STATE FRAGMENTATION AND CITIZEN EDUCATION:
CREATING A CULTURE OF CITIZENSHIP IN BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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My dissertation is an ethnography of governance in Colombia. I argue that despite widespread understandings of the Colombian state as failed, it actually plays an important role in the everyday lives of citizens. I argue that the Colombian state continues to govern through two key mechanisms: 1. the rapid construction of state institutions and policies that clutter symbolic and physical space 2. the education of citizens such that they learn to be active participants in providing services traditionally forthcoming from the state, like security and justice. I explore how these interconnected processes of state and citizen formation are articulated through citizen culture, a novel crime reduction policy that has turned the capital city of Bogotá into an international model of best governance practices.
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“Two years ago as we were leaving Neiva [department of Huila] the army made us get out of the bus. They killed the young man I was with. I was raped by eight or nine soldiers. They left me on the road and I eventually got a ride. When I got to Dabeiba [department of Antioquia], the paramilitaries were there. They said I was a guerrilla. The commander of the paramilitaries raped me,” (victim testimony, AI 2004, 20).

“We depart from the conviction that security is not only a police problem; moreover, it is not only a state problem. Learning to resolve conflicts peacefully, to make one responsible for his/her personal security and own life and that of others while avoiding behaviors that put it [their life] at risk, and collaborating with other citizens or with the authorities in order to detain criminal or terrorist activities are all jobs that correspond to citizens and that have a great impact in terms of protecting life,” (Presidencia 2006, 15).

Introduction

Colombia is a country of spectacular and enduring violence. While scholars debate the origin, cause, and even extent of the violence, there is unanimous agreement that, in a comparative perspective, Colombia has not had “normal” or acceptable levels of violence since before the mid-twentieth century. Homicide rates were estimated to have been normal enough, if a bit high, in the early 1940s at around 11 per 100,000 inhabitants. Yet by the end of the decade, an increase had occurred that would never be reversed. Violence steadily accelerated through the 1940s, exploding with the assassination of populist presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948. For the next decade, Colombia’s homicide rate fluttered between 30 and 51 (see Graph 1 below). When this acute period of violence ended around 1960, homicide rates fell, but not to previous levels. Instead, the homicide rate hoovered at approximately 20 for the next two decades, far superior to any other country in Latin America at the time. Violence began to increase again in the early 1980s, with
homicides rising to close to 30, and from 1985 on, violent death skyrocketed. By the early 1990s, Colombia’s homicide rate hit a national average of 90. In some cities, it would reach nearly 1,000 per 100,000. Ranging between 60 and 90, Colombia consistently had the highest homicide rate in the world, year after year, throughout the 1990s. As a point of comparison, Japan’s homicide rate was .5 and the United States, notorious among developed nations for its violence, had about 6.5 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants throughout the same decade. Starting in 2003, Colombia finally registered a much celebrated decline in its truly stunning homicide rate. Yet the fall was nominal, never even returning to the already high rates of the early 1980s. At 37 homicides per 100,000 people in 2007, violence in Colombia is still at epidemic proportions, making it one of the most violent countries in the hemisphere in any given year, and one of the most violent countries in the world in terms of sustained levels of inflated homicide rates across two decades.

Yet homicide rates alone do not capture the quality or pervasiveness of this “surplus” or “gratuitous” violence in Colombia, thought to be so rampant and sensational that it cannot be politically productive (Keane 2004; Munck 2008). These numbers do not reveal the frequent occurrence of massacres that eliminate entire communities or the way in which these mass killings are accompanied by torture, including rape, dismemberment, and burning by acid. In at least one well-publicized case, paramilitary death squads killed an entire community with chain saws while drinking liquor and dancing to music. They left the victim’s body parts floating in a local river. New words like “ethnocide” and “politicide” were created to describe the physical destruction of ethnic minorities and entire political parties, like the systematic elimination of the Patriotic Union (Unión Patriótica) party by state death squads who hunted down and murdered over 3,000 members, including two presidential candidates, with almost total impunity (Dudley 2004).¹ In addition to ethnic minorities and political activists, trade unionists, journalists, and judges are also particularly targeted. Over 4,000 unionizers were assassinated in Colombia between 1986 and 2003, making it the most dangerous place in the world for labor activists. One paramilitary leader, Carlos Castano, stated that, “We kill trade unionists because they

¹ The FARC launched the UP in 1985 as its legal electoral branch, running its first presidential candidate, Jaime Pardo, a year later. Pardo won 328,752 votes, four times as many as the Communist candidate got in 1982. Additionally, the UP won 24 provincial deputies, 275 municipal council representatives, 3 senators, and four congressional representatives, and the president elect, Barco awarded the UP 14 mayoral (mayors were still appointed by the president in 1986). As early as September 1986, Braulio Herrera, the congressional substitute of the UP reported to the legislature that over 300 UP members have been assassinated before the party’s first anniversary. A year later, in 1987 party leader and presidential candidates Jaime Pardo was assassinated along with 111 other UP members. In 1988 16 UP mayors elected in the first mayoral elections and 276 UP members were assassinated, along with another 138 the following year. After the second and third UP presidential candidates assassinated in 1989, Senator Bernardo Jaramillo and his replacement, there was a mass exodus from the party including the top leadership. Paramilitary troops have publicly assumed responsibility for the murders. Fidel Castano was dubbed “2000” by Pablo Escobar for the number of UP members he supposedly killed. 1994: Manuel Cepeda, director of weekly Voz assassinated by 2 military soldiers, again, planned and coordinated – and admitted by - Carlos Castano, even before the AUC officially forms. In 1997 Reiniciar file a case for political genocide at the OAS. It was denied, and they filed again with the Inter-American Human Rights Court which, as of 2007, is still hearing the case The UP was finally purged from the party lists when it failed to receive the necessary 2% of the votes in 2003.
interfere with people working,” (as cited Avilés 2006, 403). So many judges and jury members were assassinated in the late 1980s that the state disbanded jury trials and officially endorsed secret tribunals with hooded judges to protect the identity – and the life – of judges and jurists. Land mines disfigure or kill hundreds of civilians a year. Even tried and true forms of violence like violence against women take on new and grotesque manifestations; in 2007, a number of women were murdered or permanently disabled in a spate of attacks in which men injected them with feces or doused them in battery acid in public places. Similarly, rape is used as a tactic of war, to disable, disfigure, and displace thousands of women a year. With over half the population living in poverty, millions of citizens die each year from starvation, lack of medical attention, and poor infrastructure. Kidnapping is a common crime and a constant fear, as over 3,000 people were kidnapped in 2002 for ransom, political advantage, or retribution and intimidation. The threat is so serious that travel by land outside of urban centers is virtually non-existent (see Chart No. 2). Forcefully displacing rural citizens from their lands and homes as a tactic of war and land consolidation is so prevalent that by the end of 2006, nearly 4 million people were internally displaced in Colombia, the highest number in the world, surpassing even the Iraqi IDP of 3.5 million (UNHCR 2006, 26). Armed gangs working in collaboration with

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2 Statistics provided by the Vice-President’s Antipersonnel Landmine Observatory show a dramatic increase in casualties in the 21st century. The vast majority of casualties are military. However, as an indiscriminate weapon, the number of reported civilian casualties has increased from 66 in 2000 to 314 in 2006. Between 1990 and 2000, total reported casualties (including military) never exceeded 148 per year. In 2001, the total reported casualties increased to 287, and continued to 627 in 2002, 732 in 2003, 877 in 2004, 1,112 in 2005, and 1,107 in 2006. The FARC is suspected of being the primary perpetrator in employing land mines, describing them as “the weapon of the poor,” due to the low cost of production. However, the ELN and paramilitary groups are also suspected of making and laying landmines, albeit to a lesser extent. The state has been strongly criticized for failing to provide appropriate benefits to landmine victims, although these benefits far exceed those available to rape victims, despite similar violent traumas and subsequent displacement, physical disability, and depression, all of which inhibit the ability to work and lead to frequent suicide attempts.

3 As with the use of anti-personal landmines, internal displacement has not followed the overarching reduction in violent crime since 2003, instead increasing steadily since 2002. 38.52% more people - 287,581 persons or 61,182 households - were displaced in Colombia during 2004 than 2003, and more than
Chapter One: The State and Violence: Monopolies and Policies

taxi drivers take wealthy fares on “millionaire tours” (*paseo millonario*) during which they are taken to multiple ATMs in the city to empty their bank account, using drugs or physical coercion, including sexualized violence, to ensure the victims will provide the password.

These quotidian forms of violence exist alongside spectacular moments of violence, like the 1985 “48-hour coup” by the military when it bombed the Palace of Justice, killing 11 of the 24 Supreme Court justices inside and over 100 bystanders, and kidnapping and torturing to death at least seven survivors after the M-19 guerrilla group invaded the building and took the Supreme Court hostage. In just one presidential campaign, at least four candidates were assassinated, including both UP candidates, Senator Bernardo Jaramillo and his replacement, Carlos Pizarro of the M-19, and the front-runner, Luis Carlos Galán, of the New Liberal Party. The stunning murder of drug baron Pablo Escobar on the rooftops of Medellín on December 2, 1993 has become an international legend. Similarly, the country still re-watches with fascination the military slaughter of 700 armed insurgents in the “retaking” of Mitú (see *El Tiempo* Multimedia Special August 6, 2008). The kidnapping of presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt in 2002 and her daily deterioration, documented through heart-rending letters to her mother made public and “evidence of life” videos, drew international attention until her military release in 2008.

Violence has thus turned into the defining feature of Colombia and its constitutive characteristic (Serje 2005). “For most observers, violence appears to be the constant backdrop, the context in which all other discussions – politics, love, travel, business,

200,000 people were forcefully displaced in 2006 alone (UNHCR 2006). Between 1999 and 2004, there was an average of 77,692 people displaced per quarter, or 863 people every day (UNHCR 2006). After having been the largest group for many years, Afghans dropped to third position with some 2.8 million persons considered as of concern to UNHCR by the end of 2006. Put in a comparative perspective, other important countries of origin included persons originating from Sudan (2.1 million), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2 million), Uganda (1.9 million), and Somalia (890,000) (UNHCR 2006, 26). In Colombia, this number is not diminishing with time, as the government has no policy of recovering the land taken by displaced or providing for their security so they might return to their lands.
painting, or poetry – occur. Violence becomes the problem of Colombia, the central issue that plagues the body politic, for which other conditions – weak state, repressive state, excessive wealth, poverty, inequality – are offered as explanations,” (Tate 2007, 22). There is widespread agreement that all life in Colombia is mediated through this phenomenon of violence: “Public violence is an inescapable parameter for existence (in Colombia),” (Fitch 1998, 196). So insidious is the violence that it is normalized and routinized, obscuring the existence of actual terror and complicating or confusing coherent intellectual or political explanations for it (Pecaut 2001, 142).

In this dissertation, I look at what this violence tells us about the state and the relations between the state and society. What does the state do if it can’t guarantee the lives of its own judges and politicians, much less those of their citizens? Does the state continue to govern despite these gross inadequacies, and if so how? I argue that the state continues to rule through the rapid proliferation of state institutions that inundate public space and the education of citizens to provide services previously forthcoming from the state, like justice and security. This study intervenes in existing debates on the implications of violence for our understanding of state-civil society relations both in Colombia and in comparative contexts. In the next section, I present an overview of the key debates regarding the study of violence and the state in Latin America generally and in Colombia specifically, and outline my own understanding of the state, citizenship, and the impact of violence on renegotiating the boundaries between the two. In the third section, I explain my case selection and choice of methods. In particular, I will highlight why Bogotá is an essential site for understanding contemporary forms of state and citizen formation as well as why an ethnography of governance is the best, if not only, way in which to understand this inter-
related process. In the final section, I present an overview of my findings and a brief chapter outline.

**Literature Review**

*Violent Democracies and Failed States*

For many people there is an apparent contradiction between such violence and democracy. Colombia is consistently declared Latin America’s oldest and most stable democracy. Yet it is also Latin America’s most violent regime. In terms of the number of dead or disappeared, Colombia’s democracy is more violent than any of the infamous dictatorships in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, or Brazil. In fact only the Guatemalan genocide of indigenous peoples, in which an estimated 200,000 lives were lost, quantitatively compares with Colombia’s violence, and this, too, took place partially under democratic rule (Giraldo 1996, 17-18). This combination of democracy and violence is seemingly a paradox. According to anthropologist Winnifred Tate (2007, 31), “What makes Colombia’s case illuminating is not that it is the site of the worst violence but rather that multiple forms of violence exist in the context of a relatively wealthy, established democracy.” Similarly, Meltzer and Rojas argue that: “Colombia remains a paradox, by minimal procedural measures one of the oldest democracies in the region, yet caught in a cycle of violence, lawlessness, poverty, and inequality,” (2005, 2). Hundreds of books and articles have been written on this perplexing coexistence, creating a flowering of terminology to qualify this violent democracy, including “traditional bipartisan elite,” (Mainwaring 1999), “under assault,” (Kline 1995), “besieged,” (Bejarano and Pizarro 2002; Archer 1995), “elitist pluralism,” (Bailey 1977), “exclusionary” (Pécaut 1989), “democradura” (Leal 1989),
“limited democratic consociational” (Hartlyn 1988, 1989), low-intensity (Aviles 2006) and even “genocidal” (Giraldo 1996).

Yet while Colombia may be the most sublime case, it is by no means unique in Latin America. Violence is now considered the greatest threat to, or flaw of, democracy in the region. While nearly every country in Latin America ended a civil war, signed a peace treaty, or replaced authoritarian dictatorships with democratically elected governments in the late 20th century, violence only continued to rise. In addition to Colombia (1991), Ecuador (1998), Brazil (1988), Argentina (1994), Peru (1993), Paraguay (1992), Venezuela (1999), and Guatemala (1985) all rewrote their constitutions to decrease violence by transitioning to democracy and increasing citizen participation, yet violent crime only rose higher. Lynchings are now legendary in the region (Goldstein 2004; Godoy 2006; Benson, Fischer and Thomas 2008; Vilas 2008). Citizens are said to live in perpetual fear, which has lead to new forms of spatial segregation, the reinscription of discriminatory categories, the privatization of security, and popular support for heavy-handed and often illegal measures to deal with perceived criminals (Rotker 2002; Caldeira 2000; Koonings and Kruijt 1999). There has been an explosion of private security companies, widespread popular support for vigilante justice, mass opposition to human rights as special treatment for criminals, and demand for heavy-handed policing from autocratic leaders (Holston and Appadurai 1999, 15). Rather than a panacea for violence, democratization is now said to be a “disjunctive” process, increasing violence by challenging socio-political hierarchies and threatening established power dynamics (Caldeira and Holston 1998). State and society are said to be in conflict, as an unruly and overly participatory civil society strains the social fabric and impedes the implementation of rational policy choices (Drake and Hershberg
Far from ameliorating violence, then, democracy in Latin America has incorporated endemic violence into its structure.

Like these students of democracy, state scholars have similarly struggled to understand the effects and meaning of such pervasive violence on and for the state. The predominant understanding of states is one based on the Weberian “myth” of the state, in which the modern state came into being by monopolizing violence. As the Colombian state clearly does not monopolize violence, most state scholars have determined that the state is in crisis. They note the inability of the government to maintain a monopoly over the use of violence, to reign in rogue independent republics, or to establish a rule of law throughout its sovereign territory, and conclude the Colombian state is failed, variously referring to it as “partially collapsed,” “disintegrated,” “precarious,” on the “brink of anarchy,” or even inexistent (Kline 1999; Oquist 1978; Pécaut 2001; González, Bolívar, Vásquez 2003; Richani 2002; Santos and Villegas 2001, 2004; Cepeda Ulloa 2003; Montenegro and Posada 2001).

Historically this weak state and failed democracy have been blamed on institutional factors and elite blunders. Miguel Centeno (2002) argues that the lack of international conflict has spawned weak states throughout Latin America, while Juan Linz (1994) posits that presidential systems are more volatile than parliamentarian systems. Daniel Pécaut (1987; 2001) maintains that state failure in Colombia is an effect of elite preference to encourage popular identification with particular political parties rather than the state itself, creating “subcultures” along party lines rather than a cohesive national identity. Many scholars similarly argue that the Colombian state is failed because the nation is failed. “[T]he Colombian state is weak because of the weak articulation of the Colombian nation,”
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(Fischer 2004, 186). Political elites are criticized for failing to consolidate control over regional strongmen and produce symbols of national unity (Pécaut 2001, 36; Palacios 1990; Restrepo 2004; Sousa Santos and Garcia Villegas 2004). Weak national identity is thought to have impeded any sort of “national” consensus on political problems, making Colombia “a nation is spite of itself,” (Bushnell 1993), a “nation under construction,” (González 1989), and a fragmented nation (González, Bolívar, Vásquez 2003). State failure is thus national failure, and proposed solutions include verbally assuming national responsibility for the violence rather than blaming it on others (i.e.: “We killed him,” instead of, “They killed him,”) (Posada Carbó 2006).

The Turn to the Social: Citizenship, Civil Society, and Social Capital

Disappointed with democracy and disenchanted with the state, there was a global turn away from the study of states, democracy, and institutions toward the analysis of citizenship, civil society, and social capital as the defining features of states and democracies (e.g., Tulchin and Ruthenburg 2007; Yashar 2005). Scholars refocused on citizen participation and social capital instead of political institutions and elite pacts. Nancy Bermeo (2003, Introduction) argues that this turn to civil society marks the advent of a new phase in which civil society is seen as the “savior” of democracy. During the Cold War, U.S. scholars advocated moderate citizen involvement and a solid respect for authority as characteristics of the “civic culture” best suited for democracy. These scholars feared that

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4 But the assumption that weak nations cause weak states or vice versa is both tautological and theoretically inaccurate, given the historic-spatial specificity of actual nation-states. It relies on a racialized understanding of outlying regions as savage, backwards, uncivilized territories, this projected barbarity making possible the construction of a “civilized” nation center that must be projected outwards, overcoming barbarity in order to “make” the nation in the margins (Serje 2005, 105). Finally, it grossly misconstrues the Colombian nation-state, that, if anything, given very little ethnic diversity and a relatively homogenous population, formed a cohesive national identity much earlier and more easily than neighboring countries, and as a result, have never had national or nationalist struggles.
too much popular participation would turn civilians into a “praetorian society” that could undermine or even destroy democracy due to lack of political knowledge or delicacy. Yet Bermeo argues that the 1990s ushered in a new period in which civil society is now seen as democracy’s “salvation” and unlimited participation by common people is encouraged as the solution to democratic malaise and state failure. Indeed, scholars and practitioners alike have turned their attention from state capacity and institution building to civil society, social capital, and citizenship. High levels of social capital engendered through vibrant and active civil societies are said to prevent or reduce both chronic and sporadic outbursts of violence (Moser 1998, 2000; Laitin 1995; Varshney 2002; Godoy 2006; Sudarsky 1999, 2001; Londoño 1998). Participatory budgeting is thought to reduce corruption, increase transparency and fiscal oversight, and engender better economic outcomes (Licha, ed 2004) while an active civil society rich in social capital is now considered a routine and necessary actor in negotiations with the international development (Howell and Pearce 2001) and essential to bringing about good economic growth (Fukuyama 1995). Insurgent collective action from below can challenge local hierarchies, transform elite interests, and result in democratization (Wood 2000; 2003; Holston 2008). Greater citizen involvement in political processes generally is supposed to buoy depressed democratic institutions, revitalize legitimacy, result in better political outcomes, lower violence, and increase economic growth.

5 Huntington 1968; Almond and Verba 1963; Linz 1978; O'Donnell 1979; and Lipset 1981 all articulate this suspicion of civil society and advocate limited popular participation in politics, blaming the fall of democracies to authoritarian and fascist regimes in the early twentieth century on too much participation by the wrong people.

6 The relationship between social capital and violence in this literature is not clear. Some argue that violence depletes social capital (Moser 1998; 2000), while others argue that low social capital engenders violence (Laitin 1995; Varshney 2002), and yet a third faction is forthcoming about the circular nature of their argument, simply stating that violence depletes low social capital which in turn creates more violence in a never-ending spiral (Godoy 2006; Sudarsky 1999, 2001; Londoño 1998).
Yet despite this positive attention given to the benefits of an active civil society, common citizens have not simply become the “hero” of recent democratic transitions as described by Bermeo (2003). Ordinary citizens are still blamed for political failures. Current anti-democratic conservatism in post-communist Europe is similarly blamed on a weak civic tradition that is said to complicate democracy and provide the seedbed for “dangerous populism” (Gibson 1993, 1994, 2001; Howard 2003). In Latin America, “citizens are not so much seen any longer as agents of democratization, but rather as part of the diagnosis of shaky democracies… […] Ordinary people… represent the gravest threat to democracy today in Latin America,” (Hagopian 2007, 19; 110). In Colombia, citizens’ failure to participate and educate themselves is said to have caused the violence:

“Colombia’s social capital is feeble. As has been repeated in Mafioso societies, when social capital does not fill society, it is crime, violence, and lawlessness that abound,” (Sudarsky 1999, 41). Indeed, these scholars draw directly on Putnam’s landmark study of democracy and civic culture in Italy, which, it should be remembered, did not only explain the effectiveness of democratic institutions (and economic development) in the North through its vibrant, participatory civil society, but also blamed the flaws of democracy in the South, including violence and poverty, on a passive, hierarchical civil society (Putnam 1993). In response to world-wide discontent and disappointment with the “third wave” of democratization, scholars have rotundly answered the question as to what went wrong with: “civil society.” A prostate civil society, non-participatory citizens, and common people are blamed for the violence, inequality, and conservatism that undermine democracy and the state.
Instead of being seen as simply good or bad for democracy, civil society is now increasingly understood as a space of government intervention. According to Comaroff and Comaroff (2001, 44), civil society was thought up during the “First Coming of Capitalism” in the late 18th century to mediate between the market, the nation-state, and the populace at a moment of social upheaval, radical economic change, and political instability due to the “epochal metamorphosis in the organization of production, labor, and the market, in technology and its socio-cultural implications, in the constitutive connections between economy and polity, nation and state, culture and place, person, family, and community,” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001, 44). The similar social, political, moral, and economic upheaval brought by the “Second Coming of Capitalism” in the late 20th century has once again made civil society ‘especially “good to think,” to signify with, to act upon,’ (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001, 44). As new democracies are besieged by even higher levels of violence than under previous authoritarian governments and old democracies suffer from general “democratic malaise” and citizen apathy, “the Idea – the fetish” of civil society becomes a “remarkably potent battle cry… a language with which to talk about democracy, moral community, justice, and populist politics,” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001, 41). Suspicious of the authoritarian, antidemocratic, violent, or premodern tendencies of civil society that might or do undermine democracy and weaken the state, and convinced of the benefits of good social capital, civil society is now acted upon by the state, development institutions, and the private sector to foster the right kind of citizen participation, social capital, and self-governance. “[T]he strengthening of organized society’s political capacity is an important element in the “double democratization” of the state and society. Thus, amid contemporary social crises, the associational impulse is
fundamental not only for purposes of accountability but also for confronting urgent, severe
economic and social problems,” (Varas 1998, 158). This intervention thus frames civil
society as in need of democratization just like political structures and institutions and posits
that concerted intervention can help civil society overcome its undemocratic nature,
making it an asset rather than a threat to democracy.

As civil society has increasingly become a space of government intervention, social
capital has turned into technology of governance employed by the state, development
institutions, and the private sector rather than the basis for civil society strengthening. As
noted by Sidney Tarrow (1996), the absence of civic capacity is the by-product of politics,
state building, and social structure. Thus policy makers who attack the lack of social capital
by encouraging association are addressing the symptoms and not the causes of the problem
(Tarrow 1996). The implication of citizens in their own governance and belief that the state
and other parties can intervene in order to make citizens more self-sufficient is precisely
the goal of the modern governance to which social capital lends a hand. According to
Mitchell Dean, a technology of governance is the technical aspect of government, the
means, mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, technologies, or vocabularies through
which authority is constituted and rule accomplished (Dean 1999, 31). Social capital is thus
a technology of governance when it is used by ruling, authoritative bodies to create active
citizens that are capable of self-government. This is precisely what scholars and
practitioners advocate for civil society. In various policy recommendations for Latin
America, World Bank officials argue against traditional conceptions of state-building,
pointing out that strengthening the criminal justice system and judiciary only redresses
crimes already committed, but does not prevent crime. Instead, the Bank advocates that
civil society, not the state, take the reins in violence prevention, as “safety and security are everybody’s “business” – rather than just the governments,” (Moser 1998, 87). The only role the state is recommended to take in violence prevention is that of measuring violence and producing crime statistics while fostering social capital initiatives so that civil society reduces violence itself (Moser 1998, 2000). Similarly, scholars now argue that “[W]orking on, and building, integrated civic networks is a better bet [than working on or building the state]… as integrated organizational and civic life makes the state behave much better than intellectual and political exhortations that it do so,” (Varshney 2002, xi). Social capital thus becomes a technology with which governing agencies intervene in civil society to make it self-sufficient rather than traditional understandings of social capital as civil society strengthening.

Given the re-centering of civil society, social capital, and citizenship in questions of institution and regime building, the failure to adequately define or consistently operationalize these variables is surprising. Instead, civil society and social capital are ambiguously defined and inconsistently operationalized, making comparison impossible and the construction of a body of coherent theory difficult. As noted by one World Bank scholar at a regional conference in Bogotá on social capital and violence:

We have to be very cautious about how we use and how we define social capital, how we measure it, and what indicators are used. When Juan Luis [another panelist] showed me his papers, my first question was, what were your indicators? He uses intrahousehold indicators. In the work we have been doing in the Bank, we don’t use intrahousehold indicators. So we really have a different debate going on about what we are measuring (as quoted, Burki, Aiyer and Hommes 1998, 103).

Similarly, in one of the earliest critiques of social capital theorists, Sidney Tarrow (1996) pointed out Putnam’s conflagration between policy performance and democracy, arguing
that Putnam’s indicators of "civicness" are actually behavioral and structural, not attitudinal or cultural. Lacking a solid definition or common understanding of what social capital is, there is not even agreement upon whether social capital is or is not good for democracy. A growing body of work argues that many social capital theorists that always find social capital as beneficial to democracy have chosen on the dependent variable, operationalizing social capital as whatever systems of oppression are dominant in a successful democracy while unable to account for the social capital generated by subaltern and nonhegemonic social groups like women, gangs, mafias, racial and ethnic minorities (Smith 2006; Arneil 2006; McLean, Schultz, and Steger, eds 2002). Lacking a unified or consistent definition, civil society and social capital are largely marked by their absence and failure. Yet it is precisely this polyvalence and unfixability from which their power as panacea is derived (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001, 44).

Forging New State-Society Boundaries through Violence

Contemporary theories of the state conceptualize state making as either a success or a failure building almost singularly on Max Weber’s definition of the state that endows it with two fundamental capabilities: to monopolize violence and control a sovereign territory. For Weber, “a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (1958, 82, italics in original). Focusing on Western Europe, subsequent scholars have argued that the triumph of the nation-state over other forms of governance was due to its superior abilities to wage war and tax local populations (Tilly 1992; Levi 1988). The Weberian state is seen as a modern and rational individual, displaying omnipotence, justness, decision, strength, and control (Hansen and Stepputat 2001; Mbembe 2001; Migdal 2001). “Relatively
autonomous” from civil society, the sublime state appears as “an agency capable of creating a definite and authorized nation-space materialized in boundaries, infrastructure, monuments, and authoritative institutions” (Hansen and Stepputat 2001, 2; see also Migdal 2001; Mitchell 1991). A “successful” state, then, must exhibit total control over violence within an absolutely sovereign territory. This territory is understood as a fixed entity that serves as a container for a natural, eternal “human community,” the nation (Agnew 1999, 175). The sublime Weberian state must present an image free of profanities such as incoherence, brutality, partiality, banality, incompetence, technicality, and/or self-interest, as only through ascription to the sublime and rejection of banality can the state earn the legitimacy needed to beget voluntary compliance with its rules and avoid resorting to coercion. Marked thus by absolute sovereignty, legitimate authority, and a monopoly over violence in a clearly defined territory with a common temporality, the Weberian state model forms the basis for the “myth of the state” (Hansen and Stepputat 2001, 2).

Yet few states, if any, meet Weber’s ideal in absolute terms. When held up to this ahistorical myth, the “failure” of states is the rule rather than the exception. “Actual states are deviations from the ideal or corrupted versions of the ideal,” (Hansen and Stepputat 2001, 14). In practice, states are not unitary or coherent actors easily distinguished from civil society, but rather decentralized, disaggregated, and multilayered amalgams of social structures deeply embedded in and produced by power relations in a multinational society (Cooper 1995; Gupta 1995; Mbembe 2001; Migdal 2001, Mitchell 1991). Internal disjunctures among and within state bureaucracy contribute to incoherent policies with inconsistent application, as well as the pitting of one arm of the state against the other (Gupta 1995; Migdal 2001). Scholars such as Akhil Gupta (1995), Veena Das (2004), and
Fernando Coronil (1997) have demonstrated how state power is both reliant on and susceptible to irrational and uncontrollable processes such as gossip and rumor, further emphasizing the banality of the state. Oscillating between rationality and magic, legitimate states are often deified through fantastic displays of power, dazzling development projects, the miraculous domination of natural resources, or the ability to incite citizens to action against their own better judgment (Coronil 1997; Das and Poole 2004; Taussig 1997). Moreover, despite necessary attempts to appear rational, actual states exemplify two levels of arbitrariness—simple irrationality and the arbitration of naming (Ferme 2004, 83; Mbembe 2001). When the state does act “rationally” and earnestly dedicates itself to planning, its plans seldom beget the desired outcomes, instead producing unintended, conflicting, and at times incoherent, results (Migdal 2001). The state is personal, comprised of individual bureaucrats and their often competing or contradictory personal investments, emotions, desires, and agendas (Byrnes 2003, 5). Absolute territorial sovereignty has been eroded through processes of social and economic globalization accompanied by deterritorialization and decentralization spurred by ethnic mobilization, separatist movements, the (im)migration of peoples, international finance institutions, and the global movement of capital, accentuating the permeable and fluid nature of borders while undermining the state’s “pretence of sovereignty” (Coronil 1997; Das and Poole 2004; Hansen and Stepputat 2001; Mbembe 2001). This assumed sovereignty is further challenged by “shadow” or “parallel” states that utilize existing structures of state governance, combined with novel forms of local surveillance and organization, to administer state-like control in the margins of the state (Hansen and Stepputat 2001, 35–6; Roitman 2004).
The paradox of contemporary states, then, is that they continue to exist and exert such influence, by all measures maintaining their permanence and ubiquity, despite overarching failures to approximate Weber’s mythical, sublime state. According to Mbembe (2001, 68), even the most “failed” or “stateless” of states will inevitably retain its title, while evolving qualities and modes of operation very unlike those of conventional states. States may not be undermined by profanities at all, but rather constituted by them, both physically and discursively (Gupta 1995; Roitman 2004). Many modern states do not maintain a monopoly over violence, but rather have structural links to private or paramilitary security forces (Roitman 2004; Davis and Pereira, eds 2003), a form of governance Mbembe (2001) has coined “private indirect government.” As the “ultimate form of organized crime,” all states simultaneously threaten and protect citizens, complicating facile distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate force (Tilly 1985; Das and Poole 2004). Law itself functions as a second order violence that works to obscure the origins of the state in violence itself (Coronil 1997; Das and Poole 2004; Derrida 1976, 101–140; 2002, 230–298; Mbembe 2001; Poole 2004; Holston 2008). State sovereignty is not the bedrock of “civilized” international order, but rather founded in the excessive, violent will to rule over “bare life” (Hansen and Stepputat 2006, 11; Agamben 1998; Foucault YEAR). As violence is not indicative of state dysfunction, neither is corruption, which is similarly central to the discursive constitution of the state (Gupta 1995). Finally, the pluralization of regulatory authorities, particularly armed actors that establish state-like control over territory by utilizing existing state structures and novel forms of local surveillance, does not necessarily undermine state power, but rather is essential to its very (re)composition (Das and Poole 2004; Roitman 2004).
I use my study of Colombia to deepen our understanding of state-civil society relations by analyzing the inter-related processes of state and citizen construction. State formation is a continuous process (Wood 2000) that is inherently linked to subject formation (Joseph and Nugent 1994). States do not encompass naturally-occurring human communities, but rather engage in dialectical nation-building projects with local populations (Anderson 1991; Nugent 1997). Yet according to Sara Radcliffe (2001), this relationship between state and citizen construction has been understudied. In this study, I seek to fill this gap by analyzing how the state continues to govern despite such failures. I argue that the Colombian state continues to rule through two primary mechanisms: 1. The rapid construction of state institutions that clutter public space 2. The education of citizens to provide the services previously forthcoming from the state, such as justice and security.

I build on an understanding of the state as a field of power comprised of both image and practice (Mbembe 2001, 25). As Joel Migdal points out, the state is “a field of power marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by (1) the image of a coherent, controlling organization in a territory, which is a representation of the people bounded by that territory, and (2) the actual practices of its multiple parts,” (2001, 15-16). I seek to push beyond binary conceptions of the state as either strong or weak, successful or failed. As Hansen and Stepputat argue, “Instead of deploring the crisis or even collapse of postcolonial states in terms of the repercussions for regional stability, we find it more pertinent to explore the local and historically embedded ideas of normality, order, intelligible authority, and other languages of stateness,” (Hansen and Stepputat 2001, 9). In this study, I understand the state as a structural effect of modern social order resulting from complex power relations. Conceptualizing the state as “relatively autonomous” from civil
society is a false distinction that serves to maintain certain social and political orders (Mitchell 1991). By taking the paradoxical nature of the modern state as a starting point, I seek to further our understanding of the particular power arrangements or “languages of stateness” that allow the state to govern in the context of the patterns of violence and disorder I have described in contemporary Colombia.

**Methodology and Case Selection**

In this study, I conduct an ethnography of the Colombian state. According to Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2001), globalization necessitates the ethnographic study of states in order to account for their fluidity as effects and processes. Ethnography is “social research based on the close-up, on-the-ground observation of people and institutions in real time and space, in which the investigator embeds herself near (or within) the phenomenon so as to detect how and why agents on the scene act, think and feel the way they do,” (Wacquant 2003, 5). Ethnography is thus particularly good at analyzing the interrelated processes of state and citizen formation and the redefinition of the boundaries between state and society. Javier Auyero points out that “[E]thnography is uniquely equipped to look microscopically at the foundations of political institutions and their attendant sets of practices, just as it is ideally suited to explain why political actors behave the way they do and to identify the causes, processes, and outcomes that are part and parcel of political life,” (Auyero 2006, 258). More than simply a good complement to, quantitative large-N studies, ethnography is the best method for studying a variety of political processes and phenomena. For example, Rogers Smith argues that “We are likely to gain more insight on these topics [of political identity formation, language acquisition, nation building, and state formation] through interpretive textual analyses; ethnographic
fieldwork; biographical studies; in-depth interviews; individual and comparative case studies, both historical and contemporary; participant observation research; narrative historical institutional analyses; and other methods rather crudely termed “qualitative,” (2004, 205). Ethnography is the method of choice for studying state formation and citizenship regimes because it is evidence-centered, it embraces the complexity of reality while addressing competing and confounding variables; and finally, it avoids reductionism, statistical manipulation, and overly thin or parsimonious explanations (Coppedge 1999; Ragin 1987, 32). As political culture is not a fixed system of meaning, but both stable and changing, reflecting both structure and agency as social actors make meaning and produce intelligibility in a dialectical social process by attempt to make their worlds coherent; need to know how common knowledge is produced, changed, and used in order to produce robust explanations and avoid erroneous causal inferences (Wedeen 2002, 722). Direct observation is essential to understanding questions of political culture regarding governance, civil society, and society capital, as intelligibility - how local populations make sense of their surroundings – must be observed, and not assumed (Wedeen 2002, 722). Particularly in war zones such as Colombia, field research is an imperative given the absence of unbiased data from traditional sources such as newspapers, the partisan nature of most information available through government organizations, and the difficulty of establishing what a representative sample might be (Wood 2006).

Despite these advantages of ethnography, Javier Auyero (2006) notes a surprising “double absence” of both politics in ethnographies and ethnography in the study of politics. Indeed, by his count, there was one article published in the ten years between 1996-2006 in either of the two principal political science journals, the APSR or the American Journal of
Political Science, that relied on ethnographic data. Given this absence, political scientists are missing the “nitty-gritty details of politics… the pace of political action, the texture of political life, and the plight of political actors [which] have all been cast into the shadows created by the unnecessary and deleterious over-reliance on quantitative methods in both political science and political sociology,” (Auyero 2006, 258). Quantitative and formal models are overdetermined, being employed even when they are not useful explanatory tools, or worse, when they actually obscure the political processes at hand (Smith 2004). Thus there is a need to diversify the methods employed by political scientists to include “richly interpretive methods… that attend to the historical and contextual processes through which identities are constructed,” (Smith 2004, 205).

In this study I employ an ethnography to study governance in Colombia because it best illuminates the interconnected processes of state and citizen formation. I consider the importance of the Colombian state in structuring daily life by exploring how it continues to govern despite such failures. During ten months of field research in Colombia between June 2006 and December 2007 I collected data for this study using various methods. First, I conducted three types of interviews. I interviewed approximately 78 elected and appointed public officials, urban planners, public servants, and state bureaucrats of various natures on the origin, design, implementation, goals, and effects of citizen culture programs. I carried out hundreds of informal interviews with citizens actively participating in citizen culture programs, including street vendors, citizen guides, readers, and local justices of peace in order to understand how they felt about citizen culture initiatives and how the programs had affected them. Finally, I conducted informal interviews with citizens who were not directly targeted by the programs but who witnessed the transformation in order to assess
their opinion and understanding of the process. Second, I carried out archival research in several locations, including the Archive of Bogotá, the Popular Sales Fund, Mission Bogotá operations headquarters, the Ministry of Culture, the District Secretary of Culture, Recreation, and Sports, the newspaper *El Tiempo*, and the private library of one ex-state bureaucrat. Third, I conducted direct observation at numerous citizen culture initiatives. According to H. Russell Bernard, direct observation offers greater accuracy than behavior reported in interviews (2002, Chap 15). Thus I attended citizenship classes with both citizen guides and the general population. I visited each library and Justice House in the city. I attended book swaps and fairs, parades, concerts, informal markets, and public readings. Fourth, I analyzed state policy documents dealing with security and citizen culture from both the national and local level. In the next section I will present an overview of each chapter’s findings. Lastly, I collected data on cultural “schema” as presented in the media by reading the daily newspaper, watching local soap operas and news programs, and listening to local radio stations (Bernard 2002, 257-260). This data, collected through semi-structured and informal interviews, direct observation, and archival research, was coded twice, once during grounded theory - the inductive, “discovery” of hypotheses - and again during content analysis – the testing of hypotheses generated from the texts (Bernard 2002, Chapter 17).

In this project I employ a “strong” case study of governance in the capital city of Bogotá where processes of state and citizen construction are intensified and thus readily visible. Case studies are superb at testing causal hypothesis, eliminating false hypothesis, and establishing or negating causality. Case studies routinely mix levels of analysis, including national structures, group factors, international factors, and individuals, thus
easily avoiding creating inductive hypothesis, or in-sample testing, by using one case study to generate hypothesis and others to test it or look for new data within existing case, as in another level of analysis (Ross 2003, 16; Coppedge 1999, 474). “The longitudinal case study is simply the best research design available for testing hypotheses about the causes of specific events. In addition to maximizing opportunities to disconfirm observable implications, it does the best job of documenting the sequence of events, which is crucial in establishing the direction of causal influence,” (Coppedge 1999, 472). This case study also allows for process tracing, a method that allows for the identification of causal mechanisms as part of a “building block” approach to theory (Bennet and George 2005). Process tracing allows the researcher to interpret decisions by looking closely at the decision process by which various initial conditions are translated into outcomes as per (George and McKeown 1985).

Bogotá is not merely as good site to study governance in Colombia; it is an essential site. Urbanization, global capitalism, and decentralization have fundamentally changed the relation between nations and their cities, such that cities are especially strategic arenas for the development of citizenship, salient sites for current renegotiations of citizenship, democracy, and national belonging, sites of contestation over and redefinitions of citizenship, cities not national government site of state-citizen formation and policy development (Holston and Appadurai 1999; Holston 2008; Caldeira 2000; Bender 1999, 22). Colombia, once a country of many urban centers, is now dominated by

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KKV (1991) advocate process tracing as way to increase the number of cases, thus making case studies more scientific or as a way to complement quantitative research. But as Tarrow (1995) notes, the goal of process tracing as per George and McKeown who thought of it, was not to increase the number of discrete decision stages and aggregate them for larger-N as KKV are seeking, but rather to connect the phases of policy process in order to study then in a dynamic process that is different in kind from the simple accumulation of observations desired by KKV (Tarrow 1995, 472).
Bogotá. This “gigantic anaconda,” swallowing up people, resources, and other urban centers (Fals Borda 2004, 49), is now held up internationally as a model of good governance and crime reduction (Martin and Ceballos 2004; Llorente, Escobedo et al. 2001, Llorente, Escobedo et al. 2001b, Sanchez, Espinosa et al. 2003; Rivas Gamboa 2005, 92). Former mayors of Bogotá are recognized and contracted as consultants around the world. Antanas Mockus (1995-1996; 1999-2000) founded an NGO, Univisionarios, which consults around the world, creating and executing surveys of citizen culture, making policy recommendations of how to improve the existing culture in order to reduce violence, and working with local state bureaucrats and citizens to implement their policy recommendations. Enrique Londoño (1997-1998) has become an internationally recognized speaker and consultant, touted as an “urban revolutionary.” Policy makers and think tanks such as the Inter-American Dialogue have recommended that other cities suffering from increased violent crime such as Rio de Janeiro and El Salvador study, import, and implement the model.

As Bogotá increasingly serves as an international model for violence reduction and state strengthening, understanding the way in which it has affected debates, naturalized certain categories and technologies of governance, and redefined the boundary between state and society becomes essential to understanding global governance. I am not seeking to explain how Bogotá is either unique or ideal in terms of governance, but rather to develop an analytic framework by exploring how this case structures discourses, knowledge production, and technologies of governance. Case studies do not simply lend to the accumulation of discrete, disparate, or local knowledge; not are they unrepresentative or “exceptional,” (as per KKV 1994, 211; Tarrow 1995; Collier 1993; Lijphart 1971, 691).
Rather, case studies help rethink theoretical boundaries and challenge assumptions that shape social science inquiries, a project that is essential to comparative analysis (Fernandes 1997, 13). “Students of comparative politics examine a case to reveal what it tells us about a larger set of political phenomena,” (Lichbach and Zuckerman 1997, 4). Studying Bogotá is uniquely important because it is the model on which international policy is now based. Transporting policy prescriptions from foreign contexts and implementing even exemplar policy without due concern with the local context and populations has resulted in some of the worst development tragedies in history (Scott 1998). This ethnography thus lends to the analysis and further theorization of how state-society relations are being reshaped in contexts of pervasive violence.

Finally, I use this study to rethink traditional spatial categories involved in state construction. I seek to illustrate that there are other kinds of “margins” than just geographic ones, and they can be found in the very capital city. Many of the scholars that inspire this study argue that the state is constituted through disciplinary practices in the “margins” of the state, at the interstices of social reproduction, where power is entangled and popular geographies attempt to redraw the map of state power (Radcliffe 2004; Das and Poole 2004). They argue that local state practices in the geographic margins, such as documentation, mapping, drawing and reinforcing boundaries, establishing armies, and so on may alternately contradict or reinforce the ideal image of the state set forth, both marking the distance between the state and individuals as well as penetrating into everyday life, both creating and undermining national identity and control, producing the state as a structural effect while explaining its elusiveness (Cooper 2004; Coronil 1997; Das and Poole 2004; Gupta 1995; Mitchell 1991; Radcliffe and Westwood 1996; Scott 1998). These
scholars have pointed out that as an expression of social relations of power, the state is not simply imposed from the “top down,” but constructed through dynamic national-local interactions (Nugent 1997). Furthermore, rural areas shape national, republican states through local worldviews (Ducey 2004), such that in order to understand nation-state construction one must account for “the active participation and intellectual creativity of subaltern classes in processes of nation-state formation,” (Mallon 1995, 3). These insights have fundamentally informed this study, and in no way do I mean to imply that governance does not occur in rural areas and that state and citizen formation is unique in the geographic margins, or that this process doesn’t inspire, effect, and change governance in the center. Yet I am seeking to reveal the existence, activity, and agency of the margins within the very center of state power, the capital city. Since nation-states contain within them so much variance that regionally-specific and multi-site studies are needed to explain within-case unevenness and differences (Knight 1994; Trouillot 2001), I have clearly defined the site of my study in order to contribute to building a comprehensive model of governance in Colombia.

Chapter Overviews

In the first chapter, I present the larger historical, political, and economic context in which this new form of governance became a logical possibility. I provide a brief history of violence in Colombia. I argue that the writing of Colombia’s national origins myth as a nation born in and through violence, has naturalized and depoliticized violence in the country, diffusing solutions to the violence. I explore the state’s first strategy to re-legitimize itself and lower violence in the early 1990s, dual democratization and market liberalisation. Ironically, this policy initiative served to buttress the legitimacy of the state
without lowering violence. Moreover, I posit that democracy and market liberalisation opened the door for the creation and implementation for a radically innovative crime reduction policy that consists of two spatially distinct but complementary strategies: democratic security and citizen culture. This understanding of democratic security and citizen culture differs greatly from common conceptualizations of the two policies that frame them as different, oppositional, and even antithetical. While democratic security aims to reduce violence by militarily defeating communist guerrillas and incorporating rural citizens into the state’s military structure in outlying area and citizen culture aims to reduce violence by creating kind, polite, law-abiding citizens in urban areas, both policies employ the same technologies of governance, seeking to reduce violence by increasing state fragmentation and citizen education. Both democratic security and citizen culture reformulate the relationship between state and society by drawing citizens into the state through the proliferation of state institutions, material, information, and representatives, while educating citizens into assuming responsibility for their own security and justice provision.

Chapter Two focuses on the topic of this research: citizen culture. I identify the origins and basic tenets of citizen culture. The 1994 mayor-elect of Bogotá, Antanas Mockus, proposed the ideological framework for citizen culture, and as mayor fully embraced citizen culture as his primary public policy. Mockus explained violence through the existence of a “culture of violence,” and argued that the best way to eradicate that violence was through citizen education. Mockus thus launched a massive public education campaign. He put mimes on street corners to teach pedestrians to cross at the crosswalk and wait for the light. His administration made banners, street signs, and hand-held cards
advising good citizenship practices involving everything from paying taxes to wearing a helmet while riding a bike and the virtues of reduced water consumption. He engaged on a public relations campaign using every form of mass media so that his message of good, law-abiding citizenship would reach every citizen in the city, at any or every given moment.

The program has enjoyed stunning success. Citizen culture is the most positively remembered and recognized public policy enacted in Colombia in the last 25 years. Citizens readily recognize its signs and slogans, express support for them, and voice the conviction that the policy improved the city. International policy makers have deemed the program a “success” as well, and exported it to other cities in Colombia as well as internationally to urban centers battling rising crime and fear of crime. Bogotá’s citizen culture now stands as a global model of violence reduction. Drawing on a series of interviews with state bureaucrats and policy makers, archival research, and photographs, I argue that this initiative was able to transfer responsibility for security from the state to civil society by successfully inundating public space with signs, slogans, banner, and human representations of the state that all work to educate citizens into willingly assuming the responsibility for their own security provision.

Chapter Three looks at Mission Bogotá, the most explicit effort to inculcate a culture of citizenship as a security measure. Mission Bogotá is a state program that employs and educates citizen guides who in turn educate the wider public on citizen behaviors. The state imagines the citizen guides as preventing violence in two ways. First, the guides themselves are chosen from the intersection of the poor, young, and female. The state describes these poor young women as “at risk” of being violent. Thus they are
educated into citizen culture, defined as good work habits, peaceful conflict resolution, and active urban citizenship in order to reduce their perceived anti-social tendencies. Secondly, these reformed citizen guides are to engender more peaceful, democratic behavior in regular citizens by the mere fact of their overwhelming presence. Clad in bright yellow jumpsuits, guides inundate space physically and symbolically, impeding pedestrian and motorized transit by forming physical barricades, and serving as a personal manifestation of the state in every inch of the city.

Citizen culture brings the use and meaning of public space to the fore as both a site of (in)security and citizen participation. In Chapter Four, I document the explosion of state institutions, policies, and plans to create and regulate public space as the privileged site for citizenship. These new state institutions identify the problem of public space as its invasion by “ambulant” street vendors. The state then solves this problem by “recovering” public space from street vendors and their “culture of informality” and preserving public space as the privileged site for citizenship. The non-citizen vendors are relocated in state-controlled markets where they are educated in “formal” market mentalities such as respect for private – particularly intellectual – property, paying rent, immobility, work ethic, inflexible work hours, entrepreneurialism, and a culture of savings. I argue that the recovery of public space and relocation of street vendors is a spatial technology of governance that produces new forms of segregation in which citizens and street vendors have differentiated places and rights to mobility, while coding structural inequalities as a question of culture.

Chapter Five addresses a fourth component of citizen culture: reading. Despite a history of monopolizing reading, writing, and access to books, using literacy as a tool to legalize illegal behaviors, and manipulating the law to exacerbate social injustice and
exclusion, beginning in 1991, the Colombian state performed an about face, framing the poor reading habits of common citizens as a problem instead of a virtue. Rather than restricting access to the written word as it did in the past, the state now claims that reading is a fundamental part of citizen culture, essential to democracy, participation, and peaceful coexistence. While reading habits are worst in rural areas, the state once again focused on the capital city of Bogotá as the proper space for a new citizenship. Bogotá was thus lambasted with reading initiatives. Libraries were built, book fairs were held, and every park, plaza, market, and mass transit station in the city featured a prominent and visible reading program. The city’s administration applied for and won the honor of being UNESCO’s 2007 “World Book Capital,” and a wild flurry of state construction and public programming projected the image of Bogotá as a reading – and thus modern, democratic, and non-violent – city. Fairs and parades were held, banners displayed, and state bureaucracy re-organized and expanded. While reading rates in the city have not increased, the state again occupied every inch of the city with programming, advertisements, and physical constructions, creating the sense of omnipresence and security while educating citizens on desirable citizen behaviors.

Chapter Six examines the redefinition of justice under citizen culture. With a 97% impunity rate, one of the central problems for the Colombian government in maintaining legitimacy and deterring crime is making it appear that it has the interest and ability to punish, deter, or inhibit offenders. Thus residents of Bogotá were given an alternative to the traditional justice system in 1997. A system of Justice Houses were built in order to facilitate access to justice, reduce impunity, and increase the state’s legitimacy by bringing state services closer to the community. Justice Houses bundle the provision of state
services, so that citizens can maneuver the confusing and fragmented state bureaucracy with the help of a legal expert. Yet citizens are not guided through the traditional justice bureaucracy, which is presumed to not work. Instead, Justice Houses redefine justice as “community coexistence,” replacing traditional lawyers, courts, and trials with conciliation hearings, mediators, peaceful conflict resolution, and mutual agreement. Victims who go to Justice Houses to report crimes are educated in “coexistence” measures that assist victims in remedying their own legal problems, while the state’s role in providing justice is reconceptualized as a facilitator rather than guarantor.
Chapter One: The State and Violence: Monopolies and Policies

Introduction

In this chapter, I seek to transcend understandings of the Colombian state as either successful or failed, illustrating instead the going project of state and citizen construction that produces its own unique language of stateness. While most scholars assumed that the rise of the modern nation-state would beget the gradual elimination and/or containment of violence as the state increasingly monopolized the power of physical coercion and regulated society, violence plays a key role in the formation and transformation of modern nation-states (Coronil and Skurski, eds 2006). The sovereign nation-state is not the bedrock of “civilized” international order. Rather, its very power is garnered from excessive and exceptional violence and the ability to create and exclude “bare life” (Hansen and Stepputat eds 2006; Agamben 1998; Foucault 1980). The violence it invokes does not just destroy, but also regulates, creates meaning, and structures life (Hansen and Stepputat eds 2006; Hardt and Negri 2001). Violence in Colombia/Bogotá is worst in precisely the areas where the state is most present, in terms of the highest density of public functionaries and greatest public expenditure/inhabitant (Llorente et al 2001). Nor is Colombia unique in its use of paramilitary or private forces to wreck this terror; instead, irregular armed forces are constituent of modern states and governance (Davis and Pereira, eds. 2003; Roitman 2004).

I argue that the Colombian state continues to rule despite banalities by employing two technologies of governance: 1. the fragmentation of the state such that the state inundates public space and appears omnipresent 2. the education of citizens to provide services previously forthcoming from the state, like security and justice. This new form of governance has had several policy facets, including democratization, market liberalization, paramilitarism, democratic security, and citizen culture. I argue that these technologies of
Chapter One: The State and Violence: Monopolies and Policies

governance transfer the responsibility for security and justice onto civil society while fundamentally re-conceptualizing the relation between state and society. “State failure” has been defined as “where leaders cannot even govern their core areas” (Herbst 2000, 254). It is perhaps by this marker that the complexity of the Colombian case is most evident. While Colombia’s national origins myth is that of a nation born in and through bi-partisan violence between Conservatives and Liberals, this violence has rarely touched the city. Moreover, as I will argue, when it has, it has met with rapid and efficient elite responses to secure the capital city.

In the first section, I explore the state’s first attempt to lower violence through democratization and market liberalization. In the second section, I detail why this policy worked selectively to increase security for some citizens while jeopardizing security for the majority of citizens as certain factions of the state turned to paramilitary death squads in order to buttress their traditional positions of privilege threatened by democratization. In the third section, I explore contemporary rule in Colombia. I argue that democratic security and citizen culture are two complementary and interconnected policies that govern through the fragmentation of the state and the (re)education of citizens while dovetailing with existing paramilitary structures. In the final section, I conclude with the implications of this new form of governance for states, citizenship, and governance.

A Nation Born in Violence

Colombian’s national origins myth begins with the bloodiest civil war ever to occur in Latin America, the War of a Thousand Days (1899 –1902) that killed an estimated 100,000 people, 2.5% of the approximately 4 million inhabitants (Bergquist 1978; Bushnell
The subsequent Conservative republic was marked by low-grade violence against political opposition. It was finally toppled in 1930 when after the 1928 massacre of 3,000 striking banana workers on the Caribbean coast and the division of the party.\(^8\)

The story then skips to the assassination of populist presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948. His murder led to the “Bogotazo,” the mass riots in the capital city during which almost the entirety of the downtown area was burned (Alape 1983; Braun 1985). In rural areas, the violence raged for nearly a decade in a period simply referred to as “The Violence” (1946-1957). While popular and national stories commemorate this as a time of bi-partisan violence or the persecution of Liberals by the ruling Conservative party, scholars have illustrated the local and contingent nature of this violence in which national narrative of bi-partisan violence were employed to justify resolving local political issues and furthering personal gain through violence (Oquist 1978; Roldán 2002; Sánchez 1983; Sánchez and Meertens 1984; Guzmán, Fals Borda, Umaña Luna 1962, 1964; see also Das 2000). All subsequent violence in Colombia has been understood as the natural continuation of The Violence and a permanent characteristic of Colombia (Pécaut 2001; Chapters 3 and 5).

Regardless of the true depth of partisan affiliation, The Violence, largely inflicted by Conservative paramilitary groups, caused Liberal party members to flee for their lives. Many took up arms to protect themselves, forming the basis of what would become the contemporary armed Marxist insurgency. The Violence only began to abate when the leaders of the traditional Conservative and Liberal parties feared the mounting political...

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\(^8\) Bushnell (1993; 151-154) argues that 100,000 is probably an overestimation, though does not provide supporting evidence to his claim. In any case, the event was significant both for its extreme violence and the political and military destabilization of the country that precipitated the loss of Panama.

\(^9\) Again there is contestation over the number of dead. Popular memory and the public record commemorate 3,000 dead (Marquez YEAR), while some historians, again, Bushnell (1993), insist there were only 60-75 dead.
power of the popular General Rojas Pinilla that they had installed in a dictatorship. The elite negotiated a power-sharing agreement, the National Front, abroad, that evenly split all elected and appointed government seats between the two parties, alternating the presidency while excluding all other political parties. They exiled Rojas Pinilla, put the National Front to a popular vote, and installed a temporary military junta.

It is possible that the National Front engendered the concomitant fall in homicides by reducing the benefits of violence by sharing patronage 50/50. Conversely, it also allowed low-grade violence to continue simmering in the countryside, as long as it did not affect urban centers (Pécaut 2001, 37). Whatever the cause for the temporary fall, the violence did not stay tempered for long. The National Front collapsed in 1970 when General Rojas Pinilla was popularly elected from a third party, and the traditional oligarchy stole the election from him in order to maintain control and keep the presidency between the two elite parties. This massive electoral fraud and political exclusion again drove frustrated citizens to justify armed insurgency over electoral struggle.\textsuperscript{10} The issues the engendered The Violence were never dealt with, thus re-emerging and forming continuities with contemporary violence (Bergquist, Peñaranda, Sánchez G., eds. 1992, 2001; Sánchez and Peñaranda 1986; Commission for the Study of Violence 1989 report).

\textsuperscript{10} So extensive was the violence that Laureano Goméz was elected president in 1950 unopposed, all the other candidates were either killed or intimidated into withdrawing. Yet the violence only continued to increase under the rule of Goméz, until he was forced out of office in 1953 by massive popular mobilizations and a sort of coup d'état, in which the political elite convened a constituent assembly which named General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla to the presidency, to overwhelming popular and elite support in the name of ending the “fratricide.” Rojas Pinilla served four years, and would have liked to continue in power, but leaders of the traditional Conservative and Liberal parties feared loosing power to the populist leaders, and instead negotiated a power-sharing agreement, the National Front, among themselves and exiled Rojas Pinilla.

\textsuperscript{11} Colombia also has spectacular levels of electoral corruption, ranging from Misael Pastrana stealing the presidency from General Rojas Pinilla during a “power outage” in 1970 to the assassination of entire political parties and the kidnapping of presidential candidates, to mundane, regular-old state neglect and poverty, as in 2007 in the state of Gauviare(?) when a recall vote had to be held because voters systematically lacked the proper infrastructure like road and transportation to make the two-day trip to polling booths.
Violence steadily increased over the next 15 years, and by the end of the 1980s, over half of the population was living in poverty. There was one homicide every 24 minutes, one kidnapping every seven hours, and two terrorist acts per day. Not even the capital city of Bogotá was exempt, as armed factions recognized the spatial concentration of the state in the capital district and specifically targeted the city with violent attacks. Drug cartels sought to make Bogotá and its elites “bleed” by conducting a high-profile bombing campaign in the city in order to protest extradition to the United States (Bowden 2001). The M-19 guerrillas executed a number of very visible attacks on the center of state infrastructure, including stealing arms from a military arsenal, taking hostages at an embassy, and taking over the Supreme Court.\footnote{Following the mantra, “la revolucion es una rhumba,” the M-19 engaged in high-profile, stunning acts that earned it a great deal of public attention and support. It focused on daring, symbolic acts like stealing Simon Bolivar’s sword as its first official act, to be returned when real democracy returned to Colombia (although it was later lost!), stealing milk to give to poor, stealing weapons from army arsenal outside the north of Bogotá, and taking 14 ambassadors hostage at Dominican embassy during dinner party. The guerrillas enjoyed widespread popular support until the bombing of the Palacio de Justicia when public sentiment toward them greatly soured.} Not even presidential candidates were protected, as at least four candidates were killed in the 1989 campaign, including Carlos Pizarro (M-19), two candidates from the Unión Patriótica including then-Senator Bernardo Jaramillo, and the neo-populist Senator set to win, Luis Carlos Galán.

State Solution Number One: Democratization and Liberalization

Violent crime in Bogotá doubled from 1988 to 1993, the only year in which the capital city had a higher homicide rate than the national average. For possibly the first time, the three percent of the nation’s elite that owned 97% of the country’s land and wealth and dominated all the major news sources and government positions (Bowden 2001, 28)
became acutely aware of their “mutual class dependency” (Scheper-Hughes 1992) and decided to act, collectively and swiftly, to end the violence. The first technique the elite pursued in order to lower violence and re-legitimize the state was dual democratization-liberalization. Presidents Virgilio Barco (1986-1990) and César Gaviria (1990-1994) began political decentralization, introducing the democratic election of mayors, creating local governing boards (Juntas Administrativas Locales, JAL) and creating plebiscites and referendums, implementing neoliberal economic reforms, and declaring by decree processes to support the convening of a constitutional convention (Van Cott 1998). Increased citizen participation in government was seen as a necessary component in order to reduce violence and increase the state’s legitimacy. In 1985 Congress passed Law 34, amending the constitution to allow for the popular election of mayors in 1988 and referenda on local issues (see Legislative Act 1 1988).

Student protests following Galán’s assassination, supported by the press, turned into a popular movement calling for a constitutional convention to rewrite the Constitution, framing more democracy as a response to institutionalized violence. The M-19 guerrilla group demobilized in 1989, forming a legitimate political party with Carlos Pizarro as leader, and participated in the Constitutional Convention. While refusing to participate in the Convention, the FARC entered into peace talks with the Betancur administration (1982-1986) and launched an electoral party, the Patriotic Union (UP), in 1985 that met with huge electoral success, earning 24 provincial deputies, 275 municipal council representatives, 3 senators, and four congressional representatives, and 14 mayors in its first round of elections (awarded by president elect Virgilio Barco as mayors were still
appointed by the president in 1986). With widespread legitimation of the guerrilla as a self-evident product of political corruption and exclusion, finding a negotiated solution to the “armed conflict” had broad public support. Previously excluded parties held 40% of the seats in the Constituent Assembly, who were not bound to local bosses and patronage systems in the same way. As stated by then-President Gaviria in regards to the National Constituent Assembly chosen on December 9, 1990 to draft the new constitution, “[The Constituent Assembly] is the opportunity to revitalize the legitimacy of our institutions, to modernize and strengthen them. It is the opportunity to construct a new, comprehensive democracy, extending citizen participation to new scenes in all aspects of national life,” (Gaviria 1994, 7). This belief in the ability to improve democracy and lower violence by institutional reform can only be understood in an international context, in which “Third Wave” democracy scholars emphasized the role of institutions and elites in “consolidating” democracy, and development agencies favored rewriting constitutions in order to overhaul economic systems to favor neoliberal economic policies rather than adopt them piecemeal.

13 The FARC launched the UP in 1985 as its legal electoral branch, running its first presidential candidate, Jaime Pardo, a year later. Pardo won 328,752 votes, four times as many as the Communist candidate got in 1982. Additionally, the UP won 24 provincial deputies, 275 municipal council representatives, 3 senators, and four congressional representatives, and the president elect, Barco awarded the UP 14 mayoral (mayors were still appointed by the president in 1986). As early as September 1986, Braulio Herrera, the congressional substitute of the UP reported to the legislature that over 300 UP members have been assassinated before the party’s first anniversary. A year later, in 1987 party leader and presidential candidates Jaime Pardo was assassinated along with 111 other UP members. In 1988 16 UP mayors elected in the first mayoral elections and 276 UP members were assassinated, along with another 138 the following year. After the second and third UP presidential candidates assassinated in 1989, Senator Bernardo Jaramillo and his replacement, there was a mass exodus from the party including the top leadership. Paramilitary troops have publicly assumed responsibility for the murders. Fidel Castaño was dubbed “2000” by Pablo Escobar for the number of UP members he supposedly killed. 1994: Manuel Cepeda, director of weekly Voz assassinated by 2 military soldiers, again, planned and coordinated – and admitted by - Carlos Castaño, even before the AUC officially forms. In 1997 Reiniciar file a case for political genocide at the OAS. It was denied, and they filed again with the Inter-American Human Rights Court which, as of 2007, is still hearing the case. The UP was finally purged from the party lists in 2003 when it failed to receive the necessary 2% of the votes.

The participatory nature of Colombian democracy was consolidated in the 1991 Constitution and Law 134 of 1994, which granted citizens the right to participate in legislative, judicial, electoral, and fiscal initiatives. It allowed for the first time in half a century for the calling of referendum and plebiscites, popular introduction of legislative initiatives, town hall meetings open to the public (cabildo abierto), popular impeachment mechanisms (revocatoria del mandato) (Murillo-Castaño and Gómez-Segura 2005, 10). Article 270 provided for citizen oversight of public management and administration, Article 342 established participatory mechanisms in creating development plans, Article 79 created participatory mechanisms in developing plans concerning the environment, Article 78 allowed for participation in the production and commercialization of goods and services, Article 45 states that youth may participate in the planning of their educational curriculum and Article 68 gave the entire community the right to participate in local education, Article 57 awarded workers the right to participate in management, Article 49 gave communities the ability to participate in the oversight of health services, Article 40 specifically allows for women’s participation in decision-making, and Article 330 grants indigenous the ability to participate in natural resource management in their territories, to name a few.

The new constitution also marked the consolidation of a new market model, establishing the “constitutional basis on which to structure and consolidate the new economic model: openness, privatization, central bank autonomy, public utility regulatory commissions for electricity, gas, telecommunications, public services, and the like,” (Cepeda Ulloa 2003, 197). Presidents Virgilio Barco (1986-1990) and César Gaviria
(1990-1994) had already pursued political and economic decentralization, banned strikes, and charged labor leaders with terrorist acts whenever they engaged in social protest (see Pizarro and Bejarano 1994). Gaviria, in particular, filled his cabinet and ministries with “technopols” or “technocrats,” a “modernizing” elite of the “new right” that saw neoliberal economic policies as a matter of good “economics,” or science, rather than a political matter (Domínguez 1997; E. Silva 1996; Centeno and P. Silva 1998). Importantly, these policies were not based on the removal of state intervention in economics, but rather the very specific restructuring of economics as well as the re-crafting of social institutions: and profound alterations in relations between social classes with manifold implications for distribution of resources, power, and insecurity (Taylor 2006, 8). President Samper (1994-1998) continued this neoliberal turn, increasing privatization of state-owned companies, increasing foreign investment, maintaining tight monetary policy. Renegotiated oil contracts to increase foreign investment, increased foreign direct investment from 12 to 23% of the GDP (Avilés 2006, 396-397).

Decentralization was a primary component of this democratization and market liberalization. Like much of Latin America, Colombia was historically a highly centralized and unitary state, marked by a centralized 2-party system and a strong executive. The

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15 Combined with the systematic assassination of labor leaders by state death squads, the labor movement was permanently weakened (Avilés 2006, 391).

16 These technocrats were not a new group of educated outsiders in Colombia, but rather they came from the same political elite that had long dominated public policy in the first place. As education was sharply restricted to those who governed, “These are not two easily differentiated groups, intellectuals/state administrators. Since the period of colonial occupation the “distinguished men” of our political life have also been our “erudites.” The panorama today cannot be more telling: academics occupy vice-presidencies and ministries, ministers hold university job and public academic works, students and intellectuals work not just as consultants or advisors but as active and direct agent of state policy and NGO and multilateral entity programming… They have constructed an expert knowledge that is indistinguishable from the business of ‘constructing state and nation’ in contemporary Colombia,” (Serje 2005, 52-5). The weekly newspaper Semana described Gaviria’s cabinet as “defenders of democracy, first and foremost, with a civilian conception of society and a rejection of the use of violence to solve social problems… [they are] anti-communist, anti-populist, anti-third worldism and anti-statist,” (as quoted Avilés 2006, 388).
Chapter One: The State and Violence: Monopolies and Policies

The president appointed all department governors, who in turn appointed municipal mayors. Both exercised effective vetoes over popularly elected municipal councils and department assemblies. Intraparty competition led to undisciplined parties and clientelistic relations between legislators and provincial elites to further individual rather than party power.

Decentralization was advocated by political scientists as necessary for democratization, touting for improving the quality of democracy, reducing violence, enhancing participation, increasing representation, and building a participatory democracy (Willis, Garman and Haggard 1999, 29). Decentralization was also advocated by economists, imperial powers, and international lending institutes as a way to address fiscal instability and reduce the “accumulated costs of overcentralization” (Willis, Garman and Haggard 1999, 16) or the inefficiencies associated with the “centralist tradition” of Latin American politics (see Vélez 1980 and IDB 1994), by increasing accountability, transparency, and citizen participation.

Fiscal decentralization was first introduced by President Alfonso López Michelsen (1974-1978) in response to local fiscal problems, but was only passed by Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) when the “armed conflict” grew so severe as to necessitate state intervention (Willis, Garman and Haggard 1999, 31). Fiscally, the Constitution of 1991 grants both departments and municipalities taxing authority, the ability to issue their own debt instruments, and even borrow abroad. Decentralization changed the spatial structuring of the territory by effectively eliminating departments and replacing them with regions.17

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17 Seen as the “favorite son of the centralist and executive-centric (caudillista) Constitution of 1886,” (Fals Borda 2004, 47), departments were rendered unviable for their bureaucratic corruption, ignorance, and disrespect for regional cultural patterns, the Constitution of 1991 created a dual institutional system. The Constitution of 1991 created nine more departments plus the capital district of Bogotá, a nearly 50% increase from 22 to 32, it simultaneously undermined the entire system of departments by proposing the creation of “regions” that transcend departments, laying the legal foundation to directly unite municipalities on the basis of cultural proximity. At the same time the state created more departments, then, it stripped the departments of their functions, effectively eliminating them as the intermediary between the
Decentralization exacerbated pre-existing regional disparities, disproportionately benefitting Bogotá, (Escobar-Lemmon 2003, 687), resulting in the increase of wealth concentration in urban centers and wealthy provinces and an increase in the local share of total expenditures that far exceeds the increase in share of tax revenue (Willis, Garman and Haggard 1999, 13). In total, decentralization multiplied Bogota’s revenue by 2.3% between 1992-2000 (Rojas 2002, 19)

As with many the neoliberalization of economies in myriad countries, this automatic transfer of almost 50% of the ordinary national revenue to municipal budgets without the institutions necessary to administer such sums efficiently nor the mechanisms of institutional or civilian control to assure effectiveness and transparency resulted in “a great squandering of funds inevitably ensued, causing much of the fiscal deficit and irresponsible indebtedness of municipalities and departments,” (Cepeda Ulloa 2003, 207). Despite this corrupt and incompetent fiscal devastation due to decentralization, international lending agencies refused to be sensitive to context or admit their “science” was infallible. Instead, the World Bank suggested introducing legislation to deepen the process of decentralization while the IMF “suggested” a constitutional amendment furthering decentralization in the legislative package it wrote for Colombia in 1999. Local economists could only describe the policy mandates as “lack of insight” and “monumental naïveté” as “the islands of technocratic governability championed by the multilateral financing agencies have not helped democratic governability in Colombia, but rather weakened it,” (Cepeda Ulloa 2003, 207-208). This transfer of power to foreign educated (and identified) technocrats, foreign governments, and international institutions created a national state and the municipality, and fragmenting the institutional forms of bureaucratic state organization (Fals Borda 2004, 48). The emphasis on regions over departments has continued, pushed by President Uribe Vélez and the Mayor of Bogotá Lucho Garzón.
situation ripe for neoliberal clientelism or “politics of the belly,” the displacing sources of legitimacy and blurring of accountability through the invisibility of those who design and police policy to local populations, as well as their outsider and foreign status that relieves them from having to answer to the population as well (Mbembe 2001, 75-76). The program “Safe Municipalities and Departments” transferred a significant portion of security responsibilities to mayors and governors, encouraging them to form their own security plans and procure their own financing for security measures (Casas Dupuy 2005, 69). The program started in 2004 with funding from USAID and now boasts 1,098 municipalities and 32 departments that are “secured” by the additional education of their elected leaders: mayors, governors and the heads of police departments attend national training once a year (Acero 2005, 226),

Paramilitarism

Yet violence increased precisely because of this radical restructuring of both state and society through decentralization and participatory measures to buttress political democracy and market liberalism. As demobilized guerrilla groups and the political left became electorally successful and combat groups entered into negotiations with the government, established power hierarchies were threatened. “The central argument of this work indicates that the opening of negotiations with the guerrilla, political opening, and decentralization unleashed a series of political mechanisms that facilitated the rise and consolidation of paramilitary and self-defense groups as a reaction towards the redefinition of the regional power equilibriums and the potential changes in favor of the guerrilla and their allies and sympathizers,” (Romero 2003, 41). Notes positive correlation between rise
in number of para combatants and guerr negotiations (Romero 2003, 25). Yet the guerrilla expansion could have, and perhaps would have, been handled predominantly by the military, as usual, if it had not been for international pressure to adopt a democratic-neoliberal form of governance that projected the image, at least, of a regime concerned with human rights, democracy, and civil liberties. Civilian authorities weakened the institutional role of the armed forces in part in order to become more integrated in a neoliberal economic order, while tolerating paramilitary repression of political and military opposition to this integration,” (Avilés 2006, 385). As democratization put increased pressure on the military to reduce human rights violations and elite factions reticent to relinquish their privileged positions in society sought to curb popular political participation, the two factions both turned toward the arming of death squads in order to solve their problems. While the precise origin of paramilitary forces varies by context throughout the country, two consistent factors have been noted: 1. the initial participation of the Armed Forces 2. support from regional elites, either traditional or newly emerging (Romero 2003, 24).

The state’s death squads are widely mistaken for an illegal form of governance or legal groups - self-defense forces – who do not engage in illegal tactics. Yet paramilitaries necessitate the redrawing of state boundaries and the reconceptualization of notions of legality, as they are groups that have structural ties to the state, are born and exist legally while employing illegal and violent methods in order to govern.18 Private citizens were first

18 According to Mauricio Romero, paramilitaries are “armed groups organized to carry out political assassinations (limpieza) and military consolidation before taking control of an area, while “self-defense forces” (autodefensas) refers to groups organized to defend themselves from an aggressor and maintain control over a territory, without intentions to expand,” (Romero 2003, 38, my translation). In this work I use the terms interchangeably, reflecting the colloquial use of the terms and equality of outcome – primarily, extrajudicial killings, torture, and massacres – despite differences in stated goals.
called to assist the military in its struggle against the guerrilla in 1962 under US advice to President Guillermo León Valencia (1962-1966) to set up “irregular units” trained to “execute paramilitary, sabotage and/or terrorist activities against known communist proponents,” (as quoted, Dudley 2004, 96). The U.S. National Security Doctrine of the time focused on internal threats and openly used civilians used to fight battles and win the “war against communism.” Militarizing and training civilians in “paramilitary, sabotage, and/or terrorist activities was a standard and legal part of US-backed counter-insurgency. A 1965 presidential decree legalized this militarization of civil society, allowing for the organization of civilians into militias in order to help the military “maintain strong contact with the people” and “work with civilians” to achieve security.

General Landazabal, the Minister of Defense under President Belisario Betancur (1982-1985), himself trained by the U.S. under the National Security Doctrine, drew upon this 1965 decree in 1981, pushing through a law that made male peasant farmers “give service” on weekends, and forming “self-defense troops” to combat the guerrilla in 1981. In 1982, Landazabal gathered together representatives of the military, large cattle ranchers, businessmen, and powerful politicians in an official meeting in Puerto Boyacá, to pitch in money, support, and men to work as the extra-legal arm of the military in their fight against. Landazabal launched the XIV Brigade in Puerto Berrio, the place that would form the epicenter of paramilitary activity as the armed forces provided information, cover, training, and guns to the death squads. By 1983 Amnesty International reported more than 800 extrajudicial executions in the region. School enrollment in one town, Puerto Berrio, was down 70% as teachers and students fled the slaughter (Dudley 2004, 42-43).

19 In 1981, the FARC killed the prominent landowner Jesus Castano and his sons formed an ad-hoc paramilitary group and went on a killing rampage with machetes (Dudley 2004, 118).
By 1987 even government statistics showed the self-defense groups as responsible for more civilian deaths than all the guerrilla groups combined. The state’s response was the increased fragmentation of empty and meaningless institutions. A flurry of decrees was issued, commissions were established that never met, and press conferences were held about reports that were never written. A series of decrees in 1989 meant to deal with the “self-defense” problem failed to disband or even nominally make illegal the existing death squads. Rather, they only required presidential approval before making new ones (Decree 815 of 1989, Decree 1194 of 1989). A commission was established to study the “paramilitary” problem, but it never met; in any case, it was comprised of politicians who were directly involved in the death squads and openly supported the “private justice groups” (Decree 813 of 1989). A special police force dedicated to elimination of paramilitary groups was created. It explicitly adopted a pro-death squad policy and changed its mandate to anti-drug enforcement (Decree 814 of 1989; see Aviles 2006). A “Center for the Fight against Self-Defense Groups” was created, but a year later, it still had not met (Aviles 2006, 400).

Ironically, it is precisely at this point when the death squads found the greatest support in the state and expanded and consolidated control as the primary form of governance over massive swaths of territory, massacring thousands of people whose corpses are only today being recovered from the mass graves where they were dumped. An influx of cocaine processing and trafficking in Colombia as a result of U.S. intervention in Bolivia and Peru provided the necessary money as well as pretense for the parallel growth of the guerrilla and the death squads. According to one paramilitary leader, the death squads earned 70% of their overhead from the drug trade (Aranguren 2001). The U.S. and
Colombian governments both continued to support death squads, working particularly closely with Los Pepes (People Persecuted by Pablo Escobar) in their hunt for drug baron Pablo Escobar. Started by the Castaño brothers, Carlos and Fidel, Los Pepes massacred family and friends of Escobar while the US explicitly “prioritized the capture of Escobar over any competing concerns regarding state-paramilitary relationships,” (Avilés 2006, 395, see also Dudley 2004). Presidents Samper and Uribe (in his home region of Antioquia) supported the self-defense groups CONVIVIR (Rural Vigilance Associations which allow anyone to create armed groups to provide for his or her own security, in accordance with Decree 356 of 1994. The first President of CONVIVIR was the owner of a banana plantation that oversaw efforts to “pacify” his workers in the region of Urabá through massacres; President Samper thought it prudent to appoint him National Security Advisor anyway (Aviles 2006, 398).

The hundreds of local, disparate death squads, self-defense groups, and paramilitaries joined hands in 1997 under the AUC (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia). By 2000, the AUC, consisted of an estimated 8,000 men, well equipped, controlling strategic areas of the country (Romero 2003, 26).

Paramilitary groups were not created to engage in battle with other armed actors, but to murder civilians (and sometimes individual state actors) with impunity, carry out illegal assassinations. From 1990-1996, the death squads did not engage in a single “war” activity, be it battle, armed confrontation, or even sabotage, with either guerrilla groups or the state. That is, their target was neither the guerrilla nor the state, but the civilian population. In the same time period, they committed thousands of massacres with the assistance of the army. The most notorious cases involved an extermination camp in San
Onofre were the paramilitaries developed and perfected a technique of dismembering and cutting up their victims to such an extent as to make identification of the bodies impossible without forensic testing, burning an entire town and destroying its infrastructure after gouging out the eyes, cutting out the tongues, and castrating village members in El Aro, and crushing victims’ heads with rocks and sludge hammers in el Chengue massacre, and gang raping women and suffocating children with plastic bags in a mock “court” in the El Salado massacre. In the last decade alone (1996-2006), paramilitaries are known to have killed 14,677 people, and these are counting only those murders for which attribution can be certain; it does not include the thousands of bodies currently being exhumed from mass graves or disappeared. By the year 2000, they had started engaging in minimal combat with guerrilla groups, boasting a grand total of 58 battles against the stated enemy, all caused by in-group fighting. In comparison, the FARC engaged in 530 battles with the state or other armed groups in 2000, while even the smaller and weaker ELN had 407 battles. The Armed Forces engaged in 414 battles in the same year. Thus the death squads are the only armed

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20 In San Onofre, paramilitaries established an extermination camp where victims were taken to be tortured, killed, and buried in mass graves. In the massacre of El Aro (October 25-26 1997), soldiers maintained a perimeter around the town for two days, refusing to let villagers flee while paramilitaries tortured and killed at least 11 people including three children, cutting of the tongues, testicles, breasts, and eyes of victims. Thirty more were “disappeared,” and the town’s infrastructure destroyed, 47 of the 58 houses in town burned to the ground and even water pipes for potable water destroyed. In El Chengue massacre (January 17, 2007) paramilitaries killed 26 men by crushing their heads with stones and sludge hammers, including a 16-year old boy, his head severed from his body. Again, the area was sealed off by military forces who refused to protect the local population or even allow them to flee. The paramilitary forces had told town residents they were going to kill them months ahead of time, and town residents had reported threats and abuses to the police and military. Even on the very week and day of the massacre, local residents and police phoned the military with license plates numbers, whereabouts, and number of paramilitaries approaching their town, and the military did nothing. In El Salado, Bolivar massacre (February 18-19, 1999) paramilitaries set up a kangaroo court, “trying” local residents. The tortured, garrotted, stabbed, decapitated, and shot residents. A six-year old girl was tied to a pole and suffocated with a plastic bag, and at least one woman gang-raped. Pieces of at least thirty-six bodies were found immediately and another 30 were “disappeared.” “To them, it was like a big party,” a survivor told the New York Times. “They drank and danced and cheered as they butchered us like hogs,” (as quoted, Haugaard 200, 4). Again, the Navy prevented the Red Cross from entering until 30 minutes after the paramilitaries had left. In the massacre of Mapiripan (July 1997, 5 full days), 30 residents were killed over the span of five days, even while a local judge sent daily urgent messages describing scene to the military.
actor that systematically does not fight other armed actors, instead targeting civilian populations. Throughout the decade of the 1990s, the death squads were participants in merely 1% of any armed conflict (Gonzalez, Bolivar, Vasquez 2003, 103-104).

While not active agents in the “armed conflict,” paramilitaries were responsible for the steep rise in violent crime starting in the mid 1980s. As levels of violent crime shot from high in the mid-1980s to international records not seen even in war zones, scholars tried to classify the violence as social, political, or economic (Moser 1999; Bergquist, Peñaranda, and Sanchez 1992). Explanations for the origins of the violence were offered, such as political exclusion, the Marxist guerrillas, the armed conflict (UNDP 2003; González, Bolívar, Vásquez 2002), the drug trade (Yashar forthcoming), and poverty (Moser and McIlwaine 2004). However, drugs, poverty, and political exclusion do not account for the violence. Other countries have greater poverty without such violence.

While Colombia is the source of an estimate 80% of the world’s cocaine and home to the oldest armed Marxist guerrilla insurgency in the hemisphere, neither the drug trade nor the “armed conflict” are responsible for the violence. From May 1989 to June 1990, precisely when drug-related violence was at its highest in Colombia and narco-terrorists were conducting a bombing campaign in Bogotá to protest extradition, there were only 227 total drug-related fatalities out of 2,969 politically motivated murders outside of combat, less than one-tenth of all political violence. Fall even further: from January 1991 to May 1992, drug related deaths represented only .18% of all violent deaths (Giraldo 1996, 20).

Similarly, battle between the guerrilla and the state accrued only 6,040 victims between 1988 and 1992, including soldiers, guerrilla, and civilians caught in the crossfire. This accounted for only 4.7% of total violent deaths and less than a third – 30.5% of politically
motivated killings (Giraldo 1996, 21). Throughout the decade, the paramilitaries were responsible for approximately 70% of all “political” assassinations and 2-3 times as many forced displacements as the guerrilla (Avilés 2006, 384; 403), using both massacres and displacement as a strategy of further consolidate land ownership (Civico 2006).

The paramilitaries’ complicated relation to the state requires a reconceptualization of the state and its boundaries. Created by and reliant upon the state, the death squads do not systematically fight the military or the state. Yet they do provide a forceful example of different branches of the state working against one another. The state is not a coherent actors or unitary figure, and its branches often violently attack one another. For example, paramilitaries hunted down and killed so many judges in the early 1990s, that they resorted to hooded trials without juries in order to protect the identity of the jurists. Similarly, some of the principle targets of paramilitary violence were elected officials from any party that was not part of the traditional Liberal-Conservative oligarchy, that is, any “leftist” party.

Completely overrun by paramilitaries, the military even attacks other state armed forces like the police. In one trivial case, the military carried out a raid in a small town. People complained to the local police who confronted the army official in charge. The army official showed disrespect for police’s higher status. In the fight that ensued, the army official physically attacked the police officer. Yet the Defense Minister, a strong supporter of the paramilitaries, made the police officer retire while nothing happened to the army official, despite the fact that it was he who was clearly in the wrong (Casas Dupuy 2005, 68). In a more serious clash, a military squadron massacred 10 police officers and one civilian in the infamous Jamundí massacre.
After democratization, paramilitaries replaced military as primary human rights abusers (CCJ 2004). The death squads are responsible for the vast majority of human rights abuses ranging from rapes to massacres to forced displacements. The death squads were formed, trained, armed, and aided and abetted with information and technology by the state so that they would perform the dirty work historically undertaken by the state military in order to appease domestic and international pressure to portray an image of a democratizing state marked by the use of human rights discourse, an increased respect for civil rights, and fewer arbitrary detentions, tortures, and deaths at the hands of the military. Paramilitaries combated armed insurgency as well as legal political opposition to neoliberalism. Even state employees, the chief national prosecutor in 1986 reported that army officials used death squads as “armed fronts, as hired killers who could do unofficially what was not permitted officially,” (Pearce 1990). This optic illusion, making illegal violence seem external to the state, was highly successful, as the death squads replaced the armed forces as the leading source of human rights violations in the early 1990s. By the end of the 1990s, there was a general consensus that the violence was not a product of the armed conflict, but “generalized” (Bergquist, Peñaranda, and Sanchez 2001), an intentional tactic of governance by the state. The state specifically chose paramilitary death squads as the way to reinforce the status-quo, protect elite interests, and physically eliminate leftist guerrillas and their supporters because they could re-establish their desired authority while improving the military’s human rights record by skewing the origins of the

21 The state needed to distance itself from a rather dirty military past during which the military committed frequent forced disappearances and torture. For example, President Turbay-Ayala (1978-1982) called a state of siege and in 1980 over 8,000 Colombians were detained for “political reasons” and tried in military courts (Avilés 2006, 386).
violence and blurring the lines of causality and culpability (Giraldo 1996; Gamboa 2001; Taussig 1997, 2003.)

Like the widely-criticized DMZ offered guerrilla by Pastrana, President Uribe offered all paramilitaries a safe zone on a beautiful ranch at Santa Fe de Ralito, in 2001 where they could congregate to negotiate a peace process with the government with no fears of arrest. AUC signs ceasefire in December 2002, continued to operate in zones of influence, committing crimes from the area, ordering assassinations, brokering drug deals, and even leave in order to participate in criminal events. The government signed the “peace accord” of Santa Fe de Ralito with the AUC on July 15, 2003 and formal “peace process” began. The “Peace and Justice Law” (Law 975) was passed by a Congress dominated by the president’s party in June 2005, legalizing the process and offering very attractive incentives to militants to “demobilize.” The law essentially gave everything the paramilitaries wanted, ensuring they did not have to confess their crimes, disclose information about how their groups operate, or turn over illegally acquired wealth. Moreover, the law granted widespread impunity to all paramilitaries except those convicted of crimes against humanity and limited the latter’s jail term to two years in “agricultural colonies.” There were numerous legal challenges to this law by victims, and in July 2007, the Supreme Court Ruled key aspects of the Justice and Peace Law unconstitutional. The Uribe government went ahead and implemented it by decree in 2007 (Decree 3391 2007).

By the end of 2006, the government claimed that 32,000 paramilitaries have demobilized. Of them, 29,000 filled out a short survey consisting of their role in the death squads. According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 90% of these surveys “offered no significant information on illegal acts or crimes committed by the
paramilitary units to which they belonged,” (as quoted Haugaard 2008, 5). Afterwards, they were given state identity cards (*cédulas*) and military service records – whether or not they had served – and registered for the “reincorporation” package, including state-provided food and housing, education, government subsidies or paychecks for two years free of work, and state health benefits including psychological counseling. These benefits had absolutely no strings attached to them, like disarming, signing confessions or truth statements, reparations, apologies, or even avoiding criminal conduct in the future. Only 3,127 paramilitary members who were guilty of so many crimes against humanity that they feared later discovery, prosecution, and possible extradition to the United States, applied for the “reduced” sentences by giving voluntary depositions (*versiones libres*) or statements of facts on their illegal activities. But over the course of four years, the justice system only managed to start depositions on 1,057 of the assassins, 941 of which were closed, because the paramilitaries withdrew from the process, as the inefficiency of the justice system offered a probable way to escape even eight years in jail (Haugaard 2008).

The top commanders who gave their voluntary testimonies before being extradited unexpectedly to the United States justified their crimes as necessary, claimed to not remember the details of their crimes, declared themselves poppers and unable to restitute their amassed wealth, and displayed the extent of their power and impunity by mobilizing supporters to turn the depositions into celebrations in their honor, throwing confetti,

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22 The state distributed 862 identity cards and 420 military service records. 200 more were being processed. The DAS awarded 639 certificates
23 Sentences were capped at eight years and the time the paramilitaries spent on protected farms while they negotiated the agreement was to be deducted.
dancing to music, and threatening victims, much as they did during the massacres they committed.\textsuperscript{24}

Paramilitary wealth, political power, and criminal networks were left intact upon their “demobilization” (Avilés 2006, 406). In reality, their power structures were not broken and few turned from a life of crime and violence. Instead, the AUC was fragmented into 22 smaller units consisting of 3,000-9,000 members that have taken over drug trade and extortion rackets, many under the name of Aguilas Negras. From the start of the ceasefire in December 2002 until June 3, 2007, paramilitaries committed 3,530 murders or disappearances outside of combat. Guerrilla groups, who were not demobilized and were in active combat, killed 1,805 civilians during same period. In essence, demobilized paramilitaries continue to kill nearly twice as many civilians as guerrilla still in combat (Haugaard 2008). They still threaten unions, human rights activists, community leaders, and paramilitary victims seeking restitution, and they still receive support from Colombian soldiers and police. By September 2007, 15 paramilitary victims had been murdered and 200 more threatened by demobilized paramilitary groups.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{24} In their testimonies (versions libres) Jorge 40 opened with lengthy explanation of why self-defense groups were necessary due to the guerrilla threat and peasant marches. Victims, corralled in another room after travelling long distances to find answers to disappeared loved ones, were not even allowed to ask questions. They testimony was suspended after they became “desperate” and protested. Roman Isaza claimed to have first amnesia then Alzheimers, and asked his victims to help him remember his crimes. Macaco Carlos Mario Jimenez claimed that he and his men were possessed by spirits “in pain” that drove them to kill. Freddy Rendón (El Aleman) bussed in supporters and sympathizers who threw flowers, provided musicians and dancers and confetti. Rendón appeared at a 6\textsuperscript{th} floor window, saluted his “fans” and shook his hips to the music below.

\textsuperscript{25} According to the state CNRR (National reparation and reconciliation commission), at least 15 victims seeking justice have been killed by September 2007 and another 200 have been threatened. Paramilitaries have an extermination list with 26 victim names on it. Yolanda Izquierdo, a displaced leader demanding her land to be returned to her, was murdered on January 31, 2007 after testifying in Salvatore Mancuso’s hearing. She had previously gone weeping from one government agency to another, demanding protection for death threats she had been receiving for weeks; She went to the Attorney General’s office, the Ombudsman’s office, the DAS intelligence agency, the Inspector General’s office, and the local attorney general, who told her he couldn’t do anything, and to “come back on Friday.” Carmen Cecilia Santana Romana (February 7, 2007) had testified in front of the National reparation and reconciliation commission, demanding reparation for the killing of her husband and making human rights claims for the union Sinatrainagro. She was killed in front of her house and three kids, ages 7, 9, and 14. Judith Vergara Correa
Meanwhile, the “parapolitical” scandal unfolded. One third of Congress was thought to have worked directly with paramilitaries, hiring, financing, or otherwise supporting them. Sixty-three politicians were under active investigation, charged or convicted of paramilitary collaboration. Other unelected top officials appointed by President Uribe were similarly systematically paramilitaries, like Jorge Noguera, the head of the nation’s top intelligence agency (DAS), who was forced to resign when his own paramilitary activity was exposed and investigated. With overwhelming public support, indifference, or placid tolerance of paramilitarism, the stability of the government in the face of this media “scandal” illustrates the extent of the success of using death squads as a tool of governance. “In the sixteen years after the Colombian government officially prohibited the development of paramilitary groups by the military in 1989, such groups simply grew in size and influence… Military officers were promoted in spite of their well-known connections to paramilitary organizations. The ‘demobilization’ law actually failed to demobilize the paramilitary groups. The privatization of repression was a necessary response to the international legitimacy accorded to democratic practices and human rights, which excluded a resort to overt state repression,” (Avilés 2006, 407-8).

State Solution Two: State Fragmentation and Citizen Education

While paramilitarism has been successful on its own of providing security for the few that benefit from the death squads, it is actually part of a larger political project. Democratization and neoliberalism did not abet the violence, but actually lead to the

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adviser to a victims group, Madres de la Candelaria, was similarly murdered on April 23, 2007. The state only produced a witness protection plan in 2008 upon court order. Victims associations have been broken into and registries of victims stolen, and the government has failed to investigate or even denounce these crimes.
conditions in which elites could privatize violence for their own benefit rather than providing for security publicly. They also created the conditions for the deep-seeded restructuring of society and redefinition of the state, its boundaries, and its services and activities. This state and citizen construction has taken place through two primary techniques of governance. First the state has rapidly proliferated, creating new institutions, symbols, laws, and decrees such that it inundates physical and symbolic space, making its presence seen and felt everywhere. Second, it has embarked on an educational campaign to teach its citizens to display “solidarity” by assuming the task of their own security and welfare provision, participate as workers in a neoliberal market that relies on pre-capitalist employer-employee relations, and be “tolerant” and non-violent while waiting for incompetent, disinterested, or privatized state services.

Within this new model of governance, two new, complementary security policies have emerged: “democratic security” and “citizen culture.” Democratic security and citizen culture are not antagonistic policies, as often described, but rather complementary tools of governance. Both rely on state fragmentation and citizen education in order to make citizen responsible for their own security provision, collapse boundaries between state and society by incorporating citizens into the state as collaborators, and generally further the democratic-neoliberal project, of which paramilitarism is but one facet. Democratic security policy blurs the boundary between state and society in rural areas by militarizing civil society, incorporating common citizens into the military or police infrastructure through myriad programs including peasant soldiers, military informants and collaborators, and community police, to name a few. In urban areas, the state again eliminates boundaries between state and society though “citizen culture,” a policy similarly designed to make
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citizens responsible for their own security by teaching them to be more “tolerant” and law-abiding.

“Democratic security” is the national security policy proposed by the Uribe government (2002-current) that proposes bringing security to urban centers by militarizing all of rural society through the growth and promotion of paramilitary/self-defense groups, networks of “civil” police and civilian military informants, and rural soldiers. “Democratic security” imagines the capital city of Bogotá as the physical, political, and economic center of the country, the exemplar site of good governance, state presence, security, and democracy from which the state “extends” its presence to outlying rural areas. It also imagines the City-State as under violent attack by backwards, uncontrollable, and unruly rural territories (Hunt 2006). Thus “democratic security” pretends to increase security in urban areas, particularly Bogotá, the besieged City-State, as a side-effect of “strengthening” the state’s presence and decreasing violence in rural areas. The state’s primary mechanism for increasing its presence in rural areas and decreasing violence has been militarily defeating all opposition (ie: guerillas) by incorporating all rural citizens into the military structure of the state through paramilitary or self-defense groups.26 This is part of what Margarita Serge (2005, 246) describes as the “enclave policy,” the interventions into the frontier in attempts to develop the outlying regions economically and culturally,

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26 Not only has democratic security blurred lines between state and society, but it has also collapsed important distinctions among state institutions. Under President Uribe, all other branches of the government have been militarized. The police’s function, in particular, has been so collapsed or eclipsed with military objectives that even committees established by Uribe recommend police reform, suggesting the demilitarization of police. “Democratic security policy privileges the state’s security in its crusade against subversion and it requires a police with a military profile,” (Casas Dupuy 2005, 60). These recommendations were not followed, and other scholars, and under democratic security the Uribe administration continues linking national and domestic issues, police and military matters, democratic security and citizen culture. Even claims to “protect the citizenry and the national infrastructure” and “cooperate for the security of all” are directly connected to struggle against “subversives” in terms of protection from displacement and against terrorism, as witnessed through informants network, financial compensation for informing on neighbors, “public diplomacy efforts,” etc... (Casas Dupuy 2005, 63).
such that violence, corruption, terror, and prostitution are exported to the regions, where they are institutionalized in “tolerance zones” where the violence is regulated, allowing the state to claim they are barbaric and violent (Serge 2005, 245).

The first technology of governance used to eclipse rural civil society with the state via the military was the fragmentation of military programs, policies, and personnel. The Uribe government oversaw a massive transfer of wealth to the security sector, both public and private, publicly vowing to cut other necessary services in order to prioritize security (DSDP 40). With this money it created new mobile brigades, high-altitude battalions, rural soldier platoons who perform their military service in their hometowns, special anti-terrorist unit, and 62 mobile carabinero police squads to increase patrols in rural areas. The government lowered the minimum age and educational requirements to be an auxiliary police, increased the police force with 10,000 new patrols and 10,000 regular auxiliaries, enlarged Local Security Fronts (FLS), created a “Civic Police” Force, and extended coverage of the National Police to all municipalities. It created local security councils and a National Defense and Security Council, in addition to a Joint Intelligence Committee and regional intelligence committees to coordinate state intelligence (DSDP 34). It established two “rehabilitation and consolidation zones” that continued functioning even after they were declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court. Hundreds of new plans were drafted or issued, including a Border Security Plan, a “protection of persons at risk” program that wrote the “risk-evaluation and regulations” in a special Risk-Evaluation Committee. An Operational Committee for the Laying Down of Arms was convened to oversee demobilization as part of the newly formed Demobilization and Reintegration Program. A Highway Strategic Information Center, Orad Monitoring System, Plan Meteor,
Mobile Judiciary Unites, and Control Systems at Toll Booths, Air Monitoring, Road Security Centers, Road Guards, and the travel program Experience Colombia, Travel Colombia (Vive Colombia: Viaja por ella) were all created to increase highway security. “Justice Houses” and “Coexistence Centers” were built around the country to help citizens solve their own judicial problems in areas where the state was not present to do so.

The state recognized that the success of these programs that transfer the responsibility of security and justice to the population at large by eclipsing civil society by the state rely upon the active participation of civilians. Dem security espoused three pillars: 1. The protection of citizen rights 2. The protection of democratic values, plurality, and institutions 3. “The solidarity and co-operation of all citizens in defense of democratic values… the proper functioning of institutions also requires the active participation, solidarity and commitment of the citizen,” (DSDP 13). “Solidarity” thus came to stand in for the militarization of civil society by the participation of common citizens in questions of internal security. According to the Democratic Security Defense Policy, “The key concept here is solidarity. Solidarity between citizens and solidarity with the security forces. This principle, a pillar of our constitution, is essential for peaceful coexistence, for the successful integration of Colombian society,” (DSDP 6).

The state explicitly acknowledges this transfer of responsibility, arguing that it cannot guarantee security itself if its citizens belong to a culture of violence; instead, citizens must be active in their own security provision and educate themselves into a culture of peace and citizenship. “Guaranteeing the security of all Colombians is the responsibility not just of the Ministry of Defense, the Armed Forces and the National Police, but also of the entire Colombian State and of all of society,” (DSDP 8). “We
Colombians all have not only the right, but also the duty to participate actively in the strengthening of our democracy, to support our institutions, to back the efforts of our security forces and to show solidarity with the victims of forced displacement, terrorism and violence in general. A strong democracy and a nation built on citizen solidarity are the best guarantee of our rights,” (DSDP 10). The democratic security policy argues that the state can only protect the rights of Colombians and strengthen the rule of law and the authority of democratic institutions with the support of the citizens, as “democratic authority” can only be improved with “the active participation of the citizen in matters of common interest,” (DSDP 12). “Security is… the protection of the citizen and democracy by the State with the solidarity and the co-operation of the whole of society,” (DSDP 13). Even the protection of human rights is not the state’s responsibility, but requires the active participation of citizens: “Just as the realization of human rights requires the active participation of the citizens, so the free exercise of political and civil rights, which are the basis of human rights, require citizen participation,” (DSDP 16). Displacement, in particular, is described as a phenomenon that can be best treated through solidarity, thus a Social Solidarity Network was created by the state to combat displacement and assist IDPs in receiving benefits.

Thus rather than narrowly defining democratic security as the state provision of security by militarily defeating the enemy (which is narrowly defined as the guerrilla) as is often thought, democratic security actually rests on a much broader understanding of “solidarity” and the incorporation of citizens into the state through expanded opportunities for engagement (state fragmentation) and citizen education and participation out of a feeling of “solidarity.” “Solidarity” thus takes center stage in the policy, appearing
repetitively in italics – the only word to appear this way. “The Government will encourage the voluntary and patriotic cooperation of Colombian citizens in performing their constitutional duties and, in particular, in demonstrating the solidarity demanded by the modern social democratic State, to help prevent crime and terrorism, by providing information relating to the illegal armed groups. The Government will also establish regional security committees, which will enlist the support of civil society… citizen participation is more effective than coercive measures to contain crime. If 44 million Colombians support and feel support by the State, terrorism can be defeated,” (DSDP 57, italics in original). “Ultimate responsibility for upholding the rights and freedoms of the citizen lies with the State, in accordance with its constitutional obligations. However, security is also the result of a collective effort by the citizens: it is the responsibility of all. Active citizen participation, co-operation in the administration of justice and support for the authorities all play a major part in the strengthening of the justice system and democracy and, consequently, in the strengthening of the rule of law. These are constitutional duties which every citizen must strive to fulfill; but above all, citizen cooperation is based on the principle of solidarity which forms the basis of a social and democratic State,” (DSDP 17, emphasis in original). “The Government will keep the public fully informed of developments in all areas relating to the Defence and Dem Sec policy in order to boost confidence and encourage citizen co-operation and solidarity,” (DSDP 60, italics in original). Displacement, as well, “requires urgent action on the part of the State and solidarity on the part of society,” (DSDP 48, italics in original).

The state seeks to educate citizens into feelings of solidarity, increase citizen participation, and bring civil society under the fold of the state through myriad citizen
“networks.” “Active citizen co-operation, based on the common values of respect for the dignity of the people and the rejection of violence… success [in the fight against terrorism] does not depend on international co-operation and co-ordination alone: the solidarity of the citizens and their co-operation with the authorities is a key factor, without which it will be impossible to defeat the terrorists. The authorities will develop prevention programs, extending the links between the Armed Forces and the National Police and the private sector, the private security companies, public business, and society in general, in order to establish a warning network which will assure the protection of the population and the country’s infrastructure,” (DSDP 49). “A network of citizens in both urban and rural areas, in accordance with the principle of solidarity and the duty to contribute to common security, will provide the authorities with information which will help in the prevention of crime and the pursuit of criminals. They will also participate in programs aimed at promoting a culture of security,” (57-58). Unpaid citizen volunteer networks are to protect intermunicipal roads, while Citizen Cooperation Networks “with the appropriate communications equipment, will exercise their civic duties and express their solidarity by assisting the authorities in the provision of information on any irregularities which occur on the roads,” (DSDP 57). Locally, citizen cooperation networks, Local Security Fronts (Frentes Locales de Seguridad, FLS) are supposed to enhance the network of Civic Police “to prevent terrorism by building citizen co-operation networks working more closely with the local community, companies, businesses and other state institutions,” (DSDP 39).

Democratic security works within the framework of decentralization as well as citizen participation. It specifically devolves the power and responsibility of security to municipalities, stipulating the actions they must take in order to ensure security. “The local
authorities and the national Police will draw up security plans to encourage peaceful coexistence, reduce crime and prevent the spread of the problems of the countryside into urban areas. The security situation of the majority of cities calls for a response tailored to their problems; but the principles behind the six courses of action of the DSDP remain just as relevant. In particular, it is essential that the local authorities [work] together with the national authorities… The mayors and local authorities have the responsibility of formulating security policies which integrate the efforts of the Armed Forces and the National Police with those of other government agencies, as well as contributing to the financing of security schemes,” (DSDP 43). Democratic security emphasizes that it is essential that local and national security policies work together “to encourage the participation and co-operation of each and every citizen in the achievement and maintenance of security,” (DSDP 44). In this sense, Bogotá is held up as an exemplar, the model for the rest of the country: “Without a firm commitment from the local authorities it is not possible to guarantee citizen security. The case of Bogotá shows that perseverance in the formulation and execution of security policies and targets, together with active citizen participation through mechanisms such as the Local Security Fronts, produces results,” (DSDP 44).

Within the global state of war, these technologies of empowerment and privatization have turned into paramilitary death squads. War is constitutive and productive, shaping society as a form of biopower. “The constant and coordinated application of violence, in other words, becomes the necessary condition for the functioning of discipline and control. In order for war to occupy this fundamental social and political role, war must be able to accomplish a constituent or regulative function: war
must become both a procedural activity and an ordering, regulative activity that creates and maintains social hierarchies, a form of biopower aimed at the promotion and regulation of social life,” (Hardt and Negri 2004, 21). Democratic Security provides a troubling example of the way in which the “global state of war” creates a situation in which war becomes the rule rather than the exception and a way of life instead of a tactic of engagement with another sovereign power, conflating police and military, and fighting abstract concepts or ideas such as drugs, terror, as “communism” (Hardt and Negri 2004). It also provides a cogent illustration of the shortcoming of the “war makes states” theorem. As noted by Achille Mbembe, war in the postcolony, unlike in Western Europe, does not lead to the development of the state apparatus, the monopolization of force, or centralization of power, but rather creates new forms of domination, reconfiguring the state and forcing authority to be renegotiated given the changing relations between individuals and communities (Mbembe 2001, 88-9). Political scientists are in dire need to understand better this development and lineage, not only to understand this current phenomena, but also to prevent such slippage in the future.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued for a reconceptualization of the Colombian state that takes into account its strengths and its weaknesses, its contradictory embrace of democratization at the same time it deployed death squads, and the way in which it both threatens and protects citizens unequally. I have argued that the state itself is responsible for the violence in Colombia, and that this violence has functioned to shore up the power of a small minority while jeopardizing the livelihood, wellbeing, and life of the majority,
creating a differentiated citizenship based on class and rural/urban geography. Indeed, studies have shown that it is not the absence, but rather the presence of the state that is correlated with violence, creating a “perverse” effect by increasing violence where most present in terms of public functionaries and dollars per inhabitant spent (Llorente et al 2001). Yet the state was neither impervious to the violence, nor incapable of controlling it. Rather, like all states, it was selective, uneven, and inconsistent in the priority it gave to providing security in different regions of the country and for different citizens. Democratic security and citizen culture seek to protect the city from violence understood as spilling over from rural areas, illustrating spatially differentiated forms of sovereignty and rule (Ong 1999, 2006).

I have also argued that the state has proposed two solutions to the violence: 1. democratic-neoliberalism 2. democratic security and citizen culture. I have illustrated how democratization-liberalization, which began in the late 1980s and culminated in the Constitution of 1991, did not abate the violence, but rather created a context in which the second policy proposal to reduce violent crime – democratic security and citizen culture – was thinkable and possible. I illustrate how democratic security, like citizen culture, operates through state fragmentation and citizen education to transfer the responsibility for security provisions onto citizens themselves. This case illustrates the way in which social capital, trust, and solidarity are used by the state as means to interfere in, rather than strengthen, civil society.

This study also necessitates the reconceptualization of states as ruling both violently and non-violently, legally and illegally, equally and unequally. Colombia is not a stateless society, but rather one ruled by private indirect government (Mbembe 2001).
Paramilitaries are a private form of governance that share the ideological underpinnings of democratic security and citizen culture which similarly seek to transfer the responsibility for security provision onto citizens by obscuring the division between state/non-state, il/legal, non/violent. Complicating the Foucaultian understanding of the transition from coercion to discipline under modern governance, paramilitary groups successfully skew the origins of violence, blurring lines of causality and culpability as a tactic of war (Giraldo 1996). This blurring is essential to governance under democratic-neoliberalism and the global state of war: “While confronting unconventional and low-intensity conflicts, which occupy a gray zone between war and peace, these military analysts propose a “gray” strategy that mixes military and civilian components,” (Hardt and Negri 2004. 53).

In the remainder of this study, I explore the second half, and less-studied correlate of democratic-security: citizen culture. In the following chapter I will present the basic tenets of citizen culture and illustrate the way in which it shares the same technologies of governance – state fragmentation and citizen education – with the democratic security. In the subsequent chapters, I will explore individual aspects of citizen culture.
“In the last decade, Bogotá has experienced an urban revolution that has turned it into a global example. (Decenas de) [M]issions from each continent visit Bogotá in order to know first hand how the capital of a country with such an acute internal conflict could transform itself (cambiar la cara) in such little time. In effect, the reduction of insecurity, illustrated by a nearly 63% reduction in crime statistics, is not just due to the increase in the police force. It is the result of the continuous investment in infrastructure, campaigns to value life and respect legality, and social assistance programs in terms of food, health, and education for the poorest sectors of the city, like “Bogotá without Hunger,” lead directly by the Mayor of the city (Alcalde 2005, 8).

“The basic intention was to locate problems of security in the framework of problems of coexistence and to favor understanding these problems of coexistence as an issue of congruence between juridical, moral, and cultural regulations,” (Mockus 2001, 9).

Introduction:

While Colombia has been scarred by a civil war for over half a century, most of the violence and fighting has been confined to the rural countryside. Even as the import of other urban centers to the national project fell away and they became ravaged by violence, Bogotá has consistently been one of the safest places in the country. Except for the Bogotazo – the brief period of urban violence following the assassination of populist presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948 – Bogotá has escaped relatively unscathed from the country’s bloodshed. By the late 1980s, however, the rise of the drug cartels, the corresponding influx of narco-dollars into the economy, the consolidation of the paramilitaries, the expansion of the guerrillas, and the rise of the electoral left that threatened traditional power structures through democracy itself, had turned Bogotá into a
battleground. The official homicide rate in the city reached 56 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1991 and climbed to 80 in 1993, surpassing the national average for the first time (see Appendix 1). Los Pepes – a ring of drug traffickers lead by Pablo Escobar – executed a bombing campaign in the city in order to intimidate the government into tabling efforts to extradite those involved in the drug trade to the United States for trial and incarceration. Hundreds of high-profile kidnappings of political and economic elite by guerrilla groups dominated the news, while the members of the Patriotic Union were being hunted down in the streets by military death squads. So many murders occurred without investigation or determination of motive, much less guilt, that this “everyday” violence and street crime took on spectacular dimensions and blurred fluidly and flawlessly with “political” and “economic” crime. Levels of urban fear soared as people re-arranged their lives to cope with the violent death of loved ones and avoid future victimization.

While these levels of violence paled in comparison to the massacres in rural hamlets or the nearly 1,000/100,000 homicide rate in Medellín, it was enough to fundamentally re-orient people’s conception of the city. Security became the number one issue of concern in the capital city. Already two years after the implementation of the new constitution, it was clear to all that democratization had not reduced violence; instead, violence had continued to rise both nationally and in Bogotá. Yet the Constitution had provided the framework for a new, novel crime reduction policy by decentralizing the responsibility for crime reduction to local municipalities. Working within the larger national rubric of decentralization and citizen participation, the city administration implemented a novel program seeking to reduce violence and increase personal security by
inculcating a “culture of citizenship” in its inhabitants. The state explicitly renounced its ability to provide security for its inhabitants, and instead taught citizens to assume responsibility for their own security. The state employed two primary technologies of governance in order to redefine this relationship between state and society. First, the state created hundreds of new institutions, departments, policies, plans, documents, budgets, categories, statistics, programs, and symbols that inundated public space both symbolically and discursively, in order to relinquish the state’s *imagined* monopoly over violence and transfer the responsibility of security provision onto civilians themselves while legitimizing the state by making it seem active and present. Second, it encouraged citizens to renounce their “culture of violence” by educating them into a culture of citizenship in which citizens provide for their own security through self-regulation. The policy is exemplary in its redefinition of the relation between states, security, and citizenship, its direct attempt to manipulate political culture, and its stunning success. The employment of citizen culture in order to reduce crime and increase security in Bogotá has been so successful, in fact, that after just ten years, the program was attributed by international observers, city officials, scholars, and citizens alike with drastic reductions in violent and exported around the world as a crime reduction policy.

In this chapter, I analyze the origin, content, and deployment of citizen culture. I argue that citizen culture has fundamentally reconceptualized the state, radically altering the relationship between state and society by transferring responsibility for security

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Mockus and state documents of the time use interchangeably “cultura ciudadana” and “cultura de ciudadanía.” I use the translations “citizen culture,” “citizenship culture,” and “culture of citizenship” interchangeably throughout. I do not use the term “civic culture,” as some have chosen to translate “cultura ciudadana,” as this term has a very particular referent in English, one the deployment of the phrase and concept in Spanish do not reflect, as I will discuss. In short, citizen culture does not eliminate the use of force or coercion, as civic culture implies, and moreover, is used as a point of state intervention into civil society rather than a tool for civil society building.
provision from the state to ordinary citizens. In the first section, I will look at the underpinnings of citizen culture in a theory of cultural decay. The state openly relinquishes responsibility for security provision by asserting that insecurity stems from a culture of violence that can only be changed by changing political culture through citizen education. In the second section I discuss the way in which the state employs institutional and symbolic fragmentation in order to inundate public space with highly visible and recognizable signs, symbols, slogans, and statistics. In the third section, I critically engage the state’s assertions that citizen culture has lowered violent crime through education, illustrating both the coercive elements of the program and the overt manipulation of statistics and concepts that have lead to the pathologization of non-violent and legal behaviors, while leaving the political roots of the violence untouched. Finally, I explore the way in which the program has been defined as successful and used as a model crime reduction policy in other cities both nationally and internationally.

**Manipulating Political Culture: Educating Citizens Out of Violence and into Coexistence**

Articles 1 and 2 of the 1991 Constitution lay the foundation for thinking about security as a question of citizen comportment. Article Two, for example, states that, “Serving the community, promoting general prosperity and guaranteeing the effectiveness of the principles, rights, and duties consecrated in the Constitution; facilitating the participation of all in the decisions that affect them and in the economic, political, administrative, and cultural life of the nation; and defending national independence, maintaining territorial integrity, and ensuring pacific coexistence and the existence of a justice system are essential goals of the state,” (emphasis added). These articles establish a
conceptual as well as legal framework for defining security as a matter of citizens getting along and being respectful to one another, while creating a bifurcation between citizen security and national security. National security was relegated to military affair in defeating the guerrilla. As the guerrilla and the “armed conflict” between the guerrilla and the state were, and continue to be, responsible for less than 10% of violent deaths, “human security” through citizen culture allowed the state to address the rest of the more “generalized” violence while exempting itself from citizen oversight in its military dealings with the guerrilla. Citizen security, as opposed to national security, “refers to a democratic, citizen order that eliminates the threat of violence in the population and permits safe and pacific coexistence,” (Acero 2005, 175-176).

President Samper launched the Presidential Program for Citizen Coexistence and Security in August 1995. It consisted of four primary strategies: 1. strengthening and modernizing the police force 2. decentralizing security 3. updating and improving legal norms 4. creating citizens who provided for their own security by participating in citizen culture. Samper’s development plan, “The Social Leap Forward” was based on the idea of a “new citizen” who peacefully resolved conflicts through “active citizen participation in the planning of security and police control,” (as quoted, Rivas Gamboa 2005, 112). President Pastrana (1998-2002) continued in this line of action, developing the “National Strategy for Citizen Coexistence and Security, positing citizen’s security concerns as a matter of their ability to get on well together (Rivas Gamboa 2005, 113). President Uribe (2002-2006; 2006-2010) furthered this reallocation of responsibility for security, calling upon citizens to not only get on together, but also to collaborate on national security, thus further blurring the lines between state and society. While these three presidents all
emphasize citizen participation in crime prevention and justice provision, each adopted their own discourse and programs, cluttering discursive as well as institutional space with a proliferation of state programming. Samper’s model of more participatory, tolerant, respectful, and peaceful “new citizens” overlapped and coexisted with Pastrana’s “good citizen” who knew her rights and duties, was capable of resolving conflict peacefully, and disposed to collaborate with the police, which existed alongside Uribe’s “solidary citizens” who actively collaborate and participate in community policing, justice, and crime prevention (Rivas Gamboa 2005, 115).

Despite this larger national context creating a framework for thinking of security as a question of citizen coexistence, it was Antanas Mockus who made “culture of citizenship” a household phrase around the nation during his campaign for mayor of Bogotá in 1993-1994. Mockus was elected into office over Enrique Peñalosa in January 1995 on a security platform, promising to reduce violence in the city by inculcating a culture of citizenship. In his development plan, Mockus defined cultura ciudadana as “the combination of customs, actions, and minimally shared rules that generate a feeling of belonging, facilitate urban coexistence, engender respect for commonly-held heritage, and [inculcate] the recognition of the rights and duties of citizens,” (Decree 295 of 1995, Article 6). Mockus argued that violence and corruption are cultural manifestations of a disassociation between the three systems that regulate human behavior: law, morality, and culture. Combating crime required changing political culture in order to align the three, thus “recovering the harmony” among law, morality, and culture. As the name “citizenship culture” implies, culture was targeted for necessary change in order to properly align with the law. The law, however, was beyond reproach; citizenship culture seeks to increase
cultural (and sometimes moral) (self)regulation so that residents increasingly comply with the law, not vice-versa (Alcaldía 2003, 24).  

Numerous strategies were employed to teach citizens to assume responsibility for ensuring their own personal security; “of which citizen education stands out” (Londoño 2004, 3). That is, citizen culture was an explicitly pedagogical program. Mockus and his team of experts drew on theories of social capital and civic culture in the formation of their policy, citing the work of scholars like Robert Putnam (1993, 2001; see Informe Final 2001-2003), James Coleman (1990), Kymlicka and Norman (1997), Varshney (2002) and Francis Fukuyama (1995), as well as practitioners and politicians, like Leoluca Orlando, the mayor of Palermo, who tried to lower crime and destroy local mafias by “renewing” local culture (2001). Mockus actively sought to distinguish citizen culture from other municipal approaches to crime reduction, like Rudolph Guliani’s zero tolerance policy that relied heavily on repressive policing. Unable to increase the police force and under very different budgetary (austerity) and ideological (neoliberal-democracy) constraints, Mockus drew on theories of political culture as social learning and focused on a pedagogical approach, seeking to modify the existing culture of violence through education rather than “repression.” He imagined illustrating the rationality of rules and engendering compliance because people “believed” in them and their higher reasoning, not because they were forced to do so. Even crimes against humanity could be addressed through “social

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28 As a point of confusion and inconsistency, sometimes the state also stated that morality, too, was to be reformed (Alcaldia 2003; 19, 22). “The harmony among law, morality and culture can be defined as the conjunction between the moral or cultural disapproval of illegal behaviors and the moral and cultural approval of legal obligations. Alternately, there is a divorce (among the three elements) when illegal behaviors are approved morally or culturally, or when legal obligations are censured morally or culturally,” (Presidencia 2006, 9, cited from page 57 of Bogotá para Vivir, see Appendix 1).

29 As it turns out, however, Orlando himself was deeply linked to the mafia and is now widely known as a mafioso.
learning” if only people were taught more respect for human rights (Herrera, Díaz, Acevedo et al 2005).

By 1992, Mayor Jaime Castro had already declared Bogotá an “Educating City” (Ciudad Educadora Decreto 576), converting “all the spaces and actors of the city into opportunities for learning,” (Sáenz Obregón 2004, 35). The city was reconceptualized as one big classroom for the instillation of democratic, peaceful, citizen values, moving the inculcation of citizenship culture away from school-age populations and traditional educational spaces to the public sphere in general (Herrera, Díaz, Acevedo et al 2005, 174). Even in 2004, state propaganda at a bus stop displayed an image of a playground-city and declared the “School-City-School: another way to learn.”
Mockus himself was widely known as a “pedagogy,” and had conducted and published survey research on anomie among high school students as a scholar at the National University. This study of respect for difference and coexistence among high schoolers would form the model for the district’s policy under Mockus, who continued to emphasize the creation of citizen culture through citizen education outside of formal educational institutions in both of his development plans. He theorized a complete pedagogical framework of five different forms of communication in order to be used in teaching this diverse population, including demonstrations of state authority that would validate legal norms, distributing information and education about the letter of the law, “expressions of public rationality,” “dialectic” teaching/learning, and symbolic communication including aesthetic and dramatic action. Each of these forms of communication sought to convince the “citizen-student to develop knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that the state discourse considers conducive to the promotion of public interests,” and to beget voluntary conformity of both “students” and “teachers” (Sáenz Obregón 2004, 26-7). The state also proposed the use of indirect communication in spaces

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30 The image of Mockus himself as a pedagog was essential to this task. Mockus identifies as “a philosopher and mathematician” – his undergraduate major was math - and as previous rector of the National University, he was widely recognized as a public intellectual. Indeed, the entire model was based on research that Mockus had conducted as a professor at the National University on the source(s) of anomie among high school students, in which Mockus recommended the creation of “manuals of democratic coexistence,” in every school in order to promote respect for difference, and thus peaceful conflict resolution, among the teenagers (Herrera, Díaz, Acevedo et al 2005, 107-8). Decree 1860, Article 17 established the school’s coexistence manulas, citing the Constitution: “In all educational institutions, public or private, the study of the Constitution and civic instruction will be obligatory in order to promote respect for difference, and thus peaceful conflict resolution, among the teenagers (Herrera, Díaz, Acevedo et al 2005, 107-8). Decree 1860, Article 17 established the school’s coexistence manulas, citing the Constitution: “In all educational institutions, public or private, the study of the Constitution and civic instruction will be obligatory in order to promote respect for difference, and thus peaceful conflict resolution, among the teenagers (Herrera, Díaz, Acevedo et al 2005, 107). Similarly, a central objective of the 10-year plan of the Ministry of Education (1996-2005) is to “achieve an education that serves to establish democracy, foment participatory citizens, and construct peaceful coexistence,” (as quoted in Herrera, Díaz, Acevedo et al 2005, 107).
that are “educational in and of themselves due to a certain strategic disposition of space, 
time, bodies, and physical environment,” (Sáenz Obregón 2004, 27).

In teaching citizens to provide for their own security, the state explicitly 
relinquished its subscription to the Weberian myth of the state as holder of a monopoly 
over violence or security provider: “The capacity of the state to guarantee peace and 
security is limited. These [peace and security] are only possible with the collaboration of 
citizens that learn to make themselves responsible for their own security and that of others, 
through precaution, avoiding risk factors, and collaborating with other citizens and with the 
authorities in preventing crime,” (Presidencia 2006, 1). The state thus redefined security -
even terrorism and human rights violations by the military - as a social problem best 
addressed by civil society, either individually or collectively, but without assistance from 
the state. “We depart from the conviction that security is not only a police problem; 
moreover, it is not only a state problem. Learning to resolve conflicts peacefully, to make 
one responsible for his/her personal security and own life and that of others while avoiding 
behaviors that put it [life] at risk, and collaborating with other citizens or with the 
authorities in order to detain criminal or terrorist activities are all jobs that correspond to 
citizens and that have a great impact in terms of protecting life,” (Presidencia 2006, 15). 
The city thus directly invited – in fact, insisted – that civilians assume responsibility for 
security provision themselves.

Citizenship culture also involves reconceptualizing democracy such that it is 
antithetical to violence and non-citizens. In interviews, policy makers consistently equated 
citizen culture to a democratic culture, and noted that educating citizens into a culture of 
coexistence was necessary because “they were not complying with democratic culture.”
Moving away from the strictly procedural evaluations of Colombia democracy that allow it to boast as one of the oldest democracies in the hemisphere, citizen culture understands the existing culture of violence to be an impediment to democratic consolidation. “In an ideal democratic society, law, morality and culture tend to be congruent,” (Mockus 2001, 3; see also Presidencia 2006, 1). This framing imagines democracies as necessarily based on (peaceful) citizen cultures, conflating citizenship, non-violence, and democracy. Moreover, “[t]he ability to reach an agreement and comply with it is fundamental to the development of a democratic culture; similarly, solidarity, tolerance, feelings of belonging, and trust are cultural values that go beyond cultural and ethnic diversity, and whose consolidation and preservation are fundamental objectives of citizen culture,” (Presidencia 2006, 13). Thus, as per Putnam (1993, 2001), solidarity, tolerance, and trust are closely related to (peaceful and democratic) civic cultures, though the causal nature of this relation remains unclear.

Citizen culture defined as citizen’s ability to coexist through either self or social regulation of their violent tendencies. Peaceful “[c]oexistence implies self-regulation,” (Sáenz Obregón 2004, 22). “Self-regulation is having the capacity to control yourself. Culturally, it is one of the fundamental principles of coexistence. In order to make possible interactions among strangers, in contexts such as public transportation, in public space, in establishments of common use, and in the neighborhood,” (Alcaldía 2003, 22). At other times, the state argues it is seeking social, cultural and moral regulation and well as self-regulation: “Citizenship culture is understood as a mechanism of individual self-regulation and social regulation that demands of citizens a certain harmony between respect for the law, one’s own moral convictions and cultural traditions and conventions,” (Herrera, Díaz, Acevedo et al 2005, 178). Despite this failure to thoroughly theorize culturally embedded
individuals, both self and social regulation rely on the “internalization” of legal norms in citizens, voluntary change, participation, and self-transformation (see Alcaldía 2003, 6-7). Voluntary citizen participation is essential to this cultural change, and necessary for the reduction of violence (see Alcaldía 2003, 7; Herrera, Díaz, Acevedo et al 2005, 174; Presidencia 2006, 7). Through education the state sought to beget “the formation of a new type of citizen acting within the participatory democracy consecrated in the Constitution of 1991, that which contributes to the resolution of the problems of violence and weak social fabric,” (Sáenz Obregón 2004, 13).

According to this model of “citizen culture,” Colombia’s weak social fabric has created a culture of violence in which difference creates violent reactions in intolerant citizens, who, presumably, kill, rob, or physically assault those who are different from them. “The systematic use of violence outside of the rules that defined the state monopoly of the legitimate use of it [violence], as with the practice of corruption, increase and consolidate precisely because they come to be culturally accepted behaviors in certain contexts,” (Mockus as quoted, Alcaldía 2003, 20). As the extraordinary levels of violence lived in Colombia cannot be explained by single, acontextual variables such as poverty, income distribution/relative poverty, war, urbanization, or otherwise, the state has attributed the violence to a culture of violence, thus relinquishing itself from all responsibility. According to Present Samper, “Let’s look frankly at the reality that we have tried to avoid and we will be confronted, rather brutally, it must be said, with phenomena whose final explication resides precisely in the cultural traits of the country. Now that the path is visible (aclarado), at a high but necessary cost, let us turn (volquémonos) toward a more fecund culture that is not the culture of violence, the culture of lies, the culture of

Citizen culture posits that when difference encounters itself in public space, it creates conflict, and because of the existing culture of violence, this conflict is resolved through violence.31 “As a hypothesis we can suggest that the high base level can be explained by the establishment in Colombia of a culture of violent response to conflict… There isn’t any doubt when we see the graph of [violence in] Colombia… The only explanation found is our unfortunate cultural tradition of violent solution to conflict,” (Guerrero 1998, 97-101).

This framing is inconsistent, alternately arguing that criminals are rational actors making strategic decisions to get ahead and that they are victims of culture. These two models combine to leave vague ideas of criminal motivation attributed to partially rational delinquents, a model that does not adequately explain why so many people commit violent crime (Rubio 1998).

This culture of violence is juxtaposed to a culture of peace: “Respect for human rights, coexistence, solidarity, inter-culturality, pluralism, and tolerance are fundamental cultural values and the essential base of a culture of peace,” (Ley 396 de 1997: Ley General de Cultura, Art 1.9). The state variously argues that there are two solutions to this culture of violence, both which involve a cultural revolution. First, intolerant citizens can learn to be tolerant, and respect difference. “Tolerance is the capacity to respect other’s ideas, customs, and beliefs, even if they are different or contrary to one’s own, if and when they are in accordance with the law,” (Presidencia 2006, 17). Citizens must learn to be tolerant

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31 The state thus puts forth a model of conflict that proposes that the naturally occurring differences lead to inevitable conflict in public spaces. Citizens apparently either cease to exist in private spaces or do not have differences there.
towards racial, cultural, religious, and political differences, and accepting of social, moral and cultural diversity (Presidencia 2006, 17). Recognition and tolerance of (conflict-generating) diversity allows for peaceful conflict resolution and the possibility of coexistence (Alcaldía 2006, 50). “[T]he exercise of citizenship is fundamentally oriented around the recognition of others,” (Alcaldía 2006, 69). The state thus goes through great effort to teach citizens to respect difference and to create a homogenous urban collective identity, making the recognition and toleration of one another easier. The culture of coexistence or citizenship requires solidarity and a sense of belonging as well as the recognition of difference: “Consequently, to speak of solidary citizen culture is to speak of shared languages/codes that allow the coexistence of the tensions between people and groups that inhabit the city, to the extent that they don’t attempt to homogenize but rather recognize that conflict, derived from difference, is the motor of the practice of citizenship and must have forms of non-violent expression,” (Alcaldía 2006, 73). Alternately, coexisting citizens can learn to resolve the conflict that is seen by the state as naturally arising from difference through peaceful mechanisms of conflict resolution (Presidencia 2006, 3; Alcaldía 2003, 15, 36; see Chapter 6).

Governmental offices like the Presidential Anti-Corruption Campaign (*Programa Presidencial de Lucha Contra la Corrupción*) embrace both of this conflicting notions of the origins of violence, treating it as a cultural artifact while ascribing to liberal understandings of rational choice, and linking minor “infractions” like not using the cross walk or cheating on tests to gross crimes against humanity. In charge of reducing government-level corruption, particularly the infiltration of drug monies (*narco-dolares*) and paramilitary groups, the Presidential Anti-Corruption Campaign exemplifies citizen
culture in its efforts to reduce state crime and corruption by getting school kids to behave better, to coexist, and embody a “culture of non-violence” (*cultura de la no violencia*).

School kids ages 6-16 years old were invited to submit a picture or painting dealing with respect, honesty, or transparency, and presenting alternatives to corruption in order to eradicate it completely. With 57,402 pictures from eight cities, a team comprised of Antanas Mockus, Hector Abad Faciolince (journalist), Yolanda Reyes (pedagog), and Guillermo Hoyos (philosopher), visited each city to select 84 works that were on display at the Luis Angel Arango Library between October 2004 and January 2005 and later compiled into a book “in order to continue a dynamic of reflection around topics such as values, coexistence, and respect for rules, so that together, we can find a way to say “Goodbye to Cheating (*las trampas*) in Colombia,” (2004, 7).

The pictures depict the successful internalization of the belief in a “culture of violence” at a very young age. Given the same parameters, students almost equally illustrated mundane occurrences of cheating on tests (the most common definition of “*hacer trampa*”), children telling white lies about studying while really watching television, and general pictures of happiness, sunshine, rainbows and flowers when people say “No to cheating,” next to pictures depicting men clad in army fatigues and armed with large fire arms and tanks shooting women and children with their hands in the air in surrender in the open countryside while planes drop bombs on them from overhead (No más guerra, Biad Marcel Pérez, 13 years old, Leticia Amazonas, p. 95), next to pictures decrying social crimes such as drug use, adultery, and selling damaged or adulterated merchandise (watered down milk). The trajectory is clear: if one lies to their parents or cheats at football in grade school they will become a drug user and wife beater and then, if
powerful, be a politician and if not, be a paramilitary or guerrilla and in any case, cheat, rape, rob, murder, and kill people in the most horrific of manners. All of these activities are lumped into the “culture of violence,” that is now fully depoliticized, as are the solutions to them. The following pictures taken from the book display an image of a school boy trying to cheat off a female student on a test, a young girl with a balloon who steps on a “footbreaking” landmine and looses her leg, and a small village being ambushed by air and by land, male figures clad in ambiguous green garments – capturing the elision among guerrilla, paramilitary, and military forces – massacring adults and children (Adiós a Las Trampas 2004, 6, 82, 95).

Image 3: Goodbye to Cheating: Landmines, Adiós a las trampas, 2004, 82.
Slogans, Programs, and Symbols: Innundating Public Space and Making the State Visible

According to Mockus, a crucial element of citizen culture was its enormous visibility (Mockus 2001, 7). The state sought to educate citizens into a culture of coexistence through the inundation of public space and the repetition of slogans, colors, and numbers. An explosion of programming sought to increase state legitimacy by making the state appear closer and more accessible to citizens while inculcating a culture of citizenship so that the state would not have to provide other forms of presence such as judicial or police.

The most visible, prominent, and memorable aspect of the state’s citizen culture campaign has been to chide pedestrians into walking in a more orderly manner. The most popularly recognized symbols of the citizen culture campaign were mimes located at intersections that encouraged (or forced) citizens to use and respect the crosswalk. From July to September of 1995, 425 mimes and police performed educational campaigns in a total of 482 intersections of the city, consisting of more pedagogues/police and more physical space occupied in this effort than any other “crime reduction” strategy. These mimes and police taught (and forced) pedestrians to use the crosswalk, wait for the light to change, and hail the bus from designated stops only. Cars were also “taught” or forced to stop before the crosswalk in order to allow pedestrians to use it. This effort to regulate pedestrian traffic is considered by the state to be one of most successful examples of the ability to lower violent crime by inculcating a culture of citizenship: On one street, it claims, the Calle 80, the number of passengers who used the designated bus stop rose from 26.2% in 1995 to 38% in 1996, while 43% of bus drivers claimed to use them in 1997. By 1996,
76.46% of drivers and 72.25% of pedestrians respected the crosswalk (Mockus 2001, 9-11). Such statistical evidence is widely distributed to establish the “success” of this crime reduction policy. While the streets were inundated by the mimes, there were even more (re)presentations of them and their “successes” in photographs, postcards, news stories, and government propaganda. So successful, indeed, was this propaganda machine, that, according to the leader of the Corpovisionario team contracted to evaluate the political culture of Pereira in 2005 and design a citizenship culture campaign, ten years after the mimes took to the street, residents of Pereira, a city eight hours down the mountain, most immediately identified citizenship culture in Bogotá with mimes and clowns, having never hosted a citizen culture campaign of their own.

Another highly symbolic effort to engender the obeisance of pedestrian transit rules was a system of “citizenship cards” that mirrored the card system employed in soccer or volleyball, in which citizens could show their disapproval of other’s behavior by “red carding” them. The cards displayed a thumbs-up on a white background and a thumbs-down on a red background. Massively distributed throughout Bogota, citizens were encouraged to peacefully regulate the behavior of others by displaying the appropriate (usually red) side of the card to show appreciation of or censure another’s behavior. Other symbols employed in citizenship campaigns to reduce violence included a “thumbs up” sign that was supposed to stand for “Bogotá legal,” an “ok” sign made by touching the thumb and index fingers was to stand for “Bogotá Productive,” praying mantis hands carried subtitle “Bogotá, Interior Peace,” also “Bogotá United,” “Bogotá What’s Happening to Us?” Christmas lights throughout December of 2002 hung over the central Plaza Bolivar formed one huge hand making the “A-ok” sign indicating “Bogotá
Productive,” while a similar hand reigned over all of Bogotá from the top of Monserrate, the mountain forming the eastern edge of the city. Not only symbolic, but physical space as well was inundated with the signs, illustrated in the diagram below (as displayed I Londoño
Chapter Two: A Culture of Citizenship to Increase Security

2004, 16).
The state tried to combat the culture of violence by instilling a respect for life in the citizenry. It launched huge public relations campaigns and programs, using symbolic events, colors, and slogans. The phrase “Life is Sacred” was plastered around the city, even being carved into the public graveyard in the center of the city. The state fragmented into hundreds of programs under this umbrella term meant to instill respect for life. The program “vida sagrada” sought to diminish the number of violent deaths in the city by promoting self-regulation (Alcaldía 2003, 39). Symbolic events and slogans inundated public space urging voluntary disarmament. There were “vaccinations against violence” where people could express anger, sadness, and frustration for violence suffered in their childhood by participating in a short ritual, assisted by a psychologist or psychiatrist, in which they remembered the violence they suffered and expressed their suffering by unloading physically or verbally onto a doll on which the physical features of the aggressor were drawn. This was to vaccinate the victim from becoming a victimizer and perpetuating the cycle of violence. In two days, 45,000 people arrived to be “vaccinated,” leaving huge lines of people waiting for their turn at the end of the day (Mockus 2001, 22-23).

Workshops were held on how to solve conflicts peacefully, teaching participants about the use of dialogue in solving interpersonal problems, and setting up nine tables around the city where citizens were invited to bring the person with which they had a conflict in order to dialogue it out.

Symbolic events were also used to educate citizens into a culture of peace. Flags of Bogotá and Colombia were placed around the city in order to indicate where potential sites

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32 The engraving originally read, “Life is Sacred. Do not kill, especially not children.” Much public debate ensued over the qualification of “not children,” and this portion was eventually removed.

33 The state believed this outpouring had to do with high levels of child abuse perpetuated by mothers and which functions as the source of violence reproduced by the victims in society throughout their lives (Mockus 2001, 22-23)
of FARC terrorist attacks. Additional banners displaying three orange circles were displayed wherever dangerous elements were stored. Other flags with three orange triangles symbolized vital installations for the civilian population, while a red circle with three red circles (the symbol of the Roerich pact) were used to mark educational institutions (Sáenz Obregón 2004, 45). In 2001 there were three “Women’s Nights” that were described as symbolic, “event-spectacles” in which women were encouraged to walk in designated public spaces (particularly the central street, the Septima) in order to bring to the public’s attention that men are the primary victims and perpetrators of violence while highlighting women’s “greater capacity” to protect life and engender peace (Sáenz Obregón 2004, 65-67). Life “agreements” were signed and civil resistance campaigns of FARC terrorist acts were launched by the state.

Identifying smoking and alcohol consumption with violent crime, the “Carrot Law” (Ley zanahoria) was implemented in 1995. Used colloquially, “carrot” (zanahoria) indicates a person who lives a healthy lifestyle by avoiding alcoholic beverages and other drugs, going to bed early, eating well, and generally avoiding risky behaviors. When he assumed office in January of 1998, Mayor Enrique Peñalosa remarked in his acceptance speech that, “The vast majority of homicides in our city are occasioned by the consumption of alcohol and other drugs… Out effort to improve security in our society will have campaigns against the consumption of alcohol and other drugs as an important component,” (Alcaldía 2000, 11). The Carrott Law sought to generally reduce access to and consumption of alcohol and tobacco and nightlife more generally. A new, earlier closing time for establishments that served alcohol was implemented at 1:00 am, only extended

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34 700,000 women were in street (23% of total female population) while 14% of the male population, 420,000 in total, also participated, making it less than women-only.
slightly until 3:00 am in 2003, while a simultaneous educational campaign urged drivers to turn over their keys if they had been drinking and elect a designated driver. High school students were educated on responsible alcohol consumption and the negative effects of alcohol consumption. The sale of alcohol was prohibited on random days throughout the year when the government suspected unrest, such as holidays and political inaugurations. The restriction of the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors was more strictly enforced, and clubs for minors received more negative public attention, if they were not closed outright.

As the goals of citizen culture were to reduce violent crime by achieving a greater compliance of the law through self and collective regulation, one of the central programs had no real programming behind it, but rather was only a public relations campaign meant to increase voluntary compliance with the law. “Abide the law and admire how good it is” (acatar/apreciar las normas y admirar lo bueno) “consisted of the massive dissemination of the law and encouraged voluntary compliance with it by demonstrating its democratic foundation and the benefits obtained by boeing it. It emphasized laws pertaining to security and coexistence, transit, taxation, the environment, human rights, and public services. The goal was to a) increase the number of people who comply with the basic norms of coexistence and b) increase the number of people who do not justify transgressing the law,” (Londoño 2004, 9). A new police code was passed that focused solely on “planting coexistence” though pedagogy and education to the exclusion of punitive law (Londoño 2004, 9).

The state sought to educate citizens in their duties to the state, including tax payment, environmental protections, and democratic participation. “Contribute out of good will” (aportar de buena gana) sought to reduce tax evasion and fraud and increase
responsibility by pointing out the benefits of tributaries. “110% with Bogota” sought to address the fiscal crisis of 2002 by getting citizens to voluntarily pay an extra 10% on their taxes.35 “Paying your estate taxes helps construct a better city” (Pagando su impuesto predial... usted construye una ciudad para vivir mejor) just added to the mix, attempting to build a “culture of tax payment” in a city where tax evasion is rare, except for among businesses and commercial establishments (Londoño 2004). “Name your park,” “Experience your park!” and “Govern your park” were supposed to encourage the use of public parks, while “Bogotá enjoys sustainability” sought to generate daily respect for environment. Citizens were asked to voluntarily reduce their water consumption.

Democracy was supposed to be enhanced through slogans such as “Decision-making procedures – self-organization in order to have an influence and learn” (procedimientos para decidir - organizarse para influir y para aprender) attempted to strengthen democratic culture while “communicate life and play clean” inculcated citizen behaviors in public space. “Bogotá, the brotherly city” tried to promote solidarity toward people in vulnerable situations and “generate autonomous and responsible behaviors, both individually and collectively. “Admirable Public Leadership,” was to generate “effective and transparent” public administration, increasing the confidence of the population in their state. No classes were spared, as “Nurture the future” was supposed to combat malnutrition caused by poverty through inculcating healthy eating habit, and Bogotá, I like you better clean” sought to reduce corruption and “white-collar” crime among the wealthy.

35 Between 2002 and 2003, 109,246 taxpayers contributed over 2,000 million pesos voluntarily. Donors were primarily poor: “It must be mentioned (cabe destacar) that in 2002, among the five localities with the greatest percentage of voluntary contributors, three are more than 50% class one and two,” (Sáenz Obregón 2004, 63).
Cultural programming sought to improve citizen’s capacity to reach agreements and find peaceful solutions to conflicts by improve citizen’s communication capacity (expresión and interpretation) through art, cultural activities, recreation and sports (Mockus 2001, 7). The state thus reformed the district’s cultural system in 2002, created a Youth Cultural System in 2003, and strengthened the local cultural policy councils. The city created new mediums for the repetition of its mesasges, launching myriad weekly television programs on the city’s two new television stations, Canal Capital and Convivencia Capital, established for “educational” means. They served to endlessly reiterate and repeat these sayings until every Bogotano new them by heart on programs like Encuentro (Meetings) and Palabra Ciudadana (Citizen’s Voice). A weekly radio show, “Por las buenas,” was broadcast over the course of one year, and “Toolbox” booklets were distributed to teach more about peaceful conflict resolution through dialogue (Mockus 2001, 23). A monthly newspaper De Ciudad was distributed for free. The city was overwhelmed by athletic, artistic, and cultural events. The major roads were closed every Sunday to allow for recreational and athetic enjoyment of the city; sports, music, and theatre festivals were held weekly in public parks; the slogan “Common Culture” was repeated around the city, and massive events like “Rock in the Park” and “The Summer Festival” drew millions of people to the parks.

More than actual programming with activities and events, however, was the complete inundation of public space with empty slogans that sought to educate through their repetition and omniscience. Thousands of slogans lambasted public space, printed on brochures, displayed on banners, worn on buttons and stickers, heading up inconsequential programs, and repeated over and over again by state personnel and the media (see
Appendix 2 and 3). Just a sampling of these slogans includes: “Bogotá saw you grow up, now watch Bogotá grow” (Bogotá te vio crecer, ahora usted ve crecer a Bogotá), “My house is in Bogotá, and at the same time, Bogotá is my house” (mi casa está en Bogotá, y a la vez, Bogotá es mi casa), “Let’s improve the neighborhood and the home” (mejoremos el barrio y la casa), “Works with a pedagogic outcome” (obras con saldo pedagógico), “Eco-neighborhoods,” (ecobarrios), “Attractive Bogotá,” “Locate Ourselves for Solidarity,” “Everyone to Read with Pleasure,” “Quítale el Puum…. Y ponle el Son a tu corazón,” “Everyone Wins Playing Clean,” “Bogotá vital, onda cheverisima,” “Communication for Coexistence,” “Fontibón disarms with love in it’s Heart,” “Let’s take the right path… in taxi,” “Live the live party,” “Bogotá, we are getting used to it. What’s happening to us?” “Goals in Peace,” “Re-creating Bogota,” “Bogotá Carefully Planned (prevista), We Live More: Desirable Behaviors when Facing Risky Events,”… (Sáenz Obregón 2004; Alcaldía 2003). The slogans went on, and on, and on, and on, creating a backdrop for all conversation, and making it impossible to speak without referring to them.

**Knowledge Production, Crime Statistics, Citizen Culture Surveys**

An important aspect of state rule by citizen culture is the explosion of knowledge production legitimizing the policy, creating the constant image of violence reduction, restating its popularity among citizens, and affirming its success in creating lasting changes in citizen culture. This knowledge production took three different forms: the statistical production of crime rates, the academic or scholarly production of policy “analysis” that detailed the “successes” of the program, and surveys of citizen culture. Each of these forms of knowledge production was a successful tool of governance, not for its accuracy or the
validity of the information contained, but for its incessant repetition and amazing quantity that rendered irrelevant its inconsistencies, inaccuracies, and presumptions, and exempted it from any need to establish coherency.

The first form of knowledge production the state sought to establish through citizen culture was the quantification and statistical representation of violence in the city. Before 1995, no official record of violent crime was kept for Bogotá (or in the country, for that matter). The police did not keep statistical records of violent crime in the city, and while myriad institutions produced short-term compilations of violent crime, they were partial and contradictory. Legal Medicine, for example, had perhaps the most accurate reports of murders and other violent deaths, as most corpses eventually made it to the morgue for disposal. Similarly, Legal Medicine compiled the only record of rape and other aggravated assaults such as stabbings, beatings, or shootings, that require medical attention. Yet as this entity only reported the number of people (or bodies) brought into public hospitals for care, it was by no means an accurate representation of crime, particularly of those not requiring medical intervention. Moreover, Legal Medicine released the number of cases seen each quarter, but did not save or compile any of their information. The Army and Metropolitan Police also released periodic “crime” statistics, but their numbers were based only off police reports that were filed. As is discussed in Chapter 6, reporting a crime in Colombia is nearly impossible, incredibly time consuming, and infinitely confusing. Of hundreds of violent crimes I know of that occurred in Bogotá, including stabbings, rape, domestic abuse, car theft at stoplights, street muggings, and murder, not one has been reported to the police. Mugged myself on four separate occasions, stabbed gravely enough to require hospitalization, and privy to the repeated rape of a minor, I could not file a police report,
even when I tried (see Chapter 6). Crime victimization surveys now indicate that 10-30% of actual violent crime in Bogotá is reported (rapes and muggings, for example, are less reported than car theft). Thus these statistics produced by the Metropolitan Police were unbelievably low in addition to never being tabulated or compiled, making them wholly unhelpful.

Thus a central component of citizen culture has been to increase the knowledge production of crime using statistics. Under Mockus’s first administration (1995-1997), violent crime statistics were “consolidated” into the new Unified System of Violence and Coexistence Information in Bogotá (Sistema Unificado de Información de Violencia y Delincuencia de Bogotá, SUIVD). The SUIVD produces an endless stream of statistics that inundate space and crowd out other perceptions of crime. The group has a website and also distributes a bi-monthly Delinquency Bulletin (Boletín de Violencia y Delincuencia) both electronically and physically, as part of the “security strategy for citizen coexistence” coordinated by the Sub-secretary of Citizen Security and Coexistence. Importantly, however, this database does not produce it’s own violent crime statistics, but rather systematizes, compiles, saves, and re-represents the security and crime information produced by the Metropolitan Police, Legal Medicine, and the Secretary of Government. The administration claimed that this compilation was a necessary starting point for measuring violent crime in Bogotá (Mockus 2001, 20). Despite these and other flaws, few scholars or politicians dispute the general “trends” constructed by state statistics. The “trends” indicate that violent crime in Bogotá has decreased since the early 1990s. According to state compilations, while in 1993 there were 80 homicides/100,000 inhabitants, in 2002 there are officially less than 30 (Presidencia 2006, 12).

http://www.suivd.gov.co/finsuivd.swf
The second kind of knowledge the district produces is “academic.” Each administration has taken advantage of “participatory” measures created to ensure citizen’s access to information and increase their oversight of government in order to subsidize knowledge production projects that serve only to legitimize their policies, establish their legacy, and ensure the possibility of future bids for higher office. For example, citing compliance with Articles 91 and 315 of the 1991 Constitution and Law 134 of 1994, all meant to ensure citizen participation in government by increasing their access to information, then outgoing mayor Enrique Peñalosa contracted and oversaw the writing, editing, publishing, and distribution of the book *The Bogotá of the Third Millennium: The History of an Urban Revolution* (La Bogotá del tercer milenio: historia de una revolución urbana) (Alcaldía 2000). This purportedly academic analysis of Peñalosa’s administration went beyond a non-critical description of Peñalosa’s policies. It did not even bother detailing policy specifics; instead, this five-book series, dedicated to Peñalosa’s “revolutionary vision,” was nothing short of hyperbolistic political propaganda:

> No government in the history of Bogotá has presented such coherent actions and thoughts as the administration of Enrique Peñalosa Londoño. For over 20 years, this man that would later become Mayor of the City after trying repetitively to obtain this dignity, has been lucidly expounding Bogotá’s problems and the un-delayable (inaplazables) solutions. One thought and one vision of the city converted themselves into the vertebral column of the Government's Program and the Development Plan: For the Bogotá We Want. Both were fully achieved/fulfilled between 1998 and 2000, complemented by (ajustados a) an obsessive compliance of norms and far from any improvisation. In order to achieve the radical change that the city experienced, he maintained political will, that superimposed, without vacillation, the general interest above particular interests. He fled from fleetingly popular things, and spoke instead to the citizenry with the only criteria that can sustain a responsible government: the truth,” (Alcaldía 2000, 8).
Unfortunately, Peñalosa is not the exception, but the norm. Every administration hires public intellectuals and academics to “study” their policy. The reports are always very lengthy, consisting of several volumes, thousands of pages, and millions of photographs. They always consist, in varying proportions, of a description of the policy and, most importantly, a ridiculously positive appraisal of the policy, with no recommendations made to improve it, only more of the same. For example, upon finishing his second term in office, Mockus paid two internationally renowned scholars to write a 772-page book on the wild success of his rule. Mockus guaranteed access to all the proper state employees for interviews and was gracious enough to even write the introduction to this work that not once departs from its laudatory appraisal of public policy in Bogotá since Mockus came to office the first time!

The final form of knowledge production undertaken by the city as part of citizen culture was citizen surveys to measure – or create the image of – their cultural transformation. The city undertook surveys of citizen culture in 2001, 2003, and 2005. These surveys served not as much to justify the spending or evaluate the program as to provide yet another opportunity to flood citizens with trite sayings, graphs, images, and representations of the state while providing no discernable service. These quantitative measures of citizen culture were theoretically supposed to allow for accountability (rendición de cuentas) of the government’s policies (Sáenz Obregón 2004, 16). If there were any internal debates on how to measure the existence or quality of a culture of citizenship or even better, the extent to which moral, cultural, and legal norms are in harmony, it was not indicated in any state documents I analyzed or interviews I conducted. The surveys consisted of two components: an evaluation of citizen culture and a
presentation of state crime statistics. The effort to evaluate citizen culture employed thousands of people to conduct surveys in each of the 20 urban neighborhoods. The residents were asked questions on their knowledge of laws, their own behaviors regarding the peaceful resolution of conflict and coexistence, the participation in civil society and government, and specific topics that had been targeted in campaigns, such as water consumption and noise pollution. The surveyors asked residents questions that were meant to indicate whether the resident complied with the norms of coexistence and if they justified to themselves non-compliance with the law. They inquired into resident’s voluntary compliance with rules and laws, their ability to celebrate and comply with agreements, and their “proper” understanding of rights as rights instead of favors, and democratic procedures (Sáenz Obregón 2004, 17). Did they use their seatbelt? Did they cross at the crosswalk? Did they pay their taxes? If the resident displayed good citizen behaviors, they were not asked to justify them; if they did not, they were asked to explain how they justified to themselves this failure to be a good citizen. The surveys report that nationally, only 14.1% justify breaking the law when it is “expected” or “customary,” (lo acostumbrado) while 77% justify doing so when it is the only way to help their family (Presidencia 2006, 21). Residents were also asked about their opinion and behavior regarding particular issues, such as gun control. Did they support gun restrictions? Did they carry a firearm? Residents were asked how they felt about popular sayings like, “The law only applies to the poor,” (La ley es para los de ruana); “Don’t let people take advantage of you, but don’t waste a good chance to take advantage of someone else!” (No hay que dar papaya pero tampoco desperdiciar papayazo). Citizens are also asked about their perceptions of security and their confidence in local government. They are tested on their
“culture of legality,” including their confidence in the legislative system and the law. The surveys displayed low confidence in both (Presidencia 2006, 2019 Vision, 20).

The city also inquired into perceptions of security and law abidance (Presidencia 2006, 23). The state even argues that the central challenge to be overcome is not crime itself, but “increasing citizen’s perception of security,” (Alcaldía 2003, 40, emphasis added). According to the district administration, “Insecurity is a story (un cuento)… a city is insecure more because of what is said about it than because of the reality that it inhabits,” (Alcaldía 2006, 83). Security is thus reduced to a discursive construction that is wholly severed from any material reality, while feeling and expressing security is aligned with good, coexisting citizens.

The state uses the statistics, charts, and numbers produced from these surveys and reports to argue that citizen culture has worked, that there has been a cultural revolution in Bogotá, and it has resulted in a sharp fall in crime: “The most outstanding results of this focus [on citizen culture] were the following: a reduction in the yearly homicide rate (from 72 to 51 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants); two-thirds fewer children hurt by firecrackers during the Christmas season; a 20% reduction in the annual rate of homicide in traffic accidents (from 25 to 20 for each 100,000 inhabitants); respect for the crosswalks by pedestrians and drivers; seatbelt use by more than two-thirds of the drivers,” (Mockus 2001, 9). Similarly, Gutiérrez (2003) asserts that, “the successes of citizen culture are gigantic, on the factual level as well as in perception.” He notes “an obvious and justifiable change in the climate of the city… a sharp fall in the homicide rate” and a “growing perception that the city is secure,” complemented by “an increase in the observance of the basic norms of transit and a decrease in risky activities,” (as quoted, Bogotá Como Vamos
2007, 18; see also Rojas 2002). “In 1995, 75% of Bogotanos considered the city “a bad or horrible place to live”; in 1998, 67% of citizens had the opposite perception,” (Presidencia 2006, 12). “One study by the Economic Development Studies Center (CEDE) of the University Los Andes attributed the disarmament campaign and the Ley Zanahoria with 22% of the fall in homicide rates in Bogotá between 1995 and 1999 (Presidencia 2006, 16). “Violent deaths in Bogotá have diminished considerably in the last 6 years. The reduction of violence is due in part to the application of an integral policy of security and coexistence in effect since 1995. The mayor of Bogotá has developed an important number of projects oriented at fomenting a citizen culture of peaceful coexistence, adopting a focus that favors the participation and exercise of democracy,” (Mockus 2001, 1). Other state publications claim the “Life is Sacred” programming lead to “a reduction of violent deaths,” which fell from 11 per day in 2000 to 7.05 in October 2003, totaling 3,136 violent deaths in 2002 compared to 3,354 in 2001 (Londoño 2004,11). The same state publication attributes a fall in all “crimes of greatest impact,” due to citizen culture.

Yet in reality, the statistics, surveys, and reports created in abundance by the state do not provide the basis for making any conclusions about the effects of citizen culture on violent crime. The data is collected randomly, when the state has the time, desire, money, or interest in collecting it instead of systematically. There is no continuity among questions or categories, such that one year traffic accidents and drowning might be considered “violent deaths” and the next year not. Survey questions show a similar lack of continuity, making comparison impossible. Like many measures of social capital, there is no clear idea what the “data” means or what conclusions might be drawn from it. The state does not and cannot explain what it means that 51% of Bogotanos think laws are collective agreement or
how it affects the functioning of public institutions or levels of violence that people prefer
demobilized combatants for neighbors over gays and lesbians (see Presidencia 2006, 21).

Many of the policies, like the "Carrot Law" (Ley zanahoria) and the arms restriction, were applied only spuradically for ten years. As the army and police opposed any restrictions on civilians’ right to carry firearms, restriction were just that: piecemeal, sporadic, unenforceable restrictions applied to select types of firearms, select days of the week, and select areas of the city. Mayor Jaime Castro (1993-1995) restricted carrying firearms on weekends, and the measure was said to have reduced homicides despite the fact that they continued “exaggeratedly high.” In 1996 carrying firearms was again “restricted,” and at end of 1997 carrying firearms was prohibited. The state claimed the fall in homicide rates from 397/month in 1995 to 291/month in 1996 as indication of this policy’s success (Mockus 2001, 21). Mockus got the army to accept “selective” disarmament during periods of time when the homicide rate traditionally peaked, such as Mother’s Day, but the disarmament campaigns were largely voluntary. Likewise, “Let weapons rest in peace this Christmas” (“Que las armas descansen en paz en esta Navidad”) encouraged citizens to voluntarily turn over firearms and ammunition in exchange for vouchers to acquire Christmas presents. 2,538 firearms were turned over during the 1996 campaign. Naturally, this was attributed with a drop in homicides from 397 in December of 1995 to 291 in December of 1996, though it was unclear how the voluntary disarmament of some citizens would affect the homicide rate in such a manner (Mockus 2001, 21-2).

In agreement with the state’s transfer of security provision onto the shoulders of citizens, the policy also blames victims for their victimization. For example, the Carrot Law stemmed from concern over levels of alcohol in the victim’s, not pertetrator’s, blood.
“In 1995, 49% of traffic deaths, 33% of homicides with a firearm, 49% of homicides with knives or other sharp objects, 35% of suicides, and 10% of accidental deaths “were associated with elevated concentrations of alcohol in the victim’s blood,” (Mockus 2001, 20, emphasis added). The administration claimed as proof of the success of these initiatives that in 1995, homicides with traceable concentrations of alcohol in the blood of the victim fell to 9.5%. Traffic accidents in which any involved person was drunk fell 24.2%. Over Christmas in 1996 homicides fell 26.7%. Homicides also fell 15% from 1996-1997 and traffic deaths 13%. Rising crime in poor sectors of the city (the neighborhoods of Ciudad Bolivar and Kennedy) alone was blamed upon the suspension of the Carrot Law, whereas presumably it had no effect on wealthy neighborhoods.

The attribution of crime reduction to the Carrott Law and other similarly sporadic measures is problematic not only in its methodology. Certainly there has been no indication of causality, no attempt to evaluate alternative hypothesis, eliminate alternate explanations, or assess intervening variables, and certainly no reason to believe that teaching people to cross the street at the stop walk has reduced violent crime. Not even perceptions of security are correlated to statistical representations of security. Popular perceptions of security do not necessarily fluctuate with or reflect statistical representations of security. For example, while homicides have fallen steadily and significantly in the city since 1993, the perception of security has jumped around wildly, displaying an overall decrease. In 2001, 3.6% of the people described Bogotá as “very safe,” increasing wildly to nearly 13% who considered the city “very safe” in 2003, and falling again to only 1.9% in 2005. The administration made no attempt to explain or even address this fall in 2005, instead it simply omitted it from their “analysis” as it didn’t contribute to their argument: “It must be mentioned that
one of the indicators that is most difficult to improve – the perception of security in the city – went from 3.6% in 2001 to 12% in 2003,” (Presidencia 2006, 16).

Not all citizenship culture initiatives were as pedagogical or purely symbolic as the state made them sound. Indeed, many of them included highly coercive components, like issuing decrees and forcefully implementing them with the use of the police force or the physical intimidation of other state employees. Only three policies – the Carrot Law, the prohibition of fireworks, and the selective disarmament - were statistically deemed “successful.” Additionally, these were the three policies in which the police played the most central roles. A huge portion of the police force was dedicated to stopping, ticketing, and arresting drunk drivers as part of the Carrot Law, and the sale of alcohol after 1 am and on state holidays was severely criminalized. Similarly, the use of fireworks was criminalized and severely sanctioned by the police for infractions, apparently successfully lowering the number of deaths from fireworks from five children in 1994 to none in 1996 (Mockus 2001, 21). While the police played minor roles and were sometimes present in other citizenship campaigns such as getting pedestrians to use the crosswalk, no one has been recorded as being arrested for failing to abide by this rule.

Finally, however, is the misguided ideological justification of citizen culture that makes it reasonable to think that using the crosswalk will lower violent crime, and will produce any statistics necessary to illustrate the effectiveness of the policy. Given these gross ideological biases, the argument that citizen culture works to reduce violence is a “crude conclusion” (Llorente et al 2001, 17-28). Citizen culture reports claim the policy is very successful at lowering crime, but statistical studies of the crime reduction in Bogotá have shown that the only portions of the policy that have possibly had any effect on crime
reduction have been the restriction on alcohol sales and consumption and arms carrying, and the effect of these have been mild for the above mentioned reasons. The fall in crime in Bogotá had much more to do with the increase in arrests made by Bogotá’s police force, alone which was attributed 50% of the fall in homicides (Sánchez 2003), and external political factors that eliminated the drug cartel’s attack on the city, the complete annihilation of political parties that threatened the distribution of power. Citizen culture ascribes to three “myths” about the violence in Colombia: 1. that it is “generalized” 2. it is “impulsive” violence, stemming from arguments, intolerance, or disrespect 3. it is caused by poverty, socio-political exclusion and marginalization, urbanization, and other “objective” causes (Llorente et al 2001). Moreover, as a policy intended to change political culture, citizen culture is even more unsettling. Political culture is consistently seen as something that changes very slowly, over centuries. Yet citizen culture programming suggests that political culture in Bogotá changed in less than a decade

Violence in Bogotá, however, is not generalized, but extremely concentrated in three small geographic regions of the city that are neither particularly poor nor rich, have stable populations, do not receive high levels of migrants, and are not even particularly overcrowded. If any one violence is “generalized,” it is violence against women and children in the home, the only form of violence found evenly and pervasively distributed throughout the city, albeit not in higher proportions that other Latin American cities. Inequality, intolerance, or migration – the violence “myths” that lead to impulsive violence – are estimated to constitute no more than 30% of the homicides in Bogotá, a percent that alone account for a homicide rate per 100,000 of only 10, a fairly average rate across Latin America. The other 70% of the violence is political and instrumental in nature, thus its
extremely selective manifestation. Homicide cases in which neither the perpetrator nor the motive is clear are attributed to impulsive violence and bar fight among friends, hiding the political nature of the violence. Crime reduction policies should not continue to focus exclusively on citizen coexistence, the least concerning manifestation of urban violence that accounts for the smallest portion of homicides, but rather political violence that accounts for the majority of homicides. “In the end, what we see is that the public diagnostic regarding homicide in an urban center like Bogotá cannot continue ignoring the violence that criminal structures operating in the city generate,” (Llorente et al 2001, 20).

As violence in Bogotá is directly related to armed gangs that are involved in both arms trafficking and larger criminal activity and often conduct business in some bars, what is needed are targeted policies that recognize political and targeted nature of criminal groups – guerrillas, drug traffickers, paramilitaries, and gangs – operating in the city.

**An Inter-National Model**

Despite these drawback, citizen culture has been labeled a success and exported to other urban centers both large and small around the country as a crime-reduction policy, as well as incorporated into the national agenda. Mockus formed a non-profit organization, CorpoVisionarios, that travels to other cities to conduct preliminary surveys on their culture of citizenship. Like the surveys in Bogotá, they try to measure resident’s respect for legal norms and make recommendations regarding the use of public space in order to reduce levels of violence. The team has been contracted by the cities of Casanare, Yopal, Aguazul, Cali, Neiva, and Medellín, Tulúa, and Pereira to conduct surveys and assess their cultures of citizenship (Presidencia 2006, 20). Barranquilla, Cúcuta, Sonsón, Vistahermosa,
Cali, Bucaramanga, Ibagué, Tutúa, San Andrés, Manizales, Pereira have all developed plans emphasizing coexistence, obeisance of pedestrian traffic laws, and citizen participation (Presidencia 2006, 14). Other cities, like Barranquilla, have developed their own surveys based on the model available on the NGO website. In this way, the discourse and practice of “citizen culture” has been transplanted from Bogotá to the rest of the country, implemented with funding from the Inter-American Development Bank and USAID.

USAID funded program Safe Departments and Municipalities to replicate the “successful” experience of Bogotá in every department and municipality in the country, departing from the presumption that security requires knowledge of the local character (Acero 2005, 174). Yet according to members of the Visionarios team, however, this model was neither relevant nor successful in other cities. Issues of public space, bike routes, and appropriate levels of noise were not transplantable to other cities where the culture of citizenship was “not as strong.” For example, in Pereira, residents hoped the citizenship culture team would address issues of domestic violence, “public” violence such as homicides and street attacks, cultural identity or feelings of belonging to the city, and public space. But the city was unable to implement the recommended policies. According to the Visionarios team, these smaller cities lacked qualified and experienced local leaders and the necessary knowledge. Their local alliances were fragile, the budgeting small and insecure, and they were confronted with uncontrollable levels of local violence.

Nevertheless, CorpoVisionarios insists that citizen culture policies did not fail in these areas. Rather, the failure was in the lack of technical capacity of local state employees and political instability. For example, in Casanare the governor in office at the time of the
survey in currently in jail for connections to illegal paramilitary groups, and two other
governors have also been disposed, creating such institutional instability as each one
brought his own cadre of friends into office that no continuous policy has been
implemented. According to the experts, the successful implementation of citizen culture
requires strong mayors, which have yet to be found outside of the capital city.

According to the scholars and policy makers I interviewed, the “success” of citizen
culture in Bogotá lies precisely in its institutionalization, political coordination, and
continuous backing. Due in large part to the budget surplus from decentralization, Mockus
was able to carve out a budget to be dedicated to citizen culture initiatives alone through
the IDCT. As his pet project, he also insisted on a coordinated committee that met monthly
and oversaw and implemented all citizen culture efforts. Conversely, in no other city were
they able to reserve monies for the implementation of the recommended initiatives,
resulting in the mayors having to beg money from the director of each program or
department.

This policy solution to violence in Bogotá was only made possible by
decentralization. As noted in Chapter One, decentralization significantly increased
Bogotá’s revenue, multiplying it by 2.3% between 1992-2000 (Rojas 2002, 1; 18).
Citizenship culture campaigns cost nearly 130 million USD between 1995-1997,
representing 3.7% of Bogotá’s total budget (Mockus 2001, 7). Under just the first
administration of Antanas Mockus (1995-1997), slightly over 500,000 million pesos (250
million USD)\textsuperscript{37} were granted to the Institute of Culture for citizenship culture-security
initiatives, 64% of which was dedicated directly to citizen culture efforts and only 36%

\textsuperscript{37} As exchange rates have fluctuated wildly in the last decade, all USD conversions are based on the
average 2007 exchange rate of about 2:1,000, and all USD are approximate.
Chapter Two: A Culture of Citizenship to Increase Security

toward more traditional security measures. The Secretary of Transit and Transportation was allocated 2,040 million pesos (1,020,000 USD) for education for accident prevention, and 1,920 million pesos (1 million USD) to promote the voluntary compliance with traffic laws. The Public Service Executive Unit was granted 1,085 million pesos (544,000 USD) for the organization and relocation of “ambulant” vendors. The regional television channel, Canal Capital, was granted 3,357 million pesos (1,678,500,000 USD) for the diffusion of educational information regarding culture, athletics, and health. 3,283 million pesos (1.5 million) were allocated to the Public Space Defender’s Office in order to beget respect for public space and compliance with the rules regulating the undue invasion of public space. Transmilenio was given 2,653 million pesos (1.8 million USD). The Secretary of Government was granted 1,972 million pesos (986,000 USD) to be dedicated to teaching and promoting communication that lends to coexistence. The Health Secretary was given 934 million pesos (.5 million USD) in order to promote a “culture” or habit signing up with a health insurance provider and paying health premiums, while Social Wellness was endowed 1,392 million pesos (696,000 USD) in order to educate the public on the ills of drug consumption. Department of Social Wellbeing was given 625 million pesos (312,000 USD) to work on local democratic development. Under the rubric of social justice, the District Institute for Child Protective custody was given 1,996 million pesos (one million USD) to educate street inhabitants and 540 million pesos (a quarter million USD) more to get them to be culturally and artistically productive. The IDCT was given 1,365 million pesos (687,500 USD) to educate youths to “construct society.” The District Personería was given 2,406 million pesos (1.2 million USD) to promote human rights, with the Secretary of Government for the district was given 469 million pesos (234,500) in order to disperse
information about illegal housing. The aqueduct was allocated 2,113 million pesos (1 million USD) to teach community management (Sáenz Obregón 2004).

Subsequent budgeting for citizen culture was dispersed as the program became massified and decentralized, incorporated into every program and institution in the city without having its own central office. Still, some institutes were more dominated by citizen culture than other. For example, one of the Vigilance and Security Fund’s (Fondo de Vigilancia y Seguridad) primary goals was to increase security through promoting citizen culture, and between 1998 and 2000, it was allocated 120,000 million pesos (60 million USD) to be used for citizen coexistence programming (Alcaldía 2000, 2.19).

Nationally, even the government of President Uribe, whose democratic security policy is based on military-police repression, has not been able to avoid the incorporation of citizen culture initiatives. Under the current administration, the fomentation of a culture of citizenship is one of four proposed strategies for building a “society of free and responsible citizens” (Presidencia 2006, VI). National publications “reflect citizen culture as a public policy of national reach,” (Presidencia 2006, 3) and propose strategies for advancing the “consolidation” of citizen culture including efforts to increase citizen security, increased knowledge production regarding the “epidemiology” of violence, violence statistics, the prevention of “risk factors,” and the adoption of safe behaviors, citizen cooperation with authorities in preventing and denouncing crime, and improving the perception of security. Again, strengthening or improving the police force or justice system is not mentioned (Presidencia 2006, 5; 16).

Citizenship culture initiatives have been exported to other countries as well. Still regarded primarily as a local initiative appropriate for the contemporary era of
decentralization and deregulation, urban planners and policy makers in other major urban centers confronting similar levels of violent crime have taken note of the reputed advances of Bogotá. Consultants and scholars from reputed research and policy institutes like the Inter-American Dialogue have recommended that policy makers in cities as diverse as Rio de Janeiro and San Salvador draw on the experience and expertise of Bogotá in fighting crime in their own cities. The United Nations Development Program hold international seminars on it so that representatives from Bogotá can teach other crime-plagued cities like San Salvador how they went about implementing the policy. Ex-mayor Enrique Peñalosa spends most of his time traveling, lecturing, and serving as a consultant about his experiences as Mayor of Bogotá and how to orchestrate an urban revolution. When he spoke at Griffith University in Queensland, Australia, the promotional flyer recognized him as an “urban design revolutionary” and “charismatic former Lord Mayor of Bogota, who transformed a city of seven million from a third-world gridlock of congested streets to a poster child for sustainable cities. His bold and controversial vision turned a city for traffic into a city for people with a world-leading public transport system, 300km of bicycle and walking trails, and a green network of 1200 parks and quality public spaces. His efforts earned a Stockholm Challenge Award — the environmental equivalent of the Nobel Prize. This inspiring event is essential for anyone who cares about the future of our cities, environment and community,” (February 2008).

Conclusions

In this chapter I have analyzed the origin, content, and deployment of citizen culture as a crime reduction policy in Bogotá. I have argued that citizen culture has
fundamentally reconceptualized the state, radically altering the relationship between state and society by transferring responsibility for security provision from the state to ordinary citizens. I explored the theoretical orientations of citizen culture in studies of political culture and the belief of a culture of violence. I have detailed the role of citizen education and state fragmentation in the transferal of responsibility for security provision from the state to citizens. I detailed the institutional and symbolic fragmentation of the state that governs by inundating public space with highly visible and recognizable signs, symbols, slogans, and statistics. Finally, I critically explored the state’s assertions that citizen culture has lowered violent crime through education, illustrating both the coercive elements of the program and the overt manipulation of statistics and concepts that have lead to the pathologization of non-violent and legal behaviors, while leaving the political roots of the violence untouched. In the next chapter, I explore in more detail one particular program used to create a culture of citizenship: Mission Bogotá.
Introduction

Mission Bogotá is a security measure that pretends to decrease violent crime by employing the state’s fundamental technologies of governance, state fragmentation and citizen education. First, Mission Bogotá is a program through which the state shattered itself into thousands of human figures in the form of citizen guides. These citizen guides were created with the explicit intent to inundate public space both symbolically and physically with visible representations of the state. These human embodiments of the state were chosen for their visibility and proximity, as they made the state seem human and omnipresent to other citizens. This inundation of space through the human fragmentation of the state has been complemented by the “layering” of slogans, colors, policies, and goals of the program, as each new administration adds their propaganda on top or alongside already existing material without eliminating previous or competing programming. Through the
somatization of the state in thousands of citizen guides and the layering of programming, the state governs by “overloading” spaces, particularly those of state neglect, lethargy, or incompetence (Mbembe 2001).

Secondly, Mission Bogotá seeks to lower violent crime by educating citizens. Again, the state frames security as a question of “differentiated” citizen education and comportment (Ong 1999). Citizen guides are chosen from populations the state has categorized as “at risk” of being violent. The state attempts to minimize the threat these potentially dangerous citizens present to society by teaching them to be hardworking, tolerant, communicative citizens that respect diversity, practice peaceful conflict resolution, and feel a sense of belonging to the city. These “at risk” populations must attend citizenship classes to foment their sense of belonging to the city and work habits, after which the state employs them to serve as citizen guides. Citizen guides are reformed “at risk” populations who engender security by their excessive physical presence as well as their exemplary citizen behaviors. They teach other citizens to comply with ritualistic and public demonstrations of state authority, like obeying foot-traffic rules and waiting patiently in line for incompetent and lethargic state services, increasing and embodying state power through their compliance (Wedeen 1999).

In this chapter I argue that Mission Bogotá is a successful tool of governance in contemporary Colombia that employs state fragmentation and citizen education to improve perceptions of security. In the first section I explore the origins of Mission Bogotá in two presumably contradictory theories of crime reduction: social capital creation from the community up, and “broken window” policing from the state down. I illustrate how these two approaches to crime reduction are not contradictory, but complementary, revealing the
militaristic underpinnings of social capital programming in practice. In the second section I analyze the strategic decision by the state to employ citizen guides as a way to make visible both the state and security, and easily profligate the two. In the third section I detail the way guides are used to educate citizens into assuming responsibility for their own security and legitimate the state by complying with unnecessary and pedantic rules. In the fourth section, I investigate the equation of violent offenders with poor, young women, and study the education they receive in order to become non-violent, model citizens. In the final section, I consider the implications of this symbolic feminization of both violence and the state given the internal contradictions of the program.

**Broken Windows, Social Capital, and Security**

Mission Bogotá (*Misión Bogotá*) was created as a security measure by Mayor Enrique Peñalosa in his 1998 Security and Cohabitation Campaign (Decree 927). The program was formed in collaboration with the Municipal Police Department and placed under the jurisdiction of the Vigilance and Security Fund (*Fondo de Vigilancia y Seguridad*) which was to distribute it’s nearly $5 million multi-year budget (*El Tiempo*, November 19, 1988; Martin and Ceballos 2006, 456).\(^{38}\) According to the state, Mission Bogotá was created “to impel communities to construct a safer, friendlier city. One of the objectives is to distance ourselves from the traditional framework for reacting to crime and involve neighborhood residents directly in identifying and solving the problems that most effect them in terms of security and order,” (Alcaldía 2000, 2.190). The program was launched on November 18, 1998 in the central Plaza Bolívar, surrounded by the imposing

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\(^{38}\) The FVS was granted 8,000 million pesos to fund the project, 500 million of which were used in 1999.
Peñalosa originally intended Mission Bogotá to support Local Security Fronts 
(*Frentes Locales de Seguridad*, FLS). FLS were created in the 1980s in order to reduce 
hostility toward the municipal police force by bridging the gap between police and local 
communities and bringing the police “closer” to the people.\(^{39}\) Ironically, this was to happen 
by removing police from their role as security providers completely and making poor 
neighborhoods responsible for their own security provision. A bell was installed in each 
participating home, connected to others by a wire. Members were to ring their bell when 
threatened, such as if they saw someone suspicious in the neighborhood or if their home 
was burglarized. The bells worked like a phone tree, ringing throughout other participating 
houses in the neighborhood, with a grid in the home of whoever was at the “top” of the tree

\(^{39}\) Police and local relations have been extremely tense in the past few decades, with most people feeling 
indifferent toward police at best and antagonistic or hateful, at worst. The municipal police force is ridden 
with corruption and violence, made public by spectacular events like the 1993 rape and murder of a girl in a 
police station or the open links to drug trafficking and/or paramilitary groups (see Casas Duprey et al… 
2005).
in order to locate where the “call” was coming from. In a display of solidarity, neighbors were then to come out of their homes in order to “police” the situation. The bells did not ring at the local police station and in practice the program had neither formal nor informal links with the police. FLS and their bell trees explicitly drew on social capital theory that maintains that active citizens embedded in social networks that produce some sort of “capital” that works to reduce crime and make people live longer and happier lives (see, for example, Putnam 2001). These “security” measures made poor citizens in the lowest classes, one and two, responsible for their own security. Collaboration between the police and residents was defined by giving local communities minimal training and funds to provide their own security while the police reduced their presence in the neighborhood and re-asserted their position of superiority. Peñalosa intended for Mission Bogotá to support the FLS by installing the wires and bells necessary for their security tree. According to the city, Mission Bogotá guides had created 260 FLS by 2000 and equipped them with communication systems and alarms, allowing them to react “opportunely,” and without involving the police, when confronted with crime (Alcaldía 2000, 46).

These early Mission Bogotá guides were given forest green uniforms, instructed to stand at attention, and worked in teams of 10-20 people headed by an appointed leader armed with a walkie-talkie in order to “report things” to other leaders and the police. “[I]t was totally military,” reported the first director (CV interview). This “totally military” program was, not surprisingly, highly gendered. Its first project was to clean up a public park in the neighborhood El Rosario on November 7, 1998 (Martin and Ceballos 2004, 457). As described by the local press, twenty “official cars” drove into the poor neighborhood. “From one of the automobiles descended a man 1.93 meters tall… It was
Chapter Three: Learning to Work, Learning to Belong

Enrique Peñalosa Londoño, the mayor. He looked to both sides. Instantaneously, six District functionaries – all in green shirts that said, “Mission Bogotá – began to give the sector a new look. The men in green shirts” remodeled the plaza while local women busied themselves making empanadas and coffee (El Tiempo November 19, 1998). An accompanying photograph indicates nine men, all wearing green jumpsuits, breaking down a brick wall with a small tractor; the article was entitled, “Mission Bogotá operators destroy the walls of this house’s garden on account of a judicial order,” (El Tiempo August 30, 2001). This same vision of masculine penetration into poverty was described to me in interviews. According to an ex-functionary of the program, Mission Bogotá would “intervene” in poor, run-down neighborhoods. The state would arrive, bringing up to 40 state entities ranging from telephone to water services, and “take over” the space, painting, cleaning, and washing. The psychological impact on people of such an astounding, physically strong, and sudden state presence after years of neglect was described to me in an interview as “totally shocking” to the local communities.

Yet the state was not in agreement over the role Mission Bogotá should play in security provision. In fact, it was deeply divided. Peñalosa envisioned a very narrow role for the program as a security provider only, working to support the FLS and no more. Yet the woman Peñalosa hired with monies from the United Nations granted to the capital district for the purpose of institution strengthening to contract “expert” labor to direct the program had other ambitions, despite the fact that she was hand-chosen by the mayor! This director envisioned a much broader role for the program. As Peñalosa would not grant her the budget to expand the program as she desired, she created her own budget by contracting the guides out to various public and private entities, offering them cheap labor to clean
their parks, mow their grass, or just be present in order to provide an image of security for
them while generating budgetary and institutional independence for herself and the
program from the mayor’s office. Mission Bogotá guides were first contracted out to the
transportation company Transmilenio, local precincts, and other state bureaucracies as
security providers. For example, when the Secretary of Health needed to carry out
vaccinations, they contracted guides in order to mobilize people and get them there. The
director negotiated the high-profile donation of 2000 cell phones to FLS leaders by the
company Comcel, officially to “be used for security purposes” but recognized in interviews
as a tool for making the program visible and desirable, as cell phones were uncommon,
expensive, and coveted technology available only to the most elite in 1998 Colombia.

The high visibility, increasing power, and technological perks won by Mission
Bogotá soon created a rift between the police and the program. As a security measure,
Mission Bogotá was designed “in conjunction” with the police force in order to improve
police-community relations. “For Mission Bogotá it was of vital import to coordinate
actions with the police and overcome the distance that had developed over several decades
between this institution [of the police] and civil society. But it was not easy for the police
to accept the fact that they had to work with people who they did not recognize as
possessing sufficient practical knowledge regarding police work or the real situation that
existed in the city streets in terms of delinquency or criminality, even if these [civilian]
people had obtained higher university degrees or held important positions in [government]
administration,” (Martin and Ceballos 2006, 455). When confronted with the vast power
these paramilitary groups had amassed, the municipal police became “jealous,” in the
words of one contracted expert. The director of Mission Bogotá took advantage of the
institutional fissure to sever Mission Bogotá’s relation to the FLS and distance it from the police, allowing it greater institutional flexibility to multiply its points of engagement and embark upon educational campaigns and citizen mobilization regarding any number of issues.

With this reorientation of the program, the same police strategies and goals were applied directly to civil society without the presence or intervention of the police force, militarizing public space and civil society. Mission Bogotá continued to focus on improving the quality of public space, but now expanded its efforts to cleaning up its human inhabitants as well as its physical infrastructure. Marginal populations such as street inhabitants, sex workers, and youth were subjected to new forms of social cleansing, targeted by the city as dirty, out-of-place, and foreign, and thus the source of insecurity. Mission Bogotá meant to “organize” these dangerous, out-of-place populations, teaching them to adopt certain personal hygiene habits, making them wear uniforms, and regulating behaviors deemed unsightly – or uncitizenly – like smoking, swearing, and spitting. Homeless “recyclers” who lived on the streets gathering scrap metal from curbside garbage in the Center were given baths and state-issued dark green jumpsuits to wear. Prostitutes were “organized,” dressed in “normal” clothes and trained in STD prevention. The state employed 150 prostitutes to lead STD workshops, paying them 500,000 pesos per month – more than the monthly minimum wage – and creating public criticism that the state was promoting prostitution. There was such a flood of applicants that state employees had to drive through the red light district at night to ensure the applicants really did engage in sex for money, as, according to one state employee in charge of prostitute-verification: “everyone claimed to be a whore.” Youth were turned into “civic guides,” leaders in
civility, coexistence, and compliance with the law, by dressing them in dark green jumpsuits and placing them in highly visible points of dense pedestrian traffic in the Center. By inculcating habits of (self)regulation regarding their attire and personal hygiene homeless, recyclers, prostitutes, and youth were all visually stigmatized and properly (re)placed in public space as newly non-threatening elements. Importantly, this focus on eliminating dangerous elements from public space by transforming them into non-threatening, citizen elements, rather than killing them did not replace, but rather was complemented by, traditional social “cleansings” in the form of murder and massacres of these same populations.

Once properly attired, these at-risk populations went to work to improve the material or physical landscape of the city, participating in conjunction with the police in public works projects. The newly clean and jumpsuit-clad “recyclers” were paid about 2 USD a day\textsuperscript{40} to perform public maintenance like picking up litter, landscaping, and painting public space. The prostitutes were to control the spread of sexually transmitted disease and look like prostitutes in public. The youth, dressed in the same green jumpsuits as the homeless, were grouped into teams of 10-20, the leader armed with a walkie-talkie to communicate with other leaders and the police, and instructed to urge people to use cross walks and give directions to the disoriented, although city employees consistently reported in interviews that these youths were not as ambitious as the city would have liked, preferring to smoke cigarettes or marijuana when in large groups of their peers than guide other citizens in proper street etiquette. These groups assisted the city in a range of urban renovation projects, ranging from the beautification of the 7\textsuperscript{a} by picking up trash as part of Clean City (\textit{Ciudad Limpia}) to assisting with the “recovery” of San Victorino from street

\textsuperscript{40} 5,000 pesos a day
vendors (*El Tiempo*, October 4, 1998). These early initiatives were intended by the state to build social capital, helping citizens “to develop a sense of co-responsibility” for their security and surroundings and making people understand they have to provide communally for their own sanitation and security.

Like the FLS, Mission Bogotá was intended to build networks that produced social capital, from which crime reduction was but one positive by-product. “We started the program Mission Bogotá as an instrument to bring citizens together in order to further preventative and coexistence policies,” (Alcaldía 2000, 46). Following social capital theorists, the state also assumed that neighborhoods organized around this “security” initiative would naturally volunteer for community maintenance, like cutting the grass in the local park or picking up garbage in the streets. As one program officer stated in an interview, the goal was to make people think they were responsible for the environment in their neighborhood so that they would not let poverty serve as an excuse for crime-generating disrepair. Yet the program drew equally as much on Giuliani’s “broken window theory,” that sought to lower crime through police crackdowns on minor infractions, without trying to reconcile the tensions between the two. In fact, Mission Bogotá effectively combines them. Under this reasoning, Mission Bogotá was supposed to create “spaces of order” in which poor citizens had enough “responsibility” and “social capital” to improve the physical appearance of their neighborhoods and thus lower crime rates.

Mission Bogotá was chosen as the primary crime-reduction policy not in small part because of its low price tag. It was preferred by the district capital’s administration because it did not cost much and would not require increased state spending. In every interview I conducted, social capital was explicitly juxtaposed to economic capital, chosen
as an appropriate policy because the state did not have or did not want to spend economic capital on improving security. Every state employee with whom I spoke emphasized that one of the primary appeals of “social capital” as a solution to violent crime was the low overhead cost. The state could quickly and cheaply build hundreds of visible “networks,” and reproduce them by printing guides, directories, and charts of them. In this way the state could effectively expand its reach by incorporating each of these communities or networks while reducing its expenditures by making citizens responsible for the provision of basic community services such as the maintenance of public space and the provision of security.

Yet while preferred for its economy, the state readily recognized that Mission Bogotá did not really build lasting social capital or sustainable changes; instead openly admitting to the ephemeral nature of its intervention. The state spent one day in each neighborhood and then moved on, with no pretense of continuity. Its only hopes of sustainability were to develop a sense of co-responsibility, making people understand that they had to administer the programs themselves, to take control for themselves their neighborhood sanitation, security, and other state services. While states employees consistently acknowledged in interviews that these changes were not sustainable, they also noted the success of the program as a tool for teaching citizens the building blocks of self-governance: knowledge, networks, social capital and entrepreneurship. Citizens were, after all, drawn out of their homes, interacting with others, assuming responsibility for their neighborhood security, and participating in state programming, albeit momentarily.

State and Security: Visible, Embodied, Omniscient

While not affecting deeper or lasting social change, citizen guides are employed by the state to increase security by making both the state and security visible (“Hacer visible
el polo de la seguridad”). This was to be done by making human “security chains” that protect citizens (Alcaldía 2003, 2). The guides thus embody both the fragmentation of the state as well as physical security. At the beginning of 2002 the guides were given a make-over to make them more visible, changing in their dark green jumpsuits with new pants, shirts, jackets, and hats, all in a brilliant yellow with grey accents. Working in groups of 7-20 guides, identically clad from head to toe in shockingly bright yellow, the guides play a highly symbolic role, increasing the perception of security by inundating public space with representatives of the state: “with their presence, [citizen guides] contribute to the prevention of daily conflict, increasing the perception of security among citizens,” (Alcaldía 2006, 81). The state explicitly posited the guides as proxies of the state, important in their physical approximation to citizens: “One of the factors that generates citizen’s trust is the sensation of an institutional proximity (of the state) embodied in the figure of the citizen guides of Mission Bogotá,” (Alcaldía 2006, 80).
In order to achieve this end of the appearance of institutional proximity, the state flooded public space with somatic manifestations of itself, at times inhibiting traffic due to the density of the guides. By 2005, there were 4,527 guides in the city, located in 15 of the 20 precincts. There are now 894 guides in 284 different institutional spaces across city like Cades, the IDCT, and SENA, promoting “the exercise of citizen rights and duties.” The district estimates that these guides helped 5,842,721 citizens to better exercise their citizen rights and duties, such as paying taxes and registering deeds, given the close proximity of the state in the form of citizen guides in those institutional spaces (Alcaldía 2006, 87). Guides are also dispatched to any space or event that involves citizen participation in local government, like community or council meetings (JAL) and local elections or cultural events. They are expected to be present, organize the participants, and perhaps provide information or directions for those who are lost or confused. The guides hold banners and carry out massive awareness campaigns in 56 different places in the city to educate people in public space that they are responsible for their own well-being and safety. Three hundred and fifty guides work at 17 district events for kids, affecting, according to the state, an estimated 7,000 kids (Alcaldía 2006, 87). There are 235 guides who flood three precincts and 25 schools in order to help kids cross the streets on the way to school; the state has declared 12,000 kids safe because of the program. The state has also had citizen guides dispense information on children’s rights at 55 district events. Eighty-seven guides are employed to distribute information on peaceful conflict resolution at Justice Houses in 13 precincts (see Chapter 5), while 1,515 guides were dispatched to 250 different public events sponsored by the district, draped in materials reading “Celebrating the City,” in order to ensure security and orderliness among the 6,000,000 total participants, (Alcaldía
Guides are found in spaces of mobility, such as the public-private bus system Transmilenio and the bus depot, where they have a bright yellow tent station, carry banners, distribute stickers, and display brochures declaring themselves “City Hosts” (*Anfitriones de la ciudad*).

Guides are found with the greatest density in the historic center of the city, where they impede traffic and occupy, quite literally, the majority of public space. The state uses the guides to take over the center and “Recover Our History,” (“Recuperando nuestra historia”), because “It [the historic center] is our inherited city. It is the territory where all that we identify with symbolically is concentrated, the historic, architectural, cultural, political, and artistic landmarks; moreover, it integrates city customs, traditions, narrations, parties, and celebrations. It is an important referent of all Bogotanos and visitors that seek the beginning of the city that today spread out over the Sabana. It’s the memory that is offered to explain the modern city,” (Alcaldía 2006, 14). The Center is also privileged as a necessary site for citizen guides because it is the one place in the city where rich people have to interact publicly with poor people as a group and do not have direct control over them as they do when individual poor women go to their homes to clean or cook. Thus there exists greater fear and perception of crime in the Center as elites feel uncomfortable surrounded by so many poor. Guides are thus present there to create a culture of coexistence between these groups. “The Center must be the most attractive spot [in the city], where residents from the North and South meet each other… The Center is a strategic sector, the necessary link between the North and the South of Bogotá. That’s where the residents of each side converge. These conditions enable it to be a stage for pure coexistence (*toda una convivencia*),” (Alcaldía 2000, 140).
Appropriating the necessary concern for human rights required by the United States for continued funding under Plan Colombia, Mission Bogotá explicitly allotted some guides to keep vigil over “human rights” as well. Eighty guides are assigned to the historic Center at all times where they are supposed to inform people about cultural and historic patrimony of the city, helping what the state estimates to be 49,021 citizens exercise these “rights and duties” pertaining to knowledge of their culture and history, while another 46 guides promote “human rights” by holding educational events in parks on how to appreciate urban parks and use trash cans to dispose of litter. In seven educational events in different parks and botanical gardens, the state figures that 156,067 citizens were educated on their “human rights” (Alcaldía 2006, 89). These events consisted of guides who promoted “Environmental Citizenship” in the Botanical Garden by handing out stickers, banners, flags, and brochures covered in the slogan, and encouraging the use of public parks as spaces of coexistence.

Guides are particularly visible in spaces where the state has relinquished service provision to citizens by either privatizing or exhibiting such incompetence, lethargy, indifference, or corruption that it effectively avoids providing for the needs of citizens. For example, guides are subcontracted out to public-private entities and sub-local government offices as security providers. The state also provides guides in “new” spaces where citizens need “orientation” in order to “exercise their rights and duties” without resorting to violence (Alcaldía 2006 12-16). These space include the Transmilenio bus system, Supercades (see Chapter One), Super/Cades, Sisben distribution points, Displaced Persons Services (Unidad de atención integral a la población desplazada, UAID), community justice (unidad permanente de justicia, UPJ), domestic violence centers (centro de
atención integral a la violencia intrafamiliar, CAVIF), the ministry of education (servicio nacional de aprendizaje, SENA), the Secretary of Health, and the Veeduría Distrital. Each of these places is supposed to be a site where many state services are offered together in one building. Residents go to these places in order to attempt to perform any number of government transactions ranging from paying utility bills to requesting or changing land titles and deeds to requesting passports, obtaining educational scholarships, reporting domestic abuse, or receiving emergency food, education, or medical subsidies. In reality, they are massive holding sites or waiting rooms for citizens. Citizens enter any of these facilities and must find the correct section, usually directed by a Mission Bogotá guide, and then they wait to be attended by either standing in line or taking a number and sitting in a chair. They may wait for several hours or several days, accompanied by a citizen guide who will instruct them in patience and tolerance. The city frames the confusion and poor service provision generated in these spaces as one of their novelty and citizen inexperience. In reality, however, few of these spaces are “new”; the Transmilenio bus system, for example, started functioning six years ago, in 2002. Similarly, Super/cades were constructed several years ago, and only provide in one central location the same state services and bureaucracies that has existed for decades and with which everyone is very familiar. Instead, citizen guides have a permanent presence in these spaces in order to help or force citizens to negotiate poor, incompetent, lethargic, indifferent, or corrupt state services. Mission Bogotá guides are present in order to keep the frustrated and poorly treated citizens calm and treating one another – and state employees – with respect in spaces specifically designed to wear down and confuse citizens in their attempts to utilize them.
The state readily identified the necessity of this high profile and the need to make the program “easily identifiable” to citizens. According to the first director, “Mission Bogotá also developed a highly ambitious communication strategy, with its primary objective the introduction of the concepts that supported the strategy of security and coexistence of Mission Bogotá: To spread the concept of the “broken window” and make the FLS known among all Bogotá…. Additionally, it sought to make the program easily identifiable by all citizens. There was a profusion of pamphlets and graphic messages with the logo and colors of Mission Bogotá,” (as quoted in Martin and Ceballos 2004, 462). As the director was increasingly able to contract out the guide teams to local organizations, generating her own self-sustaining budget, the more she was able to expand the program, in a flurry of printing and production in the name of citizen education, with no subject left untouched. There was a wild proliferation of slogan, publications, and public relations campaigns. The Communications Department of the Secretary of Coexistence was key in the diffusion of this information. They inundated public space with a profusion of printed material with the signature stamp of Mission Bogotá, including the booklets, “Let’s Make a Pact” (Hagámos un pacto), a video series, and eight television programs entitled “Bogotá Vital” published and produced by the communications department of the Secretary of Coexistence (Martin and Ceballos 2004, 462). Mission Bogotá contracted a radio show and sought free publicity from journalists. It published a phonebook of all the FLS, as well as hundreds of flyers, brochures, and pamphlets. No common theme connected the publications, which ranged from cards to teach bike riders to follow traffic rules to children’s books that sought to involve kids in crime prevention and pamphlets with recipes for non-alcoholic drinks. Mission Bogotá published a monthly newsletter with an
activities agenda and had workshops to teach candle and jewelry making that were supposed to provide an alternative source of income to stealing. It provided bright red stickers for any “registered” business to place on their windows that read: “Citizen Security Network.” This registration, like other bureaucratic transactions, approvals, and authorizations in Colombia, was little more than a sham, a lesson in jumping through loopholes and patience, as according to the director, nobody failed the “inspection” and “inventory” required to “register.” They just wanted the owners to be compliant with the district and if they demonstrated compliance by reserving the day necessary to perform the “inventory” they would be awarded the sticker. An ex-director of Mission Bogotá stated in an interview that they sought to make the program visible by “documenting everything… [we] sought to give the impression of state presence, albeit psychological.” For the three years that this director held the post, there were literally thousands of flyers, pamphlets, folders, stickers, and publicity – enough to fill three big, overstuffed binders with just a sample of each, in fact.

Teaching a Culture of Citizenship

In addition to the amazing quantity of their physical, the state also intends for citizen guides to provide security by educating other citizens into self-regulating, patient coexistence (see Martin and Ceballos 2004, 459; Chapter 10).41 Citizen guides try to reduce violence and engender cohabitation by promoting “active citizenship” and “converting public space into a meeting place in which everyone is equal in terms of the exercise of rights and duties,” (Alcaldía 2006, 19, Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 5). The citizen guide “promotes self and collective regulation by her example of voluntarily compliance with

41 Originally called “civil” guides by Peñalosa, Mockus typically employed the term “citizen” guides. I will use “citizen” throughout for purposes of clarity.
rules,” (Claudia Vásquez, as quoted in Martin and Ceballos 2006, 459). Citizen guides are supposed to promote a culture of active citizenship, alternative conflict resolution, cohabitation, and solidarity as a means to reduce violence (Alcaldía 2006, 8; 74). Guides are described by the state as “informers,” providing the information necessary to figure out these confusing state bureaucracies to active citizens. Citizen guides are imagined by the state as agents of cultural change in these public spaces turning them into places where poor women can exercise or practice citizenship (Alcaldía 2006, 17). Citizen guides are to teach other citizens to be less violent in public spaces by providing them with information such that they can self-order or self-regulate. Guides must actively exhibit, teaching by example, “alternative mechanisms for conflict resolution [that] permit the citizenry to accede to other types of justice in accordance with their interests, expectations, and necessities,” (Alcaldía 2006, 81). According to the IPES website, Mission Bogotá seeks to “Contribute to the strengthening of neighborhoods and the good use and appropriation of public space through the promotion of practices and values founded in (enmarcados) a supportive citizen culture, as fundamental elements of improving coexistence and security in a Bogotá Without Indifference,” (IPES website). It is the hope and intention of the state that the citizen guides serve as a buffer between negligent state or public-private institutions and potentially angry, demanding, and impatient citizens. Thus guides are intended by the state to engender self-regulation and active citizenship in other citizens through example and moral approbation or disapproval only, as they are granted no coercive power.

Citizen guides are theoretically employed by the state to dispense public information, organize citizens, promote the state’s “institutional offer,” and facilitate access
to state institutions and services (Alcaldía 2006, 8, 30). The 80 guides assigned to the historic Center are supposed to educate people about cultural and historic patrimony of the city. According to the state, these guides have educated 49,021 people, enabling them to become full citizens who exercise their “rights and duties” pertaining to knowledge of their culture and history. Under the human rights program, guides are supposed to teach citizens how to appreciate urban parks and use trashcans to dispose of litter. In seven educational events in different parks and botanical gardens, the state figures that 156,067 citizens were educated on their “human rights” (Alcaldía 2006, 89). The guides teach “Environmental Citizenship” in the Botanical Garden by handing out stickers, banners, flags, and brochures covered in the slogan. They hold banners that chastise citizens for making purchases from informal street vendors and urge them to take responsibility for their own lives and security. They carry out massive public awareness campaigns throughout the city to educate people into assuming responsibility for their own safety and well-being. The city estimates that 5,842,721 citizens were able to better exercise their citizen rights and duties, such as paying taxes, registering deeds, and providing their own security with the assistance and example of the citizen guides (Alcaldía 2006, 87). Poor people are specifically identified as the target population for these citizenship lessons. As noted by Sáenz Obregón, a significant portion (28%) of citizenship initiatives directly target the poor, and this, she speculates, is an understatement (Sáenz Obregón 2004, 61). Besides the programs that are intentionally directed at the poor, as noted in an interview with the Coordinator of Mission Bogotá, nearly all of the programs target poor people’s “culture” by virtue of focusing on public space and state “services” that poor people are forced to utilize while those who have the means seek private space and services (Caldeira 2000).
Yet despite the security guides are supposed to provide, the vast majority of guides are simply dedicated to regulating and enforcing pedestrians as they walk. Guides “facilitate pedestrian mobility” across the city, making pedestrians use the crosswalk and wait for the light to indicate when to cross the street. According to the state administration, guides “constitute support for traffic, businesses and residents in terms of security and coexistence. Among other functions, the civic guides help kids, the elderly, and the handicapped to cross the street; they pay attention for all forms of robbery; they enter into contact with police officers when it is necessary; they demand of pedestrians that they cross at the crosswalk, and they orient citizens,” (Alcaldía 2000, 2.190). Indeed, the state operationalizes this great security measure as “facilitating and providing incentive for pedestrians to use the crosswalk, the sidewalk, the pedestrian bridge, the bus stop, and the stoplight,” (Alcaldía 2006, 13). Guides are imagined by the state as encouraging pedestrians to abide by foot traffic rules such as using crosswalks, waiting for the light to change before crossing the street, and catching the bus from official stops only, as well as waiting patiently in lines for state services, and thus decreasing violent crime.

Moreover, guides do not conduct traffic by example or moral approbation alone, but rather use a great deal of physical force. As illustrated in the photographs below, they physically force cars and pedestrians to respect traffic lights by blocking the intersections with huge, yellow banners. These signs display slogans that simultaneously link the presence of the guides to security while reinforcing that citizens, and particularly pedestrians, are responsible for providing their own security through respecting traffic laws and behaving nicely.
For example, these banners read “Solidary Street,” “culture of coexistence in public space,” “Relax: Enjoy public space with security,” “The Yellow Hug Accompanies You in Public Space,” and “Pedestrian: Watch Out for Your Life,” (“Peatón: Pilas con tu vida”). The guides also use whistles and signs to coerce, scare, or intimidate citizens into not buying from street vendors, to wait for the green light to cross the street, and to walk in the cross walk.

Yet less than half of all guides are dedicated to traffic control. The majority do nothing at all. They largely stand around in public space – loitering, if you will - chatting with each other and/or holding banners. They are present in large groups at all public events and in all public spaces, presumably to provide information or set examples. While they might field a question if approached, this is not their primary activity, nor a necessary one. Few people require information and the guides are seldom approached. Instead, the guides are important tools of governance simply because they are physically present, overwhelming public space with representations of the state and security, not because they do anything. The irony is that in interview after interview the larger public was both not oblivious to the fact that the guides don’t do anything – they repetitively poked fun at this
“job” that involved no work, described the guides as lazy or the job as easy, and criticized state expenditures on this “service,” while also liking the guides, feeling safer when they were present, and actually believing that it was their role to provide security, like police. Fundamentally, what the guides do is not as important a tool of governance as their visibility.

The state’s classification of citizen guides as security providers rather than public educators and Mission Bogotá as a security initiative rather than a civic or public service group has created serious public misperceptions. While most people think the guides do nothing, this is at least partially that what the public expects of the guides given their presentation as security providers, is security. For example, when a 21-year old student was stabbed to death during a mugging in front of a group of Mission Bogotá guides, there was public outrage that the guides had done nothing, even as witnesses had screamed at them for help (El Tiempo, November 15, 1999, 1D). The occurrence is significant not just in the blame attributed to the guides after the fact, when those coping with a violent and untimely death often need desperately to explain or blame someone. Rather, it conveys the depth of the ambiguity in the perception of guides both doing nothing, and being the first recourse for help when there is a security problem as they are, as the state intended, the most immediate and proximate manifestation of the state, and intentionally confused with security providers. Thus the witnesses called upon the guides to interfere when none of them would, and indeed, they would only, at best, expect the police to do so. But citizen guides are not police or security providers. They are unarmed and not even trained in first aid, much less crime prevention. They are wholly unqualified to act as police. And still the state promotes them as security providers and other residents internalize and maintain this
role in tension with their impression of the guides as poor, young, thieves, prostitutes, and single mothers who stand around and do little. This ambiguous role of the guides creates confusion regarding who exactly is responsible for the provision of security. The content of the guides’ own education, analyzed in the next section, will illustrate the role the state sees the guide’s as playing in crime reduction.

**Educating Citizen Guides: Reducing the Risk of Violent Behaviors**

Citizens in public space or caught in state bureaucracy are not the only ones being inculcated with a culture of citizenship. In fact, they are not even the primary target population of Mission Bogotá. The program, rather, actually focuses on inculcating a culture of citizenship in the guides themselves. Citizen guides are framed by the state as most in need of a culture of citizenship because they are identified by the state as “at risk” of displaying violent or anti-social behaviors. “Mission Bogotá is a program intended to produce security in the city by changing potential offenders into the directors and regulators of public life; it generates work while linking possible delinquents to city life,” (Alcaldía 2006, 84). To exercise “active citizenship” guides must be knowledgeable about their own rights and duties as citizens as well as facilitating other citizens in exercising their citizen rights and duties by giving them orders or information (Alcaldia 2006, 53).

There are four principal populations the state has identified as “at risk” of being violent delinquents. These include youth, the poor, women, and internally displaced persons or rural migrants. From time to time, the state has also targeted single mothers, recyclers, sex workers, street inhabitants, displaced peoples, informal vendors, reincorporated armed actors, ethnic minorities, and the disabled (Alcaldia 2006, 6). For
example, when the federal government guaranteed demobilized paramilitaries income and
work for two years, Mission Bogotá created some slots that were singularly designated for
demobilized paramilitaries. Yet three specific hiring guidelines have resulted, in practice,
in the definition of these “at risk” people as poor, young, displaced women, particularly if
they are single-mothers. All citizen guides are chosen only from the poorest socio-
economic classes 1, 2, and 3. In addition, sixty percent of the positions are reserved for
“youth” between the ages of 16 and 21 and another 60% are reserved for women, with a
particular emphasis on single mothers, even though the program does not provide any form
of childcare.

These various requirements, combined with the larger context of state policy and
gender stereotypes, have resulted in the drastic feminization of the program. The program
originally defined “at-risk” as male gang members and sought to link them to the police.
This emphasis on male youths explains the masculine uniform and emphasis on physical
labor during the early years of Mission Bogotá. Yet the project, like many flexible, low-
paying jobs that require few “qualifications,” was quickly feminized without recurring to
the reserved spaces. By the year 2000 photographic archives depict well-over 50% of new
employees being inaugurated in the Plaza Bolivar as women. In 2007 women far exceeded
the 60% quota, with women constituting over 80% of the guides and staff joking about
implementing affirmative action mechanisms for men. In the incoming classes I attended in
2007, there were between one and four male students in each group of 25.

42 In Colombia, socio-economic classes are clearly demarcated by the tax base of the area in which they
live. There are six categories, 1-6, with one being the poorest and 6 being the richest. As Bogotá is highly
segregated by class, which class is easily identified by geographic location in the city, dress, talk, and
occupation.
As the project became increasingly feminized, incorporating far more single mothers than male gang members, it became more and more difficult for the state to sustain the belief that these people were violent threats to society. These young, poor mothers simply did not match the state’s stereotype or actual profile of violent street thugs who are almost singularly men. The state thus created multiple images of the target population and layered the rational for the program. The result was two contradictory images existing side-by-side. The state now simultaneously, or alternately, argue that this target population is both “at risk” of engaging in violent behaviors as well as “violated” and “marginalized.”

One state training manual reads: “Project Mission Bogotá guides are people who come from populations whose rights are violated and have had few possibilities to know and appropriate the exercise of citizen rights and duties,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 9). The municipality thus engaged in both stigmatizing and destigmatizing this violent/vulnerable population. According to one director of the program:

The intention of the civic guide was to make absolutely clear that the District Administration had to recognize and make an effort to destigmatize “the bad ones,” that is, those who are beggars, street inhabitants, sex workers and thieves… Instead of “the bad ones,” they turn into the smartest people… this was pretty revolutionary, that you would have a civic guide, knowing that s/he had been a thief, a sex worker, or recycler and that s/he was orienting you to be a better citizen… It was a message of social inclusion in order to demonstrate that the topic of inclusion was fundamental in order to lower aggression and insecurity in the city (as quoted in Martin and Ceballos 2006, 460).

The state identifies four “citizenship competencies” that it believes reduce the likelihood that the guides will indulge their violent tendencies, thus increasing societal security. These four “citizen competencies” include a good work ethic, a feeling of belonging to the city, and respect for or tolerance of difference, and good communication
skills. According to the state, mastering these skills will make guides good citizens, responsible for their own security and non-threatening to others. The program’s main goals, then, is to take poor, dangerous populations, inculcate in them citizen competencies, and “hand over citizens to Bogotá,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 13). The state allows a relatively brief period of time – one year – for the inculcation and development of these “citizenship competencies,” as opposed to the relatively longer period of time it would take to structurally address their situations of structural disadvantage and exclusion.

The state uses myriad pedagogic tools to teach the guides to be competent citizens. Guides are required to take a 5-question multiple-choice exam and a psychological evaluation in order to enter the program. There are no minimum requirements, however, and the scores are not even collected by the state to establish an initial indicator. Instead, the exams merely serve as tools of governance that display the state’s ability to test and evaluate them. After presenting the intake tests, the guides enter the “introductory classroom” which consists of three weeks of education in a cramped room with about 30 chairs, a dry erase board, and one small desk for the teacher. Sliding cardboard partitions separate each room. The class meets every morning from 9-12 and three afternoons a week for three additional hours. There is no official book or material for this course. The city provides each instructor with a “lesson plan” that consists of the topic for the day, ranging from an introduction to what Mission Bogotá is, to the rights and duties of citizens, citizenship culture, urban mobility, body language, non/verbal communication, community justice, non-violent conflict resolution, Justice Houses, and public space.

Beyond the daily topic, classroom activities are left completely up to the instructor’s discretion, and class content and the structure of classroom time thus varied
greatly from instructor to instructor. The instructors themselves have no formal training and are not certified teachers. They are contracted only for the three-week stints, and come from any variety of backgrounds ranging from artists to community activists, with no explicit degree requirement. Yet they all attempted to educate the future guides on the citizen competencies of hard work, good communication, non-violent conflict resolution, and belonging. In one class students sat in a circle and threw yarn balls to one another, taking turns talking about where they were born and how they celebrate religious holidays. As every single student identified as Catholic, the lesson to be learned was not religious tolerance or respect, but that of belonging. Only a handful of students were not from Bogotá, and they seemed to have the same religious traditions as everyone else. But the teacher concluded that people who are not born in Bogotá do not appreciate the city, its weather or customs, and thus must learn to appreciate it and share in its culture. Students were quizzed on their civic and geographic knowledge of the city, such as how many precincts it has and where the aqueduct is located.

Guides-in-training had several different days dedicated to different forms of communication. They learned about verbal and non-verbal communication, with emphasis placed on the latter. Guides were taught to display pleasantness and enthusiasm for their work through their facial expressions and arm gestures. Guides also received various classes on community justice and “alternative” (re: non-judicial, non-state) conflict resolution. Good communication was supposed to enable the non-violent and non-judicial, communal resolution of conflicts. Guides thus memorized the lengthy list of state actors and agencies involved in community justice. They learned that conflict is the natural result of difference and is best resolved with tolerance, while a problem is a legal matter requiring
community justice mechanisms. They learned about Justice Houses and various procedures of conciliation, mediator, and arbitration (see Chapter 6).

Finally, each class conducted two outings through the historic to build a shared sense of to the same city. All guides must complete a tour of the historic Center that emphasizes a common urban history and identity. Through the hour and a half walk, different landmarks and historical sites were pointed out to the guides, who were instructed to be watchful and take note of their surroundings, the architecture, and how people behaved in the space. Additionally, all guides must complete a tour of the Luis Angel Arango Library. Few had spent any amount of time in the center and none in any of the groups I accompanied had ever been inside the Luis Angel Arango library, a fact for which the soon-to-be guides were chided by their teachers for staying at home and watching television instead of getting out and appreciating – or appropriating - the city.

After the initial three weeks in the classroom, guides are sent out to their work sites where their education is continued on the job. This education continues to emphasize the core “citizen competencies” of entrepreneurialism, good communication, non-violent conflict resolution, and a sense of belonging to the city under a program entitled “To Be - Is/You are –Life and Work Competencies (SER-ES: Competencias para la vida y el trabajo). As described by the state administration, this portion of the program is yet another “attempt to educate the guides in citizenship competencies,” (Alcaldía 2006, 49). The guides are given a workbook, and taught (or overseen) by a teacher (gestor) with the basic goal, as stated in the teacher’s guide, “to strengthen their basic citizen competencies,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 8). The workbook focuses on three forms of development that are supposed to be necessary for the citizen competencies of hard work,
Chapter Three: Learning to Work, Learning to Belong

The three forms of citizen development identified by the state consist of: cognitive (the ability to reflect and analyze), emotional (the ability to identify and respond constructively to other’s emotions), and communicative (to listen and understand arguments, express oneself firmly but without aggression, and develop positive and assertive communication). A fully developed citizen, according to the state manual, is able to integrate these three competencies, manifested in the ability to peacefully deal with the conflict that stems from diversity. These citizen competencies are almost verbatim taken from Almond and Verba’s (1963) citizen “orientations” - cognitive, affective, and evaluational - that they theorized defined a political culture.

Women, the poor, and youth are considered by the state to be cognitively, emotionally, and communicatively retarded or underdeveloped, and thus violent. Yet these traits are not considered inherent, but malleable. Guides can be educated into cognitive, emotional, and communicative non-violence, although only if constantly surrounded by educational opportunities to counter their natural deficiencies. The city is turned into one big educational setting for the guides. The teacher’s manual for the guide’s mentor program states, “[I]n accordance with the educational intent of Mission Bogotá, all interactions with the guides should be constituted as pedagogical actions that lend themselves to the exercise of active citizenship,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 10, see also Alcaldía 2006, 52).

The actual lessons meant to develop these cognitive, emotional, and communicative capabilities necessary for democratic (peaceful) citizenship focus on the memorization of the rights and duties of citizens; factoids about the geographic layout, history, and cultural appeal of the city; lessons on politeness, non-verbal communication, and active listening;
and the elaboration of a culture of work. In response to their anticipated violent resolution of conflict, guides are taught good communication skills and respect for difference, which are supposed to lead to the peaceful conflict resolution through dialogue. The class reads a story about jealous boyfriends who “misread” a salutary kiss on the cheek, and are supposed to practice assertive communication by writing the lyrics to a song that the jealous boyfriend could dedicate to the girlfriend. The training manual also seeks “to strengthen their capacity to live with others, valuing difference, and understanding that diversity is an element that enriches cohabitation, formulating and respecting agreements and reformulating them when needed,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 10). The guides are taught to respect difference in lessons entitled “With respect there’s room for all,” in which the guides look at international agreements regarding global warming. The necessity of agreements in the face of dangerous diversity is emphasized as the only way to prevent violence. “Guides must “value difference as an element that enriches coexistence,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 15). The Bogotá Chamber of Commerce certifies the guides as “Facilitators of Peaceful Conflict Resolution” because of the communication skills and respect for difference they have learned during the course.

In response to their perceived status as foreigners, guides are taught information about the city in order to inculcate a feeling of belonging in the metropolis that will overcome anomie. “[I]t, [Mission Bogotá] seeks to facilitate the process of transitioning between previous territories, settings, and traditions and the demands of the new urban dynamics for those who do not feel they belong to the city,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 14). Citizen guides are thus taught to “appropriate” the city by learning facts about its demographics, history, and geography. “This educational/formational axis seeks to
generate processes that permit the guides to feel as though they participate in the
city” is a lesson meant to test the guides knowledge of the city’s cultural and tourist
attractions, which are defined as diversity, and to teach them to appropriate these
attractions as their own, by having information in order to guide other citizens and tourists
when visiting those sites. The guides are thus asked to plan an agenda for a friend that has
come to Bogotá to visit. They are supposed to incorporate different museums, libraries.
Churches, plazas, parks, cinemas, shopping centers and universities to visit, as well as be
able to recite trivia about Bogotá like the number of inhabitants and the year its mass transit
system was built. Finally, they must identify the names of each of the 20 precincts in a
crossword. However, in the 3 groups of guides I followed, the vast majority were born in
Bogotá. Only a handful had migrated from surrounding towns.

These exercises and course materials and trainings emphasized poverty as foreign
to the city. As all the guides are poor, this assumes that the guides are outsiders or non-
natives to the city and feel as though they do not belong there. Poverty constructed as
foreign, does not belong, must have been displaced or migrated; citizens not poor or
violent. Those (poor) who are not born in the city but migrate to it due to forced
displacement, job opportunities, or family connections, are described by the administration
as not belonging to the city. Poor migrants are otherized and ascribed antisocial feelings
stemming from lacking a sense of belonging to the city. Mission Bogotá thus “posits the
need to facilitate processes of transition between previous territories, scenes and traditions
and the exigencies of the new dynamics for those citizens that live in the city but do not
feel as though they totally belong to it,” (Alcaldía 2006, 54). For guides, this implies
constructing a feeling of “belonging” to the city in order to curb their violent tendencies that stem from feeling or being other or foreign. The very poor themselves are seen as other and described by the administration as migrants or not “of” the city. Yet in hundreds of interviews I conducted and the classes I attended, I witnessed no evidence of either an overrepresentation of people from outside of Bogotá, nor feelings of estrangement from the city, but rather, multiple conceptions of the city.

In response to their alienating poverty, guides are taught a good work ethic. In order to exercise their rights and duties as citizens, guides must “know the rights and duties of human beings and of the undertaking of a productive activity,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 15). Central to the project of making guides “productive” is the inculcation of a culture of work (promueve una cultura laboral y ciudadana). “Upon finishing their contract with Mission Bogotá, the guides understand that the possibility of developing a productive activity requires assuming work habits and recognizing the rights and duties derived from different economic activities,” (Alcaldía 2006, 56). These work habits include arriving on time, wearing a uniform, and not smoking on the job or when wearing the uniform.

One of the lessons guides have in their workbook that is supposed to create a work “competency” is entitled “I seek out opportunities for myself.” The guides read a very short story:

Luz Dary is 22 years old. She completed the 9th grade and now works as a brick layer. She was just offered an 18 month contract at a construction site near the Hospital Simon Bolivar. Luz Dary thinks “It’s nice to find work, but I’m worried that I live so far away. From my house in the South (Ciudad Bolivar), I’ll have an hour and a half commute in public transportation each way. I’d have a stable income, but would spend so much time commuting. How could I turn this wasted time into productive time? (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 46).
Finally, Luz Dary decides to take an English class on Saturdays and make her lost time productive by practicing English through a walkman during her trip. The instructor’s manual indicates for the teacher to “emphasize the concept of productive time,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 49). Instructors are told to point out the Luz Dary does not have a problem, but an opportunity (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 49). The discussion questions do not revolve around, or even mention, structural issues such as why Luz Dary cannot find a job closer to home, why she is only contract labor, the quality of public transit, the spatial distribution of poor housing and new constructions, and who has access to privatized transportation, be it taxis or their own cars. Instead of dwelling on these issues or whether Luz Dary should take the job or not, guides are challenged to think of ways they would spend their time on the bus, and to link these activities to larger long-term goals in order to be considered “productive.” “The objective is to reinforce the importance of self-realization for the guides,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 49). The guides are told that they should distinguish between what is urgent - daily subsistence - and what is important – setting mid-term goals for getting ahead – “and privilege what is important, as urgent necessities like eating and shelter are not important,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 45, emphasis added). The lesson ends by suggesting the students read The Tortoise and the Hare to drive the point home one final time that slow, steady, constant work pays off.

In the guides’ training, productivity is equated with self-sufficiency and responsibility. “Mission Bogotá is a project run by the IPES that contributes to the economic and social development of the city through…. The development of both productive and citizen competencies in the guides that strengthen their capacity to exercise full citizenship and contribute to their own process of social and economic
Guides are also taught to be irrationally loyal workers. One of the lessons the have that is supposed to form a work “competency” is entitled “Ask for what you’re willing to give,” seeks that “The guide understands that the possibility of engaging in a productive activity requires building work habits and recognizing the duties and rights derived from commitment,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 53). The lessons teaches the guides that a job is like belonging to a team or group to which you have a commitment that is stronger that your personal wants or desires. It displays three friends talking in a group. One describes his job with a theatre group, saying, “It has been very difficult to sustain my participation in the theatre group because I have to totally dedicate myself to practice and presentations. Sometimes I feel that I will not have the strength to continue; I would like to have time for other things.” Another friend concurs: “The commitment for my job in very heavy, on many levels: time, effort, knowledge. When I imagine the future, I would also like something less intense.” But they are quickly reprimanded by a friend, who has the final word: “Friends, we can’t get distracted now (ponernos con bobadas). We all know that the effort is enormous. But how are we going to back out now if what we wanted was to belong to these groups? Remember how much we wanted [to get these jobs/belong to these groups] and the commitment we gave in the interviews. Now put yourselves to the
task!" (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 58). The guides are then encouraged to discuss how they understand their commitment to their jobs, and encouraged to think of their jobs as groups to which they belong and owe loyalty. Ironically, this is far from a capitalist spirit. Instead, the guides are being taught to be good workers and accept their lowly places in society and legitimize their hard work and satisfaction in those places. The manual indicates that the instructor should underline the fact that if we agree to be a part of a “group” “we assume a commitment to take on the hardships necessary to remain in the group,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 60).

The second fundamental component of the work ethic guides are taught is how to be economically productive within the informal economy. The classes “suggest the strengthening of citizen competencies oriented toward the insertion of the guides in the economic and productive life of the city,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 22). In their “appropriation” of the city, guides are taught to “recognize the city as a dynamic territory that allows them to undertake productive activities,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 15). As they become familiar with the political and spatial administration of the city, guides are instructed to “identify productive alternatives” that they could undertake instead of wasting time in public transit or “illegally” selling in public space (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 16). “It is hoped that the intention to educate [guides] in citizenship competencies for life and work translates into the empowerment of the guides through the exercise of rights and duties, and the appropriation of their role as informers, directors, and promoters of the good use and enjoyment of the city,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 12).

The yellow uniform donned by guides plays a central role in both the state’s symbolic occupation of public space and their efforts to inculcate a culture of work in these
poor women. “The gestor will teach the guides the meaning of the uniform as a symbol of the District Administration,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 24). “The uniform will be worn in its entirety and without additional accessories. The identity card of the IPES-Program Mission Bogotá is part of the uniform and must be displayed in a visible place. Additionally, the guide must always carry her health insurance card and state identification (cédula). The uniform must be used in the spaces of intervention during the workday. After the workday, if it is necessary to use the uniform, it will be worn in its entirety/completely and without any additional clothing or accessory. If it is necessary to take the uniform off, it must be taken completely off in a private space. If the guide arrives at the area of intervention without the complete uniform, s/he will be sent home without exception and must make up that work day,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 24).

Guides are closely monitored by a third party that “permits the analysis of recurring difficulties in fulfilling the guide's work,” such as “failure to fulfill his/her duties” or “difficulties regarding coexistence,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 28). Should such difficulties be noted by the supervisor, guides are drawn into “mediation” during which the guide and the supervisor sign an “agreement of commitment” after “reflection” with the area coordinator. If the guide is again written up for breach of contract or conflicts with others s/he is remitted to the psychology team that “offers pedagogical assessment to the supervisor and the guide in order to strengthen the guide’s work competencies,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 29). In the third case, the guide is forced to meet with the oversight committee comprised of a lawyer, the area coordinator, the supervisor of the contract, and one representative of the SER-ES oversight committee, who meet, have a hearing, and make a written decision. “This regulation should not be understood as watching over the guides in
order to sanction them, but rather as the disposition to critically and constantly go over the diverse motivations that play a role in decision making, attitudes, and opinion,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 27).

During the last month of their contract citizen guides are given a final exam that consists of ten multiple-choice questions. The municipal administration presumes that this multiple choice test evaluates the guide’s cognitive understanding of citizenship, defined, again, as their ability to work hard, resolve conflict peacefully, and belong to the city. However, there is no minimum criteria or “grade” on the exam in order to enter the program; similarly, there is no way to “fail” the exit exam, though the District does threaten that it takes the final evaluation into consideration when referring guides to work opportunities after their contract expires, though they are not clear in what capacity. Guides are referred to employment opportunities through the program “Enlaces,” literally, connections or links (Alcaldía 2006, 7). Enlaces offers the guides information regarding state services and “productive” opportunities once they have completed their training: Enlaces “indicates the guides towards opportunities for income generation and other services,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 8). Program coordinators, however, are insistent that they don’t “give” away jobs: “Enlaces invites the guides to exercise their rights and duties from an autonomous and self-enterprising (autogestionario) point of view through access to information, recognizing that the exclusion of people from circuits of information limits their possibility of exercising rights and duties by not knowing the suitable channels and mechanisms to do it,” (Alcaldía 2006, 57). “Enlaces will remit guides to external district services and orient them about the following procedures, but it will not advance active negotiations, as the program seeks to promote the capacity to negotiate for
oneself.” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 28). In 2005, 3,969 guides were given information on state services, but only 1,740 guides were recommended by the state to an employer (Alcaldía 2006, 58). In any case, there are certainly no guarantees that a recommendation from the state will promise a job, and no statistics on how often or when it might do so. For example, one women interviewed was recommended to painting companies, as MB had employed her for six months to paint park benches. But painting companies only employ men, and laughed at the applicant when she went for interviews, insinuating that she did not know her place in the gender hierarchy.

The culture of work into which the state is seeking to initiate the guides is in some ways a very neoliberal one. First, the guides are contract labor, limited to one year with the organization. Second, as contract labor, guides are responsible for paying their own health insurance and pension contribution. Given Law 80 of 1993, all state employees must affiliate with the General System of Social Security before they can start working and/or receive their first paycheck. This means an up-front investment of nearly half the monthly minimum wage - 224,000 pesos or about $115 dollars - just in order to take the job, no small amount for people from the socio-economic classes of 1-3.

While Mission Bogotá seeks to include potentially dangerous, marginalized populations into urban life, this “inclusion” is very limited. It seeks to include these poor women into “citizenship” by redefining citizenship as a practice that overcomes not the structural or material but the intellectual, emotional, and attitudinal characteristics of their poverty. As a technology of governance, the District redefines “citizenship” not as a legal status but as a practice: “citizenship is understood not as a starting point in and of itself, but rather as a practice that seeks both individual and collective recognition and
affirmation,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 14). Citizenship, properly practiced, is supposed to address poverty not in a structural manner but by inculcating a culture of work. Yet guides are kept poor by limiting their contract to one year and paying them the minimum salary, just over 200 USD a month in 2007. Violent tendencies are overcome and citizenship practiced by learning tolerance, respect, and good communication. Socio-spatial marginalization is not structurally rearranged, but rather overcome by feeling a part of the larger city. Guides’ subordinated positions in society then are not structurally addressed, but rather, they are “integrated” into a concept of citizenship defined as a practice that helps the guides themselves to deal with or become placatory with, if not overcome, their structural oppressions. As stated in the guides’ training manual: “The process of social integration that Project Mission Bogotá furthers intends to strengthen guides in the development of their citizenship competencies, facilitating the exercise of their citizenship,” (Cuaderno Gestor 2007, 10). Thus these poor women are not to be integrated into the middle or even working class, consumer society, or political parties. Instead, their “citizenship” has been (re)defined as increasing their tolerance, respect of diversity, and work ethic, all of which are supposed to engender peaceful conflict resolution.

Governance through Spectacle

As with other citizenship culture initiatives, the idea of citizen guides has been both institutionalized in Bogotá and exported to other cities around the country. It’s institutional stability and continuity in Bogotá was ensured through a 2006 administrative reform that eliminated its dependence upon changing administrations for funding and leadership,

44 Colombian society is sharply divided into six “strait” based on the tax bracket for utilities their neighborhood falls into, one being the poorest and six being the wealthiest. These tax divisions are also used as social categories to describe socio-economic and class status. The original contract limit of six months was lengthened to one year in June 2006, and paid 426,000 pesos per month in 2007.
ensuring the institutional autonomy and permanence of the program.\textsuperscript{45} The original budget of about $300,000 in 1999 grew to over a million dollars in 2007.\textsuperscript{46} By the end of 2005, 4,041 guides had been (re)educated through Mission Bogotá, and the anticipated number of 1,650 guides for 2007 had been surpassed by September.

Guides are a public spectacle, the embodiment of the state’s fragmentation. They clutter public space, making the state hyper-visible, giving the illusion of institutional proximity, and engendering compliance with ridiculous displays of authority that enact and create state power. The guide’s ability to engender complicity with inadequate state services as well as the state’s ability to beget willing and active guides invested in their own (re)education into non-violent citizens indicates that the Colombian state has not lost its normative capacity as described by Bejarano and Pizarro (2000). Instead, its authority now stems from this fragmentation of the state into thousands of yellow-clad bodies that inundate public space as human expressions of the state. In this sense, Mission Bogotá uses visibility as a technology of government, but not in the way typically described by Foucault or Foucault scholars who tend to focus on how technologies of government make the population visible (e.g., Inda 2004, Rose 1999, Burchell, Gordon, and Miller 1991, Dean 1999). Visibility becomes an innovative technology of government in contemporary Colombia in which the state governs by making itself visible, thus creating the image of an attentive, active, responsive, present state. This image is as important a tool of governance as the actual practices of the state (see Migdal 2001), particularly in the institutional “margins” of the state where the state has constructed spaces of confusion, institutional

\textsuperscript{45} District Agreement 257 of November 30, 2006 changed the Popular Sales Fund (FVP) into the Institute for a Social Economy (\textit{Instituto para la Economía Social}, IPES) and placed it in charge of the coordination of Mission Bogotá as well as the relocation of ambulant vendors (see Chapter 3).

\textsuperscript{46} $500,000,000$ and $18,000,000,000$ Colombian pesos, respectively.
lethargy, and corruption, within the boundaries of its own capital city, the geographic and political center of the state.

The success of Mission Bogotá illustrates the strength of the Colombian state through its ability to increase inequality and differentiated citizenship while still engendering wide-scale approval and legitimacy. Thus the basis for differentiated citizenship is a complex intersection among class, gender, age, and sexuality. By specifically focusing on poor, young, mothers, the state created a unique population of guides. This population is simultaneously threatened and protected by the state by offering them badly needed jobs, income, training, and security, while at the same time pathologizing them and framing them as potential infractors (see Das and Poole 2004; Tilly 1985). Mission Bogotá is yet another example of the way in which citizen culture ascribes to the “myths” of urban violence that attribute it to intolerance, poverty and exclusion, and a cultural habit (Llorente et al 2001). Thus is wrongly focuses on the poor, displaced, and recent immigrants to the city as foci of insecurity, while overlooking criminal mafias and gangs that are related to drug cartels, paramilitary forces, and guerrilla groups. The state very successfully transfers the ambiguity of its own role as protector/perpetrator to these women, the closest embodiment of the state most people encounter over the course of their day. As the state is increasingly feminized through the expansion of the program, this ambiguity of protector/perpetrator is projected onto the women guides, who are socially perceived as both victims and threats. Poor young men were not able to successfully somatize this tension of the state as both protector and threat, and thus the program was refocused to eliminate their participation. Instead, poor women were uniquely situated to
serve as the dialectical image, one whose apparent stillness obscures the tensions that actually hold it in suspension (Benjamin 1986; Wright 2001, 143).

Like the Mexican maquiladora women described by Melissa Wright (2001) whose still image hides their ambiguous constitution as both waste and value, the guide’s “death by culture” is used by the state to blame the women themselves for the poverty and violence they suffer, thereby absolving the state from providing for their security or economic well-being. Yet unlike the maquila women who are described as untrainable, the Colombian state frames the guides as highly trainable and spends considerable time, if not money, on their (re)education. To the extent that these poor, young, mothers are seen as violent threats to society, the state still believes that they can be rehabilitated through education and participation in a culture of work. The state draws directly from social capital theory in ascribing to the belief that political cultures, even violent, non-working ones, can change with education. The guides are thus encouraged to participate more, and educated in “citizen competencies” drawn directly from Almond and Verba’s (1963) cognitive, affective, and evaluational “citizen orientations.” The state assumes that those who belong to any of the target populations of poor, women, youth, or migrants are deficient or retarded in these categories and thus do not solve problems peacefully. Yet the guides are taught to overcome their problematic traits the state considers malleable – violence and non-belonging – and cope with the traits considered immalleable - gender and poverty. The state does not comment on the fact that all social capital scholars concur that political culture can only be learned or changed very slowly, over generational replacement.
Finally, Mission Bogotá is riddled with contradictions that far surpass the state’s tendency to both protect and threaten. The culture of work the guides are indoctrinated into is itself contradictory, combining elements of both capitalist as well as non-capitalist economic systems. The guides are trained daily into a culture of savings, short-term, contractual employment, self-actualization and participation, private benefits and pension plans, entrepreneurial spirit, and individuality, independence, and self-reliance. As described by EP Thompson (1967), they are taught to subvert their body’s natural time and rhythms, synchronizing and regimenting movements and behaviors. Like the usina farm in Brazil described by Nancy Scheper-Hughes, where workers were taught how to cut cane and even urinate in order to conserve calories and maximize their work output, guides are trained to be better and more efficient workers, and subsequently blamed for their own poverty and hunger for failing to fully learn or adopt the work ethics they were taught (see Scheper-Hughes 1992, 58-62). This culture of work transfers responsibility for structural poverty from the state, international financial institutions and large corporations to the poor themselves who are then blamed for their own poverty because of ignorance and/or lack of citizenship values which can only be overcome by “participating” in “building awareness” (concientización), “trainings” (capacitación), increased taxation, and providing for their own security through neighborhood self-defense units (Everett 1997, 141; Goldstein 2004, 83-4; 211-212; Schild 2000, 282). Yet far from the “market citizens” of contemporary democracies who are “viewed as capable of enhancing their lives through judicious, responsible choices as consumers of services and other goods,” (Schild 2000, 276), the guides’ education reveals the non-liberal underpinnings of contemporary forms of capitalism, as they are taught to stay in low-paying and high-intensity jobs even when they
want to leave, to feel personal loyalty to their employer, and to think of their market interactions emotively rather than with rational calculation. Calculative technologies of government are used on the guides in order to make the free agents who make their own decisions within stiffly defined parameters of asymmetrical relations (Miller 2001, 381). These worker citizens are exempted from the market by their poverty, and taught to make work decisions that are non-rational, non-individualist, and non-competitive, based instead on royalty, emotions, patronage, and status. In doing so, the non-capitalist and non-liberal underpinnings of neoliberalism are exposed.

Mission Bogotá is thus constructed around further internal contradictions and tensions as a result of the “layering” of slogans, colors, policies, and goals resulting in a dense, contradictory, confusing, and nearly incoherent, but omnipresent state, that inescapably fills public space and structures people’s daily behaviors and perceptions of security. With each new change of staff, expert opinion or personal desire, new policies, programs, goals, or slogans were added on top or alongside the previously existing ones like layers. These layers were often contradictory and always overwhelming. The “citizen culture” policies put forth by Mockus differ ideologically from the “broken window” theory advocated by Peñalosa and the “culture of work” espoused by the Garzón administration, yet each new administration added a new layer of ideological justifications and goals without eliminating previously existing, and contradictory, ones. The initiative was thus simultaneously justified by both civic culture theory based on the premise of voluntary, good will associations, and the “broken window” theory based on increased police surveillance and coercion, without trying to reconcile the tensions between the two. It claimed to provide an alternative to increased policing yet pointedly militarized the
program. It both sought to incorporate and assist “marginalized” or “target populations” at the same time it pathologized them and framed them as the sources of insecurity. Mission Bogotá slips back and forth between claims that the poor, women, prostitutes, other socially marginalized populations cause insecurity and, alternately, that they are victims of social, economic, and political marginalization. Mission Bogotá recognizes the structural nature of their oppression, but provides temporary, individual improvements.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have traced the creation and transformation of Mission Bogotá, a novel program designed to build citizen culture and reduce violence. Mission Bogotá is a new technology of governance created to fill the vacuum of the state when tried and true technologies such as the creation of statistics and other forms of knowledge production were rendered impotent. I have illustrated how this program successfully deployed the state’s two novel technologies of governance, state fragmentation and citizen education, to transfer the responsibility of security provision from the state to citizens through the use of citizen guides. First, citizen guides inundate public space with thousands of human embodiments of the state, making the state both visible and proximate to other citizens. Second, the state engaged in differentiated citizen education, fomenting a culture of citizenship in regular citizens in public space by making them comply with ridiculous displays of state power and active participation in lethargic and incompetent state services. Meanwhile, “at-risk” populations were educated into a culture of work, tolerance, and belonging in order to eliminate their misanthropic tendencies and turn them into model citizens. While these state policies took place in the context of public space, in the next chapter, I will look at contestations over public space itself, as the state tries to reclaim
public space as the privileged site of citizenship, pathologizing and (re)educating street vendors on the way.
Introduction

Citizen culture was marked by contestations over the meaning and use of public space. As Colombia democratized throughout the 1990s as a violence reduction measure, public space became seen as a “privileged place of citizen communication,” central to the exercise of participatory, democratic politics (Vich 2004; Sarlo 2000). At the same time, by the late 1990s, Colombia was mired in a deep economic depression with 52.3% of the population mired in poverty by 2003 (DANE 2003, 38). These simultaneous processes of democratization and economic crisis threatened established social hierarchies by expanding political rights and diminishing socio-economic distance, making class positioning

precarious, feeding uncertainty and disorder and prompting the policing of social
boundaries by elaborating prejudices and marks of distinction in order to reinforce fading
social difference and refine separations. Sustaining a perception of difference, narrate
violence, explain instability by constructing the urban poor as barbaric, dangerous,
polluting, and foreign; relying on discriminatory and stereotypical tropes (Caldeira 2000,
74; Guano 2004; Caldeira and Holston 1998; Holston 2008).

In this chapter I analyze various spatialized languages of citizenship (Radcliffe
2004) in Bogotá as the city attempts to re-structure daily life by “recovering” public space
from street vendors and relocating them to segregated markets as a spatial technology of
governance that seeks to preserve public space as a privileged site for privileged citizens.
This process is made possible by the proliferation of state agencies, policies, and plans that
define the problem of public space as one of its invasion by ambulant vendors and the
solution to this invasion as the relocation of vendors to spatially marginalized and state
regulated markets where they are taught to overcome their “culture of informality” by
keeping strict working hours in a confined space and opening savings accounts. I argue
that the recovery of public space and relocation of street vendors to peripheral, enclosed
markets is a spatial technology of governance that produces new forms of segregation in
which citizens and street vendors have differentiated places and rights, while coding
structural inequalities as a question of culture.

This social contestation is manifested and shaped by struggles over urban space, As
space is not simply an empty container, but the dialectic reflection and mold of social
public space was proclaimed by the state to be a “social inversion,” that levels wealth
inequality (Alcaldia 2000, 3.14). Yet this study illustrates the way in which the “recovery” of public space did not serve democratizing or equalizing ends. Instead, anxiety over defending public space from invasion by dirty or dangerous elements served as a code for the expansion and exercise of state power that blurred the lines between state and society while intensifying social inequalities and exclusions and reshaping the meaning of citizenship and democracy (Fernandes 2006, 152; Guano 2004). New spatial segregation creates new public sphere that accentuates class difference, maintain hierarchy, reinforce existing social boundaries while spatially containing threatening differences like poverty that are considered dangerous in and off themselves as they are thought to spread and contaminate very easily, thus necessitation strong institutions and authorities to control it (Caldeira 2000, 53; 215; Douglass 1963).

As one specific policy manifestation of the novel form of governance being developed in Colombia that is characterized by state fragmentation and the pedagogicalization of citizenship, recovery and relocation have produced both compliance with the policy as well as conflict over the content of participation and the spatial designation of citizenship. Unlike studies that focus exclusively on regulatory or coercive forms of vendor control like licensing and relocation (see Donovan 2008), this analysis of the inter-related nature of state and citizen construction allows us to account for both the agency and complicity of street vendors in relocation plans while considering the continuous pedagogical work and state construction implicated in the permanence of both democracy and neoliberalism.

In the first section I look at the way in which violence reduction policies, including institutional democratization, engendered a prioritization of public space as the privileged
site of citizen participation and the flowering of state institutions in order to protect this space from street vendor’s “culture of informality.” The second section explores one particular spatial technology of governance, recuperation-relocation that seeks to minimize the “threat” presented by street vendors to citizen space by spatially segregating them and inculcating them with market mentalities. The third section offers an analysis of this spatial technology of governance in terms of its implications for theorising the state and citizenship, understanding the perpetuation of both democracy and neoliberalism, explaining new forms of socio-spatial segregation, and analyzing the role of “culture” in development.

**Dangerous Mobility: Protecting Citizen Space from the “Culture of Informality”**

The 1990s in Colombia were marked by extreme violence, a crisis in state and democratic legitimacy, and an economic depression that threw over half of the population into poverty and increased inequality to one of the worst levels in the region. It was at precisely this moment of political and economic crisis, when actual inequality was at its alltime highest, that public space came to be imagined by the state as the spatial manifestation of democracy that it has been unable to implement economically or politically. Public space became seen not only as the place for democratic, participatory citizenship, but economic citizenship, as well, where inequalities were neutralized or erased and everyone enjoyed the same benefits. “High quality public space is beginning to compensate, albeit in the most miniscule way, the greatest inequalities… In Bogotá, it is the poor that walk. But public space is democratic for even more profound reasons: In a very hierarchical society in terms of organization and consumption, the most conspicuous of which is the automobile, public space equalizes… in public space, bosses and workers
(gerente y mensajero) meet like equals,” (Alcaldía 2000, 3.14). Investing in public space is understood by the state to be a “social inversion,” that levels wealth inequality (Alcaldía 2000, 3.14). Additionally, like all other citizen culture initiatives, the focus on public space is also expected to democratize, understood as pacify, the city by “stimulating civilized coexistence,” (Alcaldía 2000, 3.22).

With this focus on public space as the anodyne for political and economic exclusion and violence, public space became a central focus of state legislative initiatives. Public space was defined in Article 5 of Law 9 of 1989 as “the totality of public property and the architectural and natural elements of private property, intended by their nature and by their use or affectation to the satisfaction of collective urban needs that therefore transcend the limits of individual interests of the inhabitants.” Three different articles of the 1991 Constitution Established public space as a constitutional right and stipulate that they state must protect the integrity of public space, understood and ensuring public access to the space. Subsequently, seven national laws and 23 rulings by the Constitutional Court clarified the use, definition, and location of public space. Coinciding with larger processes of decentralization, Presidential Decree 1421 of 1993 placed the onus of public space recovery on mayors and their deputies rather than on the federal government. The capital district became active in the legislation of public space, with the City Council signing six different agreements and the district government issuing ten different decrees. After the Urban Reform Law of 1989 revived class action lawsuits regarding public space and redefined public space (broadly) as “areas for the satisfaction of collective urban needs,” the city adopted the Territorial Ordering Plan (Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial, POT) in 2000 and the Master Plan of Public Space (Plan Maestro de Espacio Público, PMEP)48 in

48 The PMEP is to remain in force until 2019.
2005. These policies sought to increase the amount and quality of public space for democratic-neoliberal citizens and laid out the guidelines for the “orderly, regulated, and democratic use of public space,” (FVP 2005, 10).  

These plans present “the totality of spaces and elements in the city,” as public space, turning the city, in its entirety, into public space (Alcaldia 2000, 3.14).

A wealth of state agencies was created in order to assist in the implementation of these plans. The Workshop on Public Space (Taller del Espacio Público) was established in 1990 to produce the plans for the recuperation and maintenance of public space. The Public Defender’s Office for Public Space (Defensoría del Espacio Público) was created in 1999 and staffed with 84 employees, while the Police Brigade for Urban Space was created within the municipal police force and assigned 87 permanent officers charged with enforcing the proper use of public space. Two telephone lines were established for citizens to make complaints, and the Popular Sales Fund (Fondo de Ventas Populares), created in 1972 to administer to informal vendors, opened Vendor House (Casa Vendedor) in 2003 to oversee the relocation of street vendors to “analogous sites.”

These new offices and plans define the problem of public space in Bogotá as its “invasion” by street vendors. Yet street vendors are responsible for less than 10% of public space.

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49 These policies were to increase the amount of public space, defined as “the total of urban spaces comprised of parks, plazas, pedestrian paths and sidewalks, environmental controls of the waterways, the subsoil, the facades and outsides of buildings, avenues, gardens, and other natural and constructed elements defined in the national legislation and laws” (PMEP p. 2) from 2.40 m² per person in 2005 to 10 m² by 2019 (PMEP 5.10; PMEP Annex 1, 73). When Peñalosa took office, there were only 2 m² of public space, per person, thus his administration increased it only nominally (Alcalda 2000, 3.12).

50 The Public Space Defender replaced the “Procuraduría de Bienes,” previously staffed with 20 employees (Alcalda 2000, 3.27).

51 As the distribution of the police force is allocated by the national directorate, the creation of this brigade did not represent an absolute increase in the number of police officers in Bogotá but rather a re-prioritization of public space and re-allocation of a limited number of officers to protecting it. According to the 2004 census conducted by the DANE, there were 154 police officers per 100,000 residents in Bogotá in 2004; 4,459 total and 1,486 on duty at any given time.
space “invasions,” while illegally parked cars are the greatest “invaders” of public space, followed by private constructions and “formal” businesses (Secretary 2005, 3). Peñalosa recognized publicly that “[t]he principal invadore of the sidewalks today, more than ambulant vendors, are private vehicles,” (Alcaldia 2000, 13). On the citizen hotline installed to report illegal uses of public space, 38.01% of the calls reported illegal car parking, the number one complaint. People also frequently called in to report illegal enclosures of public space (30.46% of the calls), while only 15.93% of the complaints had anything to do with using public space for commerce, and this number does not separate out how much of this was “formal” and how much was “informal” (Alcaldia 2000, 3.34). Nevertheless, “ambulant vendors” are consistently identified in both state and public discourse as the principle source of illegal public space occupations. Despite having access to and at times even producing statistics that indicate otherwise, urban planners and state officials systematically erroneously identify as the “main violators of this public space, ambulant vendors,” (Donovan 2002, 11, emphasis added). State institutions consistently feign ignorance of the knowledge that the small percentage of public space understood to be “invaded” by street vendors is precisely calculated, instead insisting that, “[i]t is absolutely necessary to determine with precision the dimension of the problem of ambulant sales in the public space of Bogotá,” (Mesa 2004, C.7).

Street vendors are seen as intruders in public space reserved for peaceful, democratic citizens, thus defining them as non-citizens within a binary conception of citizenship. Recuperation foregrounded the issue of mobility as the state sought to “guarantee citizen’s right to walk in the street,” while eliminating vendor mobility (FVP 52

There is absolutely no consensus on how to define street vendors, much less count them. Estimates in the number of “street” vendors in the city range from 25,000 to 280,000 (Castaneda 3-4).
Chapter Four: Citizenship’s Place: Public Space and the Culture of Informality


Street vendors cannot be citizens because they are thought to belong to a “culture of informality” that consists of a bevy of negative vices ranging from the unsanitary to the violent and illegal. Their culture of informality is defined first and foremost by mobility. While in policy documents, city officials distinguish between “ambulant” vendors who are “passive” and “stationary” vendors who are “active,” (Castañeda 1), in practice, all street vendors are perceived to be ambulant, and are consistently identified as such; hence their common designation “ambulant vendors.” The culture of informality is also marked by a willful desire to sell in public space rather than in privately owned real estate in order to avoid paying taxes, rent or utilities. As one Vendor House employee explained to me in an interview, “It’s hard to direct this population because they have a culture in public space where taxes don’t exist, rent doesn’t exist… Because of street vendors’ culture and customs of working in public space, it is difficult for them to arrive in a place where they have to pass from informality to formality. Because formality has its costs.”

This understanding that ambulant vendors are simple shirkers who are too cheap to pay the costs of increased “formality” is widespread, with 77% of the residents of Bogotá agreeing that “ambulant” vendors are tax evaders while 69% believe they engage in “unfair” competition with “formal vendors” (FVP 2005).

It should be noted that if a “culture of informality” exists, it is that of buying in the street. According to a 2005 state survey, sixty-six percent of Colombians purchased something from an “ambulant” vendor in the previous year, the majority of these making such purchases weekly (FVP 2005, 10).
Chapter Four: Citizenship’s Place: Public Space and the Culture of Informality

The culture of informality is also thought to be characterized by insalubrious conditions and uncontrollable or disease-ridden sexualities, exemplified by vendor’s (perceived) failure to adequately control reproduction. As one police officer in the Division of Public Space explained to me in an interview, “They live in a culture of disorder. Usually if you ask an ambulant vendor, a little girl 18, 20 years old, ‘Why are you here?’ (She answers) ‘Because I have 2, 3, 4, up to 5 kids at home, the oldest taking care of the rest while I’m here working.’ This is the product of disorganization, of disorder, of failing to plan life.” Police officers also sexualize the perceived filth and risk of contamination that street vendors are thought to pose by calling vendors “sons of a bitch” (“un H.P.”) and “gonorrheas” (CC T-772 1.1.5). “Ambulant” vendors are more generally seen as sources of dirt or filth, and thus polluting. One public official in Vendor House informed me in an interview that, “In the last year we have been working to control the sale of food because it is not handled properly or adequately. The tamales, the oatmeal, the empanadas… in all of Bogotá there are people who inadequately prepare these foods and distribute them in the street. This has health consequences that our administration cannot permit.” Indeed, the policies and discourse adopted under the mayoral administrations of Antanas Mockus-Paul Bromberg (1994-1997) and Enrique Peñalosa (1997-2000) explicitly advocated “cleaning” the streets of these “dirty rats” (una rata desgraciada) in order to improve security as well as hygiene (CC T-772 1.1.6.).

The state actively condones and promotes the fear of contamination from this culture of informality by pathologizing street vendors and perpetuating the belief that, as polluting matter out of place, the vendors are dangerous and violent (Douglass 1966;

54 For excellent analyses of the (particularly sexual) pathologization of informal market women in the Andean region, see Weismantal (2001) and de la Cadena (2000).
The state directly links the dirt and disorder street vendors are thought to generate to violent behaviours. Informal vendors were said to have “blocked the whole lane and generated dirt, disorder, all kinds of problems… the insecurity was terrible,” (Beccassino 2000, 210). This elision from dirty to dangerous and also illegal is very common. The estimated $800,000 million pesos\textsuperscript{55} spent annually in the street are said to be “not only an informal but illegal business” that includes the selling of contraband by organized crime and the exploitation of child labour (Secretary 2005, 2). This illegal, informal economy must be stopped, argued Mayor Luis “Lucho” Garzón (2005-2007), because “[n]obody has a license to exercise illegality,” (as quoted, El Tiempo May 31, 2005). Street vendors are widely understood to belong to the mafia and sell illegal drugs and fire arms. As one editorial in a prominent newspaper proclaimed in opposition to legalizing street vendors through licensing, “Street vending or informal vending has become a lucrative business, not for vendors, but for a hidden mafia that controls on a whim where vendors are located and goods sold. In addition, vendors are gangs that conceal street attacks, sell any variety of illegal drugs, and provide a safe haven to several crooks, and thereby allow them to evade authorities. To regulate the job of a street vendor, as the law intends, would be the equivalent of returning public space to the criminal underworld (el hampa),” (El Tiempo June 15, 2001).

Ex-mayor Peñalosa agrees, adding that the informal vending is a lucrative business for the vendors, themselves, who are probably not even poor: “Regarding so-called “informal street vending,” to suppose that this activity arises as a consequence of extreme poverty is a mistake. One well-located stand for informal sales produces much higher earnings than jobs in or even owning a formal store,” (Alcaldia 2000, 3.15). Peñalosa also

\textsuperscript{55} Approximately $398,719,275.65 USD in 2007.
describes the capital city and formal economy as under physical and violent attack by the informal economy: “The disorder that they (the street vendors) create generates a highly propitious environment for delinquency and then they (the vendors) start doing away completely with sectors of the city, the stores in the formal sector go bankrupt and abandon buildings…” (Peñalosa 2003, 23). This same man who knows that street vendors are only a miniscule portion of public space “invasions,” had no problem attributing to them larger social and spatial deterioration: “The deteriorated state the Center of Bogotá was in for decades, that only now is beginning to be reversed, was largely caused by the invasion of informal vendors,” (as quoted in Alcaldia 2000, 3.16).

Despite this insistent framing by influential public figures of street vendors as illegal occupants of public space, wealthy tax evaders, and powerful mafia thugs, other state institutions actually produce information that directly contradicts these assertions by illustrating both the dire poverty of street vendors and the structural, not cultural, factors that engender their situation. The Popular Sales Fund and Vendor House both acknowledge that street vendors in Bogotá are the poorest of the working class, victims of the civil war, neoliberal policies, and economic decline. Their own statistics report that 40.1% of street vendors earn less than half a minimum salary while 76.2% earn one minimum salary or less, despite working more hours per day and more days per week than any other working group.\footnote{Minimum salary in 2007 is 433.700 pesos per month, or approximately 216 USD.} Eighty-one percent of street vendors work every day of the week, while 60% work more than 40 hours per week, with the average workday consisting of 10 hours. Ninety-five percent of these workers do not have pensions to care for them in old age. Moreover, the number of street vendors and people who create jobs in the “informal” sector is negatively correlated with the national economic performance, such that 32.4% of vendors were only
recently pushed into the street with the economic crisis of late 1990s, working in the informal sector less than five years (FVP 2004). As at least some parts of the state acknowledge at least some of the time, “The reality of the invasion of public space by ambulant vendors is linked to processes of economic restructuring that have generated severe unemployment, aggravated by the agrarian crisis and the internal conflict in the country with the resulting displacement of the rural population,” (FVP 2005, 2).

Street vendors actively resist efforts to define them as non-citizens, shirkers, or criminals. In hundreds of interviews I conducted not a single vendors reported choosing to sell in the street in order to avoid paying taxes or utilities. To the contrary, vendor after vendor expressed the hopes and aspirations of someday obtaining a job in “formal” company or even opening their own store. As their motivations for selling in the street, vendors spoke about the need to provide for their children, make their own opportunities to improve themselves, and move ahead (sacarse adelante; adelantarse). While everyone mentioned the difficult economic situation, women and couples with children, in particular, spoke of the inability to find a job close to home, the costs and quality of public transit, and the lack of child care. They were very aware of the way in which others saw them as violent, amoral, dangerous degenerates, and consistently defended their virtue, arguing they cleaned up the area after they sold goods, did not cheat customers, did not use or sell drugs. To the contrary, vendors spoke openly about the dangers of their work, their economic and physical vulnerability, the frequency of attacks and muggings when they were carrying their wares or daily earnings, and harassment by police and neighbors. One vendor, stripped of his goods by the police, filed a complaint before the Constitutional Court, arguing that he was a model citizen who took his civic duties seriously, “which motivated
me to participate in courses on citizen security, Citizen Security Schools (*Escuelas de Seguridad Ciudadana*), run by the National Police. I have been coordinator of the local program Security Fronts (*Frentes de Seguridad*) in this very neighbourhood, Chapinero,” (CC T-772 2003 1.1.1). The man also carried letters of personal recommendation that spoke of his good character, asserting an image of a good citizen and hard worker who was invested in the public good and increased security, a very different picture from the dangerous, tax-evading, mafia members put forth by the state.

**Recuperation and Relocation: Contested Participation and Economic Formalization**

The state’s solution to this violent, filthy, illegal “invasion” of public space by informal vendors is its “recuperation,” a particularly spatial technology of governance. “Recuperating” public space means taking away chaos and ordering the space for elite control and the “democratic participation of citizens” (Everett 1997, 144). “Recuperation” does not involve the removal of all objects and people who are invading public space, but rather the removal of objects and people who, as Douglass (1966) reminds us, are seen as dirty and dangerous because they occupy transitional or marginal spaces. Thus, the “recuperation” of public space has focused *solely* on recuperating public space from street vendors, imagined as ambulant, while ignoring the illegal invasion of some street vendors, cars, and private businesses.

As in many other cities, urban planners in Bogotá prioritized the “recuperation” of the center of the city. Home to the national capital, 14 universities, 160 public high schools, 80 cultural sites, and 11 bank headquarters, Bogotá’s historic center draws in

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57 Prioritizing the recuperation of the center of the city as symbolic of the nation-state if a familiar motif, from Paris under Napoleon (1853-1869), to Bolivian central markets in the 18th and 19th centuries (see Goldstein 2004), to contemporary England (see Jacobs 1996).
1,707,745 people a day, making it “the most important economic, administrative, and symbolic space of the country,” (PMEP 2.3, 53). The center of Bogotá is not just the center of the city and the region, but rather the center of the very country (Beccassino 2000, 208) and a symbol of the nation: “The Center is not the heart of just the capital, but of the country. It is a symbol, like the coat of arms or the flag. All Colombians should visit the Center at some moment in their lives, and return home with their own image and idea of the place,” (Alcaldia 2000, 2.138). Moreover, the Center is strategic in bridging class divides in a deeply unequal society. The Center is envisioned as the space where rich and poor come together, a democratic space of comingling and interaction where bridging social capital is built, preventing the outbreak of inter-class violence. The Center is “where inhabitants from the North and the South [of the city] meet… The Center is a strategic sector, a necessary link between the North and South of Bogotá. It’s where the inhabitants of both sides converge. These conditions enable it to be the stage of a great big coexistence (toda una convivencia),” (Alcaldia 2000, 2,138-2,140). Irony is that public space invasion not only not caused by street vendors, but not in center: the state studies, knows that more space “invaded” in neighborhoods further from the center, in fact, negatively correlated, the closer to the center, the less space invaded (Alcaldia 2000, 3.32). As such, it was to be fully “recuperated” from the hands of dangerous street vendors by 2010 (POT Annex 1 23-4).

While “recuperating” public space used to imply the eviction of street vendors and the confiscation of their goods, the left-leaning mayor, “Lucho” Garzón (2005-2007) of the Polo Democrático, insisted he meant to offer “alternatives” to street vendors, unlike his predecessors Enrique Peñalosa (1997-2000) and Antanas Mockus (2000-2003) who largely
employed violent repression or licensing techniques in order to eliminate street vendors. This discursive change was necessitated by the Constitutional Court decision T-772 of 2003. This *tutela* - one of the participatory mechanisms adopted by the Constitution of 1991 that is supposed to provide citizens direct and immediate access to justice if their fundamental rights are obstructed - established that anyone whose basic needs are not met by the state has the right to utilize public space for income-generating activities.

Furthermore, it required the state to provide vendors with viable alternative spaces in which to earn a living *before* attempting to “recover” an area, thus equating recovery with relocation.\(^{58}\) The Garzón administration thus claimed to offer street vendors “alternatives” while really engaging street vendors in “negotiation” processes in which the policy outcome was already determined to be one in which the “recuperation” of public space would be achieved through the “relocation” of street vendors to “analogous spaces” or “transitional zones of authorized exploitation” (PMEP 19, 29.2.C, 30, 45).

Vendors nevertheless took an active role in the “social negotiation networks” (*redes de gestión social*) set up by the state as one of the mechanisms for inviting citizen participation. These networks invited all affected parties into negotiations (*concertación*) with the state in order to find an acceptable solution to the “problem” of public space occupation by street vendors (PMEP 11-13). The working table for the centre (*Mesa de Trabajo para la Concertación – Centro*) was to recommend policies to the government regarding the recuperation of the centre before June 30, 2004, although these

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\(^{58}\) Despite the Constitucional Court decisión T-772 in 2003 as well as party and ideological differences, these administrations show startling levels of continuity in terms of attention to public space as a prioritized place for the exercise of democratic citizenship, efforts to remove street vendors from public space in order to reduce violence, and neoliberal models of governmentality in general (Martin y Ceballos 2004). As such, I this argument is not focused on any one particular administration, but rather the continuity in forms of governmentality.
recommendations were non-binding. In their non-binding report, vendors actively
contested the state definition of the problem, arguing that their use of public space was not
illegal, dangerous, or problematic, and that arrangements should be made to ensure their
right to work in public space rather than relocating them (Mesa 2004 D.2). Vendors
attempted to guarantee their current locations by paying a tax to the municipality for the
productive use of public space, directly contradicting state beliefs in a “culture of
informality” that was incompatible with paying rent (Mesa 2004 D.6; R.1). They argued
against state control over contraband, child labour, and the sale of food, explicitly linking
these controls to neoliberal forms of governance: “The representatives of the informal
vendors maintain that the operatives of control of contraband and pirated goods –
phenomena we consider to be the result of the neoliberal economic model and a form of
reduction in the cost of living for the inhabitants of Bogotá - should not be used as an
excuse to execute eviction operations. The same goes for the control of the improper
exploitation of child labour and the control of the sale of foods in the street.” (Mesa 2004
D.4). Participating vendors pointed out the contradictory and illegal nature of previous
“recuperations” that are still selectively enforced by police, due to the fact that they did not
comply with due process or offer viable economic alternatives before the eviction (Mesa
2004 D.1).

Despite the vendors’ active participation and articulate proposals, none of these
recommendations were reflected in the final policy. The failure to incorporate or even
validate the vendors’ suggestions resulted in the resignation of the then-General Secretariat
(Secretaria de Gobierno): “That’s why I am resigning. Because I was the one who had to
lie and tell them [the street vendors]: ‘You are citizens. Let’s take a look at the proposal.’
But it didn’t have anything to do with (finding) solutions, but rather convincing them.”

This form of participation confirms one indigenous leader’s sense that the government understood her “participation” as her passive presence at meetings in which her proposals were not seriously considered and she had no control over decision making, resulting in a quality of participation lacking any substance while legitimizing the regime (Van Cott 1998; 476). It also problematizes social capital theorists who assume “participation” empowers people, makes their voices heard, and contributes to the construction of a better democracy, as participation in this case merely legitimized a very poorly functioning regime with high levels of popular dissatisfaction.

Focusing on the intersection of the three main avenues in the Center of the city, the recuperation-relocation process was an exercise in the inculcation of democratic-neoliberal citizenship that included the documenting, counting, registering, training and regulating of the vendors in order to transform them into appropriate democratic-neoliberal citizens.

First, a census was conducted in September of 2004 of 13,372 informal vendors in the city, establishing a profile of the vendors. Another census of only the centre area to be recuperated was conducted on October 31, 2004, and the working table for the centre signed a contract with the government on November 11, 2004, indicating their willingness to relocate peacefully. Official enrollment for the relocation program continued until November 30, 2004, during which time vendors were fingerprinted and required to produce official state identification (a cédula) in order to register. Those vendors who registered

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59 The survey directly inquired into whether or not the vendors were interested in changing jobs, being trained for another job, or being relocated. Only 11.3% affirmed a desire to be relocated. More interesting, however, was the fact that despite the city’s best efforts to employ quantitative tools in order to lend legitimacy and sense of modernity to itself, the level of missing data in the survey is consistently around 50%, at times rising to 88%, illustrating state incompetence of even generating “reliable” data (FVP 2004).

60 Vendors frequently reported their failure/inability to register due to the fact they did not possess this document identifying them as citizens.
before the deadline were supposed to be guaranteed immediate relocation to an “analogous” site. Yet of the 2,495 street vendors from the centre who signed contracts with the state, only a small portion were actually relocated by May 31, 2005 when they were forcefully removed. The state only planned to construct 1,396 stalls in “analogous sites,” half those necessary to accommodate all of the vendors being removed, and only a few hundred of these stalls were ready for occupation when the vendors were forcefully removed from the streets of the centre, leaving thousands vying for the chance to be relocated through raffles over the following year (El Tiempo May 26, 2005; May 31, 2005).

During the “Septimazo” on May 31, 2005, the approximately 1,310 street vendors who had previously worked on the Septima, 10a, and 19 were replaced more than one for one by 1,800 policemen in riot gear, effectively militarizing the entire area while contradicting the state’s insistence that the intervention was a welcome “alternative” for vendors and making a mockery of arguments justifying the “recovery” in order to increase citizen pedestrian mobility (see El Tiempo May 31, 2005). Increased numbers of policemen now have a permanent presence in the area in order to prevent the return of the vendors.61

Vendors are instead supposed to carry out their sales from spatially marginalized, state-controlled markets were they (may) have been relocated. Relocation is meant to “formalize” vendors, cultivating in them market mentalities which are seen as the panacea for problems created by their “culture of informality” (see Bedford 2005). The state seeks the “organization and formalization of commercial activity… in order to contribute to

61 Similar processes of militarization occurred in the recuperation of other areas in the city, such as San Victorino: “In order to get rid of 400 vendors (in San Victorino), we put 3,000 police, bulldozers, helicopters on top making noise in an intimidating way, everything you could do so the people would see that there was no possible way to oppose. Obviously this immediately had a huge repercussion in terms of security. All levels of insecurity in the center have dropped more the 50% - street attacks, motorcycle robberies, everything,” (Beccassino 2000, 212).
vehicular and pedestrian mobility, guarantee legal and sanitary products, guarantee formal
commerce its rights to exercise its activity, contribute to street security, and provide
services to citizens,” (Secretary 2005, 21; 31). Despite the fact that the primary planning
document, the Master Plan of Public Space, recognizes the false dichotomization of
in/formal economic spheres and specifically states that the informal economy is not merely
a stubborn, backwards relic of premodern economies, but rather the direct result of
“modern” international capitalism (PMEP Annex 1, 47), state agencies in charge of the
recovery of public space systematically posit “formalization” as the tool with which to
eliminate the informal economy and beget the “modern” use of public space (FVP 2005, 1),
thus reinscribing dichotomous and antagonistic understandings of the formal economy as
modern and the informal economy as primitive. As the Director of the Department of
Urban Planning, Carmenza Saldías, expressed, formalization will happen through the total
control of the state, by “declaring the [analogous] area as one of regulated exploitation and
putting in place all of the conditions as to how, when, and who can provide services and
what that will signify to the city,” (as quoted, El Tiempo July 10, 2005).
The first component to formalizing vendors is eliminating their perceived mobility by corralling them into a fixed building and assigned stall. Their working hours are similarly regulated from 8am – 6pm, Monday-Saturday and sharply regulated by daily sign-in sheets to verify prompt and consistent arrival. According to one state employee interviewed, this reduced mobility and flexibility is presumed to improve both the service provided and the product sold in the formal market: “[Informal vendors think] ‘if today I want to work, I work. If not, I’ll go tomorrow or the next day’. While in an analogous site, they have to earn a good reputation by going every day, giving good attention and a good product.” Not only mobility, hours, and space are controlled in the analogous markets, but what is sold is also regulated, with the state strictly enforcing private intellectual rights regarding contraband and pirated goods (see Yúdice 2003).
Relocation further works to remedy vendor “informality” by inculcating a culture of savings, order, and appropriate market mentalities by forcing them to “pay what must be paid” (Secretary 2005, 3). As one Popular Sales Fund employee explained in an interview, “They pay very little for rent, but they have to pay. They have to obey rules. It is the vision of the administration to formalize the culture of the vendors.” To this end, vendors are forced to pay rent for their stall at the price of 30,000 pesos (approximately 15 USD) for the first two months and 60,000 pesos (30 USD) after that. Moreover, city officials try to create a culture of savings in the vendors, requiring them to save 1,000 pesos (.50 USD) each day with the goal of purchasing their space from the state in the future at the price of 5-6 million pesos. The vendors may be evicted from their stalls if they do not comply with these requirements. Yet as none of the vendors sell anything in these not-so “analogous” zones, they have no way of either saving or paying rent. The state recognizes this dilemma and gives the vendors a subsidy of 7,400 pesos a day for the first two months, dropping to 6,400 pesos in the third month. As their “rent” is already covered by these subsidies, this “exchange” is merely a symbolic formality that constitutes part of the state’s pedantic efforts to “teach” poor people how to pay rent and save, assuming that not doing so is due to lack of knowledge rather than lack of money.

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62 By 2007 exchange rates, vendors were paying approximately 15 USD the first two months and 30 USD thereafter for rent. This was approximately 8% and 16% of the minimum wage respectively.
63 Approximately 2,500-3,000 USD.
64 Vendors who are relocated simply do not earn as much as they do in the street and thus quickly desert the “analogous” commercial centers. One study indicates that while the average street vendor earned only 272,000 pesos a month on the street, 84% of the minimum wage at that time, this is more than double the average monthly earnings of 130,000 pesos in “analogous” commercial centers (Castañeda 7). According to the Secretary of Government, the six-month desertion rate is up-wards of 95%. As one police officer with the Department of Public Space stated in an interview, “We’ve been in the process of removing the ambulant vendors and recuperating the public space for seven or eight years. But now there are more ambulant vendors than before because there is more unemployment. There is more informal work.”
Not all street vendors, however, were subjected to relocation or eviction during the May recovery. Newspaper and lottery stands, massive ice cream conglomerates, internet companies, emerald traders, shoe shiners, and vendors of sundries such as cell phone minutes, candy and cigarettes continue to realize economic transactions in public space with the benediction of the state. As can be seen in the picture below of a cable company signing up customers in a public park, some of the stands are very large, conspicuous, and semi-permanent. Government employees in all of the entities created to ensure the sanctity of public space recognize this discrepancy, and each rationalizes the inconsistency differently. Some invoke historic memory in which particular vendors, such as shoe shiners, are reconceptualized as part of the cultural heritage of the city. One public servant asserted that powerful economic actors such as the emerald traders and lottery sellers bought the privilege to utilize public space for their private ends through, ironically, the informal mechanisms of bribery and intimidation. Others invoked police codes, Constitutional Court decisions, or “decrees” from unidentified higher authorities, as can be seen in the following conversation with an employee (E) of Vendor House:

E: There is a decree pertaining to the lottery vendors, the newspaper vendors, and the shoe shiners. They have a decree because they are not considered ambulant vendors but rather service vendors. It is a service. The service of shoe shining. The service of offering the newspaper, the service of offering lottery tickets.
S: And the emerald traders?
E: No, not them. They have their…. (laughter).
S: They occupy the entire corner (of the Septima and Jimenez)!
E: (Laughing) They occupy the entire corner! They should remove the emerald traders! (Laughing).

Even recourse to a rational higher authority (the decree) quickly comes up short in this instance when efforts to pinpoint the precise service provided by (informal) emerald traders
and the thought of removing or relocating them provokes outright laughter by state employees. In the end, the inconsistencies and policy distortions are justified or ignored as long as they serve to promote a sanitized image of the national culture. It is hoped that this romanticized, orderly, and disciplined image will be good for development by reducing crime, consolidating a national imaginary, projecting an image of modernity, and bringing in tourism, while teaching citizens to govern themselves.

The public spaces for pedestrians that are occupied by informal vendors… turn insecure and loose their value. Of course, if there is an informal vendor in a truly ample pedestrian space, with a uniform or clean apron, who is licensed, with a well-designed bicycle or cart, they don’t do any harm; to the contrary, they can make the place even more agreeable. We always accept and even support with [the donation of] a standardized vest for identification purposes to those who sell corn for the pigeons in the Plaza Bolivar, to the photographers and shoe shiners there, and even the ice cream vendors, preferably artesanal, with their little boxes, but not those with carts from the big companies… There are some informal vendors who are truly charming: the little carts of aromatic water/tea, a brightly colored wagon of typical fruits (chontaduro), or some artesanal sweets. The problem is distinguishing between the vendors that deteriorate their surroundings and those that don’t (Alcaldia 2000, 22-23).

While Article 82 of the 1991 Constitution provides for the “integrity” of public space and its common use over particular interests, the PMEP clarifies that “public,” in this case, is founded in and meant to reinforce “the constitutional principle of the social and ecological function of private property,” (PMEP 5.10). In fact, private business plays an “integral” role in the recuperation of public space and the revalorization of private real estate (PMEP 15.B, 18; POT 278). Far from adverse to the principle of conducting economic transactions in public space, the state specifically seeks to “[d]ifferentiate, regulate, and organize the economic exploitation of public space,” (PMEP 15.A). Private businesses are invited to economically exploit public space, as their investment is thought
to be necessary for urban renewal through increased spaces for tourism, culture, residence, transportation, universities, and hospitals (POT 8.5, 24; see also PMEP Art 5.10; PMEP Anexo 1, 73). These “formal” businesses engage in the same practices that are used to define “informal” businesses by the state, such as shirking taxes and utilities, violating labor codes regarding child labor and work week, and employing mobile vendors in public space. According to Maldonado and Hurtado (1997, 108), “It has been shown that more than 50% of formal businesses violate more than one labor law, and it (formal business) is the greater evader of taxes, shielded precisely by its formality.” Formal businesses deliberately hire unregulated workers in order to avoid complying with labour laws that provide for worker benefits such as paying social security, dismissal procedures, and vacation. Yet when the “formal” sector systematically engages in these behaviors, they are not considered by the state to constitute a “culture of informality,” but rather an impetus to development.

**Spatial Technologies of Governance**

These struggles over urban space have much to tell us about democratic-neoliberal governance. Firstly, while an analytics of governance sought to de-centre the state as the primary or only site of rule, this study highlights the continued salience of the state in democratic-neoliberal governance as well as the utility in departing from an understanding of governance in order to theorize the state. This case evidences the proliferation, in fact, inundation, of state agencies, institutions, interventions, policies, plans, and presence surrounding issues of public space and street vendors. This state fragmentation has not merely coincided with the adoption of neoliberal economic policies and the worst
economic crisis in recent Colombian history, but rather has been integral to the state’s new mode of governance under these conditions, illustrating the way in which globalization and neoliberalism do not simply shrink or weaken states (Sassen 2003, Ong 1999, Radcliffe 2001).

State-building, rather, as witnessed in this case, is an on-going process despite globalization and the adoption of neoliberal economic doctrines. Yet this rash of state construction was not always coherent or logical (Mitchell 2002). To the contrary, these new state policies and organizations were riddled with inconsistencies and fallacious beliefs and had to resort to strategies based on chance, intimate relations, and corruption, such as the raffle, intimidation, and bribery. The proliferation of state agencies greatly increased knowledge production regarding public space and street vendors, yet the information being produced was often ignored by other agencies, discredited by individual bureaucrats, not made publicly available, or directly contradicted by other state information. Similarly, different state agencies or branches often came into direct conflict with one another, such as the Constitutional Court and the police as to what steps had to be legally taken before forcefully removing a vendor or between the mayor and the General Secretariat in terms of the quality of participation. This case illustrates the need for further studies of the neoliberal state that seek to understand the continuous nature of state construction and its reapportionment such that some branches (for example, the military) “grow” and take on new roles (such as the protection of public space or intellectual property rights) while others are eliminated or reduced.

The fragmentation of the state witnessed in this study was directly related to recuperation-relocation as a spatial technology meant to produce “governable
spaces” (Rose 1999 31-39). Power is an inherently spatial project that operates in the interstices and margins of social reproduction, arranging and regularizing spaces while creating meaning around these spaces as places (Radcliffe 1999). In this case, public space was defined as a site exclusively for citizens, thus intimately linking space and citizenship (Gledhill 2005) in a political space other than the national territory, a reterritorialization made possible by neoliberalism’s “exception,” its power to exclude places and populations from the application of technologies of governance in order to preserve the welfare of some citizens while excluding the benefits of capitalist development from others (Ong 2006, 6). Thus while in some cases it may be true that contemporary contestations over citizenship are more concerned with content than with categorical inclusion (see Yashar 2005, Ward 2004), this case illustrates the continued salience of struggles over who can and cannot access citizenship given binary spatialized practices of non/citizen. As noted by George Yúdice (2003, 122) in the case of Rio de Janeiro, ‘Those without the “right” to cross over into a space “not their own” will be stopped by the state on behalf of those who enjoy “citizenship.”’

As certain sub-national spaces have come to symbolize citizenship, mobility itself has become increasingly politicized. The right to pass through spaces and consume places has become a marker of citizenship (Urry 1995), such that those who are highly valued by global markets are also highly mobile, exercising citizenship-like claims in diverse locations while the poor - those “judged not to have such tradeable competence” – are devalued and vulnerable to exclusionary practices (Ong 2006, 6-7). In this way, citizenship is defined by the right to mobility and street vendor’s lack of citizenship is not only spatially demarcated by their location in “analogous sites” but also by the way in which
their movement within “analogous sites” is completely controlled and eliminated. Unlike
the market vendors described by Mary Weismental (2001) and Marisol de la Cadena
(2000) who were pathologised because of their physical transgressions of rural/urban
boundaries, these street vendors were not mobile and did not cross socio-spatial boundaries
in the same way. Rather, these vendors were inaccurately ascribed a hyper-mobility by
constantly conflating “street” for “ambulant,” illustrating the way in which the state
perceived the “culture of informality” as a highly mobile, contagious threat (Douglass
1966).

The mere existence of the vendors, perceived as dirty/dangerous necessitated strong
spatial authority in order to control the spread or contamination of these pollutants, thus
generating new forms of spatial segregation and exclusion while simultaneously
naturalizing the poor as dangerous and undermine the democratic values that inspired
modern public space in the first place (Caldeira 2001, esp. Chap 8; Douglass 1963).
Moreover, this pathologisation of street vendors was not merely a popular response to
insecurity and changing class positions, but official state discourse and policy that sought
to make vendors responsible for their own poverty as well as expand the reach of the state
(Guano 2004). Associating street vendors with trash and removing them from public view:
“Such processes of spatial purification are not simply an expression of the private desires
of middle class individuals. They represent a political project that centrally involves the
exercise of state power within an emerging civic culture of the new middle
class,” (Fernandes 2006, 147). State-run “analogous” markets and public space therefore
become sites of governance for “variegated citizenship” in which street vendors and
citizens enjoyed and were subjected to different types of discipline, rights, and security (Ong 1999).

One important aspect of this differentiation is the pedagogicalization of vendor citizenship. Most studies of public space and informal vendors focus on either licensing and price controls or forceful removal policies, and thus cannot explain vendors “compliance” or agency (e.g. Donovan 1998). “Formalization” employed specific educational strategies in order to eliminate vendor “culture of informality” by inculcating democratic-neoliberal citizenship regimes that emphasized participation and proper market mentalities. Vendors were “taught” to participate in working tables, to save, to pay rent, to respect intellectual property rights, to possess state identification, to work certain hours, and to use citizen tools for participation such as the tutela. The neoliberal state must actively reconfigure society to embody market values (Dean 1999, 172), and democratic-neoliberal governance often defines citizen “empowerment” as socializing them into a culture of savings in order to make their informal economies “productive” (Bedford 2005). If crisis must be exploited for the imposition of neoliberal economic policies when people are in shock and unable to resist (Klein 2007), the resilience of neo-liberalism remains to be explained (Gledhill 2005). Similarly, the perpetuation of political democracy in countries where people systematically favour more authoritarian forms of rule in return for greater security and understand democracy as primarily economic, also remains to be

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65 Donovan (1998) considers only licensing and coercive removal/relocation projects, glancing over the role of education in the governance of street vendors, and thus cannot explain their participation in the projects. “Given these disadvantages (of notably lower incomes and high desertion rates), it remains puzzling why so many vendors voluntarily complied with relocation projects,” (Donnovan 2008, 45). Donovan offers a wonting explanation: they (irrationally and temporarily) choose security over economic benefits (Donovan 2008, 45).
This pedagogicalization of citizenship did not hold individuals responsible for poverty, as noted in some cases (see Bedford 2007), but rather targeted a group of people belonging to the so-called “culture of informality.” As illustrated by de la Cadena (2000), “culture” was used here as a tool to ignore structural inequalities, proclaiming not to be disgusted by poor people themselves, only the way they choose to live. “Culture” was also used to obfuscate structural inequality and make the poor responsible for their own poverty. As studies of citizenship have largely replaced class as a means of analyzing the political struggles of the poor (Ward 2004), and critical studies have increasingly focused on the way in which culture has become a proxy for racism such that “cultural racism” serves as a more subtle but more resilient form of racism under democratic-neoliberalism (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Balibar 1991; Hale 2006), the way in which socioeconomic inequalities themselves are coded as “culture” has been increasingly obscured or overlooked given the focus on citizenship and/or cultural racism (Bourdieu 1984). Democratic-neoliberal development initiatives explicitly take “culture” into account as either an expedient and grounds for enfranchisement, or an obstacle to overcome (Yúdice 2003; Radcliffe and Laurie 2006). In this case, “development was envisioned as a form of cultural integration” into the formal economy (Radcliffe and Laurie 2006, 237), directly contradicting claims to pluralism, multiculturalism, and diversity found in the Constitution of 1991 by seeking the eradication, not the recognition or respect of, the so-called “culture of informality.”
Giorgio Agamben (1998, 180), the “culture of informality” cannot simply be absorbed into the “formal” economy through development projects: “today’s democratic-capitalist project of eliminating the poor classes through development not only reproduces within itself the people that is excluded but also transforms the entire population of the Third World into bare life,” (see also Butler 1990, Derrida 1976). Thus as recognized in at least some state documents, informality is a product of the “formal” market and poverty is an inherent outcome of capitalism; these are thus structural problems that cannot be overcome by educating individuals or groups to surpass their “cultural” limitations.

Conclusion
In this article I have analyzed state construction in Colombia though spatialized technologies of governance that sought to create and regulate public space as a privileged site for citizen participation while removing the threat of the “culture of informality” by both spatially containing street vendors and inculcating them with “formal” market and democratic mentalities. I have argued that the state remains an important site of governance and have illustrated the relation between state and citizen construction by examining the connection between state fragmentation and the pedagogicalization of citizenship. I posit that the pedagogicalization of citizens is an important factor in explaining the resilience of democratic-neoliberalism. I have illustrated how structural inequalities are expressed in terms of a “culture of informality” which is to be eradicated through education, belying claims to pluralism. Finally, I have argued that recuperation-relocation is a spatial technology of governance that creates new forms of urban segregation and citizen differentiation. In this next chapter I continue to look at the way in which the state re-arranges urban space through the construction of libraries and public reading initiatives.
“An essential component of the social policy this administration has proposed to develop... is culture: culture as the foundation of democracy and social inclusion. Promoting artistic and cultural enrichment of the city and consolidating changes in the values, attitudes and habits of the inhabitants in search of solidarity, equity and participation is one of the tasks that we have prioritized. When speaking of culture, it is necessary to speak of communication. It is communication that which gives access to knowledge and transmits the identity of nations (los pueblos), that which lets them express themselves and situate themselves in the context of the past and present. And within communication the written word occupies a privileged place, as it gathers and places within everyone’s reach, regardless of time or place, knowledge and the essence of human beings. The development of a reading culture is thus a necessary condition if we want to reach a real cultural policy for social inclusion.... Promoting reading among kids, youth and adults in our city, especially in those sectors that have been marginalized, is thus one of the priorities of this administration, which has proposed: “We Going to Get Bogotá to Read” (Vamos a poner a leer a Bogotá),” (Luis Eduardo Garzón, Mayor of Bogotá, March 11, 2005 in letter to UNESCO World Book Capital Selection Committee).

Introduction
Since colonial times, Colombia has been ruled by a very small group of elites whose status and political dominance are constituted through their education. Yet while the Spanish colonial regime and the early republic ruled by monopolizing the power of literacy and excluding the masses from general education, today they rule by framing the illiterate citizen as a problem and inundating public space with reading initiatives. As modern governance “is bound to the continual classification of experience as problematic,” (Inda 2005, 8), the state began in 1991 to identify the reading habits of the population as a problem that needs to be overcome. The state determined that Colombian citizens do not read enough. This failure to read is believed to have severe repercussions on democracy,
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limiting the ability of (unread) citizens to participate in politics, distorting the political system, and leading to violence. Reading thus figures as an important component of citizen culture, and people who do not read are framed as at risk for displaying violent behaviors.

The state has employed myriad technologies and epistemes of governance in order to fundamentally rearrange public space by generating information about citizen’s reading habits. The state thus employed myriad methods of examination and evaluation, including surveys, census, calculations, taxonomies, and tabulations, to create profiles of each citizens’ reading habits given their SES, gender, age, place of residence, and education. This information was presented through thousands of tables, graphs, maps, and reports displayed in books, new articles and stories, and pamphlets. The also state started hundreds of reading programs and initiatives, building libraries, printing books, distributing fliers and pamphlets, advertising reading initiatives, printing maps of the various spaces for reading around the city, and starting mobile libraries, to name a few. The state exercised its sovereignty to fundamentally re-arrange the spatial order of the city, using territory, architecture, and space as a technology of government by building libraries, inundating public space with images of books and readers, and turning the city into one large imagined reading initiative. While people, and their relations to one another and things, governed (Inda 2005, 3). What Bruno Latour (1986) calls material inscriptions: mundane tools: surveys, reports, statistical methodologies, pamphlets, manuals, architectural plans, drawings, numbers, rules, guidelines, charts, graphs, and the like that represent data, information, and knowledge and make objects “visible.” It was impossible to live in or even visit the city and not think about or see books, even though no one was actually reading.
In this chapter I analyze the use of space and the image of reading as technologies of governance. I analyze the transition from the state holding a monopoly over reading and writing to its formulation of the reading habits of the populous as a problem. I look at how reading has become central to the culture of citizenship, and explore the state fragmentation and citizen education involved in trying to get citizens to read. I argue that the state continues to redefine state-society relations by inundating public space and choking the public sphere. As citizen reading rates remain unchanged, this model of governance has successfully relegitimized the state through the occupation of space and the projection of an image rather than the internalization of shared desires by its citizens.

In the next section I explore the continuities and disjuncture between colonial and contemporary forms of rule. By illustrating the ambiguous transition from colonial rule to contemporary forms of governance, I aim to illustrate the continuity and overlap between Foucault’s contrasting forms of premodern and modern rule, involving discipline and governance respectively, breaking down temporally linear understandings of modernity or progression (Redfield 2005). The second section presents the way in which reading has been framed as a problem by the state and acted upon through laws, decrees, architecture, and programming. The third section explores the case of Bogotá, World Book Capital programming, while the subsequent sections looks at the International Book Fair as examples of the state’s new form of governance involving state fragmentation, citizen education, and the inundation and rearrangement of public space.

**From Colonial to Contemporary Rule: Continuities and Ambiguities**

The early Colombian state was constituted through both the act of writing and by those who could write. Control over the “civilizing capital” of writing (Rojas 2001) was
essential to the reproduction of power relations through the state such that it was
intentionally consolidated in the hands of a few and kept from the masses. Indeed,
according to Cristina Rojas, wealth alone was not the primary source of power in 19\textsuperscript{th}
century Colombia. Rather, political power – economic, racial, or sexual - was created and
accessed through education and literacy: “Grammar conferred on the literati the capacity
not only to write the rules of grammar, political economy, and constitutional law, but also
to impose their vision from the highest levels of political power,” (Rojas 2001, 55).
Throughout the 19\textsuperscript{th} and into the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, what Rojas termed the “male creole literati”
monopolized “civil(izing) capital” such as law, grammar, and morality, allowing them the
power to impose particular visions of society (Rojas 2001, 50). They ruled like sovereigns
over the territory, and by default, the people who lived therein. This male creole literati,
geographically concentrated in Bogotá, comprised the “lettered city” (Rama 1984, 41):

Through the order of signs – distinguished by organization, laws,
[and] hierarchical classifications of various kinds – the Lettered City
articulated its relationship to Power. This relation was serviced through laws,
regulations, proclamations, state identification, propaganda, and overarching
ideology destined to sustain and justify it. It was evident that the lettered city
imitated the majesty of Power, which inspired the letrados with its principles
of concentration, elitism, and hierarchy, and above all, the distance that set
them apart from the rest of society. It was this distance – that separated the
written from the spoken word, the rigidity of letters from the fluidity of
speech – that reserved the manipulation of all legal protocols to a tiny group
of letrados.

The male creole literati excluded everybody other than themselves from citizenship. In the
Constitution of 1843 they stipulated that only those literate males, 21 years of age or older,
who possessed land valued at $300 or producing a yearly rent of $150, and paid taxes,
inclusively, could be citizens. Thus by mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century there were only two male creole
literati for every 1,000 people, comprising less than .2% of the population (Rojas 2001,
53). In this absolute monopoly over the ability to write the male creole literati wrote the state, “regimes of representation,” and even “authored” history (España 2007). “The principal reason for their supremacy was due to their ability to manipulate writing; they were the owners of writing in an illiterate society,” (Rama 1984, 33). Indeed, over 90% of the population was thought to be illiterate in 1810 (Rojas 2001, 11).

There were clear economic benefits in authoring the state. Not only was control over writing a tool of governance through the production of a “legibility effect,” (Trouillot 2001, 132), but it was a political economy based on the control of regimes of representation and the formation of desires surrounding accumulation (Rojas 2001). The writing of contracts and wills in order to transmit property through bloodlines and obtain or conserve investments was one of the primary uses of written language by the lettered city (Rama 1984, 43). Holston (2008) described how Brazilian law was similarly born through illegality, manipulated by *letrados*, and used to perpetuate social injustice through the “misrule of law”: “As judges, legislators, politicians, administrators, and head of state, these elites ran the legislatures, packed local governments and courts, enacted laws to further their interests, manipulated inheritance regulations, obtained additional grants surreptitiously through distant family members and arranged marriages, and squatted on unclaimed and disputed lands. In sum, they learned how to complicate the legal system for their advantage,” (Holston 2008, 121).

Thus there was no difference between the state and the *letrados*. Nineteenth-century government in Colombia was, literally, a time of “government by grammarians,” (Rojas 2001, 54). Novelists, grammarians, and university professors monopolized politics and shaped the content of the Colombian nation-state by writing
novels, constitutions, and presidential decrees. Jorge Isaacs, author of the first national novel, *María* (1867), became deputy and self-imposed president of Cauca and Antioquia. President José Manuel Marroquin wrote the *Tratado de Ortología y Ortografía Castellana* that is still in print. President Miguel Antonio Caro authored *Latin Grammar* with Rufino Cuervo before he coauthored the Constitution of 1886 with Rafael Nuñez and later became President. Legislator and prominent advocator of expelling the Jesuits (again), José María Samper, also work as a journalist (Rojas 2001, 55). This close relation between the written word, politicians, and the state continued in the 20th century: Dr. Eduardo Santos, publisher of the Bogotá edition of *El Tiempo*, was elected President in 1938. Dr. Laureano Gomez, owner and publisher of *El Siglo* newspaper was also President until overthrown in a coup in July of 1944. President Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966-1970) was also a journalist and writer (Bushnell 1993, 196).

While Bogotá opened its first public library in 1777, long before any other Latin American city, this National Library remained the only one in the country, with a small and specialized collection that served elites only through the 19th century. Only in 1923 did it start letting users take books home, and then only books in French. With these exclusive rules, it had only about 40 visitors a day. Indeed, the National Library “never stopped being a library primarily for researchers,” (Orlando Melo 2006, 197). The first library geared toward mass publics, the Luis Angel Arango Library (BLAA), was only opened in 1959, and although it had many more books and a much more diverse collection than the National Library, it kept its books on closed shelves where patrons could not touch or see

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66 The role of these politicians in policing and monitoring language – which, when spoken by the masses, is open to wonderful levels of innovation and change uncontrolled by the male creole literati and thus making it a dangerous tool unless regulated – must be emphasized to the extent that it protected and maintained their own privileged places in society (Rama 1984).
them, and didn’t loan books out to be taken home to read. By the 1970s, there were still only eight public libraries other than BLAA in the entire city.

Bogotá continues to be the only Lettered City in the country. Bogotá is home to an important publishing industry with approximately 294 publishers and 619 bookstores (Alcaldía 2005, 10). It has the more libraries per capita than any other place in the country, and more books, as well.

Some statistics about Bogotá regarding the circulation of books, publishing, the fomentation of reading and the literary creation clearly illustrate the advantage that Bogotá has in these areas in comparison to other cities in the country, a fact that converts it into a model and center for the radiation of policies related to reading [from the center to the regions]. For example, 505 of books sold in Colombia are produced in this city; the other 50% is divided among the other department capitals, with Medellín and Cali at the top of the list. In terms of creation, ISBN registration data shows that last year 74.3% of the registered new publications were carried out by Colombian authors residing in the national capital. Accompanying this process of creation and circulation, it should be noted that nearly 70% of the bookstores in the country are concentrated in the capital (Alcaldía 2005, 10-11).

Given the mass production and ready availability of books in the Lettered City, it should be no surprise that Bogotá is also home to the greatest consumption of literature in the country. Bogotá is also the principal market for books, magazines, and all other printed materials in the country (Orlando Melo 2006, 201). More Bogotanos read than residents of any other city in the country. Indeed, the primary finding of the 2005 book survey conducted by the DANE, was the vast disparity between rural and urban reading rates. While 63% of the nation above the age 12 does not read any books ever, 72% of the rural population does not read. Similarly, fewer rural inhabitants read magazines and newspapers compared to their urban counterparts.
While libraries, books, and reading people remain concentrated in the Lettered City, the state no longer seeks to monopolize control over civilizing capital. Neither, however, has it simply relinquished the previous model of the Lettered City. Instead, it has combined “premodern” sovereignty and “modern” governance in a way that defies Foucault’s description of the two as contradictory forms of rule that follow one after the other in a linear temporality (Redfield 2005). Thus, while the state now employs novel forms of governance that identify lack of readership and illiteracy as a problem, it simultaneously reinforces the image and practice of the Lettered City. As noted by Margarita Serge (2005, 54-5), there was not an abrupt rupture between colonial, republican, and contemporary forms of rule in Colombia, but rather continuity and overlap. The existence of “technocrats” who had been educated abroad and considered themselves “experts” in their relative subjects was nothing new in Colombia, overlapping neatly with the local power relations of the educated elite of the Lettered City. Thus there was no introduction of a new, technocratic class, but rather the international legitimation of the old elite. The lettered elite and contemporary technocrats:

Are not two groups that can be easily distinguished from one another. Since the time of colonial occupation, the “distinguished men” of our political life have also been our “educated men.” The panorama today can’t be more telling: academics occupy vice-presidencies and ministries; ministries occupy university positions and publish academic works; scholars and intellectuals do not act just as consultants or advisors to the government but as direct and active agents in state policies and multilateral and NGO programs… They have constituted an expert knowledge that is indistinguishable from the business in contemporary Colombia of “state and nation construction (Serje 2005, 52-5).
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Projecting the image of a modern, literate, reading society is now central to the Colombian state’s efforts to create a culture of citizenship and decrease violence. The state directly identifies literature as a particular form of culture that is modern, peaceful, cosmopolitan, and most importantly, necessary for the development of a participatory citizenship and democracy. State initiatives explicitly link reading and books to citizenship and democracy. For example, reading initiatives have five specific objectives: to develop reading habits in Bogotanos, widen book circulation, create spaces to talk about books, contribute to citizen education and participation, and produce more prepared and happy citizens. In its promotional literature, the city proclaims that “The promotion of reading among kids, youth, and adults should be a priority in any democratic society,” (Libro al Viento pamphlet, 3). Democracy is thus closely tied to reading, and democratic, participatory citizens are defined as reading citizens. “For the construction of an active citizenry, we can affirm that the creation and consolidation of reading habits is fundamental, in order to prepare our citizens for a society of information and knowledge,” (Giraldo Rengifo and Guerra 2006, 82). Illiterate or poorly read citizens are cast as stupid, unable to understand the nuance of public policies, and inherently inhibited in their ability to participate due to their lack of comprehension (see Pérez-Abril 2006, 94). “[R]eading is more than just an issue of subject’s rights; it is more than advancing toward a “more educated” country that consumes more books; it is, instead, a predominantly political issue. Therefore, the reading rates and levels of text comprehension a country has are closely related with the functioning of democracy. From this perspective, the necessity to include reading in the educational and cultural policy agenda… is well-planted in the terrain of the construction of conditions for citizen life and constitutes a support for the
effective functioning of a democracy,” (Pérez-Abril 2006, 94-5). After the 2006 DANE census showed that six out of ten Colombians hadn’t read a book in the last year, one (literate) citizen wrote to the principal newspaper in the country, *El Tiempo*, articulating the problems for democracy with such low reading rates: “The basis of a modern and participatory democracy is a citizenry that informs itself, critically evaluates the proposals of its leaders, and has learned to take an active part in democratic deliberation. This is only possible if it is a citizenry that reads,” (*El Tiempo*, Editorial, “Leer empieza por casa,” Section 1-22, April 28, 2007).

**Framing the Problem: Laws, Decrees, Architecture, Programming**

The state used multiple technologies of “modern” governance to identify this problem of a non-reading public and act upon it by inundating public space and educating citizens in order to foster a culture of reading. These technologies included conducting surveys, creating charts and statistics, writing studies and reports, and altering the spatial dynamic of the city. The first thing the state did was draft a flurry of legislation and decrees that identified the limited access to national literature as a principal impediment to reading. As a solution this legislation proposed democratizing access to reading and writing. Thus instead of seeking to limit access to the instruments of law, the Lettered City now drafted hundreds of bills, amendments, bi-laws, and policies that control access to books down to the most miniscule detail. Bogota adopted a Reading Council and a Reading Promotion Policy in April 2006 (Decree 133 of April 21, 2006), before the national government took such steps, turning it into “a model and center for the radiation of policies related to reading [from the center to the regions].” (Alcaldía 2005, 10-11). The federal government soon followed step, however, and passed several legislative initiatives that identify all literature written in the country as part of the national cultural heritage. Decree 460 of
March 16, 1995 stipulates that all publishers must donate four copies of each piece published, distributing one each to the National Library, the Library of Congress, the Library of the National University, and the library of the province where the book was published, if that province is other than Cundinamarca (the province containing the capital district, Bogotá), all as a part of the national cultural heritage. Law 98 of December 22, 1993, seeks to “democratize and promote Colombian books,” by stipulating that each publisher register every book they publish with the state by the ISBN number so that the state can acquire copies in “no less” than 50% of the libraries that receive state funding. Article 17 of the same law regulates even the hours each library must hold: “no less than four hours on holidays and weekends.”

One of the primary spatial tactics the city used was to construct prominent libraries, often by nationally renowned architects like Rogelio Salmona. By 2001, Bogotá’s landscape was littered with 105 libraries, 19 of which formed the newly built Library Network (Bibliored), consisting of three “megalibraries,” six local libraries, ten neighborhood libraries, and nearly 4,000 “reading points” where literature or space for reading are provided (Orlando Melo 2006, 199).

In 2001 the three principal libraries, El Tintal, El Tunal and Virgilio Barco, opened, strategically located in beautiful parks around the city, within reach of the most disadvantaged populations. Each one has more than 6,000 m² of construction, capacity to attend to 600 visitors simultaneously, and storage for up to 150,000 volumes. Each also has auditoriums and multiple salons that allow interesting cultural programs to be offered, which truly converts the libraries into real centers of cultural and community development. The network is fulfilling an invaluable social function that benefits different social groups in the city. The number of users of the network surpasses 380,000 per month and approaching 4,800,000 people per year (Alcaldía 2005, 11).
Even the most remote regions of the city have local library branches. The average community library has a bag check, a kids section, a reading room, a main library room with several computers, and a small but good collection of a few thousand books, most quite new. In the political science section, for example, one finds recent publications, including books such as Anthony Giddens’ (1998) *The Third Way* and biographies of Richard Gere and Julia Roberts.

Bogotá also continues to host the two most symbolic libraries in the country, the National Library and the BLAA. Located in the historic center of the city, the BLAA forms the heart of what the state describes in promotional literature as “a great cultural center” consisting of the library, four museums, and a concert hall. Its collection of 1,100,000 volumes is one of the biggest in Latin America and growing by 60,000,000 titles per year. The BLAA is the principal library in the country. It receives about six million visitors a year, making it the most visited library in the world (Castro Caycedo 2001, 10). Many of these visitors – nearly 1.5 million – do not engage in any way with reading or books while they are there, using the space instead for the museums, to visit friends, or otherwise use the public space. Moreover, few check out books from the library to take home. Still, nearly 3 million users do use the readings rooms (*salas de lectura*) for precisely that purpose. The BLAA also supports other libraries and reading initiatives. It is the head of the 17 other Bank of the Republic library branches found in urban centers throughout the country, lending them books from its far superior collection, although only in Bogotá are members allowed to take books home. It also played an integral role in stimulating the rennovation of the District of Bogotá library network, conducting evaluating and consulting

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for the Bibliored project. Similarly, it developed and proposed the National Reading and Library Plan, a project to raise resources for the public libraries in the country, to the government. The BLAA selected the books and contributed approximately 85% of the resources necessary during the Plan’s first two years of implementation (Alcaldía 2005, 11).

In addition to the public library network, Bogotá is home to hundreds of other libraries. The social security and pension fund Compensar runs libraries throughout the city. Private research institutes and entities like the including the Colombian Historic Society, the Silva Poetry House, the Center of Public Research and Education (CINEP), the Rafael Pombo Foundation, and the Gilberto run their own libraries. Numerous public-private entities like the Gomez Campuzano House at of the Bank of the Republic, the Colombian Anthropological and Historical Institute, and the Caro and Cuervo Institute also sponsor their own libraries. Finally, the Mexican publisher the Economic Culture Fund contracted the nationally recognized architect Rogelio Saltona to design the Gabriel García Marques Cultural Center in the historic center of the city, just down the hill from the BLAA, which opened at the end of 2007.

Private entities also work closely with the state to promote reading and book consumption and generally create a pro-business image of Colombia as a modern, advanced, reading state safe for investment. The Colombian Book Chamber is a non-profit organization and union that represents the interests of the publishing industry. Founded in 1951 with the goal of developing the publishing industry in Colombia, the Colombian Book Chamber works with the state to promote “the well-being, cooperation and cultural progress of the country,” (Alcaldía 2005, 16). The Chamber helped the Ministry of Culture
design and implement the National Reading and Library Plan; it created and organizes the International Book Fair in Bogotá each year. The Silva Poetry House is another non-profit organization, founded in 1986 in colonial house in center of Bogotá, that receives with support from both the Ministry of Culture and the Secretary of Culture in Bogota. Its goal is “to facilitate and stimulate the study, knowledge, and enjoyment of poetry from all times and countries.” The House is endowed with a library, auditorium, and bookstore, and it offers poetry workshops, conferences, recitals, poetry competitions, and festivals, including the famous “Poets Launched in Spirits” that unites poets and citizens for peace.

The Rafael Pombo Foundation is a nonprofit founded in 1985 to improve the quality of life for Colombian children and “engender a culture of rights and duties, promoting authentic human values, by realizing projects surrounding books and reading,” (Fundalecra 2007, 16). Located in Bogotá, the Foundation also has a library, but loans books only to its 600 members. It also provides cultural programming and organizes reading clubs. It sponsors a children’s pabellón every year at the International Book Fair, which draws on average 102,000 children a week between the ages of 5 and 12. The Pombo Foundation also participates in the yearly celebration of Reading Day in Bogotá. Asolectura is another non-profit organization that gathers together people and institutes interested in encouraging reading and writing. It serves as an interlocutor between government and private institutes to improve education, libraries, stimulate investigation, promote reading and writing, and provides space for citizen participation in reading and writing. Finally, Fundalecra (Foundation for Readership Promotion) is a private, non-profit organization created in 1990 through an initiative between the Colombian Book

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68 The Book Chamber also assigns ISBN numbers in Colombia the result of a 1983 agreement between the International ISBN Agency and EAN.
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Chamber and the book paper industries that continue to finance the organization today. Fundalectura’s slogan is “To make Colombia a country of readers,” and the Book Law of 1993 deems it a “governmental advisory organization on questions of reading,” (Alcaldía 2005, 15-16). Fundalectura promotes the consumption of literature, by seeking to provide access for all Colombians to written culture by more widely distributing books.

Fundalectura partners with the state to co-sponsor several public-private reading initiatives. It developed the idea of PPP and provides books and training while the state finances the maintenance of the “P”s and the salary of the youth workers. It similarly sponsors the Traveling Box Library, providing the 100 books and backpack for the state-employed youth to carry around.

The state also showed amazing innovation in creating a bevy of inexpensive but highly visible reading initiatives that brought books out of libraries and bookstores to the public spaces people occupy or pass through on a daily basis. Public parks, mass transit, popular markets, malls, sidewalks, public buildings, and major traffic thoroughfares were flooded with both images of books and readers and well as actual, physical objects. State agents, often citizen guides from Mission Bogotá, donned brightly colored garb and distributed books in public spaces throughout the city, while representations of books and readers inundated public space. Images of books and people reading were hung from or draped across every street light, bus stop, public building, or newspaper and magazine in they city in the form of posters, signs, pamphlets, and photographs. Thus instead of having to assume the costs of entering an enclosed space specifically designed for reading in order to encounter books and readers, citizen were bombarded with images of readers and the
physical books at the market, on the way to work, in the park, and while paying their public utilities.

One such program, “Books in the Wind” (*Libros al viento*) began in March 2004. Sponsored by the District Secretary of Culture, Recreation, and Sports, “Books in the Wind” consists of a metal stand in select Transmilenio mass transit stations and municipal utilities and services branch offices (SuperCades) where booklet’s printed by the District are given away. Each month 70,000 copies of one booklet are published and distributed at these points as well as through community kitchens and other reading programs discussed below. The booklets are specially edited for the program. Many are abbreviated versions of a classic work by renowned authors like, William Shakespeare, Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortázar, and León Tolstoy. Others presented short stories or compilations of poems and essays. For example, one booklet featured three short stories by Guy de Maupassant. Another consisted of various poems by 26 different Colombian poets dating back to 1865. Others consisted of a play by Molière, or poems by Edgar Allan Poe, and the short stories of Antón Chéjov. There are no affiliation charges or registration procedures; anyone can take a book that would like one. They are only asked to return the book to one of the stands when they are finished so that they can be re-lent. Some stands might have various titles to choose from, then, though none are guaranteed. Stands are “open” from 8-12 am and 1-5 pm and staffed by a Mission Bogotá guide. While books can only be taken during these hours, they can be returned at any time through a book drop.

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69 Books in the Wind stands were located in the Jimenez, Heroes, Portal Usme and Portal Banderas Transmilenio stations, in addition to the SuperCades found at Americas, CAD, Bosa, and Suba.
Another reading program initiated by the Secretary of Culture, Recreation and Sports (SCRD) in conjunction with Fundalectura was Book Stops, Park Stops (*Paraderos paralibros paraparques*). Book Stops, Park Stops stations are giant yellow, metallic “P”s located in virtually every park and plaza across the city. Each “P” houses 300 books which are supposed to be chosen with the participation of local residents and rotated every three months. The PPP are also used to distribute old Books in the Wind publications. The project was conceived in 1996 by Fundalectura who provides the books and constructs the “P”s. Any third party can assume responsibility for the maintenance costs of the “P”s once they are built, which include the upkeep of the “P” as well as personnel to staff it. There were 44 “P”s built in Bogotá between 1996 and 2005 at the instigation of local precincts and community groups, but nearly all of them lay in disuse because of the failure to secure continued funding to maintain them. The district finally assumed responsibility for 40 of
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the 44 “P”s that litter its landscape in 2005 and 2006 when it was preparing its bid for World Book Capital (see below).

![Image](Image 9: Paralibro Paradero Paraparque stand, empty and closed. Photograph by author.)

Book Stops, Park Stops are not staffed by Mission Bogotá citizen guides like the Books in the Wind, but rather by “youth weavers of society” (jóvenes tejedores de sociedad). Like citizen guides, “youth weavers of society” were originally conceived of as delinquents or at-risk, but now most are simply university students looking for extra cash. “Youth weavers of society” must be between the ages of 14-25 years old. They must complete an 80-hour training program over the course of one year, where they are taught the rules of the program and pedagogical tools including reading out loud and activities pertaining to reading they can do with kids in the park like acting out scenes and miming. The youth attendants must also read and attend a monthly lecture on the Book in the Wind of the month. While attending the Ps, they are supposed to read books out loud and
encourage communal and family reading. The youth workers must open each P for 12
hours a week for which they are paid approximately $75 a month (140,000 pesos), with a
$15 (30,000 peso) bonus for attending the lecture on the Book in the Wind. Most Youth
Weavers manage two stands, and many live off of their incomes.

The city also held three book exchanges in one of the most prominent public spaces
in the city, the National Park. Adverts for the event flooded the newspapers, radio, and
television, encouraging participation and explaining the rules for weeks ahead of time,
while massive banners covered the park and spilled out into the main avenue, the Septima,
on the days of the swaps. “Pirated” or copied books, books in bad shape, school books, and
highly specialized books were not allowed. Money was also forbidden; the books were to
be exchanged or traded only. Finally, any left-over books were gifted to community
kitchens of Bogotá Without Hunger. Eleven thousand people were said to have attended the
first swap. The third, held on October 7, 2007 from 10am-5pm, fragmented itself into
multiple events, serving as well as the opening for the first Infant Book Fair, transitioning
smoothly from one state-sponsored reading even to another.

The city capitalized on virtual space as well. Forums called “Book Clubs” were
started where local residents were encouraged to read any book or short story and post a
short and easy-to-read summary on-line in order to capture the attention of other would-be
readers. Participants could also post questions to the authors, and the best questions were to
be answered if or when the author participated in the district’s book planning in person.
Some of the review essays and literary pieces were published in one of the 12 isssues of the
magazine Pie de Página (literally, “Footnote”) between 2004 and 2007.
These public-private reading initiatives set the stage for Bogotá to apply in 2005 to be named by UNESCO as the 2007 World Book Capital and subsequently launch the biggest public relations campaign of all.\(^{70}\) The application process and subsequent programming and advertising was only possible through strong public-private partnerships dedicated to increase the consumption of books in Bogotá. The Secretary of Culture (then the Literature Office within the IDCT) sought the collaboration of the District Council of Readership Promotion (\textit{Consejo Distrital de Fomento a la Lectura}), a public-private entity established in 2003 by the District to make policy recommendations and support the execution and implementation of the District’s plans to promote reading and books (Decree 1421 of 1993).\(^{71}\) These two entities formed a public-private partnership with the common goal to become the 2007 World Book Capital. According to the director of BCML, “We sought the backing of all the members of the Council [of Readership Promotion] in order to turn in Bogotá’s application. We didn’t just present a completed application but rather we obtained the backing and collaboration of all the members in case Bogotá were selected.”

According to the congratulatory acceptance letter from UNESCO to the District administration, Bogotá was chosen over other applicants\(^{72}\) precisely because of these public-private alliances and the “creative” initiatives that promoted reading by constructing public spaces for doing so. Public-private alliances and the creative use of public space continued to be essential in the execution of the World Book Capital events. The state

\(^{70}\) According to one public official I interviewed, a member of the Iberamerican Publishing Group first planted the idea by suggesting to the Secretary of Culture, Tourism, and Sports that Bogotá submit an application.

\(^{71}\) The District Council of Readership Promotion is comprised of the directors of the Public Library Network, the Rafael Pombo Foundation, Fundalecatura, Asolecatura, the Colombian Book Council, and the Secretaries of Education and Culture, Tourism, and Sports, as well as representatives from Local Youth Councils, District Council of Literature, and Regional Center for Promoting Books in Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLALC).

\(^{72}\) Amsterdam (the Netherlands), Coimbra, (Portugal), Dublin, (Ireland), Rosario, (Argentina), and Vienna (Austria). Chosen on June 17, 2005.
director of the project stated in an interview that, “This financial backing [by these private entities] and their institutional collaboration in programming has guaranteed the reliability and continuity of the programs and activities developed throughout the year.”

The city was literally bombarded with images and representations of books, as well as slogans and themes regarding reading and books. A massive publicity campaign covered the city with BCML posters that featured an image of a book with a doorhandle on it. This image and caption inundated public space. Posters of it were featured on every “bus stop” – metal benches with a place for advertisements and cover from rain, but with few exceptions, have never indicated a place where a bus is more likely to stop than any other place. Flags featuring the book and the slogan were hung from light posts throughout the city, and huge banners with the image were draped across public buildings like the Mayor’s Office. Over ten different television ads displayed shorts scenes from famous novels and invited viewers to “Come into the world of books,” by opening turning the handle to this book. Even virtual space was conquered, as an official website went up - www.bogotacapitalmundialdellibro.com - covered in symbols and slogans of the campaign, alerted the public to on-going events, posted state propaganda, and reproduced news articles and reviews of them. The website continues to exist, “remembering one of the most important chapters in Bogotá’s history, concerning the promotion of books and reading,” (www.bogotacapitalmundialdellibro.com, accessed June 2008).

The proposal for World Book Capital consisted of 53 different programs grouped into seven themes. These “themes” became slogans that competed for public space, flooding the city, stamped on thousands of programs and brochures. “Writers of Today and Tomorrow,” promoted the dispersion of works from both past and current writers, while
encouraging common people to write and consume literature as well. “Research and History,” sought the involvement of academics and researchers, particularly historians and curators, in producing literary guides to the city, promoting existing archives, and documenting for posterity the events of the year as World Book Capital. “Inventing Bogotá: Inhabitants of the City,” gave regular citizens a space to write their own stories, with a series of contests or calls for submissions on letters of daily survival, short stories on their experiences with BCML, and kids’ essays on their local neighborhoods. “Design, Illustration and Printing,” highlighted the role of illustrators in book publishing. “Bogotá, One Big School: Reading and Libraries,” was supposed to fulfill the mandate of Decree 133 of 2006 by which the Mayor had adopted the Public Policy of Reading and Writing Promotion created by the Bogotá’s Council and the District Advisory Committee on Reading. “Bogotá, City of Editors and Booksellers” was meant to highlight the contribution of the publishing industry, “an indispensable ally in the promotion of reading and writing, and the fundamental pillar of this year’s celebration,” to Bogotá’s image as a reading city (Fundalectura 2007, 16). The objective of the final theme, “Journalism and Reflection” was to “stimulate cultural journalism and the spaces of circulation for books, writers, reading, and literary and cultural critique,” (Fundalectura 2007, 23).

These state used several techniques to make sure that the programming constantly occupied public space, the news, people’s thoughts, and daily activities. One central technique was to create a host of competitions with monetary prizes and public awards. The Juan de Castellanos International Short Novel Award was established to recognize a Spanish-language author. The National Literature Award “City of Bogotá,” was created in order to stimulate the work of new authors. Other awards for national poetry, short stories,
novels, and essays sought to identify new national bestsellers (Alcalde 2005, 10). “Writers of today and tomorrow” was a contest to receive state funding to conduct “ludic” or educational workshops in local communities, with the state funding 30 of the 113 applicants to hold 15 educational workshops each on reading and writing. A children’s illustration competition was held with the winners published in a book exhibited at the International Book Fair. “Bogotá by Bogotá” sought submissions from the public about their experiences in the city. Each of these contests and subsequent awards required a new set of pamphlets, rules, and promotional materials, each creating a new media frenzy, complete with interviews of all the applicants, the recipients, and the larger public, combined with state urgings to participate in the proceedings.

Another strategy the state used was a spatial one. To facilitate access to these reading and writing initiatives, the state published thousands of maps, guides, and booklets. The District produced a literary guide to Bogotá, a “profusely” illustrated compilation of fragmented literary works that pay homage to the city, published jointly by Aguilar and the SCRD (Fundallectura 2007, 25). The city also designed, printed, and massively distributed the “Bogotá Book Map.”
Available in both digital form through the Bogotá World Book Capital website and a paper copy measuring nearly a meter long, the map visually represents the spatial saturation of reading initiatives throughout the city, particularly in the historic Center. On the back of the map, in miniscule print, is the list of the type of reading program found at each dot, including every bookstore, publisher, library, and distribution site of reading materials in the city.
Additionally, a virtual “book” of memories of the BCML year was compiled and is available on the SCRD website. Extensive reading lists were crafted, published, and widely distributed, like the list of 100 “canonical” works that any university “must” read (Fundallectura 2007, 28). Finally, a radio program, Turning the Page (Vuelta de hoja), was held on the National University’s radio station for 55-minutes each week, its “central objective to promote reading and books and inform about the current literary and publishing reality in the country,” (Fundallectura 2007, 23).
Ceremonies and public spectacles also played an important role in maintaining the constant occurrence of events. “Local memory” archives were created in each of the megalibraries, Tintal, Virgilio Barco and Tunal, and inaugurated on March 22, 2007. A database of works on Bogotá was created under the direction of the Archive of Bogotá and inaugurated itself in another special ceremony. A children’s carnival was arranged for October, and kids participated in a parade dressed as fictional characters.

An endless string of conferences and workshops were held, seeking participation from both local residents and international figures. A conference for “Bogotologists” – those who write about and study Bogota was held in November. The city hosted an international seminar for experts to reflect on how to teach writing. Participants produced a pamphlet with memories of the seminar at the end of the workshop. “Praise Reading” was a weekly workshop that brought writers and readers together in “one great, continuous praise of reading” when invited local, national, and international writers came to meet the public. Once a month the event was dedicated to authors from Bogotá. “Spanish-Colombian Glances: Letters Coming and Going” brought renowned Spanish and Colombian writers together once-a-month meetings at the National Library. “Oral Tradition in 21st Century Colombia” sought to recover and promote oral traditions through seminars on orality, indigenous writing, and oral teachings. “Bogotá 39” brought together 39 Latin American authors under the age of 39, in Bogotá in September 2007. The locally renowned *El Malpensante*, held an “F-11” annual celebration.

Finally, the city administration completed their occupation of public space by creating displays and exhibitions throughout the city. The BLAA featured expositions on dictionaries, displayed the manuscripts Andrés Caicedo, a Colombian man from Cali who
dabbled in writing short stories, plays, screenplays, and novels before killing himself at age 25, historic artifacts borrowed from the National Museum while they remodel, and an exposition on German illustrators October 16-21 in the Library Virgilio Barco, showing 65 painting and 13 illustrators. The “Survival Stories” program that was part of the initiative to let regular people tell their stories, also served as an exhibition, with the submissions displayed in libraries, parks, and news sources around the city. Photograph expositions covered public parks and plazas.

Numerous projects focused particularly on fomenting reading in schools, largely through implementing Decree 133 of 2006. The Institutional Project for Reading and Writing (Proyecto Institucional de Lectura y Escritura, PILE) urged each high school to design and implement a plan to foment reading and writing, with the participation of students, faculty, and teachers. Fourty-one schools libraries were updated with 3,500 new titles, increased security, furniture, computers, and bibliographic material, and the project was planned to continue. Colombian writers visited schools to meet and speak with kids, and the students were encouraged to participate in story and poetry contests. Even teachers were (re)educated, sent to writing workshops, while illiteracy was directly targeted as an impediment to citizen participation (Fundalectura 2007, 13).

The culmination of this book and reading frenzy, however, was Bogotá’s 20th International Book Fair held April 21 - May 1, 2007 in the Corferias event facility. As with other events and programming to inculcate a culture of reading, the International Book Fair is a public-private event, sponsored by the Colombian Book Chamber; Corferias Event Facilities, Bogotá; El Espectador newspaper; the Mayor’s Office; the Ministry of Culture; and Proexport, a private interest group seeking to increase tourism and foreign investment
in Colombian, as well as exports from the country. The 2007 Fair was timed to symbolically coincide with April 23, the day of the Spanish language, the day of author’s rights, and most importantly, the day that Bogotá was officially crowned “World Book Capital” by UNESCO in a public ceremony. The International Book Fair was specially recognized by UNESCO in the selection of Bogotá as World Book Capital “for its special role in the development of the book industry in Colombia, the fomentation of reading, and the generation of one of the most important cultural and economic events in the capital since its founding in 1988,” (Fundalectura 2007, 17). The International Book Fair has served as they key site for the consolidation of Colombian writers as national writers and the continual (re)centering of Bogotá as the Lettered City. “[T]oday there are many authors connected to the city [of Bogotá] that have transcended its borders: writers like Gabriel García Márquez, Laura Restrepo, winner of the Alfaguara 2004 prize, Mario Mendoza, winner of the Biblioteca Breve 2002 prize, Rafael Humberto Moreno Durán, winner of the Kutxa prize in Spain, Ciudad de San Sebastián, Germán Espinosa, Efraím Medina, Santiago Gamboa, Juan Gustavo Cobo and many others, who appear each year in this great literary event that is the Bogotá International Book Fair,” (Alcalde 2005, 10).

The International Book Fair consists of five huge pavilions with millions of books to puruse and purchase. Stands are sponsored by a variety of publishers and dealers, including small artesanal publishers, academic presses, and book wholesalers. Some books were sold at discounted prices, but even with a one-third reduction for imperfections, a hardcover Asian cookbook cost 80,000 pesos, approximately $40 or the minimum weekly wage.
Each pavilion had a theme. Many were organized by subject, such as children’s books, university presses, domestic books, and international material. One pavilion was dedicated to the year’s “honorary” country, Chile. Out of recognition of the excelling publishing industry in Chile, only Chilean authors and works published by Chilean presses were displayed in this pavilion. In 2006, China was the honorary country, and before that, England. One entire pavilion was dedicated to Bogotá as World Book Capital. This pavilion had books and studies published by the District for sale for 10,000 – 100,000 pesos. It also featured a massive exhibit articulating the role of reading initiatives in the larger socio-spatial transformation of Bogotá under citizen culture. The exhibit used maps, diagrams, and photographs to document this transformation from a dirty, dangerous, and un-read city to a modern, clean, cosmopolitan city as a result of citizen culture initiatives of which reading and libraries were an essential component. According to the display, the creation of bike paths, Transmilenio bus system, Mission Bogota, and Bibliored public libraries, combined with the renovation of the Center, the recovery of public space, the relocation of street vendors, and the implementation of the Carrot Law created a safer, cleaner, acculturated, moreeducated and mobile city.

An entire pavillon was also dedicated to Gabriel García Márquez, as the nation premier author. The pavilion celebrated “80 years since his birth, 40 years since the publication of [his famous novel] Cien años de soledad, and 25 years since [being awarded] the Nobel Prize.” This pavilion was by far the most popular one of the Fair, with people waiting over an hour in line just to enter. Inside, the display featured a huge timeline of Marquez’s life, accompanied by massive photographs and quotes, many taken from his latest work, Vivir para contarla. There were videos of his speeches and public appearances,
and displays of his books translated into hundreds of languages, listed by country and
language of origin. All of his works were on sale, there, including the new edition of Cien
años de soledad revised in “international” “Spanish” in order to be more “accessible.” At
23,000 pesos, this commemorative edition of Cien años was the most sold book at fair (El
Tiempo April 27, 2007 Cultura y Gente 2-1: “Éxito de Feria: Conrad y el país
imaginado,”).

There are numerous activities besides the book pavilions, however. As previously
described, many of the pavilions included historic, cultural, or educational exhibits. A full
schedule of lectures, public readings, and workshops filled the day, with authors reading
from their works, aspiring writers studying literary techniques, and literary scholars
dialoging on panels and in symposium. A continuous string of children’s activities ranging
from plays and music to dance and readings was planned in order to ensure the event was
focused on families. There was also a food pavilion, in addition to numerous coffee shops
and even mobile refreshment carts.

Publicity for the event permeated all of public and private life for weeks. The
newspapers, television, and radio ran daily stories on the event, reporting the number of
people in attendance and the top book sellers, announcing the programming for the day,
interviewing guests and visitors, and recommending books to buy (see El Tiempo, May 1,
2007: 1-2; El Tiempo April 28, 2007, 3-2). The “Cheap Guide to the Fair” recommended
purchases in each pavilion between 9,000 and 68,000 pesos (between 4.50 - 34 USD) (El
Tiempo April 28, 2007, 3-2). IF: Fin de Semana, the end of the week magazine that
accompanies the newspaper was dedicated to the International Book Fair in the context of
Bogotá as World Book Capital. Entitled “Books in their World Capital,” the magazine
reviewed new books being sold and suggested what to read and buy (April 28, 2007). Hundreds of new books were released, accompanied by book readings, the special promotion of Bogota writers, profiles of writers, reviews of their work. For example, Yezid Arteta Dávila, an ex-FARC guerrilla wrote “Stories of a Convicted Rebel,” (Relatos de un convicto rebelde) and appeared almost daily in the news in interviews, book reviews, and talk show discussions (El Tiempo April 30, 2007, 2-5). For days before and after the 11-day event, the headlines and front pages were dominated by books and reading. Even on popular holidays like Kid’s Day when people might have been thinking of something else, the media featured front page pictures of a man reading with kids (El Tiempo April 28, 2007).

Organizers anticipated 300,000 people would attend the event, but by the end of the eleven days, 377,310 visitors were counted, far surpassing the expected outcome. On the second Sunday of the Fair, April 29th, a record 53,373 people entered the grounds in one day. Lines to enter wound around the massive city block, thousands of people long. By early afternoon, the facility was so full one could barely move. So many people were in line to order at the food court that foot traffic was completely impeded, and with not enough tables to accommodate everyone, people squatted to eat on the stairs, sidewalk, or any little bit of grass or cement.

An Insidious and Sublime Image

Despite this array of programming and the state’s official discourse surrounding its success, the reality of these policies was ridden with contradiction, inconsistencias, and failures. For example, the
Books in the Wind program was advertised to operate in several places where it simply did not exist, like the SuperCade in the neighborhood of Suba. Other distribution sites, like that of the Heroes Transmilenio station, were chronically empty and not functioning. While users are told they must return the books so that another may read them, the state itself estimate the return rate to be less than one-half. As a result, most stands have no books at any given point in time, and rarely have two different books, a far cry from the image of a small library portrayed by the state. Meanwhile, the Mission Bogotá guide continuously pictured as the distribution site does very little besides hovering beside the book stand or talking to friends, as no assistance is needed for passerbyers to reach in a pick up a book. Perhaps most importantly, while 70,000 copies of a booklet flood public space each month, finding their way into public transit stations, parks, and people’s homes, I have never seen a person reading one of the books in public. While Colombia does not have a culture of reading in public and spotting someone anywhere with an open book is rare, the mere idea of reading on Transmilenio, in particular – also called Transmi-Lleno (Trans-Crowded) – while desperately trying to find an inch of rail to hold onto, protect your belongings and cellphone from the chronic robberies, and fight to stay aboard with the wave of other riders entering and exiting, their books, bags, bodies, and limbs jamming into you and pushing you around, is comical.

The PPP program is riddled with similar inconsistencies. Fundalectura constructed the “P” anywhere they are asked to do so without insisting on a commitment for continual financing to provide for upkeep, maintenance, personnel, and/or training. Most fell into disuse within a year of construction, and state and private funding sources changed with each yearly change of personnel. Within the district capital, 40 of the 44 “P”s had fallen
into disuse until the district assumed their maintenance costs in 2001 when it first started planning its bid for World Book Capital. It remains to be seen how long the administration will be interested in funding them. Outside of Bogotá there are another 54 “P”s covering the countryside. Not a single one I visited was functioning, or had been in years. Many had their doors ripped off, were spray painted with grafitti, or were completely buried in unkept grass and garbage. Even in the capital city where funding currently is being provided and the program widely publicized, it is difficult to capture a functioning “P”. Each P is advertised as being open for 12 hours a week, yet in months of traversing the city, attempting to see one open and stocked with books, I saw only three functioning “P”s staffed with a “youth weaver of society,” stocked with books, and open to the public. In the other 26 “P”s I visited during their operating hours, there was nobody there, no physical book in sight, and no sign of activity. Likewise, the year-long class that certifies youth weavers is indefinitely suspended, and when it does function, each of the 20 urban precincts runs its own classes, such that the education is informal and inconsistent. The books found at the “P” are not communally chosen with active citizen participation as claimed by the state; instead, one of the six crates of books found in each “P” was switched with a crate from another “P” if or when somebody in the neighborhood complained they had read all the books or couldn’t find one they liked. Most telling, however, was that each of the three youth works with whom I spoke noted that few, if any, adults checked out books, although they had very good relations with the youth attendant and, as one attendant reported, came to talk to her for so many hours on end that she felt like a public counselor or therapist. Not only did adults not utilize the service, but they actively discouraged their children from doing so. According to the attendents, fathers in particular tended to
discourage their sons from looking at the book stand, reading the books, or having the books read to them, instead insisting that they “Go play. I didn’t bring you to the park to read like a faggot.”

BCML and the International Book Fair programming experienced the same disjunct between actual outcomes and the image projected, as well as explicit efforts to manipulate reality and project the image of a prescient state. While the proposal for World Book Capital consisted of 53 different programs, many of these were never fulfilled or even acted upon. Nothing has been done, for example, to implement the proposed “biblo-station” program that would replace the anonymous Books in the Wind system with an identification card, similar to programs found in Santiago de Chile and Madrid. The state explicitly manipulated numbers to create the image of more programs, books, and participants. In listing the 53 different programs that it claimed qualified it to be World Book Capital, the city administration somehow managed to count the International Book Fair as 18 separate events, listing and separately tabulating each speech, play, meeting, lecture, and exhibition present at the Fair. Similarly, while press releases and news coverage focused on the huge lines and record crowds at the Book Fair, it did not cover the fact that this was manufactured by the state. Fully aware that most Colombians are too poor to buy a single book, much less pay for transportation to and entrance fees for the entire family to the Fair, the state gave away thousands of free tickets to middle class families, making attendance at the Book Fair much more of a status issue than one of national culture or book consumption. A total of 16,000 courtesy passes were distributed to state

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74 Meeting for publishers of children’s books and another for international publishing companies, the First Iberoamerican Booksellers Congress, a meeting for Andean Book professionals, a series of seminars on intellectual rights, Spanish-language publishing, children’s books, journalism, and Colombian national literature, “Other Literatures: Writer Encounter.”
employees, authors and editors working or presenting at the event, business people who worked in book or reading-related occupations, and the family and friends of these people. Seven thousand of the tickets allowed a single entry, while 9,000 granted unlimited entry, 2,000 of which were for “guests of honor.” Thus the massive lines reported by the media that wrapped around many city blocks were those with free tickets waiting to enter. There was no line to buy tickets at 3.50 USD (7,000 pesos) on weekends or 1.50 USD (3,000 pesos on weekdays), and for every day of the Fair I was able to walk directly up and purchase a ticket while those with free tickets waited in line for up to five hours to enter the Fair. Given a minimum 1.20 USD in round-trip transportation per person, simply the transportation and entrance fee is nearly half the daily salary of the average housecleaner, a relatively well-paid working class occupation, and doesn’t include the standard meals. The state would not release the number of tickets purchased or how many of the nearly 400,000 attendants were the same person counted multiple times over the span of the two week-long fair, only repeating over and over again that record numbers of people had attended, based on the number of 377,310 total entrants.

The initial multi-year budget allocated by the state to the Secretary of Culture, Recreation and Sports to be spent on BCML programming was nearly 4 million dollars, about a third of which was spent in 2006 priming for the year. Much of the programming, like book swaps and reading groups, was very inexpensive and run by volunteers or poorly-paid state employees, often Mission Bogotá citizen guides. Expensive programming that required renting private space and paying for presenters of services, like the Bogotá Book Fair, was sponsored and run by the state’s private partners who footed the bill for these

75 7,000 pesos, 3,500 niños, 4,500 students but only M-F excluding Ferias, 10,000 for catalogue of exposition
76 6,300,000,000 Colombian pesos.
more expensive activities. Thus nearly the entirety of the state’s BCML budget was spent on advertising and promotional events.

This is what happened when I visited the widely advertised PPP at the popular market El Restrepo in the South of the city. It was programmed to be open from 12–4, but when I visited around one o’clock, there was no body or book in sight. What I did find, buried in a quiet corner of the market, was a booth covered in images of books and people reading. The juxtaposition between the market women who helped me locate the stand after pondering about it a bit and discussing it together – business women stocking, dealing, selling, cleaning, arranging their stalls, preparing food for and feeding dependents, arranging for delivery, and collaborating to show strangers were the book stand is, among myriad other tasks – and the women displayed in the photographs on the stall, were comical. Market women surrounded by fruits and vegetables smile contentedly in the pictures while reading a book. These women are not working, not caring for others, comfortable and happy standing on their feet all day, and most surreal of all: reading a book anywhere, much less at work. The photographs also contradicted the widespread public image the PPP and Libros al Viento are programs for children, not adults.
None of the reading initiatives have lead to increased reading or book consumption. Actual reading rates are actually very low. Between 2000 and 2005, overall reading rates declined. Book reading fell drastically, newspaper and magazine reading stayed fairly consistent, while only internet reading increased slightly, doubling, while the number of daily internet users multiplied by five (Rey 2006, 39). Of those who did read a book in last 12 months, 81% read a book they owned, be it bought new or used; 11% read a book photocopied in its entirety; and only 3% read books in or borrowed from public libraries (Peres Rokhas and Villamizar 2006, 30). Sixty-three percent of the nation above the age 12 does not read any books ever; the 2006 DANE census showed that six out of ten Colombians hadn’t read a book in the last year. Even in the “lettered” city, inhabitants read

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77 The decrease in book reading is not due to the increase in internet reading. Rather, the two are falsely correlated, as both are determined by economic income, increasing with wealth (Peres Rokhas and Villamizar 2006).
only 1.9 books per inhabitant (*El Tiempo* April 29, 2007. 2-8. “Siete Dias”). These numbers are even more startling in rural areas, where 72% of the population has not read a book in the last year. Similarly, fewer rural inhabitants read magazines and newspapers compared to their urban counterparts.

The state was thus highly successful at filling public space and crowding out alternate images of the state. It projected an image of the state as responsive to citizen needs, accessible, coherent, rational, and modern, while creating an image of society as reading, peaceful, and active participants in state programs. Yet the actual practices of the state and citizens were far from the sublime image that was so pervasive. Instead, this sublime image was directly contradicted by the comportment of state and citizens alike. As with other technologies of governance, inconsistencies between state policy and actual outcomes did not render the programming futile, as it was the inescapably pervasive image of these practices that crowded out dissent, shaping public discourse and social practice, not social reality. Governance was achieved through the representation of the programming and the inundation of public space with these images, not the actual policies.

**Conclusion: State Fragmentation, Spatial Inundation**

In this chapter I have analyzed the use of space and the image of reading as technologies of governance. I discussed the transition from a state that monopolized reading and writing to one that formulated the reading habits of the populous as a problem. I looked at how reading has become central to governance through the culture of citizenship, and explore the state fragmentation and citizen education involved in trying to get citizens to read. The state’s policies surrounding these reading initiatives have closely
followed its dual technologies of governance of lambasting public space with meaningless campaigns, slogans, signs, and programs that make the state feel ever-present while it does very little. These policies have changed the physical landscape of the city, altering markets, parks, and mass transit stations, covering them with great yellow “P”s, building libraries, and displaying pictures of reading citizens. As citizen reading rates remain unchanged, this model of governance has successfully relegitimized the state through the occupation of space and the projection of an image rather than the internalization of shared desires by its citizens. Yet it has also created an explicit policy of differentiated citizenship, in which citizenship was defined around those who read, attend book fairs, and buy books, and these activities are explicitly limited to those of solid economic means. In the next chapter, I discuss another component of citizen culture that involved the radical alteration of the city’s landscape through the construction of several new buildings: Justice Houses.
I want to live in a world of happiness, peace and coexistence. Where I will learn to be a daily example, acting with decency. With my parents, friends, and siblings, I will grow in harmony. Clad in yellow, blue, and red, my community coexists with love. We conduct ourselves with respect and solidarity, with tolerance and comprehension. We cultivate friendship. Citizen Coexistence Center, where values construct peace.

-Promotional song for the National Coexistence Centers Program, chosen through a competition and performed in all promotional materials.

Introduction: The Impunity System and the Exposure of State Failure

Like all states, Colombia maintains its legitimacy not in small part by upholding the image of a state with a strong and effective justice system that has fair and consistent standards for determining guilt, punishes and potentially reforms offenders so they do not break the law again, thus protecting citizens from further harm while rectifying the momentary transgression when the state could not effectively provide for the minimal safety and security of its citizens. A functioning justice system is necessary to legitimate all states in the face of repetitive challenges from individuals who violate their rules, thus challenging their sovereignty. Like all other states, then, the Colombian state seeks to maintain its legitimacy by relegating violent crime to realm of aberration which is effectively dealt with by specifically and publicly placing itself in charge of maintaining a

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78 The colors of the Colombian flag.
justice system and administering justice to all when their rights have been violated (seen Article 229 of the Constitution of 1991; Article 2 of Law 270 of 1996).

Despite these de jure invocations of justice provision that attempt to ensure that violent crime does not undermine state legitimacy, the Colombian state has long-struggled with maintaining even the image of the state as an effective arbiter of conflict, punisher of violations, or agent for protecting victims. So many judges were assassinated in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s by state death squads and drug dealers opposing extradition the judges donned hoods while presiding over courts in order to protect their identity. Even high-profile crimes are consistently never investigated, much less result in a verdict. In 1993, for example, the Human Rights Ombudsman had investigated and brought to trial individuals responsible for only 10 of the nearly 3,000 UP assassinations at that point, six of which were acquitted (Giraldo 1996, 69). In the recent “demobilization” of 30,000 paramilitaries, all but 3,127 simply applied for benefits under the program, including entitlements to state-subsidized housing, education, food, and psychological counseling for up to two years. These benefits had absolutely no strings attached to them, like disarming, signing confessions or truth statements, reparations, apologies, or even avoiding criminal conduct in the future. The 3,127 who already had charges pending or guilty of crimes against humanity sought “reduced” sentences by giving voluntary depositions or statements of facts on their illegal activities. But over the course of four years, the justice system only managed to start depositions on 1,057 of the assassins, 941 of which were closed, because the paramilitaries withdrew from the process, as the inefficiency of the justice system offered a probable way to escape even eight years in jail  

\[79\] Sentences were capped at eight years and the time the paramilitaries spent on protected farms while they negotiated the agreement was to be deducted.
Chapter Six: Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers

(Haugaard 2008). “In Colombia, the fact that justice doesn’t work is quite an old idea. At present we can give you the following data: The penal system in Colombia investigates only one out of three homicides. It does not know the circumstances of about 80 percent of violent deaths. It releases more than 80 percent of criminals. It judges or tries only 6 percent of cases, and only 4 percent of homicides are finally sentenced, meaning that 96 percent of homicides are not punished. Moreover, for the few who are, the punishment for homicide in Colombia is only around six months in prison, which is quite low by international standards,” (Rubio 1998, 91). Colombia is widely reported to have a 97% impunity rate (CITE). This official level of impunity for reported crimes is most absurd considering the vast majority of crimes are not even reported. Crime victimization surveys in Bogotá, where the state’s presence is strongest and reporting is the easiest and most effective in the country, indicate that less than one quarter of muggings or street robberies and only 3% of corruption cases are reported (DANE 2003). In 1994, the Director of National Planning reported that only 21 of every 1000 crimes in the country is reported, of which for 14 the investigation is never completed; and only 3 are ever sentenced (Giraldo 1996, 69). The number one reason cited by victims for not reporting is the failure of the state to do anything (DANE 2003).

The state employs two main tactics in order to avoid responding to crime. First, it engages in widespread state fragmentation. The state is constantly creating more reports, institutions, spaces and statistics regarding crime, justice, and impunity. This proliferation of the state in terms of security measures allows the overwhelming state bureaucracy to

80 In 2003, 458,061 muggings were reported in the crime victimization survey, only 117,510 of which were reported to the police. Reporting varies greatly according to crime and class, with sexual violence being the most underreported and poor people the most likely to not report; conversely, rich people are the most likely to report, and crimes that target the rich, like the Millionaire Tour, have the highest reporting rates of any crime (DANE 2003).
avoid doing anything under the guise of its size and complexity by dragging its feet, creating bureaucratic confusion through institutional overload, and displaying general lethargy, incompetence, and disinterest. It systematically loses millions of non-essential files, stamps, or signatures, and refuses to proceed without them. In the extreme form, this deferral of authority manifests itself as the physical “disappearance” of prisoners and their files (see Giraldo 1996 for a detailed analysis). It constantly defers authority, referring citizens to always another state institution that will deflect responsibility yet again, always directing the citizen to yet a different institution. The state can engage in these behaviors for year, frequently until the statute of limits runs out. In short, it simply refuses to address the legal and judicial problems existing in the country, using the proliferation of state institutions and services to re-route and re-direct citizens always to another office or branch, thus denying the existence of a problem while avoiding assuming the costs of solving it. Another type of fragmentation the state has engaged in is the legislation and creation of legal para-justice and para-military groups so that every community, locality, and local strongman has its own private vigilante group.

Secondly, the state teaches citizens to provide their own justice, both individually and communally. The state has started hundreds of new training programs that teach people about community justice and train them to assume the responsibility of justice provision themselves instead of turning to the state. In doing so, the state has redefined justice as peaceful conflict resolution and community reconciliation while limiting human rights to children’s rights in the home.

In this chapter I study merely one of the programs employed by the state to lower impunity and (re)legitimate the state by transferring the responsibility for justice provision
onto communities themselves through state fragmentation and citizen education: Justice Houses. In the next section I explore the use of Justice Houses in order to transfer the responsibility of justice provision from the state to civil society, and the truly sublime proliferation of statistics, documents, propaganda, and even parallel programs, Coexistence Centers. In the second section, I argue that Justice Houses redefine justice as peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation. In the third section, I look at the emphasis on citizen participation in communal justice programs, and study the education they receive. In the fourth section, I look at the tensions that manifest themselves as these new community justice initiatives confront other state-sanctioned community justice groups – demobilized paramilitaries. I argue that the state negotiates this tension between its current programming and the living evidence of both the dangers and inadequacy of such a policy by redefining human rights as a question of children’s rights in the home. In the final section I relate from my field notes an experience that illustrates the high costs of using the official justice system, the chilling success the state has had at dissuading regular citizens from seeking justice, and what community justice and peaceful conflict resolution look like on the ground.

**Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers: State Fragmentation as a Solution to Faltering Legitimacy**

The Colombia faced international criticism and a domestic crisis of governance and legitimacy, not so much for the actual levels of violence per se, but for the failure of its judicial and police systems to respond effectively to the violence and thus maintain the sublime image of the state. Bogotá once again took the lead in initiating policy to locally address this national crisis. In 1995 Bogotá built the first Justice House in Ciudad Bolivar,
one of the most impoverished, dangerous, and neglected precincts in the south of the city. The Justice House was designed to provide justice, decrease impunity, and thus re-legitimize the state by facilitating citizen’s access to the justice system by bringing the state closer to marginalized communities. The House was deemed so successful that in 1998 a second one was built on the other end of the city, in the neighborhood of Suba. In August of 2000, the Minister of Interior and Justice endorsed Justice Houses as a national policy (see Decree 1477 of 2000), and by the end of 2006, there were 46 Justice Houses throughout the country, employing 1,616 workers. Three are located in Bogotá proper while two more are found in Chía and Soacha – suburbs of the capital. The rest are distributed in nearly every departmental capital along the two land corridors linking Bogotá

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81 In an agreement among the Bogotá mayor’s office, the Ministry of Justice and Rights (now the Ministry of Interior and Justice), the National Fiscal and Procurador, ICBF, Legal Medicine, and FES laid down the terms for the creation of a Justice House.
to each coast, including Cúcuta, Giradot, Ibagué, Manizales, Medellín, Montería, Neiva, Pasto, Pereira, Popayan, Puerto Asís, Quibdó Riohacha, San Andres, Santa Marta, Tunja, Yopal, Villavicencio, and Valledupar.

Yet the state did not merely attempt to transfer the provision of justice from the traditional justice system to Justice Houses; rather, it continues to create useless institutions that overwhelm public space and distract citizens from the fact that the legal justice system is in shambles while empowering local communities to provide justice for themselves. By 2002 a parallel program was created, entitled Coexistence Centers: “Where Citizen Values Construct Peace.” The first Coexistence Center was built in 2002 in Barrancabermeja, and...
in 2003 the program was adopted nationally (Decree 1477 of 2000). By 2006, there were 15 Coexistence Centers across the country in the towns of Arauquita, San Gil, Sonson, Sogamoso, Ocaña, Cúcuta, Cantagallo, La Dorada, Leticia, Magangúe, San Vicente del Cagúan, Aguachica, Baranoa, Tibu, and Barrancabermeja, as well as two in Bogotá: Rafael Uribe Uribe and Engativa.

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Coexistence Centers are identical to Justice Houses, sharing a mission, goals, procedures, and legal status (see below). Yet they are officially two separate programs, such that for every report, statistic, graph, recommendation, or study done on one, is it reprinted, republished, or reproduced, for the other. The Ministry of the Interior and Justice, for
example, has a website for each. While they look slightly different, each provides exactly the same documents. Similarly, pamphlets, manuals, studies, and promotional material are always duplicated, with an identical House and Center version. The content never varies, although sometimes minor formatting changes offer a way to distinguish between the two. The only official, legal difference is that Centers are supposed to offer fewer services than Houses and thus be built in smaller communities. Yet the state has provided both extensive and conflicting guidelines for the two programs. State criteria for exactly how large cities must be before the can apply for a Justice House ranges wildly from 2,500 people to 100,000 people, depending on the source, while Coexistence Centers are alternately relegated to towns under 150,000, 200,000, and 250,000 inhabitants in different state documents.

The state uses confusion and lack of clarity over the precise services provided at the Houses and Centers as another opportunity to produce useless information. Justice Houses are supposed to house ten core services: the Family Office, the Mediation and Conciliation Unit, the Police, an Attention Center for Victims of Violent Crime (CAVID), the Fiscalía, a Center of Conciliation in Rights by the Personería, a Family Defender by the ICBF; Legal Medicine, the Defensoría del Pueblo, and a Community Development Office under the auspices of the Secretary of Government, as well as any other institutions that sign agreements or contracts with the precinct or District to offer their services in the space.

Coexistence Centers, on the other hand, are only supposed to offer three services: the

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82 *Fiscalía* is sometimes translated as “Attorney General” at the national level, and “district attorney” at the local level; however, given the institutional fragmentation and overlap that has resulted in four such institutions: the *Fiscalía*, the *Procuraduría*, the *Defensoría del Pueblo*, and the *Personería*, none of which have direct translations into English and have caused considerable debate and contestation in translators forums and guides precisely because of their overlap that reduces all of them to the same concept in English and even in other Spanish speaking countries, most of which do not have a *Procuraduría* or *Personería*. I will therefore leave these four fragmented institutions without translation, as there is no appropriate one.
Family Office, Mediation and Conciliation Unit, and Police. One again, however, state-produced information contradicts this definition of both Houses and smaller than Centers and of the services offered at each. As can be seen in the diagrams below, produced and published by the state in their official reports, the state also brags and widely publicizes that the Centers offer many more services than described in other state materials. The diagram below, for example, illustrates the services offered by Coexistence Centers, literally “exploding” from the Centers’ center: in this image, Coexistence Centers are attributed with 18 different services and institutions.

As with all information produced about this program, Justice Houses have their own comparable diagram illustrating the services they offer.
State and Non-governmental organizations and programs found in Justice Houses, Ministry of Interior 2007, 16.
Yet the state continues to inundate physical, intellectual, and institutional space with a barrage of repetitive and contradictory reports. From these already duplicated but still unclear standards, the state notes every deviation. For example, it painstakingly documents the additional presence of the Secretary of Government, UMATA, Indigenous Affairs, an Attention Center for Victims of Violent Crime (CAVID), the Fiscalía, Personería, Defensoría del Pueblo, an Office of Social and Community Development, Families in Action, Legal Offices, Conciliation Centers, Conciliation in Equity, Psychological Counseling, Social Work, IMDREC, a Family Defender by the ICBF, the Institute of Culture and Tourism, a ludoteca, a library, the First Lady’s Office, community police, an auditorium, a human rights office, and a central coordination staff in Coexistence Centers in addition to the three services elsewhere identified by the state as constituent of the Centers. The state similarly details at great length what it deems the “extra-institutionality” of the Justice Houses: besides the services elsewhere described as being offered at the Houses, the state documents the presence of Indigenous Affairs, Marriage Licensing, Work Inspectors, Community Police, Youth Police, Therapeutic Unit of Immediate Intervention, CAVID, Juvenile Delinquent Center, Afro-Colombian community, Family Advisors, Alcoholic Anonymous, Indigenous Tribunals, Coexistence Facilitators (Gestores), a Women’s Office, Youth Mediators, CTI, an Assisted Liberty Program for disabled people, and NGOs, among others (MinInt 2007, 1384).

\textsuperscript{83} Fiscalía is sometimes translated as “Attorney General” at the national level, and “district attorney” at the local level; however, given the institutional fragmentation and overlap that has resulted in four such institutions: the Fiscalía, the Procuraduría, the Defensoría del Pueblo, and the Personería, none of which have direct translations into English and have caused considerable debate and contestation in translators forums and guides precisely because of their overlap that reduces all of them to the same concept in English and even in other Spanish speaking countries, most of which do not have a Procuraduría or Personería. I will therefore leave these four fragmented institutions without translation, as there is no appropriate one.

\textsuperscript{84} For example, Peace Drops in San Andrés and the Youth Network in Quibdó.
Not only does the state extensively document each “extra” institution at each individual House and Center, but it also studies the absence of particular services. Again, this process is not complicated due to the lack of a common base-line understanding of the minimum services provided, but rather amplified and expanded, allowing for greater and more extensive knowledge production. As there is no consistent standard, the state spends thousands of pages, scholars, and dollars to study and document not the exceptions, but each individual House or Center, sometimes multiple times, to assess their deficits as well as their surpluses in service provision. According to the state, despite such rampant “extra-institutionality,” each House or Center only offers 10 of the 17 services against which they measured, although they might offer others, despite the fact that they are only supposed to offer ten and three, respectively, in the first place.

**Redefining Justice as Coexistence**
Both Centers and Houses are supposed to bring the state closer to marginalized people. Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers are built where the state is, in its own words, “absent,” particularly in terms of crime prevention, the provision of basic social services, and the distribution of justice. According to the state, Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers address this lacuna of state presence by offering the bevy of services described above in one, accessible space. By bundling state services pertaining to justice provision, the state hopes to link local communities to the national state while speeding up the state’s institutional response to daily citizen conflict by “bringing certain services of formal justice closer to the community in order to facilitate access to them,” (MinInt 2004, 12-13). The Houses and Centers are supposed to increase physical access to justice by centrally locating state services in communities while facilitating institutional access by
bundling services in one building, thus when programs with competing or overlapping mandates refused to assist any given citizen, they can more easily visit multiple institutions while receiving “official” council from a lawyer that the individual service providers are less likely to brush off. The close proximity and overwhelming quantity of justice-providing institutions in Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers is thought by the state to “strengthen the presence and legitimacy of the State in sectors and areas where the population is excluded and marginalized,” (MinInt 2004, 17; MinInt 2008, 3), “generating credibility and trust in the Colombian state,” (MinInt website).

Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers redefine justice as informal community justice or peaceful conflict resolution, seeking not to strengthen the judicial system, but rather avert citizens from using it. For example, one of the 14 central objectives of the Houses and Centers is to “create spaces for integral action regarding community justice and informal justice,” (MinInt 2008, 1). According to the state, the primary benefit of the programs is that they are supposed to educate the community on alternate forms of conflict resolution and create spaces for informal or community justice (MinInt 2004, 12-13, 17; MinInt 2008, 3). Similarly, the Ministry of the Interior and Justice participates in the programs in order to improve citizen coexistence and “define and develop programs that promote extrajudicial conflict resolution, the participation of the community in the respective projects, and the community training necessary for these ends,” (MinInt website). Non or extra-judicial forms of conflict resolution are framed by the state as an essential part of the culture of peace, implicitly framing legal justice through the state’s justice system as part of a culture of violence. None of the state services found in the Houses or Centers offers, promotes, or strengthens the formal justice system; each one,
rather, emphasizes “alternative” forms of conflict resolution. Of the 1,616 Justice House employees, the vast majority – 1,236 – are trained in and hired to promote *extra-judicial* conflict resolution, while the remaining employees are dedicated to administrative tasks (MinInt 2007, 19).

Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers offer several forms of “non-judicial” conflict resolution. First, they emphasize therapy, psychologists, and other forms of treating the mental anxiety of the victims. This psychological focus on the victims emphasizes that, without counseling, the victims will lash out violently and perpetuate the cycle of violence. One of the institutions found in the Centers and Houses, for example, the CAVID, promotes “alternative conflict resolution” by assigning psychologists and social workers to victims of war crimes who are suffering post-traumatic stress syndrome after either witnessing or experiencing themselves torture, massacres, forced internal displacement, murder, and/or rape. Like Mission Bogotá guides, these victims are considered “at risk” for violent behavior and in need of therapy not for their own well-being, but in order to “neutralize the cycle of conflict,” (MinInt 2008, PAGE). The state imagines that this “cycle of conflict” turns victims into potential perpetrators, constituting the basis for the culture of violence, while alternative forms of conflict resolution belong to a “culture of peaceful coexistence and respect for distant rights,” (CITE?).

The second primary tool emphasized by the state as necessary for peaceful conflict resolution is conciliation. Each citizen that turns to a Justice House or Coexistence Center has the “choice” of either filing a police report that will result – theoretically – in the investigation and prosecution of the case if evidence is found to warrant it, or resolving it through arbitration. As filing a police report and using the standard justice system is both
completely inefficient and deemed by the state to be part of the “culture of violence,”
victims are strongly encouraged to “negotiate” a solution to the problem, no matter what
the nature. Regardless of which institution they are directed to see, they are given a
“conciliation” date where the victim and the perpetrator meet and reach a voluntary
agreement, eliminating the “need” for penal investigation. This conciliation is supposed to
reduce violence and the need for an effective justice system by building a “culture of
peaceful coexistence” (MinInt 2004, 12-13), understood as “the capacity to live together
respecting one another and building a minimal consensus around basic norms. It is the
quality that is possessed by the combination of daily relations among members of a society
when they have harmonized their individual interests with the collective interests, and
therefore, when conflicts are settled in a constructive manner,” (MinInt website).

Thus, despite the fact that there are hundreds of different “services” and programs
offered at the Justice Houses, they all are meant to result in the same outcome – informal
reconciliation – rather than formal justice or trials. The Mediation and Conciliation Unit
(UMC) is one of the institutions present at some Houses and Centers that promotes
informal justice. The Unit “seeks to apply alternative conflict resolution mechanisms to the
problems that appear in the community,” (Alcaldía 2006, 6). People can be referred to the
UMC whenever coexistence is thought to have deteriorated. The state gives as an example
diminished affect, dialogue or communication, solidarity, respect, tolerance, or
cooperation. “The UMC offers citizens direct access to equal treatment (la tramitación en
equidad) of differences, problems, or conflicts through the concrete actions of appraisal,
orientation, mediation, conciliation, and the promotion of processes for the participatory
construction of coexistence and security, furthering its own sustainability,” (Alcaldía 2006,

85 Created in 1998 and run by the Secretary of Government.
6). The Rights Conciliation Center is another for informal conflict resolution that seeks “to promote the culture of pacific coexistence through dialogue, tolerance, and compromise regarding issues that are susceptible to mediation and conciliation,” (MinInt website). Each center has an official list of lawyers and law students trained to be Conciliators who can deal with civil, commercial, family, work, administrative, and even penal “conflicts.”

The only state institution found in some Houses and Centers that is involved with traditional policing and justice measure are the police, who are (sometimes) present “to maintain and guarantee coexistence,” (MinInt website). According to the Ministry of the Interior and Justice’s promotional material, the principal functions of the police are to make crime reports (denuncias) and protect the victims of domestic violence, in collaboration with the Family Office and the Family Defender’s Office. “The police prevent and resolve conflicts of citizen coexistence that are regulated in the national police code; they guarantee public order through preventative actions that influence security, tranquility, hygiene, morality, ecologic equilibrium, as well as defending the proper use of public space and interfering in cases of neighborhood conflict,” (MinInt). Yet in reality, the police are dedicated almost singularly to assisting citizens or have lost their identity documents or had them stolen. According to intake statistics, 70% of police referrals pertain to lost or stolen documents (MinInt CHECK).

**Citizen Participation and Education**

Citizen education and participation are core components of both Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers. Both programs seek to “[e]ncourage the effective participation of the community in the diagnosis and solution of problem in terms of the administration of
justice,” and “establish spaces for participation and citizen education that contribute to the construction of a pacific coexistence,” (MinInt 2004, 12-13). Similarly, “promoting the effective participation of the community in the administration of justice,” is both one of the prerequisites for constructing a Justice House or Coexistence Center in any given community as well as one of the stated benefits (MinInt 2004, 12-13). One of the objectives of the two programs is to “involve the community in the resolution of conflicts,” (MinInt 2004, 12-13), while one of the primary benefits of Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers cited is the creation of spaces for citizen participation and education (*pegagogía*) that are, of course, imagined to contribute to the construction of pacific coexistence (MinInt 2004, 12-13, 17; MinInt 2008, 3). Community participation in justice provision is imagined by the state to engender a feeling of belonging and trust in the community that builds social capital, consolidates national identity, and strengthens the social fabric, “uniting the community and the state, generating trust, and constructing national identity (*patria*),” (MinInt 2004, 17; MinInt 2008, 2-3). The state actually exempts itself from responsibility the two programs, insisting that their functioning and success depend on community participation: “it is the interest and participation of the community and its organizations, as well as the political will and commitment of the department and municipal functionaries, that which guarantee the success of each Justice House and the program in general,” (MinInt 2004, 11). Indeed, one of the prerequisites for obtaining a House or Center in any given community is to document at length the existence of a highly participatory community.

One of the ways the Houses and Centers have both relied upon participation and sought to foment an active, participatory citizenship has been through large-scale volunteer
programs. Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers rely on the volunteer activities of university law students for legal council, NGOs for staff and programming, and private business for funding and mandate (see Article 7.7 Decree 1477 of 2000). During just two months in 2007, 494 university law students volunteered at the UMCs in Bogotá alone, after receiving extensive education in non-violent conflict resolution.

Yet semi-professional university students are not the target audience of the state’s participatory techniques of governance. While they are helpful, if not necessary, for the functioning of the Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers, the participation of the poor and marginalized communities where the state is “absent” in the provision of their own justice is the focal point of the two programs. The state has created a complicated taxonomy of six different types of volunteers and participatory processes that lead to reconciliation. “Mediation” is defined as resolving a conflict directly with the person with whom you have a conflict. This form of justice is preferred by the state as it does not require the intervention of any state employees or volunteers, only self-actualizing citizens. The second category of extra-judicial conflict resolution promoted by the state is “legal reconciliation.” This involves the victim taking their “problem” (not conflict) to a volunteer “lawyer” – university law students - to emit a non-blinding decision. The third category is Conciliation in Equity, in which both parties agree to take their conflict, not a problem, to a volunteer who in nominated by the community, called a “Conciliator in Equity,” to solve the conflict without winners or losers and for the common good (see Law 23 of 1991; Law 446 of 1998; Decree 1818 of 1998). The fourth category defined by the state is “arbitration,” in which conflict is again resolved through a neutral, volunteer third party. The fifth category is the “Powerful Friend,” yet another instance when a neutral, third-party
volunteer resolves the “conflict” after listening to both sides if all parties are willing to participate. The sixth and final category of informal justice defined by the state is through a “Justice of Peace,” yet another third party that tries to settle disputes “in equity,” that is, without winners or losers. In Bogotá alone there are 2,700 community mediators and leaders; 680 mediators; 450 conciliators in equity; 103 Justices of Peace; 33 Justices of Reconciliation (Acero 2005, 192). Each of these volunteers had to be certified by completing a year-long training course in her local community that taught her about peaceful conflict resolution.

This redefinition of justice as community participation and reconciliation requires a great amount of education of both individuals and communities who need to be taught the mechanisms of informal justice and participatory citizenship. The state explicitly recognizes the role of citizen education in creating a culture of citizenship, such that one of the stated goals of the Houses and Centers is to establish spaces of citizen education that contribute to the construction of pacific coexistence (MinInt 2008, 2). Citizen education is a core component of violence prevention and justice in both Houses and Centers. According to the Ministry of Interior and Justice, a total of 6,898 civilians were educated by Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers on peaceful conflict resolution in just four months of 2007 (MinInt 2007, 23).

Beyond conflict resolution, the education of both volunteer conciliators and citizens at large is focused on self-esteem, values, and life goals. “In this space [coexistence centers] programs and initiatives are carried out that promote and foment values, coexistence, and peaceful conflict resolution,” (MinInt 2008, 1). Coexistence Centers carry the slogan “Where citizens’ values construct peace,” and are defined by the state as “a
space where the community has access to justice through entities of local order, with programs and initiatives that promote and foment citizenship values, coexistence, and peaceful conflict resolution,” (MinInt 2008, 1).

Several different institutions present at the Centers and Houses contribute to the education of participatory citizens with proper values. For example, Community Police are “the leader in preventative and educational police service provision, a national and international example, founded in continual information management, permanent training, and the commitment of human talent, that is all integrated through teamwork with the community and institutions in order to create the culture of citizen security and peaceful coexistence, in search of a better quality of life of the inhabitants,” (MinInt website). Community Police are local volunteers educated in citizen culture who in turn are charged with “constructing the culture of citizen security [and] peaceful, tranquil coexistence in solidarity throughout the area, through the integration of the community, by the community getting to know their own problems, and by the community searching for solutions to their justice issues through self-regulation and participation in state programming in order to improve their own quality of life by fomenting civics, neighborliness, and tolerance,” (MinInt website). Like the Community Policy, the Justice Houses’ and Coexistence Centers’ Libraries aim to promote the “self-education” of community members and inform them how they might participate more. The Office of Social and Community Development seeks to encourage participation as a way to strengthen peaceful coexistence. Finally, the Centers and Houses teamed up with the local police and the JAC (local community boards) to launch a series of workshops for local leaders and the presidents of the local councils to train them in mechanisms of citizen participation within
the community boards and the co-responsibility of the community in providing security (Informe Aguachica March 2008).

Some of the tactics the Houses and Centers most frequently employ to inculcate proper citizen values and a culture of peace are ludic games, cultural events – defined as arts, dancing, and music – and sports. The program places a strong emphasis on the values of ludic education to help people understand and appreciate this redefinition of justice. One of the primary objectives of the program is to “[p]romote and develop pedagogical and ludic programs for the improvement of social relations and coexistence,” (MinInt 2008, 2). The most common type of ludic educational activity is sports. Sports teams and programming are specifically promoted by the Justice Houses in areas “affected by The Violence,” in order to combat crime (MinInt 2008, 2). According to the state, the benefits of participating in its athletic, cultural, or ludic programming is the improvement of pacific coexistence, linking justice, coexistence, culture, and sports in order to improve the social fabric. All told, in the same four-month period in 2007 in which 6,898 people were formally educated about extra-judicial justice, 4,442 more participated in non-justice-related activities at the Centers alone, meant to inculcate a culture of citizenship through sports and “culture” (MinInt 2007, 24). The “ludoteca” organized football teams, bike rides, carnivals and fairs, and cultural events. The Houses and Centers gathered together local cultural “leaders” and met with the Secretary of Culture to coordinate programming. They sponsored movie nights in the park, selecting movies that displayed messages of tolerance, responsibility and brotherly coexistence. They held music and dance competitions and festivals in conjunction and competition with local Culture Houses. With the IMDREC, the Centers work directly with Culture Houses, planning carnivals, fairs,
dance and beauty contests, and planning to hold training schools for rural cultural/sports promoters. The Centers participate in the training of local “cultural managers” (gestores) who are supposed to disperse theatre, painting, music, literature, and other arts in the community, and in the many communities where there is no Culture House, they have started discussions to open one. Cultural activities like rock concerts and movies in the park are supposed to restore values that permit the restoration of, ironically, traditional costumes and beliefs, and allow for the construction of a culture of peace and citizen coexistence.

More than cultural programming, however, the majority of Justice House and Coexistence Center activities that are supposed to provide justice actually involve sports programming. Monthly reports by the Centers are dominated by the sports divisions, which sought private funding and loans to build sports fields and stadiums, organize sports teams and leagues, and hold tournaments. One small municipality had three different sports complexes on which it organized its sporting events. The Centers work with the physical education departments of local schools and overlap with the municipal sports institutes.

Confronting Paramilitarism: Human Rights as a Child’s Freedom from Domestic Violence

If soccer games and dances do not seem to adequately address the crimes against humanity that have been committed in Colombia, the state did not completely ignore issues of human rights or political violence. Instead, they directly addressed them. First, there was a national proliferation of statutes and institutions meant to uphold human rights. The new
constitution of 1991 reiterates several of the existing international human rights declarations that have been signed and ratified by Colombia. Every development plan and security policy makes explicit reference to human rights. International funding, particularly from the United States, is contingent upon references to human rights in all policy documents. The state also created myriad new institutions to ensure human rights, including the Defensoría del Pueblo (Human Rights Ombudsman Office), Municipal Personería, Procuraduría (Public Ministry), Fiscalía (Attorney General’s Office), and the Constitutional Court.

Many of these of these services are supposed to be present in Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers. The Defensoría, in particular, is supposed to be found in each House, while all rural Houses and Centers have a Personera. In their mission statement, Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers are supposed “to promote alternative conflict resolution, human rights, and programs for domestic violence prevention and the protection of human rights,” (MinInt 2004, 12-13 see also Decree 1477 of 2000, Article 3; MinInt 2008, 2; MinInt 2004, 17; MinInt 2008, 3). USAID, the single largest source of financial backing, funds the initiative as a human rights program and ensures this discursive and institutional focus on human rights protections. Additionally, the Houses are currently drafting an

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86 The Defensoría del Pueblo (Human Rights Ombudsman Office) was created “to watch over the promotion, exercise, and dissemination of all citizens’ human rights, advising and educating about the exercise and defense of their rights,” (Alcaldía 2006, 12). People are supposed to be directed to the Defensoría del Pueblo when their collective rights have been threatened or violated, especially the right to work, education, health, home personal liberty, and due process. The Defensoría is supposed to help poor people place a tutela, a lawsuit that goes directly to the constitutional court without judicial representation or lawyers.

87 The Municipal Personería - not to be confused with the District Personería that has nothing to do with human rights, even nominally, but rather claims to offer alternative conflict resolution by directing cases to Conciliadores en Derecho - is also responsible for watching over and protecting human rights. This time defined as representing the collective interest and the conduct of public servants. The Personería is supposed to act as a watchdog over civil, penal, and police processes, attending to complaints regarding the violation of civil and political rights or social guarantees.
Human Rights to state their support for human rights and educate their employees through workshops on international conceptions of human rights.

This emphasis on human rights is a very appropriate and fitting tool. After all, Houses and Centers are built where the state is the weakest and most unable or least interested in protecting human rights. As the maps of the national distribution of Houses and Centers display, they are concentrated along the corridors to the coasts from Bogotá and clustered by the Caribbean Coast itself; precisely the most contested land in the conflict and the location of the worst human rights abuses. In their daily dealings with illegally armed actors, state military abuses, demobilized combatants, and survivors of human rights abuses, this international human rights model should offer excellent guidance.

The Houses and Centers offer a great deal of programming around human rights, and specifically seek to incorporate both the victims of human rights abuses and demobilized combatants responsible for human rights violations. For example, each House and Center was encouraged to participate in a national “Week Without Violence;” organized by the President’s Office, the High Commissioner for Social and Economic Reintegration of Ex-Combatants, the police and the Family Office. Thousands of demobilized combatants and their families participated alongside many more displaced persons in three days of talks, workshops, and family activities. The focus of the trainings for these ex-combatants, the displaced, and their families was domestic violence. Specifically, they spoke against the sexual abuse of children within the home, and as a solution, offered couples counseling, family relations workshops, and lessons in general citizen values and pacific coexistence.
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Mirroring the national paramilitary demobilization, many Houses and Centers in conflict-ridden zones held disarmaments… of toys. In one town, the Family Office of the Center collected a fine selection of homemade slingshots and a few plastic guns in monthly “disarmaments” in return for giving away chics and food to the parents of participating children (see Informe Aguachica enero 2008).

![Child “Disarmament” in Aguachica (Informe Aguachica 2008)](image)

The state uses Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers to redefine security as children’s right to not be abused. The state argues that reducing violence against children in the home increases human rights, by “avoiding the escalation of conflicts in the generation of ever greater levels of violence,” (MinInt 2004, 17; MinInt 2008, 3). Thus if violence against children is stopped in the home, then human rights violations by the state will not occur. In their monthly reports, Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers reported engaging in more domestic abuse prevention or awareness raising activities than any other activity, “because coexistence begins at home,” (Informe Aguachica March 2008). Justice Houses thus resituate the family as the central actors in violence and justice provision, as both the source of violence and the potential source of peace. Thus the state seeks “to familiarize the
community and Colombian families about the use of alternative conflict resolution,” (MinInt 2008, 2). As the state re-centers the family as the place of violence, domestic abuse becomes its central focus. Decree 1477 of 2000 establishes the Justice Houses and identifies combating domestic violence as one of its 14 objectives, and explicitly equates domestic violence with human rights violation (Article 3). Thus its mission statements and goals are ridden with its zeal to eliminate domestic violence, promote the peaceful resolution of domestic conflicts, and “prevent all forms of violence related to the family and community,” (MinInt 2008, 2). Eighteen different programs dealt directly with families and youth, including promoting peaceful forms of conflict resolution within families in order to prevent “intra-familial” violence, the visibilization of children, creating spaces for kids and families, sexual education…. (Sáenz Obregón 2004, 37-8).

One municipality’s Center asked public utilities to include in their bills a promotional message on community and/or family coexistence and the prevention of domestic violence, and child abuse, both physical and sexual. Special “schools” were held for parents to teach them peaceful coexistence tactics at home and in the community. Several Houses trained local children as “youth multipliers of proper treatment,” educating them in workshops about domestic, and particularly sexual, abuse and then sending them door to door in the neighborhood, armed with promotional stickers advertising the myriad institutions that deal with child abuse. Children are thus framed as key agents in the prevention of domestic, and particularly sexual, abuse, and taught to assume the responsibility for their own victimization.

Given this operationalization of “human rights” by the Colombian government, it should not be surprising that Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers, while endowed with
the responsibility of ensuring human rights, have enacted no programs to reduce massacres, rapes, forced displacement, torture, or the mutilation of the dead by any armed actor, much less the primary perpetrators, the state and its death squads. In nearly 10 years of operation, none of the Houses or Centers have engaged in any real human rights work or justice provision for political violence. They do not discuss or deal with political violence, massacres, rape, violence against women, forced displacement, poverty, illegal armed actors, in short, any number of topics that would qualify under most international definitions of human rights. Instead, human rights work is systematically defined as reducing domestic violence against children, performing a double erasure of both very real and pressing political violence and the systematic violence against women in the home that is silenced as “domestic violence” becomes defined as violence directed against children alone.

This elision is somewhat startling given the explicit emphasis given to both domestic violence and human rights by the Colombian state generally and in Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers particularly. Indeed, at least six different institutions were created by the state to ensure the protection of human rights. Many of these are housed in Justice Houses. Yet this fragmentation seems to have facilitated obscuring human rights more than protecting them. The institutional confusion surrounding which office is supposed to deal with which human rights violations results in all institutional indifference and foot-dragging, as well as an effective re-definition of human rights as children’s rights in the home, as described above, or humanitarian aid. In many towns, the Personera shares an office or is located extremely close to the Defensoría, and the Justice of Peace. As each office is represented by only one person, these human rights workers also share office
space with NGO workers like representatives of the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders. These human rights workers and NGO volunteers consistently said they did the same job, related how they worked together, and firmly stated that any issue raised could be dealt by any of them, equally. Any one of them, for example, could deal with health issues, land invasions, housing, or emergency medical or food supplies, and there was no reason to seek out one over the other. Like Doctors Without Borders, these human rights offices’ only explicit recognition of victims of human rights violations is emergency social service provision for displaced people, distributing food allowances and sometimes temporary and conditional access to health, housing, and education. As described by one Personera, her office is more “community focused, humanitarian,” providing emergency foodstuff assistance for peasants fleeing the violence, but not asking about the political nature of their displacement. “We don’t really do any human rights work,” (as quoted, Tate 2007, 125).

This state fragmentation thus inhibits, not facilitates, the protection of human rights. This institutional confusion and proliferation is not unnoticed by individuals who must interact with these offices. One Priest who attempted to document the massacres and pressure the government to stop them noted: “The government, for its part, followed the constitution by multiplying the number of official human rights committees and organizations. Those of us who make almost daily rounds of these offices, however, experience firsthand the reality behind the rhetoric and know only too well that while each fulfills its own limited function, in an endless sending and receiving of documents and files, seals and official papers, none of them ahs the power to actually solve any concrete
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problem. What they do do, however, and admirably so, is add the one final cosmetic touch to the democra-tatorship model,” (Giraldo 1996, 61-62).

Human Rights in the Home: Justice for Domestic Abuse

As the fragmentation of human rights institutions has made it more difficult to redress human rights abuses, so has the proliferation of domestic violence institutions made it more difficult to seek justice for domestic violence. At least six new entities deal with questions of domestic violence. Despite this proliferation of institutions, procedures, advertisements, and slogans – or perhaps because of – reporting domestic violence is nearly impossible. None of these entities has a clearly defined job or role that distinguishes it from any other, allowing them to defer responsibility for domestic abuse because the particularities of any given case never are quite appropriate for their mandate, as it is difficult to reconcile the power dynamics inherent in domestic abuse with the conciliation model. Instead, this institutional overlap is used to dissuade, confuse, and frustrate citizens in their attempts to seek justice.

In June 2007, while living in Bogotá, I became aware of a 15-year-old girl being serially raped by her father who had taken her as his wife. His legal spouse, the mother of the child, was interned for substance abuse a year ago, and after her departure, the man openly moved his then-14-year-old daughter into his bed. The abuse was a public secret: the neighbors knew about it; volunteer Catholic social workers knew about it; school counselors and teachers knew about it. Yet nobody reported the crime or interfered in any way. Despite the massive electronic billboard over the Septima, the main avenue just below the victim’s house, reading, “Report the sexual abuse of children,” nobody even spoke of it as a crime. Instead, they merely commented, “she sleeps with the father now.” When I
introduced terms like “child abuse” or “rape,” into the conversation, they did not deny it, but refused to adopt this vocabulary. Instead, they justified the abuse with myriad excuses, including that it would stop when the mother returned from treatment, that the girl looked fine and was not suffering any negative effects, and that the girl might like it.

I was extremely upset at the apparent apathy towards, even approval of, the situation. I spent weeks negotiating with – or hounding, in retrospect – those involved, trying to convince them that the situation was unacceptable, violated the law, and needed to be reported in order to be stopped at once. No one avoided the topic with me; some even brought it up, filling me in on the latest developments. Yet there was general agreement that the situation – nobody referred to it as a crime – should not be reported, and that they should employ informal and local means to make her as happy and comfortable as possible while the abuse continued.

Riddled with serious self-doubt and concern about cultural imperialism, making the problem worse, and having misdiagnosed the problem, failing to see what everyone else saw due to my own ignorance or insensitivity, I decided to report the crime myself. I knew offhand of various state services and agencies that address issues of domestic abuse, child abuse, and sexualized crime. I did some investigation on-line about the precise services they offer, and finally decided that the Family Defender’s Office best fit my needs, as according to its description on-line, it deals with all cases in which a male or female children or teenagers are the victim of sexual, physical, or mental abuse, when their physical or mental health is negatively affected by their parent’s relational problems, or in any special situation that compromises their integrity and rights.
I arrived at the Family Defender’s Office in the early afternoon. It was no more than a window looking into a one-room office on the 6th floor of a cramped urban building that housed numerous state services. There was only one person in line ahead of me, and she was already at the window, so several women turned to me shortly and asked how they could help. I explained that I needed to report the sexual abuse of a minor by her father. They asked me the age of the victim, and upon learning that she was 15, they all agreed that she was too old for their office and that I needed to report it as a crime to the police. I insisted that the descriptions of their services included services for teenagers (jóvenes), and nowhere indicated that children over 14 would be treated as adults. They insisted, however, and referred me instead to the Procuraduria to report the crime, writing down the address for me on a small slip of paper.

As it was just mid-afternoon, I walked to the Procuraduria’s office about half a mile away. They stopped me at the door and asked why I was there. I explained that I had been directed there by the Family Defender’s Office to report the sexual abuse of a minor. They asked to see the little slip of paper the women at the Family Defender’s Office had given me, and after noting that I did indeed have the address right, they said I had been misdirected, and needed to go first to the special station where crimes are reported and victims make official statements to state bureaucrats. They wrote down the address on a little slip of paper and sent me on my way. I walked the three blocks to the reporting station, took and number, and waited to be attended. An hour later, I was told I needed to be in another line that dealt only with “family matters”. The “family matters” department, however, told me that their schedule was full for the day and I would have to come back tomorrow; they opened at 8 am.
Familiar with the fact that Colombians are highly aware of the lethargy and incompetency of state institutions, astute errand runners (tramitadoras), expert line holders, I knew a line would be forming in the predawn hours of the morning by people hopeful to be attended to that day. I arrived before seven, and took my place as number 14 in the already forming line. We waited several hours as the line grew and the city awoke, until the office doors opened shortly after 8 a.m. We entered one-by-one, were searched, and given numbers in the order we entered. As most people were there to make statements about non-family-related crimes, I was only fifth in line at the family desk, but was given the last appointment for the day. I sat with three other women – the fourth was making her statement – each reporting the sexual assault of one of their daughters, granddaughter, nieces, or neighbors, by men living with or very near them. They were all very poor, from classes 1 or 2, and had traveled long hours from the south of the city to arrive and file their statements. They had neither money for the bus fare nor a trustworthy adult to leave the girl child with while they performed the ritual errands (tramites) or waited for days on end for the state to turn its lazy eye their direction. One woman had waited three days to be seen.

I only had to wait four more hours, until slightly after noon, before a state agent invited me into her office. She asked for all of my personal information, state identification number, telephone number, work and residential address, and date of birth, carefully filling out an intake chart to register the number of people she had attended to that day. She asked me to explain why I had come. I told her that I wanted to report a case of sexualized child abuse, and related the entire story. When I finished, she noted her horror at the situation, and reassured me that child rape and abuse is indeed a crime the state takes very seriously, and that I had done the right thing by coming to report it. I felt a great relief as she
explained to me that the state would investigate the case, and if determined to be true, the girl would be removed from the abusive situation and put in foster care. Yet because of the age of the child, she informed me, I would have to go to another office. This was not a police matter for the Procuraduría that required an official report, but a matter for the Fiscalía and the ICBF. I had originally decided against going to the ICBF because it describes its services as focusing on young children and infants, but she insisted that would be the right institution to assist the girl. She had never even heard of the Family Defender’s Office, and did not know what they were. She, too, pulled out several little slips of cut paper, wrote down the addresses of the Fiscalía and ICBF, and wished me luck. On the meticulous records the state keeps to show how many patrons it serves, I would be counted as one of the five people she attended to that day. It was so late in the afternoon that there was no point in going to either the Fiscalía or the ICBF that day, and I left the reporting station in angry and frustrated tears.

Feeling relieved and reassured, however, by her confident assessment of the situation as criminal and her belief in the competency of the state to investigate and remove the child if necessary, I rose before 6 am the next day, and arrived at the local ICBF office very early. There were only two people in front of me in line, plus the man that cut because he was a “professional.” I managed to be seen by the state agent before 11 am. She apologized for giving the “professional man” priority treatment, and performed the intake. She asked me to describe the situation. I related the crime, and she responded with all the proper outrage and disgust. Yes, the school psychologist that was treating the girl should have reported the crime. Yes, the Catholic social workers should have reported the crime. Yes, the neighbors should have reported the crime. Yes, indeed, raping your daughter is a
crime that should be reported and the state will intervene to protect the child. I felt relieved. Finally, everything was put back into proper perspective. They would conduct a formal investigation, and the state would be the official complainant. What, I inquired, would be the outcome of the situation if/when the abuse was determined to be taking place? What would happen to the father and the child? Oh, yes, speaking of that, did I know of a place where the girl could live? She absolutely needs to be separated from the father, reiterated the state employee. Where would I send her? Did I know of a family member or neighbor willing to take her? All the family members and neighbors already knew of the abuse and had done nothing. None had anything to give. They lived in the poorest of the poor squatter settlements up the side of the mountain. They all accepted the abuse just like the social workers and teachers and Church. No, there were no family members or neighbors willing to take her. Would I take her? Didn’t they have a home for her, a foster home, a state home? I countered? No, no foster homes, she explained, and no state homes either. The few they had were overflowing with kids that had no one to take care of them, their parents massacred or otherwise killed, abandoned, completely alone. Why did I think so many children live in the street? Having a father that rapes you, is, after all, better than having no father at all, and with meager resources, the state had to prioritize. What could the state do for the girl, then, if not remove her from the home? They would assign her to a psychologist at the school and follow up on her.

This is, indeed, what her neighbors, teachers, and social workers had already done: taken her to the school psychologist and provided a support system so that she could learn to cope with the situation.
Good Governance

There is evidence that Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers are extremely effective tools of governance. This is not to say that they provide justice, hold violent criminals accountable, or increase security. Rather, Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers are effective tools of governance precisely because they have met with widespread public approval, fostered extensive citizen participation, and successfully re-legitimized the state without providing these services typically considered requisite of any state.

Colombians use the Justice Houses, participate in their events, and willingly embraced their new responsibility as justice providers. The Justice Houses have been so successful, with such a large public turnout, that some have been forced to adopt weekend hours and special night sessions to accommodate the large number of local citizens waiting for their chance at justice.

Story reflects individual feelings of empowerment, successful transfer of responsibility for security provision from state to citizens. One middle-aged woman from a poor neighborhood in the south of the city who works as a day laborer cleaning houses in middle class neighborhoods voiced her enthusiasm for the program. She had married very young to a man who had physically abused her for decades. When a Justice House opened in her neighborhood, she volunteered to serve as a local conciliator, attending classes each weekend for a year, studying the different forms of conflict resolution, and learning to be a community leader. She felt empowered by her training, particularly the mantra that justice begins at home, and finally decided to try to end her abusive relationship. She spoke to several male friends in the neighborhood to have them on hand should anything go awry, and waited for her husband to come home. She greeted him with several whacks of a
baseball bat, and told him to leave and never come back, or she’d kill him. The woman never saw her abuser again, and attributed her decision, strength, and empowerment to the conflict resolution techniques she learned in the process of becoming a Conciliator.

While seemingly trivial in scope, this story illustrates the success of state programs of transferring responsibility of security provision to newly empowered and participatory citizens. Yet, despite the almost comical reversal of gender roles in the image of this gleeful, “empowered” woman wielding a baseball bat against a man who had viciously beat her for years, and the sense of justice and things set right by her successful ousting of the aggressor, this story also reveals peaks into the grave dangers of the state’s withdrawal from justice provision. First, despite the resounding success of this woman’s actions, responding to violence with violence usually escalates, not terminates, violence. Second, paramilitaries, private justice, vigilantes… no line of distinction; power dynamics!

**Conclusion**

Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers are new technologies of governance that seek to externalize the costs of justice provision by making citizens responsible for their own security. This redefinition is only made possible by the dual emphasis on decentralization and citizen participation. This technology of governance redefines justice as informal, extra-judicial, and participatory. These are, in fact, precisely the qualities that characterize paramilitary groups: informal, extra-judicial, and participatory justice. Where the line is drawn between the two is not clear, although the danger of informal, extra-judicial, and participatory justice is. Even while dealing with direct victims and perpetrators of the civil war, death squads, and other state-sponsored or political violence, the Justice Houses ignoring the political origins of the violence and the involvement of the
state in creating an unsafe environment, and actively work in the regions of the country where state death squads are most violent to reframe the problem of violence as a question of domestic violence. Moreover, this focus on domestic violence is a very selective one, erasing all forms of power relations, particularly gender. Women beating or rape is not discussed in any of the forms; while the physical and sexual abuse of children is framed as the primary problem in areas of state neglect. Ironically, even the state has not created effective mechanisms to protect even this vulnerable portion of the population. Instead, it governs by rapidly creating new institutions, slogans, and programs that work to obscure the incompetency of the state in providing justice, a justice it cannot provide because it is the perpetrator. This dual protector/perpetrator is the public secret of the state: common citizens cannot be made responsible for their own victimization or the “culture of violence,” because the state us the one who is responsible for the active creation for this space of death. This is not to argue that child abuse is not a problem in Colombia. Rather, this chapter illustrates the way in which the state trivializes or denies political war crimes and human rights abuses by framing the security issue as one of child abuse, while simultaneously avoiding acting on domestic abuse by redefining justice as agreements between equals. The Justice Houses and Coexistence Centers have thus facilitated impunity in Colombia. By claiming to increase access to justice by consolidating state services, they miss diagnose the problem. As evident in my efforts to report the sexual abuse of a young girl, the spatial distribution of state was not the problem. It was the proliferation, the lethargy, the limited resources, and the indifference. The state thus offers a spatial solution to a non-spatial problem, using this space to rearrange and rearticulate social relations, as
ex-combatants and displaced peoples are similarly taught both that their primary problems are those of child beating and that they must take justice into their own hands.
In this study I have explored how the Colombian state continues to govern despite gross failures. I have argued that it continues to rule through two primary forms of governance: state fragmentation and citizen education. The state has inundated public space with new programs, policies, and empty slogans, at the same time it has consumed civil society by increasingly incorporating civilians into para-state structures. Once in an ambiguous role between state and civil society, the civilians are educated to provide for their own wellbeing and assume the role and responsibility of service provision traditionally assigned to the state.

These technologies of governance have fundamentally re-arranged the state-society boundaries described in traditional understandings of the state as separate from civil society. Instead, civil society has become a space of state intervention and rule through the inundation of space with manifestations of the state and programs to re-educate citizens into assuming responsibility for providing services like security and justice. Moreover, in relinquishing responsibility, and even the capability, of providing for security and justice, the Colombian state has necessitated the radical re-conceptualization of the state. Traditional understandings of the state have drawn on the Weberian model that poses the state as separate from society, an arbiter of social conflict, and as possessing a complete monopoly over violence. As a structural effect of modern social order resulting from complex power relations, conceptualizing the state as “relatively autonomous” from civil society is a false distinction that serves to maintain certain social and political orders (Mitchell 1991). The state-society relation has been the central problem for political scientists (Migdal 2001; Mitchell 1991). This study of novel forms of state-society interaction illustrates that state-society relations are not static, but
changing, and indicates that our ability to theorize and understand the modern state has not kept pace with the rate of change.

This empirical study provides the basis for re-thinking the relation between state and society as well as facile distinction between failed and successful states. I have put forth a model for understanding contemporary states that defines states as a field of power comprised of both image and practice (Mbembe 2001, 25; Migdal 2001). By taking the paradoxical nature of the modern state as a starting point, I have sought to articulate the particular power arrangement or “languages of stateness” that allows the state to govern in the context of the patterns of violence and disorder I have described in contemporary Colombia.

The examples in these chapters show how state-building is a continuous practice, and how even the most “failed” states continue to function. This study seeks to fill the paucity of scholarship that investigates the “iterative and contested” process of inter-related state and citizen construction (Joseph and Nugent 1994, see also Anderson 1991; Nugent 1997; Radcliffe 2001). I have argued that this dialectical construction has employed the notion of social capital in order to intervene in civilian life, turning civil society into a new space for government intervention and radically altering state-society boundaries (see Comaroff and Comaroff 2001, 44). As civil society has increasingly become a space of government intervention, social capital has turned into a technology of governance employed by the state, development institutions, and the private sector rather than the basis for civil society strengthening and autonomy. This eclipse has further obscured the point that the absence of civic capacity is the by-product of politics, state building, and social structure, not “culture” (Tarrow 1996).
I have argued throughout that state fragmentation and citizen education are two technologies of governance that use social capital to engender voluntary citizen “participation” in their own service provision. As a “more or less” calculated and rational effort to affect human behaviour by shaping desires, aspiration, interests and beliefs (Dean 1999, 11; Foucault 1991), state fragmentation and citizen education are fundamentally technologies of governance. This study of governance seeks to resituate even “failed” states as important actors in processes of governance by asking how, not why, the state is able to govern.

This study has argued that citizens have been made responsible for their own security and justice provision in Colombia through social capital initiatives. The implication of citizens in their own governance and belief that the state and other parties can intervene in order to make citizens more self-sufficient is precisely the goal of the modern governance to which social capital lends a hand. According to Mitchell Dean, a technology of governance is the technical aspect of government, the means, mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, technologies, or vocabularies through which authority is constituted and rule accomplished (Dean 1999, 31). Social capital is thus a technology of governance when it is used by ruling, authoritative bodies to create active citizens that are capable of self-government.

I have illustrated how this particular form of governance found in contemporary Colombia was created by the confluence of neoliberalism and democracy. The simultaneous adoption and development of democracy and neoliberalism in Latin America was not merely coincidental, but constitutive of a unique form of governance that employs coercive-voluntary “technologies of citizenship.” These techniques of self-
estem, empowerment, consultation, and negotiation work through citizens’ subjectivities in order to create self-governing citizen-subjects who actively participate in politics by adding their own “voice” (Dean 1999, 168; Hale 2006; Lind 2005; Schild 2000). While engendering a “discursive crisis” for those who envisioned radical democracy as a singularly libratory project (Dagnino 2004), democratic-neoliberalism does not so much obscure the differences between two distinct forms of participation, but rather illustrates how the production of citizens is the permanent political project of democracy such that citizens are an effect of liberal governance instead of the foundation of democracy (Cruikshank 1999, 5). This simultaneity complicates the suggestion that more participatory planning could avoid development disasters (Scott 1998), as evidenced in this case. Moreover, democratic-neoliberalism exacerbated inequalities, as neoliberalism involves active state intervention to reengineer state-society relations and recraft social institutions, profoundly altering relations between social classes with manifold implications for distribution of resources, power and insecurity (Taylor 2006, 8).

This approach helps to understand the re-legitimation of the Colombian state, the widespread support for the autocratic President Uribe and his deployment of paramilitary violence, and the seemingly contradictory support for and participation in other state institutions like Justice Houses and the Constitutional Court that attempt to redress the violence started by other branches of the state. This study of governance that asks how, not why, rule is achieved helps us to understand how the state engenders participatory citizens who willingly assume these new responsibilities and often with high approval ratings for all state employees and branches. I have argued, thus, that the popularity of
contemporary leaders, particularly the mayors of Bogotá, the President, and the Courts, in Colombia is not result of crime reduction, but rather…

This approach also helps explain people’s willingness to accept, endorse, and even support the government’s paramilitary death squads. This popular justification and participation in violence is neither irrational nor hateful ignorance, but part of larger process of governance and the reformulation of state-society relations that involves the privatization of security, structural links to death squads, communal justice, private security. Justice with unequal benefits and outcomes, and extreme victimization. While a prostate civil society, non-participatory citizens, and common people are blamed for the violence, inequality, and conservatism that undermine democracy and the state around the world, this work highlights how very participatory citizens actually are, as well as how this participation serves as both the source of their empowerment and service provision as well as their subjection.

Finally, I have suggested throughout this dissertation that this case study is essential to understanding the re-defining of state-society relations both around Latin America, as well as globally. First, Bogotá has been held up as a global example of violence reduction and governance, its policies recommended for implementation and modeled around the world. Thus, understanding the original model is essential to understanding its formulation and implementation elsewhere, in addition to how is shapes and crafts a global discourse even where it is not implemented per se. Secondly, this case exemplifies similar processes at work around the world as violence has been identified as the number one impediment to democracy, and civil society and social capital the best possible solutions. This study illustrates the potent political power of such a model,
offering both a hopeful model in the incredible ability and willingness of civilians to participate in politics and a bleak warning of the abuses and dangers of this ever-increasing eclipse of civil society by militarized state structures.
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Curriculum Vitae

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Publications

