Selective Listening:

Why U.S. Policymakers De-Securitized Colombia's Internal Displacement Crisis

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Abstract

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This thesis examines the U.S. foreign policy known as "Plan Colombia" and asks why it has not allocated greater resources toward Colombia's decades-long internal displacement crisis. By analyzing primary sources connected to the policy such as White House press releases and speeches from State Department officials, and comparing them with the apportionment of congressional funding for Plan Colombia, I identified significant discrepancies between the official statements regarding internal displacement and the types and quantities of aid given to Colombia by the United States. I employed interviews with policy experts, humanitarian advocates, and NGO workers to add depth to my own understanding of Plan Colombia and its constitutive elements. Looking through a lens of Securitization Theory, my research suggests that U.S. policymakers habitually avoid any substantial commitment to helping Colombia solve its internal displacement crisis because doing so would obligate the United States to prefer a humanitarian-focused relationship with Colombia rather than maintain its long-standing and mutually reinforcing emphasis on state security.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

LEIDY VANESSA

Marxist guerrillas started recruiting Leidy Vanessa and her siblings to become soldiers

when she was in her early teens.[1] Fighters from one of the three rebel groups operating in the

Córdoba Department where her family lived came by almost daily, demanding to be fed and

sheltered by her parents.[2] They threatened to kill them if they were caught providing the same

type of support to any of the other rebel groups' soldiers. They harassed her parents with threats

but were only interested in taking the young, whom they could more easily indoctrinate and keep

hidden from authorities. They lured her with stories of the glory of the cause. She was living on

her parents' farm outside of Puerto Libertador where they had a small plot of land. Depending

on each year's market prices, they would farm corn, rice, yuca, or plantains. They also relied on

two cows, and because their land was not large or valuable enough to steal, the famously violent

FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia; Revolutionary Armed Forces of

Colombia) opted to coerce her into service. Knowing what this life would look like (her

neighbor's son had been taken and never returned), and having heard stories of the government

military offensives against the FARC, she decided that fleeing to the city was her safest option.

She knew this would increase the risk to her parents' wellbeing, but the alternative was not worth

entertaining.

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[1] Leidy Vanessa is a pseudonym for a real displaced person who shared her experiences of
displacement with a contact of mine in Colombia, who interviewed her on my behalf
[2] The EPL (Ejército Popular de Liberación/Popular Liberation Army), ELN (Ejército de
Liberación Nacional/National Liberation Army), and the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas
Revolucionarias de Colombia all maintained varying levels of coercive control over Córdoba
during this time.

It was early in the morning on September 27th, 1987, when Leidy Vanessa stole out of town on horseback to get as far away from home as possible before most people were awake. After many miles, and knowing that she would stand out if she continued to ride, Leidy left her horse and continued on foot for at least a couple more hours. Finally reaching a municipal bus line, she rode all the way to Medellin where her older sister lived, and where she hoped she could find work. "At that time," she says, "living in the city was safer than living in rural areas."

BACKGROUND

Leidy Vanessa still lives in Medellín where her life among that city's urban poor has come to typify the experience of Colombia's more than 6,000,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) (Regístro Único de Victimas (RUV), 2016). Though her displacement occurred decades ago, her story highlights the continued failure of local, national, or international policies regarding IDPs to provide substantial help to extremely vulnerable people. This figure qualifies Colombia as the possessor of the world's second largest population of victims of conflict who have been forced to flee their homes but who have not crossed an international border (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2015). This South American nation has been at second in this regard for at least the last ten years, and at its peak growth was climbing at rates averaging 296,000 newly registered IDPs annually (Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES), 2012). Stated differently, Colombia has more IDPs than Afghanistan, Iraq and South Sudan combined, and only stands behind Syria in terms of total number of IDPs (IDMC, 2015).

Yet, the political response regarding Colombia's IDPs seems incongruous when compared with reactions to recent events in Syria. While the latter has been labeled "a vast sea of suffering" and "a humanitarian catastrophe" by senior state department officials (Blinken,

2015; Kerry, 2015), other U.S. Government representatives have, as recently as 2015, described Colombia as "a beacon of hope," a "great success story," and "a nation transformed" (Biden, 2015; Kelly, 2014). In another example of contrary reactions to tragic events in Syria and Colombia, President Obama has referred to the use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime, which resulted in approximately 1,000 civilian deaths, as threatening "our ideals … and principles," but extrajudicial executions carried out by Colombian security forces producing at least 3,000 dead[3] have garnered hardly a comment from the White House (Obama, 2013). These data points, coupled with deeper understanding and analysis of the U.S.-Colombia relationship, beg the following question: Given the citizen security crisis represented by such an alarming number of IDPs, and the shared security priorities that guide US-Colombia relations, why does the U.S. government register such little public concern about this issue?

This paper aims to contextualize, define, and offer a way of understanding, the apparent inconsistency above. In doing so, I will present a background for the last 15 years of U.S. foreign policy in Colombia and a brief overview and analysis of literature regarding IDPs and state sovereignty. It is important to consider the history of this policy, known officially and colloquially as Plan Colombia, because not many other policies have enjoyed such bipartisan support in Congress across multiple presidential administrations (Crandall, 2008). Nor have other, similarly celebrated policies, achieved so little across such a lengthy policy lifespan. Drawing from scholarship on securitization, I provide a framework to help us navigate the uneven topography of humanitarian advocacy and policymaking rhetoric. This will be followed by a description of the research I conducted, and then the story of the interaction between Plan

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[3] The Fellowship of Reconciliation published a report in 2014 titled *The Rise and Fall of "False Positive" Killings in Colombia: The Role of U.S. Military Assistance, 2000‑2010*. In it, they allege that the number of extrajudicial killings of civilians by Colombian security forces was at least 5,700 between 2000 and 2010 alone.

Colombia and internal displacement. I conclude with a review of the effectiveness of securitization theory as a means for examining our question, a discussion of new questions that have come to light during my research and analysis, some ideas for future research and potential policy recommendations, and lastly I check back with Leidy Vanessa, to see how Plan Colombia has worked for her as a displaced person.

The United States and Colombia have a long and largely positive history of cooperative diplomacy, and the U.S. foreign policy known as Plan Colombia is the most well known piece of this lineage. Plan Colombia was signed into law in the year 2000 as an effort to battle the flow of illegal drugs moving from Colombia into North America (Rosen, 2014). Two large and powerful leftist rebel groups and a right-wing paramilitary organization[4] were fighting the Colombian government for control of resources – primarily land used to grow coca and process it into cocaine – and according to some in both Colombian and U.S. administrations, represented a serious threat to the governability of the state. Although the guerrilla groups were born with political and ideological aspirations following the Colombian civil war of the 1940s and1950s, by the 1990s their main source of operational financing was the illegal drug trade, and the paramilitaries were no exception. A lengthy history of security cooperation and several successive presidents who affirmed that drugs were a national security threat to the United States combined with domestic U.S. politics to enable the passage of Plan Colombia into law, and 15 years later Colombia remains the single largest recipient of US security assistance in the western hemisphere (Security Assistance Monitor (SAM), 2016).

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[4] The Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC; Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, in English), the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN; National Liberation Army), and the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC; United Self-defense Forces of Colombia)

HOW ARE COLOMBIA'S IDPs DIFFERENT?

There are two main reasons why Colombia's internal displacement crisis is different than most others around the world. The first is its longevity and the second is its official recognition by the Colombian government. Although the official Colombian government records that track the numbers and department of origin of IDPs, CODHES, goes back as far as 1985, some (Interview with anonymous source 1, 12/17/15; Henderson, 2015) argue that displacement began in Colombia with La Violencia, Colombia's violent and class-based civil war of the 1940s and 1950s, which pitted conservative elites against liberal elites and lasted for more than 18 years (Henderson, 2015; Carroll, 2011). Although the common denominator of internal displacement in Colombia is unequal access to land, an IDP advocate in Colombia I interviewed (and who wished to remain anonymous for his own safety) also commented that internal displacement is a "meta-phenomenon" in that it "has had numerous causes and numerous culprits, but has been happening for 80 years." He noted that even the ideologies of the actors behind displacement have varied across the years, and that he views Colombia's displacement in phases. "First," he says, "there was a Violencia phase, a Guerrilla phase, a Guerrilla-Paramilitary-Military conflict phase," and now "the Bacrim phase." The final characteristic of Colombia's IDP crisis that he believes makes it a meta-phenomenon is that it occurs "on every spatial level," meaning that people are displaced "from country to city, from rural to rural, and people are even displaced within cities" by criminal gangs (Bacrim, *bandas criminales,* criminal gangs in English).

One of the results of the long-lasting displacement crisis is that it has affected multiple generations of Colombians. The source remarked that "there is now a generational displacement identity" in Colombia, meaning that children and grandchildren have learned form their parents and grandparents that the normal response to violence or threats of violence is to flee your home

and settle elsewhere within Colombia. He also described this phenomenon as a "legacy of leaving or being forced off your land," emphasizing that "any time … a family faces threats or intimidation, you leave …you just leave" (Interview with anonymous source 1, 12/17/15).

"Another difference," WOLA's Adam Isacson commented, "is that there has been official recognition of the problem" (Interview with Isacson, 2/9/16). The Colombian government passed a law in 1997, Law 387, aimed at providing for "the prevention of forced displacement, and for assistance, protection, socioeconomic consolidation and stabilization of persons internally displaced by violence in the Republic of Colombia" (Law 387, 1997). Not only did Law 387 make Colombia one of the first nations in the world to adopt national legislation pertaining to its own internally displaced population, but this law was amended at least twice in the ensuing ten years, and has been taken up by the Colombian Constitutional Court (Corte Constitucional; equivalent to United States Supreme Court in jurisdiction and role). In 2004, this court declared the Colombian government to be in a state of unconstitutionality (Sentence T-025/04, commonly referred to as T-025) due to its failure to sufficiently provide for and enforce the provisions of Law 387 (Email from anonymous source, 05/26/15). In 2014, a Colombian national human rights commission observed a tenth anniversary of T-025, in which it lamented the continued unconstitutional state of Colombia's millions of IDPs, and asked that the court continue to keep visibility on the need to continue "working for the rights of the displaced" (my translation, El Espectador, 2014). "Imagine that in a place like Syria or Sudan," Isacson said. He added that not only has Colombia had more official recognition of its IDPs than any other country, but that it even has "the institutionality set up for it" (Interview with Isacson, 2/9/16).

PLAN COLOMBIA AND IDPs

These distinctive elements of Colombia's 6,000,000 strong IDP population are substantively relevant to answering my question because they further illuminate the notion that there is something outstanding and out-of-place about the ways Plan Colombia has treated these victims of violence and instability. It would be more logical for the policy to react the way it has if Colombia's IDP population was shrinking or at least not continuing to grow by thousands of people per year (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2016), or if the crisis was new and explosive like that of Syria (which still receives paltry media and U.S. Government attention in comparison with the *international* refugees produced by that ongoing conflict). But given that there has been so much official recognition of this humanitarian catastrophe, given the foreknowledge that violence was already producing internal displacement, and that it is anything but an emergent problem, Plan Colombia's continued lack of emphasis on internal displacement further solidifies the need to explore why this is the case.

Since Plan Colombia's passage into law in 2000, nearly $10 billion have been spent by the United States as part of the policy dedicated to counter-narcotics and other security goals (Latin America Working Group (LAWG), 2016). U.S. officials in favor of Plan Colombia tout statistics such as the decrease in homicide rates, quantity of drug traffickers extradited to the US, drop in number of kidnappings, and expanded reach and ability of the nation's military and police forces, as evidence that "that worked for Colombia" (Brownfield, 2014). On the other hand, policy experts such as those at D.C.-based humanitarian think tank Washington office on Latin America (WOLA) point to persistent civil war, steady cocaine production, a weak judiciary, and numerous, grave human rights problems as indications that Plan Colombia has not truly accomplished its goals (Isacson, 2010). As always, an objective analysis will acknowledge

the strengths and weaknesses of the policy. The harder question to answer is not whether Plan Colombia has been "a waste of time and money" (Carpenter, 2001) or a plan worth exporting elsewhere (O'Hanlon & Petraeus, 2013), but why IDPs are such a small part of the US policy response to such a staggering issue.

Literature on the implementation and results of Plan Colombia is plentiful, but an investigation into how Colombia's largest humanitarian crisis – its IDPs – are accounted for by policymakers in Washington, D.C., does not exist (Rosen (2014), Henderson (2015) and Tate (2016) give far better scholarly attention to Plan Colombia than I have, but do not focus on the relationship between the policy and IDPs). Not only will such an exploration shed light on a significant human rights problem that has gone practically ignored by the U.S. government as it creates and adjusts policy, but, perhaps more importantly, this study will increase what we know about how lawmakers choose which issues to confront and which to ignore.

CHAPTER 2:
LITERATURE, THEORY, AND METHODS

"There has been a greater focus on refugees that leave the country than on IDPs. They think of them as in a worse situation, but the people inside the country have more security risks. I mean they might have more people who can help them, but going to a city where armed actors are still operating, risks often follow them." –John Lindsay-Poland, Founder of the Fellowship of Reconciliation's (FOR) Colombia Peace Team

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Internally Displaced People have been gaining attention in humanitarian and political circles since their numbers outstripped the global quantity of international refugees in the 1990s (Mooney, 2005). IDPs are recognized by the United Nations as resulting from violence, persecution, natural disasters, and development, and they represent, among other things, the unwillingness or inability of a government to prevent or correct the condition of displacement (Cohen & Deng, 1998a). Internal Displacement scholarship recognizes IDPs as significant among other humanitarian concerns because, having not crossed an international border, they are legally due none of the protections offered by the long-standing Refugee Convention of 1951 and the 1967 Refugee Protocol, each ratified by the UN General Assembly (Bagshaw, 2005). There is also a growing body of literature discussing the ways that IDPs represent the failure of a sovereign state to carry out its duties to its own citizens (Deng, 1995; Evans & Sahnoun, 2002; Yamashita, 2005). This becomes more significant when coupled with the ways that countries like the U.S. and Colombia employ a security discourse when justifying policies, but fail to acknowledge IDPs as inherently linked to a lack of security. This tension points directly at the heart of my research, revealing that security often means one thing to a state and something else to individual citizens (Goldstein, 2016).

Although violent conflict is recognized as the near-unanimous proximate cause for Colombia's internal displacement, most Colombia experts also identify persistent inequality, especially regarding land distribution, as the underlying source of not only Colombia's IDPs, but also of Colombia's historical civil wars (Bello, 2004; Engel & Ibanez, 2007; Ocampo, S., et al., 2010; Segura Escobar, 2000). In this way, Colombia's IDPs are symptomatic of both systemic inequality dating back to Colombian independence, and the violence that continues to plague Colombia due to internal armed conflict, and, recently, the rapid expansion of criminal gangs with their accompanying violence.

STATE FAILURE

Some would argue that the mere existence of violence so widespread that it has caused millions of people to flee from their homes points to an inability of Colombia to function as a sovereign state (Lyons & Mastanduno, 1995; Evans & Sahnoun, 2002). But state sovereignty does not mean the same thing to every actor, and carries different significance depending on perspective. For example, Goldstein (2016) argues that a lack of personal security for citizens is not necessarily perceived as an existential threat to a state's sovereignty, but that broader understandings of security should include threats to society, "and that this identification is a cultural and political process that varies across contexts" (Goldstein, 2016, p. 138). State sovereignty, then, can look at either the entire state or a state's citizens as the unit of analysis. For example, internationally recognized sovereignty, as codified at the Montevideo Convention of 1933, requires that a state possess: (a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states (Ezrow & Frantz, 2013). In the domestic sphere, however, sovereignty historically conveys the ability of a state to maintain a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence within its borders (Lyons & Mastanduno,

1995). Alternately, some recent scholarship views sovereignty as more of a responsibility than an entitlement to recognition by the population (Deng, 1995; Evans & Sahnoun, 2002; Ezrow & Frantz, 2013). Similarly, Ghani and Lockhart (2008, p. 22) posit that "the state is also assumed to have the capability to implement … decisions, project its authority throughout the territory, possess a domestic resource base to meet its spending obligations, and have a legitimate monopoly on the physical means by which it can guarantee its citizens' security."

These ideas about what constitutes a state, when used as a filter for viewing Colombia, have brought some scholars to opine that Colombia fits the title of failed or failing state. This concept of state failure gained momentum in the early 1990s as crises were unraveling in Somalia, Bosnia, Liberia, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Call, 2008). By the late 1990s, politicians in the U.S. began to argue that Colombia was "the brink" of becoming a failed state, or, more in line with non-traditional ideas about governance, of becoming a "narco state" (DeShazo, Primiani, McLean, 2007, p. 4). Although much state failure scholarship now questions the usefulness of the term, or even argues that the state failure concept has led humanitarian assistance efforts off track, it nonetheless was appealed to by U.S. and Colombian politicians in the post-9/11 years as an urgent regional and global security risk (Call, 2008; Yamashita, 2005). In other words, consistent with the US history of claiming an existential threat to the United States or its allies as justification for intervention in another sovereign nation, Plan Colombia morphed from a purely counter-narcotics initiative into a comprehensive state security effort aimed at bringing Colombia "back from the brink" (DeShazo, et al., 2007; Rosen, 2014).

"Policy makers in general focus almost exclusively on what they define or perceive to be a threat, rather than what they could do that would be productive."
– John Lindsay-Poland, Founder of the Fellowship of Reconciliation's Colombia Peace Team

THEORY

How should we theoretically frame internal displacement as an agenda item for US policy toward Colombia? When searching for a way to analyze foreign policy, theories of international politics quickly come to mind (e.g., realism or liberalism). But before we know how to look at broad-brush ideas about Plan Colombia, it is important to identify the actors and processes involved in foreign policy creation. Winifred Tate's work on US policy in Colombia identifies the primary 'makers' of foreign policy as "congressional staff, embassy officials, military officers, and Foreign Service personnel" (Tate, 2015, p. 5). This lists those most directly involved in the actual drafting process, but Tate, a cultural anthropologist, also elaborates on the complex and convoluted process of policy formation; an activity she claims involves personal alliances, office-level politics, financially motivated lobbying, and sheer emotions. As I will describe in the next section, such a detailed and intricate pursuit does not fit easily into some of the more traditional ways of thinking about international politics.

REALISM

While there are many possible theories to use for interrogating my research question, it seemed appropriate to begin with IR theories since my topic deals with political, military, and inter- and intra-state relations. Realism, perhaps the oldest of all political theories (Williams, 2012) proposes that all states exist in an anarchic world system and that survival is the primary goal of each state (Morgenthau, 2006). In a realist system, "each state pursues its own interests, however defined, in ways it judges best" (Waltz, 2001, p. 238), and international politics are "characterized by conflict, struggle, and competition between states without a higher sovereign

above them" (Williams, 2012, p. 24). These definitions of realism apply in some ways to the

Plan Colombia-IDP relationship, but in other ways do not. It is helpful in that both the U.S. and

Colombia are certainly concerned with survival otherwise they would not talk about guerillas

and drugs as existential threats (which I discuss in Chapter 3). Realism also applies in that Plan

Colombia demonstrates that the U.S. views Colombia "as a crucial ally for its foreign policy in

the region" (Rosen, 2014, p. 7). On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine that the United

States is genuinely threated militarily by the prospect of war with a united Latin America, and

therefore in need of military allies in the region. Similarly, while a complete disappearance of

trade relations with Colombia would not be a positive thing for the U.S. economy, neither would

it signal the downfall of the United States. The most important reason, though, that realism does

not help me answer my research question, is that IDPs are not taken seriously enough by either

government to constitute a significant piece of the realist decision-making equation.

LIBERALISM

Liberalism, at the other end of the IR spectrum, is characterized by the pursuit of peace

through economic interdependence, democratic governments, and international institutions

(Mearsheimer, 2014). Liberal thinking would suggest that "states can devise foreign policies

that reflect at least a modicum of ethics and morality," and that just as "good" domestic

governance produces peace and stability within a nation, so too does good national governance

result in peace for the global system of states (Williams, 2012, p. 25). Liberalism's allowance

for the importance of non-state actors such as international institutions in achieving peace

resonates with the creation and establishment of Plan Colombia as just such an institution

(Rosen, 2014). It also offers a plausible explanation for U.S. and Colombian domestic politics

having a significant role in the make-up of the policy (which I discuss further in Chapter 3).

Where liberal IR theory falls short is in explaining the Plan Colombia-IDP relationship, which bucks the notion of good domestic governance making for good international partnership. Plan Colombia was not approved by Congress and the President because of Colombia's democratic success in governing its territory, but because Colombia was unable to effectively rule within its borders. Additionally, it would be an exaggeration to claim true economic interdependence as a motivation for Plan Colombia, since the Colombian market makes up less than 1% of all U.S. trade (Rosen, 2014).

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

If realism cannot account for the overly optimistic elements of Plan Colombia or the lack of a genuine existential threat emanating from Latin America, and if strong democratic governance and crucial economic ties also fail to explain U.S. investment in Colombia, then perhaps Wendt's (1999) *Social Theory of International Politics* will help elucidate the near-absence of internal displacement within the policy. In line with Wendt's perspective is the notion that the United States and Colombia have forged a partnership, even a shared identity, built around a common security dilemma. He says of his own theory that it "comes down to the proposition that the ideas held by individual states are given content or meaning by the ideas which they share with other states" (Wendt, 1999, p. 372). Wendt works in the realm of ideas, which he argues are thing that actually compels an actor to make a material decision, and which is especially relevant for examining the dearth of IDP content in Plan Colombia. Wendt argues that, "as cultural practices get routinized…they get pushed into the shared cognitive background, becoming taken for granted rather than objects of calculation" (Wendt, 1999, p. 310-311). This could mean that one reason Plan Colombia does not address IDPs is because they have been around for so long. But, this does not fully explain their neglect since IDPs are – at least in

public rhetoric – acknowledged as in need of help. Wendt's work also has more to do with the system of states and how they build their identities than with the ways that individuals within states interpret the interests of various actors in government, which makes it a less-than-ideal fit for my research question. Social constructivism, or "idealism," as Wendt calls it, may simply operate at too high a level to adequately interrogate the question of how IDPs figure into Plan Colombia. The idea that a shared U.S.-Colombia security identity is best viewed through a social constructivist theory of international politics provides a background for further investigation, but lacks the precision required to examine what motivates individual policy actors (Wendt, 1999). This suggests the need for a theory that not only accommodates states acting in a global system, but also leaves room for the interests of sub-state agents. One of the places this leads us is to securitization theory.

SECURITIZATION THEORY

Securitization refers to the political practice of using language to move a "public issue" out of the realm of the ordinary and give it a status as an existential threat, thereby gaining the public's consent to bypass established democratic processes in responding to the threat (Buzan, et al., 1998). Securitization theory posits that nothing exists inherently as a threat and that an actor or phenomenon requires an "intersubjective commitment between an audience and a securitizing actor" that labels the actor or phenomenon a threat (Balzacq, 2015b, p. 106). This threat construction is a part of Thierry Balzacq's (2005) treatment of securitization, wherein he identifies the three constitutive elements of securitization as "political agency, audience, and context" (Balzacq, 2005, p. 171; Balzacq, 2015b). Political agency refers to the power of the securitizing actor; audience refers to the people the securitizing actor seeks to persuade; and context refers to the wider social environment (Balzacq, 2015b). Another essential component

of securitization theory is that the act of securitizing an issue establishes a shared, ethical responsibility for the securitizing actor and the audience (Balzacq, 2015b). In other words, once both of these parties accept that a threat exists, they both gain a moral obligation to take appropriate action. How this "shared agency" manifests is the subject of the next paragraph.

A contemporary example of securitization, and one not irrelevant for our topic of US policy in Colombia, is the so-called War on Drugs. Politicians from the Reagan administration to the Obama administration have labeled drugs an existential threat to the United States (Smith, 2013), and in doing so have implied that failing to take otherwise objectionable action will amount to the refusal of the American people to allow their government to adequately confront the threat. This is a classic case of securitization in that a social and political context provided an opportunity for a powerful person to gain the consent of the governed to take action against an abstract threat which the audience otherwise would not have allowed. "One of the central implications of this idea," Balzacq says, "is that once established, securitization enables policy makers to immediately adopt whatever means they deem appropriate to curb the threat" (Balzacq, 2015, p. 99). But what does securitization tell us about the specifics of US policy toward Colombia?

Tickner describes securitization as the process through which "discursive practice or speech acts, diverse issues *become* security threats" (Tickner, 2016, p. 68, italics hers). She elaborates further that, given the subjective nature of threats (based on individual circumstances or resources, a threat for one person might be easily dismissed by another), they must be provided definition through the rhetoric of actors. "The main focus of securitization," she argues, "is how elites label specific issues as security threats and to what effect" (Tickner, 2016, p. 68). In this regard, uncovering policymakers' language in the construction and modification

of Plan Colombia possesses great potential for helping us comprehend how and why IDPs have been involved in the formulation of policy. The rest of this section analyzes the securitization discourse of U.S. policymakers placed in a context of shared, constructed identities.

SECURITIZATION AND PLAN COLOMBIA

How well does securitization explain the curious lack of appropriations for Colombia's internally displaced population in US foreign policy? Given that securitization is a theory of speaking threats into existence, who ultimately decides what goes into a policy and what stays out? Securitization literature suggests that only those agenda items – in other words, the context – that have an interested and powerful actor coupled with an audience willing to be persuaded will make their way into funded policy.

In the case of Plan Colombia, the strongest hypothesis is that policymakers abstained speaking about IDPs as a security issue in order to avoid obligating themselves to act to help Colombian IDPs (they selectively securitized only some of Colombia's national governance crisis). In other words, by refraining from acknowledging IDPs as a central piece of Colombian insecurity (which has to do with shaping the security context), those in power (the securitizing actors or agents) do not risk ascribing to themselves a moral accountability for the plight of millions of people (by generating concern among their constituencies or colleagues in Congress, the audience). Another possibility is that more than just refraining from securitizing IDPs, U.S. policymakers actively silenced the voices of those who were and are concerned about internal displacement. This hypothesis works well with the idea that the U.S. followed President Uribe's lead in excluding any non-terrorist threats from the public discourse around security (which I discuss in Chapter Three). A third option is that among the individuals involved in writing Plan Colombia, none of them believed public opinion would support the monetary cost of the policy if

another country's disenfranchised people were going to be the beneficiaries. While Congress has had a handful of vocal critics of Plan Colombia's anemic treatment of internal displacement, the silence of the majority on this issue could signify that many elites were simply not willing to pay the potential professional or personal costs of making internal displacement "their" problem.

Exploring the above ideas demands a systematic approach to discovering precisely how securitization theory might explain the problematic absence of substantial help for IDPs in Plan Colombia. Without access to Members of Congress, and without the time needed to thoroughly investigate the congressional record, I chose to employ a hybrid method of interviewing people with extensive knowledge of Plan Colombia and analyzing the spoken and written words of political elites in the U.S. The next section describes this approach and offers specific waypoints en route to the answers to my questions.

Investigating how and why the US government makes foreign policy decisions could constitute a life's work on its own, never mind attempting to unearth the internal inconsistencies of how politicians and government agencies communicate and enact US policy. Winifred Tate (2015) and Jonathan Rosen (2014) have each provided highly detailed accounts of the history and anthropology of Plan Colombia, but I have discovered one thing needing further research, which is the relationship between Plan Colombia and Colombia's internal displacement crisis. What follows is a brief discussion of how I went about conducting this research. I will touch on what my research did not address, which methods I used to gather and analyze relevant information, the limitations and constraints of my methods, and how I believe this study will shed light on the topic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

So much about Plan Colombia, especially what is being called "Plan Colombia 2.0," is worthy of in-depth investigation and analysis (White House, 02/02/16). Any foreign policy that receives more than $10 billion over the course of its implementation ought to be heavily analyzed, but especially one that is regularly acknowledged as a plan worthy of being exported to other parts of the world (Kelly, 2015). As is the case with most scholarly projects, I was limited in terms of time and resources, and unable to do justice to the vast number of individual, intriguing topics that are interconnected in a country as complex as Colombia. One might be tempted to say that everything in Colombia goes back to drugs, but that would be missing a much deeper connection between post-colonial state building and long standing land inequality. A comparison of Colombia's internal displacement crisis as it relates to land reform policies would have been incredibly instructive for developing policy recommendations, but would also have required much more time to complete. Additionally, a much more detailed description of all the major events of Plan Colombia over the past 16 years would have provided an important context for my project, but many others have already written volumes on the subject, and so I focused narrowly on the IDP-Plan Colombia relationship. Lastly, a thorough analysis of congressional documentation regarding Plan Colombia would have come closer to my goal of closely examining what things were said among policymakers as they decided what to fund as part of the policy.

The findings of my brief foray into quantitative and qualitative analysis of congressional records covering Plan Colombia did yield very interesting results, which I will describe briefly. On the quantitative side, I completed a search in ProQuest Congressional using specific terms connected to Plan Colombia and Internal Displacement. One of the reasons I ultimately

abandoned this method was because the large volume of possible search terms related to these two, very narrow phrases, generated significantly more work than I had time to complete, especially in light of my other research goals. For example, in order to be thorough using this method, I needed to search for "internally displaced," internal displacement," and "IDPs," to make sure that I caught all congressional documents that made mention of both "Plan Colombia" and some form of IDPs. Further complicating this problem was the discovery that some search results in ProQuest Congressional that yielded positive "hits" for both "Plan Colombia" and "internally displaced" within one document included material that discussed Plan Colombia in one section and internal displacement in a totally different part of the world. Additionally, Plan Colombia itself, as a policy, has many different names that mean different things to different policymakers. For example, some believe that Plan Colombia refers to the first phase of the policy that was funded by legislation accomplished during the Clinton administration, and that all follow-on initiatives should be addressed by their funding-related policy name. Moreover, many of the early goals of Plan Colombia were subsumed by later State Department programs such as the Andean Regional Initiative, the Andean Counterdrug Initiative, or the Colombian Strategic Development Initiative. About this last term, there was even an instance within one document when the same person referred to it as both the "Colombia Strategic Development Initiative" as well as the "Colombi*an* Strategic Development Initiative."

There is no clear way to completely disaggregate military and non-military funding sources (some US DoD programs accomplished the same things done by technically non-military programs operated by the State Department) that fall under the umbrella of Plan Colombia. In much of the congressional record, some members of congress will, within the same hearing or document, refer to the same policy using different names. One possible explanation here is that

more senior members who were in office at the start of Plan Colombia simply chose not to alter their vocabulary when discussing the various aspects of Plan Colombia.

What were my limited quantitative findings? I learned that there were a total of 1,337 documents that returned results when searching for one of the most commonly used terms I listed above. That is interesting on its own, that in the span of 16 years, an average of 83 documents per year mention Plan Colombia. More interesting still is the fact that of those 1,337 documents, less than one-third of them also mention "internal displacement" or "internally displaced," and of those, many were not referring to Colombia's IDPs. I attempted to control for the incidence of one document containing reference to both "Plan Colombia" and one of the other major terms by searching for two Plan Colombia-related terms at a time, but this revealed that far more congressional documents refer to "Plan Colombia" than any of the other names used to discuss the policy. Additionally, this only eliminated the possible duplication of 182 documents, meaning that almost 90% of all the Plan Colombia-related search results were unique. Finally, it is important to note that of all 1,337 congressional records mentioning Plan Colombia or its variants, an astonishingly significant number (that I did not spend the time calculating) of them were only unique in that they were technically different version of the same piece of legislation. For example, every time a bill moves from a committee to the House of Representatives, or to the Senate, or once it becomes law, it appears as a distinct document within the congressional record. In summary, the main limitation of my quantitative analysis efforts was that there were far too few documents containing valuable information among far too many existing records. This led me to focus my research on qualitative methods, which I describe in the next paragraph.

Early difficulty in obtaining interviews with policy experts and Colombia scholars drove me to attempt the quantitative methods I described above. However, around the same time that I

was discovering the quagmire-like characteristics of the congressional record, I started to receive favorable replies from people I had been unsuccessfully trying to interview for months. As I mentioned earlier, there are plenty of people who have answered questions about Plan Colombia's effectiveness, written thorough histories of U.S.-Colombian relations, or written extensively on internal displacement as a phenomenon. A difficulty I encountered in trying to solicit information that pertained to my research question was that open-ended questions led to answers that just touched the edge of my narrow focus. In other words, most people I interviewed had plenty to say about Plan Colombia, but had no deep answers about why the policy has not adequately addressed Colombian internal displacement. Michael Shifter, a long time D.C. policy analyst and current President of the Inter-American Dialogue, told me that he is unaware of anyone interrogating my research question and that it addresses the "disturbing and alarming" lack of recognition of the Colombia's internal displacement crisis. This was great news in the sense that I knew I had really discovered an unanswered question, but made the depth of analysis required on my part that much more complex.

Shifter represents only one of the types of people I sought to interview. By the end of my research I had spoken with two think tank policy analysts, two policy experts who focus specifically on human rights advocacy in Latin America, two internal displacement workers located in Colombia, and one member of the U.S. State Department's Senior Executive Service who currently serves as a policy advisor on matters pertaining to U.S.-Latin America relations. I attempted to use the same instrument for each interview, but found that the subjects' diverse backgrounds and current employment meant that some questions were left out altogether or that I radically changed the wording of the questions I asked. I wish I could say that my sample selection was highly methodical, but the reality is that I contacted upwards of 20 people seeking

interviews and only accomplished seven in total. For the purpose of recording my interviews I used a video and call recording software that operates through Skype ® and also took notes by hand to back up the digital files. Following each interview I used word processing software to transcribe the interview recordings, which in turn enabled me to code the interviews, looking for large themes and possible explanations for the research question.

Lastly, I relied heavily on speeches and press releases for the purpose of obtaining primary source information from the White House, State Department, and other government officials commenting on Plan Colombia. This yielded perhaps the most data for the least amount of effort since there are far fewer speeches and press releases pertaining to Plan Colombia than congressional documents, and each of them communicates in an official capacity for the United States government about its foreign policy in Colombia. To analyze these products I conducted generic content analysis, comparing stated priorities, missions, and commitments against the actual allocation of funds and other resources. The strength of this part of my research methodology was that it produced very quick and interesting discrepancies between what has been said about US intentions for Colombia and has actually been taking place throughout the life of the policy. This also provided an invaluable source of information I used to look at the trajectory of Plan Colombia, analyzing, for example, what the original stated goals of the policy were versus what they are now, or looking at how the policy content shifted over time in response to fluctuating US political leanings.

The next chapter analyzes several major operationalized components of Plan Colombia, and seeks to employ securitization theory to explain how they add to the depth of my research question. Although Chapter Three does contain a section dedicated to the Colombian role in securitizing – or, as we will see, de-securitizing – IDPs, the majority of this section focuses on

the ways that U.S. policymakers allowed certain harmful practices and attitudes to persist in Plan

Colombia.

CHAPTER 3:
U.S. POLICY RELATIVE TO INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The reason Leidy Vanessa had to leave her parents' farm for an uncertain life in the city was the same reason the United States Congress decided to fund its foreign policy called Plan Colombia: the Colombian government did not control many parts of Colombia, and drug trafficking gave a lot of power to the FARC and other non-state actors in areas with weak government presence. While Colombian President Andrés Pastrana presented a plan for addressing the multifaceted foundation of his country's governance problem, the United States ultimately decided to fund a counter-narcotics strategy. Not only did the dual strategies of interdicting drug shipments and fumigating coca crops with pesticides fail to produce a drop in cocaine production, but they also resulted in increased internal displacement due to the destruction of farmland and adverse health effects from the chemicals. Following the attacks of September 11th, 2001, the United States broadened the military use authorizations found in Plan Colombia in partnership with Colombia's new president, Álvaro Uribe, who introduced the idea of "narco-terrorism." This security emphasis yielded a massive ramp-up of U.S. military equipping and training, and is strongly correlated to an increase in internal displacement as well. After the first few years of Plan Colombia, some people in U.S. Congress who were moved by stories of suffering and statistics about the ineffectiveness of the policy began campaigning for a more development-focused policy. While the ratio of security-to-non-security funding in Plan Colombia did shift, the results of increasing development aid were not as effective as proponents had hoped.

DOMESTIC U.S. POLITICS AND PLAN COLOMBIA

Domestic U.S. politics trumped informed analysis in the decision to accept only the counter-narcotics portion of Plan Colombia. Although originally "sold to the US as an aid package to institutionally strengthen Colombia," the persuasiveness of securitization necessitated a dramatic shift in the make-up of the policy (Interview with anonymous source 1, 12/17/15). One international NGO employee who monitors implementation of Colombia's Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration program said that, "Plan Colombia did not really address the needs of Colombian communities, but more served as a proxy war for democrats and republicans during the Clinton presidency" (Interview with anonymous source 2, 1/26/16). This type of cynical interpretation of the whittling of the "original" Plan Colombia down to a counter-narcotics-only strategy is widespread. Among those I interviewed during my research, all but one acknowledged the role of beltway political concerns in the formulation of Plan Colombia. Crandall (2008, p.12) went as far as to say that, "the multicountry war on drugs would not have been so important to U.S. policymakers had there not been key domestic political considerations at stake," and Rosen argues that, "one cannot understand the formation of Plan Colombia without taking into consideration the domestic pressures that president Clinton faced" (Rosen, 2014, p. 20).

The concept of an "original" Plan Colombia is also pervasive, but possesses a different meaning to different individuals. A current State Department official and former foreign service officer assigned to Colombia told me that, "Plan Colombia originally was about security, stability, [and] state presence," and that its purpose was "to establish a foundation for future work on development issues that really drive development" (Interview with Gersten, 2/4/16). Alternately, a human rights advocate focusing on Colombian internal displacement described

Plan Colombia as, "above all…a military strategy; a way of intensifying the war in order to achieve US policy goals and Colombian government goals" (Interview with Haugaard, 2/1/16). In June of 2001 (less than one year after Plan Colombia was approved by U.S. Congress), the Strategic Studies Institute at the US Army War College published a monograph on Plan Colombia in which the authors said that, "the real heart of the plan," was what the former commander of US Southern Command, General Charles Wilhelm, referred to as the "soft component" of the policy (Marcella, et al., 2001, p. vii). This publication elaborates that the soft side includes, "peace process, alternative development, social participation, human development, economic assistance, and fiscal and judicial reform" (Marcella, et al., 2001, p. 9). But, two months prior, the same group of writers with the Strategic Studies Institute published a document calling counter-narcotics support "the central component of the U.S. aid package" (Marcella, 2001, p. 10).

How can we account for such schizophrenic descriptions of Plan Colombia? How is it possible that US government officials involved in an in-depth analysis of Plan Colombia in 2001 list five "specific elements of U.S. support to Plan Colombia" without any mention of drugs, while three months later acknowledging that, "the U.S. assistance package so far is focused on the military, or 'hard' component" (Marcella, et al., 2001; Marcella, 2001)? In fact, a publication entitled *Plan Colombia: The Strategic and Operational Imperatives,* lists "ten elements of Plan Colombia," only two of which deal with national defense or counter-narcotics, while approximately 66% of the money congress initially allocated to Plan Colombia was dedicated to military support for counter-narcotics efforts. How is the "heart" of the policy the social component, while the majority of funding goes to the "hard" side? A U.S. Government Accountability Office report published in October of 2008, more than 8 years since Plan

Colombia's initial implementation, acknowledges that of the more than $6 billion spent on all aspects of the policy, only $1.3 billion was directed toward "social, economic, and justice sector programs" (GAO, 2008).

Crandall (2008), Rosen (2014), and Tate (2015) argue that republican pressure on the democratic US president caused Clinton to emphasize the counter-narcotics elements of the policy proposal. Additionally, such a narrow focus may have been motivated by popular resistance to another "Vietnam style" military commitment, prompting the Clinton administration to appear hard on drugs without signing the country up for a long counterinsurgency war (State Department press release, 2000). As we will see later, the events of September 11th, 2001, quickly changed the rhetoric around US involvement in Colombia, turning it almost entirely into just such a counterinsurgency mission. At any rate, the perceived "aversion to counterinsurgency support in the United States" may have been a factor, but does not adequately explain – in fact nearly counters – why the US chose to primarily support Plan Colombia with military assistance (Marcella, 2001).

Securitization rhetoric within domestic US politics offers a strong lens for understanding how a plan that Bill Clinton said "[promoted] peace, democracy, and economic growth" ultimately resulted in a focus on US military training assistance to Colombian police and military forces, along with hundreds of millions of dollars in US arms sales to Colombia (Clinton, 1/11/2000; SAM, 2016). At a time when North American news agencies as well as members of Congress were divided over the contents of the new US policy in Colombia, the White House and State Department issued statements making Colombia's faltering territorial integrity and burgeoning drug trade a problem for the United States itself. Bill Clinton, in a speech officially introducing Plan Colombia jointly with then-president Andrés Pastrana, said that the policy

"aimed at keeping illegal drugs off our shores" and that "we have a compelling national interest in reducing the flow of cocaine and heroin to our shores" (Clinton, 1/11/2000). This language very much evokes an image of an invading threat that needs to be repelled, and according to Balzacq's theory (in which, the audience – perhaps the electorate or the members of Congress – must give assent before the people or person in authority may act), enjoins his listener to concur with the securitizing actor (Balzaqc, et, al., 2015). In this same speech Clinton added that, "Strengthening stability and democracy in Colombia, and fighting the drug trade there, is in our fundamental national interest" (Clinton speech, 1/11/2000), which also elicits a response of fear over what would become of the United States if we chose not to act. In the same month that Plan Colombia was approved by US Congress, the Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere affairs released a statement entitled, *United States Support for Colombia: Why Americans Should Care.* In it, the reader is told that more than 52,000 Americans die each year from drug-related causes, and that Colombian drug "traffickers' relentless intimidation and corrupting influence is a serious threat to the rule of law and free-market democratic institutions in Colombia and every far-flung corner of the world…" (State Department Fact Sheet, July 14th, 2000). The document also appeals to the idea that Colombia's failure will "jeopardize our other important economic and political interests," could hurt our access to oil from the region, and may even cost hundreds of thousands of American jobs in industries connected to the Colombian economy (State Department Fact Sheet, July 14th, 2000).

SECURITIZATION AND INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

How does the US securitization of Colombia's decades-long conflict relate to internal displacement? One way that securitization twisted the US policy response was by effectively lowering the status of rural Colombians in comparison with urban Colombians or North

Americans, as seen in the anticipated displacement of approximately 30,000 people that was a part of Plan Colombia (Interview with John Lindsay-Poland, 1/31/16). A second way was through aerial fumigation of coca crops, well-documented to have destroyed the livelihoods and homes of innumerable more Colombians (Bouvier, 2009; Rosen, 2014; Interview with anonymous source 2, 1/26/16). A third way was through the Post-9/11 expansion of military aid and support to Colombian security forces. Lastly, a fourth way can be seen in the "policy inertia" exhibited by Plan Colombia which, after more than a decade of outcry from human rights groups and a clear statistical correlation between the intensification of US support to Plan Colombia and a tragic surge in the number of people displaced inside Colombia, continues to be funded with a heavy majority of resources going to the police and military.

Securitization explains why the United States would, in an effort to force the 18,000-20,000-strong FARC to the negotiating table, agree to a plan that anticipated the displacement of approximately 30,000 more Colombians (Interviews with John Lindsay-Poland, 1/31/16; and Sánchez, 2/23/16). The so-called "push into southern Colombia," actually the focus of Plan Colombia's "Interagency Action Plan" which served as an initial kick-off to the policy itself, was meant to target Putumayo, the geographic "narcotics-guerrilla nexus" (Marcella, 2001). A RAND report on Plan Colombia published in 2001, which provides a description of the make-up and intentions of the policy, corroborates that by saying, "The first phase of the plan is to take control of the FARC-controlled coca-growing areas in the department of Putumayo in southern Colombia." John Lindsay-Poland and Gimena Sánchez, both U.S.-Colombia policy experts and human rights advocates I interviewed, each decried the US government foreknowledge of this displacement in Putumayo, but the most surprising admission came from analysis within the RAND report. It quotes the governor of Putumayo as saying that 135,000 out of its 314,000

inhabitants relied on coca for their livelihood, and then offers a foreboding assessment that, "Intensified coca eradication would probably be resisted by the local population, which would generate a serious social conflict, further delegitimize the Colombian government among the populace, and strengthen support for the FARC" (Rabasa, Angel and Peter Chalk, 2001). Combining the foreknowledge of displacement of the US government with the analysis of RAND and the actual text of Plan Colombia (as delivered by President Pastrana), it becomes clear that the Interagency Action Plan was bound to result in highly deleterious effects for a massive percentage of the population of Putumayo. In other words, without the ability to persuade decision-makers that controlling drug production in Putumayo was essential to making North America safe, how else could one rationally argue that anticipating conflict between the Colombian military and an agricultural population of greater than 100,000 was a good plan? The securitization of the drug threat succeeded in rapidly turning even the rhetorical emphasis of Plan Colombia away from social and economic reform and toward a military campaign plan that pitted counter-narcotics battalions against peasants whose livelihood depended on the protection of the FARC.

THE AERIAL FUMIGATION OF COCA

Securitization also explains why the aerial fumigation of millions of acres of land in Colombia was supported by the United States, both indirectly through the supply of glyphosate (commonly known as weed-killer Roundup in the United States) and directly through the significant funding of such efforts via Plan Colombia. Since 2001 the smallest area sprayed in Colombia has been approximately 47,000 hectares of land, and the largest was 2006 with over 172,000 hectares sprayed (UNODC, Colombia Coca Cultivation Survey, 2014). Not only has aerial fumigation contributed significantly to internal displacement since the start of Plan

Colombia, but it has also proven to be only marginally effective (Interview with Sánchez, 2/23/16). One interviewee who works for an NGO that monitors the implementation of Colombian government protections for IDPs told me that Plan Colombia, "didn't address the structural reasons for internal displacement, and even contributed to internal displacement through fumigation" (Interview with anonymous source 2, 1/26/16). WOLA's Sánchez argues that the Colombian government denied any assistance to people displaced by aerial fumigation on the grounds that they were complicit in criminal activity, "and so you can't say that they were civilians who were displaced" (Interview with Sánchez, 2/23/16). She also points out that it is impossible to control the dispersion of the fumigation chemicals with enough precision to guarantee that it only lands on coca crops, and that it has destroyed peoples' food security. Washington, D.C.-based NGO Witness for Peace published a fact-sheet about the negative effects of aerial fumigation in which it documents at least three instances in which licit, and even USAID-funded agricultural endeavors, were fumigated and ruined as part of Plan Colombia (WFP, n.d.).

One of the primary reasons that aerial fumigation should not have been adopted as a part of Plan Colombia is because many of the farmers the Colombian government viewed as criminals for growing coca were acting under duress (Interview with anonymous source 1, 12/17/15). The FARC, and other criminal groups in Colombia, are well known to have coerced people into growing coca for them to process and move to market. Adam Isacson says WOLA's argument has always been that aerial fumigation does more harm than good, and questions why the United States would back such a policy, even after years of reports showing its limited effectiveness. Perhaps a better question is, why would the United States tolerate the public denial of fumigation's exacerbation of Colombia's internal displacement crisis (interview with

Sánchez, 2/23/16)? Balzaqc's first assumption of securitization reminds us that the audience is central and "must agree with the claims made by the securitizing actor," but in Plan Colombia we see that only elites in the United States and Colombia had to agree on the aerial fumigation piece of the policy (Balzaqc, 2011).

POST 9/11 SECURITIZATION OF PLAN COLOMBIA

The attacks of September 11th, 2001, brought with them a multitude of effects around the globe. The George W. Bush administration began a war on terror that continues today and stretches across the globe, the United States divided its international relationships between those who supported the war and those who didn't, and US policy toward Latin America took a back seat to fighting Al Qaeda and the Taliban (Smith, 2013). In *Contemporary U.S.-Latin American Relations* (2010), Jorge Dominguez and Rafael Fernandez de Castro argue that, "President Bush had less time and interest to attend to other policies and, when the United States did focus on a bilateral relationship…securitization was a typical component of U.S. policy" (Domínguez & Fernández de Castro, 2010, p. 13). Also, just as the "original" Plan Colombia proposed to the Clinton administration morphed quickly into a mostly-military plan with an initial push to take territory from the FARC's largest coca growing zone, the policy's military elements grew considerably after "the war on terror superseded, and enveloped, the war on drugs" (Smith, 2013). While concern for Latin American issues may have subsided in the immediate aftermath of September 11th, 2001, the election of Colombian president Álvaro Uribe in 2002 led to a resurgence of popular support for military confrontation with the FARC, and securitization led the way to capturing more U.S. military commitment inside Colombia (Crandall, 2008). Colombian scholar and professor Horacio Godoy describes the transition – which fits within Balzaqc's securitization theory as a shift in social context – this way: "Terrorism has become the

central issue in the Bush administration, placing anti-drug policies as a secondary priority. Counter-insurgency, which was all but eliminated from U.S. policies, reappears as the limitations separating anti-narcotics aid from counter-insurgency were lifted" (Godoy, 2003).

That question that emerges when looking at the post 9-11 widening of US military involvement in Colombia becomes, "if the United States knew that violence among armed groups in Colombia, including the state, was the primary cause of internal displacement, how did Congress approve such a step?" Just like securitization as a speech act gives special meaning to a communicated concept, silence can help de-securitize and even de-politicize it. This may provide some clarification when looking at the above question. An international NGO employee who monitors human rights in Colombia told me that, "there were eight years of Uribe who didn't really acknowledge that IDPs had a lot to do with the content of Plan Colombia. The priorities of the US government shifted post-9/11 and Uribe censored the concept of IDPs" (Interview with anonymous source 2, 1/26/16). In other words, the securitization of Colombia's drug-fueled instability not only enabled the U.S. policy to largely disregard the world's second-largest internal displacement crisis – and make it worse in the process – but also succeeded in silencing the actual victims of the violent conflict that had been declared an existential threat to Colombia.

Gabriel Marcella's 2001 evaluation of Plan Colombia was correct when he said that the policy contained "a carefully thought out set of mutually reinforcing initiatives," but what he miscalculated were the results of the reciprocal securitization that came out of Plan Colombia in the post-9/11 era (Marcella, et al., 2001). Perhaps the most telling instance of acknowledging internal displacement as a major problem while simultaneously planning to make it worse can be found in Marcella's assertion that "Violence has displaced over 1.5 million people caught in the

crossfire of shooting, threats, and counter-threats, from the insurgents and paramilitary vigilantes" (Marcella, 2001). Later, in the same publication about Plan Colombia, Marcella acknowledged that the "push into southern Colombia" would, as revealed by John Lindsay-Poland and Gimena Sánchez, result in "peasants displaced by the imminent elimination of coca production." There is, however, no official U.S. acknowledgement that Colombian security forces pushing into southern Colombia to eliminate coca growth and disrupt FARC operations will inevitably cause more "shooting, threats, and counter-threats" (Marcella, 2001). A highly securitized outlook is one way we can account for such a dissonance within one expert's evaluation of Plan Colombia.

RE-EVALUATING PLAN COLOMBIA

After the first few years of Plan Colombia, human rights groups and congressional representatives began to make it very well known that the policy was having highly adverse effects for Colombia's most vulnerable populations. The period of highest intensity in the militarization of the policy occurred toward the end of the George W. bush administration, which corresponded to the highest levels of annual internal displacement on record, justified by the need to stop the persistent narco-terrorist threat. International humanitarian agencies began calling on the US government to address the IDP crisis in Colombia and human rights policy and advocacy groups such as WOLA and LAWG published reports detailing the horrific effects of the securitization of Colombia's internal armed conflict. Additionally, reports from entities such as the United Nations and the US Office of Drug Control Policy revealed that there had not been a significant reduction in coca growth or cocaine exports out of Colombia, begging questions about the purpose of a multi-billion dollar counter-narcotics and counter-insurgency strategy.

Several things resulted from the almost-global realization that Plan Colombia was not achieving its desired results, and that the Colombian internal displacement crisis was continuing to grow into the millions. US Congress declared 2007 "The Year of the Rights of Internally Displaced People in Colombia," and the US State Department responded by modifying funding priorities (e.g., a decrease in overall security spending and a corresponding increase in development aid) (Interview with Sánchez, 2/23/16). Also, Uribe's Democratic Security Policy was reshaped into a Plan for Territorial Consolidation, reflecting the narrative shift in the U.S. away from success in reducing cocaine exports and toward success in retaking territory from the FARC. The impending end to George W. Bush's presidency almost certainly signaled to Uribe a need to alter his rhetoric surrounding human rights and the war within his borders, but as we will see, this only led to a different flavor of securitization that still failed to help IDPs. This can be seen in the large growth of military and police presence in Colombia's most rural zones (as part of the effort to consolidate previously ungoverned spaces), as well as in the partial re-naming of the enemy from the FARC (and other leftist rebels) to *Bandas Criminales* (Bacrim, criminal gangs, in English) (Rosen, 2014).

According to Gimena Sánchez at WOLA, Uribe's success at making military operations the defining measure of success also had the unforeseen consequence of impacting the way that post-2007 shifts in Plan Colombia funding happened in the United States (Interview with Sánchez, 2/23/16). She argues that Colombian national priorities drove the US agenda, which corroborates the assertion that securitization works both ways. As an example, Sánchez elaborated that even though there was increased acknowledgement on the US side of internal displacement, Uribe's censorship of IDPs made it so that increased humanitarian assistance could only go to already-established development programs. Sánchez clarified that "money can

only be gotten for the Victim's Law (because it's what exists already); but *real* victims'

advocacy suffers" (Interview with Sánchez, 2/23/16). Furthermore, there were rampant

problems with corruption and inefficiency in Colombian aid programs, to the extent that one of

my interview respondents suggested, "the Colombian government is not a viable coworker in

development … maybe 25% of money given will actually get to the people it was meant to help"

(Interview with anonymous source 1, 12/17/15).

It appears that the largest shift in aid allotments occurred following 2007, which U.S.

Congress declared "The Year of the Rights of Internally Displaced Persons in Colombia" (House

Resolution 426). This declaration, which was initially proposed by a handful of humanitarian

relief agencies and subsequently adopted without objection by congress, effectively moved $100

million from state department security assistance to economic and social programs, but still left

the ratio at roughly 80% security and 20% development, without even accounting for

Department of Defense spending on Plan Colombia (Interview with Sánchez, 2/23/16). It is also

worth noting that while the text of this resolution was comprehensive in acknowledging the

scope of Colombia's IDP crisis, the so-called action items of the bill seemed quite empty. They

consisted of one commendation for the groups that suggested the resolution, one urging that the

Colombian government and international donor community "prioritize" internal displacement,

and the following sentence applicable to the United States: "the Government of the United

States should increase the resources it makes available to provide emergency humanitarian

assistance and protection through international and civilian government agencies, and assist

Colombia's internally displaced people in rebuilding their lives in a dignified, safe, and

sustainable manner" (HR 426, 2007). While this congressional statement represented a deeply

needed acknowledgement of the problem, it did not begin to address the role of US interventions

in exacerbating Colombia's internal displacement crisis, nor did it significantly alter the primary components of the policy.

The proportion of security-to-non-security aid has continued to shift since 2007 and, as of the 2017 budget proposal, may even result in a greater than 50% portion of total aid going to non-security programs for the first time in Plan Colombia's inception (securityassistance.org). However, Colombia remains the largest single-country recipient of U.S. military and police funding in the entire western hemisphere, and Sánchez argues that there remains much to change in terms of which programs receive development funding and who implements them in Colombia. She says, "because the US…follows what Colombia wants…it prioritizes all of this [development aid] and…doesn't have much to show for it" (Interview with Sánchez, 2/23/16). Although she acknowledges the improvements over time in the quality and quantity of non-security programs that are part of Plan Colombia, she asserts that these changes do not "compete in any way shape or form against the damage done." The work of NGOs and concerned members of congress, who have lobbied for years to change the components of the policy, have achieved these incremental shifts in the proportion and make-up of the funding (Interview with Isacson, 2/9/16). But, as I will address in Chapter 4, elite policymakers in the U.S. still only make brief mention of IDPs in their speeches and press releases, and the second-largest internal displacement crisis on the planet remains just one item among many they discuss.

THE ROLE OF THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT

It would be a mistake to assert that Plan Colombia was only securitized within the United States and only among North American elites. Just like domestic politics in Washington, D.C. heavily influenced the contents of what would become the actual Plan Colombia, internal concerns for elites in Colombia also significantly contributed to the evolution of the policy's

increasingly security-oriented programs and funding. Some have argued (Crandall, 2008; Tate, 2016) that the Clinton administration forced Pastrana's hand in 2001, but others (Rosen, 2014; Domínguez & Fernández de Castro, 2010) have written that, contrary to notions of realpolitick, Uribe used the United States' own security concerns to modify the scope of Plan Colombia for his own political benefit. I am not arguing that Uribe did not genuinely care about defeating the FARC and stemming the flow of cocaine coming out of his country. On the contrary, his father was killed by the FARC and there is every indication he cared, and still cares, deeply about the future of Colombia. However, he very shrewdly recognized that flagging US interest in Latin American issues could be resuscitated by securitizing Colombia's internal conflict. Not only did Uribe securitize the conflict to great effect in the United States, he also heavily swayed public opinion within his own country away from concern for humanitarian problems and toward a majority concern over winning the war and reclaiming national territory.   Not only did this securitization keep the focus of national funding on military projects instead of the rapidly growing internal displacement crisis, but it also removed from public consciousness a significant amount of awareness of humanitarian issues affecting Colombia.

In a meeting with George W. Bush at his Texas ranch, Uribe said for the record, "The greatest threat of Colombian democracy is terrorism. And our great partner in defeating terrorism has been the government and people of the United States" (Uribe quoted in Crandall, 2008). What had primarily been labeled a leftist rebellion, narco-traffickers, or plain instability, was now being called terrorism. According to Gimena Sánchez, "Uribe made it impossible for anyone to raise anything having to do with displacement," arguing that by making Colombian territorial security the most important problem in Colombia, nothing else could really merit the attention of the people of Colombia. Going one step farther, Sánchez told me that during Uribe's

presidency, "the whole world…turned away from Colombia in terms of displacement," because both his rhetoric and his actions as president made it very difficult for any other issue to get attention. As if confirming Sánchez's assertion, a June, 2015 article in Foreign Affairs magazine titled "Improving Humanitarian Aid" and written by two prominent international aid leaders failed to even mention Colombia when discussing global internal displacement hot spots (*Foreign Affairs,* 2015).

Álvaro Uribe developed a national strategy in 2003 after the adoption of Plan Colombia called "Democratic Security Policy," which served as a Colombian corollary to US policy. According to the International Crisis Group's (ICG) report on the immediate effects of "Democratic Security," Uribe "sought to regain control of the country by increasing the numbers and capacity of troops and police units and by deploying them across the country to challenge the guerrillas," but failed to respond to the mostly rurally located impacts of the policy with any sort of "coherent rural development policy" (ICG, 2003). Tragically, by calling this policy, which effectively worsened the security situation for the most vulnerable populations in Colombia, a "democratic security" initiative, Uribe hijacked anyone's political ability to declare that there was a lack of democracy or a lack of security. In other words, no other plan or initiative could be introduced with an aim of increasing democracy or security, because Uribe had already securitized his own plan for achieving democratic security. ICG's report elaborates that, "Backed by persistently high domestic approval ratings and strong U.S. support, President Uribe has redefined the nature of the conflict and the strategy to overcome it" (ICG, 2003). With the United States supporting Uribe, and Uribe holding a monopoly on all actions related to achieving "security," who else could those in desperate need of real security turn to?

Unfortunately, Colombian public perception, along with that of many of its institutions, turned with Uribe away from IDPs. One of my interviewees said that a really twisted attitude had developed in Colombia, communicated in the saying, "campesino que sigue en el monte es guerrillero" (Interview with anonymous source 1, 12/17/15). Translated directly, this means, "the peasant who stays in the hills is a guerrilla." What it communicates though is a startling reflection of the pervasiveness of Uribe's securitization efforts within Colombia, inferring that any farmer or rural villager who was innocent should have come down out of the mountains by now. It implies that there is so little government presence in rural Colombia that anyone not living in a city must be in cahoots with the FARC or ELN. This belief among urban dwellers reveals that Uribe succeeded in convincing Colombian's that there was no greater issue within their country than the fight against narco-terrorism.

Significantly, Sánchez told me that there is a stigma associated with IDPs coming to the cities as well; that many Colombians believe, "they must have done something wrong…that they must be a part of some [illegal] group" (Interview with Sánchez, 2/23/16). She asserts that the Colombian government would rather the IDP problem go away, and that displaced people in Colombia do not "have the political power to get the attention required internationally or politically" to address their situation. This combination of a powerless victim population and an elite class who prefers to not have to deal with the crisis at all makes it easy for them "to become really invisible" (Interview with Sánchez, 2/23/16).

Chapter 4
Revised Policy Rhetoric, Familiar Policy Content

INTRODUCTION

While the initial geopolitical and philosophical estimations of the importance of Plan

Colombia varied widely during its first ten years, the very consistent ideas about how it needs to

change in order to be successful moving forward are striking in similarity. This homogeneity

among policy prescriptions across nearly every sector concerned with US-Latin American

relations almost provides confirmation that the US policy regarding Colombia has not adequately

addressed internal displacement throughout the life of Plan Colombia. This chapter aims to

discuss what most policy experts, aid workers, and even US government officials are saying

about Plan Colombia 2.0, both generally and specifically. The former two categories largely

have revised narratives of the need to focus on victims' rights, heavily informed and even

galvanized by 15 years of terrible collateral damage of Plan Colombia's security focus. The

latter – US government officials – while employing less of a securitization rhetoric than before

and continuing to change the balance of military and non-military funding to Colombia in favor

of economic and institutional development, continue to use much of the same language. In some

ways, the US government has come full circle to President Andrés Pastrana's development

proposal from 1999. In other tragic ways, the agenda for Plan Colombia 2.0 persists with a focus

on security, albeit not with the FARC and ELN as main threat actors to Colombian and regional

stability, but now with criminal gangs and international drug trafficking organizations named as

threats to hemispheric peace.

U.S. GOVERNMENT RHETORIC AND PLAN COLOMBA

Perhaps the best way to determine current US policy vis-à-vis Colombia is to examine the statements of people close to Western Hemisphere policy-making institutions. Secretary of State John Kerry wrote an op-ed in the Miami Herald just before President' Santo's visit to Washington, D.C. In it, he describes the success of Plan Colombia, which "helped transform a nation on the verge of collapse into a strong institutional democracy" (Kerry, 2016). He also gives the policy credit for "having helped Colombia create the conditions for a peace accord" with the FARC, and says that, "Colombians now have an historic opportunity to embrace a future free from conflict and violence." The final relevant assertion about Plan Colombia was that, "with support form the United States, Colombians moved ahead … to improve governance, reform the judiciary, enhance opportunities for Afro-Colombian and indigenous groups, [and] provide support for the victims of conflict" (Kerry, 2016). Given this description of sweeping successes, what emphasis should the revised policy possess?

Kerry's op-ed articulates that the "successor strategy" to Plan Colombia is "aimed at further enhancing security gains, cracking down on trade in illegal drugs, and providing the means for redress and recovery in areas vacated by the FARC" (Kerry, 2016). This presents a remarkably different picture of what remains to be done in Colombia than Kerry's version of Plan Colombia's successes, and appears to largely revisit the original goals of the 2001 policy. While "providing means for redress and recovery" sounds relatively innocuous, "enhancing security gains" and "cracking down" on the drug trade communicate highly security-oriented objectives, that one can not reasonably argue could be accomplished without military and police action. In other words, even though the predominant Kerry narrative – "winning the peace" –

has shifted from away from the Bush-Uribe counter-terrorism focus, the actual policy prescription appears to have changed little.

Retired Admiral James Stavridis, current Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and former commander of U.S Southern Command, took the occasion of Santos' visit to D.C. to write a piece about the U.S. role in the Caribbean in a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*. He argues that narco-trafficking "fuels corruption and violence, undermines fragile democracies, and stifles growth in other sectors," and then claims that the War on Drugs has, "clearly failed – we need a strategy to fight corruption and violence, which are the root problems" (Stavridis, 2016). Getting past his circular reasoning, one still concludes from his article that "fighting" is the way ahead, which, again, requires a security apparatus. He articulates this concept clearly – advocating an expansion of security-related activities – in his specified policy recommendations, saying that, "our security cooperation has been limited in its approach and effectiveness," and that "we have failed to provide the kind of wide spectrum engagement that might improve regional security" (Stavridis, 2016).

The White House also took advantage of the Santos visit to commemorate "15 years of bilateral cooperation" between the U.S. and Colombia, touting the "profound political, economic, and security gains [achieved] since the inception of Plan Colombia in 2000" in a February, 2016 press release (White House, 2016). Similar to Kerry's statement, the White House praised Plan Colombia for the following accomplishments.

U.S. support through Plan Colombia has helped Colombia expand and professionalize its armed forces and police, strengthen investigations of organized crime and human rights violations, implement a landmark Victims and Land Restitution Law, provide opportunities to Afro-descendant and indigenous communities, and establish a program to protect journalists, labor leaders, human rights defenders, and other vulnerable individuals.

Additionally, the press release briefly spelled out the three main elements of "Peace Colombia," (the official title for Plan Colombia 2.0). They are: "1) Consolidating and expanding progress on security and counternarcotics while reintegrating the FARC into society; 2) Expanding state presence and institutions to strengthen the rule of law and rural economies, especially in former conflict areas; and 3) Promoting justice and other essential services for conflict victims" (White House, 2016). While this three-pronged approach is interestingly different than the policy delivered by Kerry in the Miami Herald, both maintain security and counternarcotics at the number one spot, and both are alarmingly similar to the "original" Plan Colombia.

What do the victims of violence and instability say about recent U.S. interventions in Colombia? John Lindsay-Poland, who has served in a supporting and advisory role to Comunidades de Paz (Peace Communities), which are made up of IDPs who commit to living together in non-violent resistance to state and non-state repression, predicted that "as Santos comes to visit Washington this week…they're not going to mention what you're focusing on" (Interview with John Lindsay-Poland, 1/3116). He also emailed me a letter from Comunidades Construyendo Paz en los Territorios (CONPAZ, Communities Building Peace in the Territories) to President Obama, which praised his public commitment to the peace process, but flatly said, "Right now, the changes achieved by Plan Colombia, and that you President Obama have referenced, have not made significant improvements in our communities" (CONPAZ, 2016). The letter goes on to claim that the main land restitution effort championed by the Santos administration has not achieved much with its $20 billion, stating, "For those of us who have been directly affected, we can affirm that it is a total failure" (International Business Times, 10/20/15; CONPAZ, 2016).

PLAN COLOMBIA TODAY

A summary of recent public and official statements praises the successes of Plan Colombia acknowledges that there is still work to be done and insists that the United States has a future role in the unfolding of Colombia's quest for democratic peace. But, not only do these fact sheets and op-eds barely mention Colombia's IDPs – if at all – but they do not agree with the assessments of the policy experts I interviewed about the policy's record or its future composition. Michael Shifter told me, "we can't point to much progress" in the area of internal displacement in Colombia, and claimed that people in Washington, D.C. are puzzled about why there are "no results" (Interview with Shifter, 1/28/16). Gimena Sánchez argued that internal displacement is "not on the priority list of Colombia or its institutions," and that is why it is not a priority for the United States. And while Adam Isacson conceded that the U.S.-Colombia relationship is less focused on armed conflict than it used to be, he said that much of "big ticket military offensives and equipment, as well as the territorial consolidation [and] development" functions have been "colombianized," meaning they have not gone away but are not as much a part of the U.S. role anymore. Isacson added that he believes Plan Colombia 2.0 will focus on Colombia continuing "as a bulwark of pro-U.S. sentiment in the region" and as "a place that is now training … other countries in the fight against organized crime" (Interview with Isacson, 2/9/16).

For the first time in the history of Plan Colombia, it appears that the U.S. president's budget proposal for the next fiscal year will see a proportion of non-security funding that is greater than 50%. While this represents an important and hard-fought accomplishment for NGOs, policy experts, and humanitarian workers, it does not necessarily indicate an increased emphasis on Colombia's IDPs. Nor does it change the lifetime percentage of Plan Colombia

funds which have been dedicated to security, which Isacson (2016) estimates at 71% and which are not likely to ever exceed the overall amount of money dedicated to development based on the dwindling overall amount of money going to Latin America. When I asked Adam Isacson about the apparent discrepancy between the official acknowledgement of the internal displacement crisis and the continued lack of emphasis in the latest policy speeches, he offered that Plan Colombia 2.0 has many of the same goals because it "still has enormous ungoverned spaces" which have "either been ceded to the guerillas" or to organized crime. Strikingly, he also said, "maybe there will always be a military component…the military will always be involved in any effort to get a state in any of these areas" (Interview with Isacson, 2/9/16). In fact, Colombia continues to be the recipient of more military and police aid than any other country in the Americas, and as recently as 2014, Colombians made up more than half of all trainees at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHISNEC, formerly the School of the Americas)(WHINSEC briefing, 2014). What all of this suggests is that even after 31 years of registering IDPs and 15 years of deep U.S. involvement in the Colombian state-building project, not even official recognition of the internal displacement crisis is enough to overcome the influence of consistent securitizing language and policies.

Chapter 5:
Conclusion

GAPS IN STATE SOVEREIGNTY

An IDP advocate in Colombia, told me, "We've learned to live with [internal displacement]. It hasn't ended because we've endured as a country…we've never experienced catastrophic failure as a country, so we've learned to live with our cancer" (Interview with anonymous source 1, 12/17/15). Ironically, one could infer from this sentiment that a complete lack of U.S. intervention – even during Colombia's darkest days – may have forced a confrontation with weak government and state failure that could have led to an entirely different national trajectory. Of course this is just conjecture, but while the government officials and policy experts I have referenced in this paper have not argued that Plan Colombia utterly failed to achieve any gains in security or growth in Colombian government institutions, this same IDP advocate counters that, "We have basic sovereignty, but that's not much. People talk about how it's safe to drive on the roads now, but what kind of government only provides the freedom to drive around?" He also acknowledges that state sovereignty has improved in his lifetime, but says people use the word "resquebrajado," the word that describes cracks in a vast, dried mud flat, to insinuate that while government presence may seem large, it is also full of cracks and gaps.

VICTIMS AND LAND RESTITUTION LAW

The Victims and Land Restitution Law of 2011 is the most noticeable among all the ways that the Colombian state has grown and strengthened its response to internal displacement, but it relies on under-resourced and highly decentralized local government offices for their implementation. The results of this gap between national intent and actual execution could not

be more clear: recent reports by Latin America Working Group (2013), Amnesty International (2014), and Human Rights Watch (2016) show that only a tiny fraction of the lands that are eligible for return to original owners (now IDPs) have actually been handed over, and incidents of restitution advocates being killed are on the rise (Interview with John Lindsay-Poland, 1/31/16). An article in *The Bogota Post* published in February of 2016 claims that it would take at least 500 years before all the land claims filed by IDPs would be adjudicated at the current pace. Most telling, however, is an insight I received from the international NGO peace compliance monitor I interviewed. Regarding the lack of resources available and excessively lengthy implementation timeline of the land restitution law, he argues that more resources simply will not fix the problem, and that "it's more of a political culture regarding land dispossession" (Interview with anonymous source 2, 1/26/16).

PEACE PROCESS WITH THE FARC

The other highly visible facet of current conflict-related affairs in Colombia is the pending peace agreement between the FARC and the Colombian government. While the progress made thus far is historic, the successful resolution of this 50-year-old civil war brings with it many questions about the future of internal displacement, and other issues such as race and gender inequality. Adam Isacson remarked that the Afro-Colombian population – which has been disproportionately affected by displacement – has not even been given a symbolic seat at the negotiating table between the government and the FARC, never mind a substantive voice or role in the development of the post-conflict roadmap (Interview with Isacson, 2/9/16).

CURRENT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

If Plan Colombia has failed to achieve its original objectives, is heavily connected to an increase in internal displacement during the period of greatest U.S. intervention, and if the best

efforts of the institutionally strengthened Colombian government are yielding so little fruit, then what are the better policy recommendations today? Both WOLA and LAWG have published extensive recommendations for shaping the future of U.S. policy in Colombia, especially in light of the nearly completed peace deal with the FARC. Among those Colombia experts I spoke with, John Lindsay-Poland alone vehemently advocated for a complete cessation of security cooperation and funding for Colombia, arguing essentially that you cannot fight your way to peace. He also pointed out that – at least in the case of Colombia – training and equipping security forces has lead to increased overall employment of the police and military forces and is correlated with increases in human rights abuses committed by these forces. Lindsay-Poland's argument notwithstanding, all other policy recommendations from non-U.S. government sources can be distilled down to three overarching objectives: 1) End the internal armed conflict; 2) Support the peace accords and their resulting mandates; and, 3) Pursue bottom-up implementation of humanitarian assistance and land restitution programs for IDPs.

Although these broad recommendations, and especially the much more detailed and substantiated versions published by the aforementioned think tanks, are the product of more than 15 years of studying the Colombian conflict and the outcomes of Plan Colombia, a simple question of logic rises to the surface when considering their functionality: If the foremost experts on foreign policy, U.S.-Latin America relations, and human rights advocacy have all been lobbying to improve the contents of Plan Colombia since its passage into law, why should anyone believe that their recommendations will be taken more seriously in 2016 than they were during the first 15 years of the policy? When two out of three of the Secretary of State's policy objectives for the next version of Plan Colombia involve state security apparatuses, and the third objective alludes to supporting Santos' barely-viable land restitution plan (all of which are

remarkably similar to the main objectives of the "original" Plan Colombia), how could one conclude that U.S. policy-makers are behaving rationally? I believe the answer lies in securitization.

As I laid out in the introduction, the puzzle this paper seeks to solve is that the internal displacement of more than 10% of Colombia's entire population represents an enormous lack of security – both for the state and its citizens – but the foreign policy employed by the United States in an effort to improve Colombia's security has not substantially addressed the needs of these IDPs. Balzaqc's theory of securitization helps us understand how securitizing actors, a shifting context, and a receptive audience all worked together to authorize a very expensive, deadly, and ineffective foreign policy. But it also identified that *not* securitizing an issue – by remaining silent in the face of known suffering – can be just as powerful a force as speaking. By abstaining from substantial public discourse about IDPs, U.S. and Colombian officials were able to maintain their audiences' focus on their own priorities, rather than on the threats that existed for millions of Colombian Others.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are also policy implications concerning how the results of this project should be applied. First and foremost, one of the great lessons of Plan Colombia is that political calculations done during policy decision-making processes rarely take into account the concerns of human rights advocates. As we have seen, securitization can be a very strong force for influencing public and government opinion, and attempting to see Plan Colombia's failure to adequately address internal displacement should not necessarily result in attempts to advocate for human rights more loudly. Instead, this study should show that there must be ways to communicate that, rather than leaving potential victims out of the policy-making process, human

rights advocates should securitize their plight. For example, if we could convincingly argue using security language that internal displacement – but not internally displaced people – constitutes a real threat to the state, that might accomplish more than trumpeting the human rights failures of current or past policies.

Another potential policy implication of this study arises from the fact that Colombia's IDPs are not the same as Syria's IDPs, Sudan's IDPs, or any other oppressed population. They may possess similar characteristics and needs, but the events that brought Colombia to its current place in history are not identical to any other country. So, just as Adam Isacson (2010) has warned that the United States should not "export" Plan Colombia to other conflict zones or narcotics hotspots, nor should one read this thesis and decide that my policy recommendations and those of the people I interviewed ought to be applied to other humanitarian crises. In other words, while there are some generalizable lessons learned within this project, especially regarding the tendency of governments to selectively securitize issues that are politically expedient, that is not the same thing as suggesting that all securitization is bad or that all government policies are inherently over-securitized.

NEW QUESTIONS

Given that this project became a combination study of U.S. foreign policy and Colombian internal displacement, there are certainly other areas within and around these topics that bear further investigation. The first question that emerges from my work relates to the potential future integration of demobilized guerillas into the larger Colombian population. If the government of Colombia has been largely unwilling to include the victims of armed conflict – the Afro-Colombian and indigenous populations – in the peace process and the political process at large, what kind of reception will former enemies of the state receive? Will there be an

entirely new class of disenfranchised and silenced ex-combatants from the FARC and ELN? How will their integration compare to the severely lacking integration of Afro-Colombians?

Another, perhaps more obvious, research project, would be a comparison between the U.S. policy vis-à-vis Syria beginning in 2011 and the various components of Plan Colombia. While the differences between the two cases are numerous, the parallel contexts of civil war, massive internally displaced populations, and terrorism-related security narratives could provide a very intriguing framework for analyzing foreign policy decisions. John Lindsay-Poland observed that the "current policy in Syria is very similar to the over-response in Colombia," not least because the U.S. focus is almost entirely on conducting military operations with little apparent regard for the impact on already vulnerable populations. It is noteworthy as well that the vast majority of official U.S. government language about Syria omits reference to its IDPs and instead focuses on regional security and, to a lesser extent, international refugees. A Syria-Colombia case study comparison could yield consistencies in U.S. policy-making that tell us something about how we emphasize certain victims but silence others once an international intervention is under way.

Lastly, an investigation into the impacts of the peace accords for Colombia's IDPs would be both timely and potentially instructive for other post-conflict, demobilizing states. Isacson argues that the signing of the accords will change little for Colombia's IDPs, mostly because new displacement now occurs at the hands of criminal gangs rather than the FARC, but also because the end of the official conflict could signal an end to conflict-related social crises. In other words, since the legal provisions for settling land claims only extend through 2021, what additional motivation will the Colombian government have to continue to recognize the needs of

a sub-population that serves as a reminder of a decades-long war that President Santos will certainly take credit for ending?

FINAL THOUGHTS

Leidy Vanessa's story gives life to every aspect of Plan Colombia's failure to adequately address internal displacement. She left her family and her home because the Colombian government could not protect her from being recruited into leftist guerrilla groups. She made a life in a city that never embraced her, remaining among the poor who lack equal access to legally available rights for the internally displaced. Nearly 30 years after her flight from violence – violence from joining the FARC or violence from not joining – Leidy Vanessa still cannot go home. Even though her teenage sons are involved with drugs and petty crime, and though she worries for their safety because of the increasing presence of organized crime in the city, her parents tell her that people are being killed every week in their department for identifying coca crops to the police. She has steady employment as a janitor in an office building, but still lives a very poor life. She has never received any help from the government based on her status as a displaced person because she never registered in CODHES. When she fled, the victims' law didn't exist yet and the IDP registry was barely in place. She thought years ago about registering to be able to get some help from the government, but she was married then and her husband did not want to bring extra attention on the family. In short, Leidy Vanessa is the archetype of a Colombian IDP, and a living manifestation of the shortcomings of Plan Colombia and its silent response to internal displacement.

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