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Gorgeous Monster:
The Arts Of Managing Violence
In Contemporary Bogotá

by

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ABSTRACT

Gorgeous Monster:
The Arts of Managing Violence in Contemporary Bogotá

by

Angela Rivas

In the late 20th century, Bogotá, capital of Colombia, a country where homicide is the leading cause of death, became a model of governmental intervention aimed at managing violence. My dissertation inquires into this puzzling transformation. It, however, is not intended as another evaluation of the reduction of violence and crime in the Colombian capital. Rather, my work examines the unfolding of municipal initiatives aimed at reducing violence—locally known as coexistence and citizen security policies—and their further framing as a model of governmental intervention for managing violence elsewhere. I examine these initiatives in terms of their crafting and deployment at the local level, the ideas and approaches to violence that lie behind them, and both local and extra-local dynamics that intervene in their further circulation. To put it in the most simplified manner, my dissertation addresses citizen security and peaceful coexistence as ways of managing violence in contemporary Bogotá, as they circulate and as they are re-defined through a variety of settings including official and private institutions, academic circles, governmental agencies, multilateral organizations and daily urban scenes.

My research takes place at a historic moment: the transformation of Bogotá from a city frequently described as one of the most violent and chaotic cities in Latin America, to a
city increasingly addressed as an exemplary case for other cities in the region in terms of violence reduction, urban governance, and the management of crime and violence. This transformation unfolds in the aftermath of the Cold War and under the shadow of both the war on drugs and, more recently, the war on terrorism. Redefinitions of violence and crime, of security and governance that are attached to these shifts, express themselves in particular ways at the local level. Rather than considering these geopolitical shifts as merely a broader context for my research, I inquire into a local version of them. I look into the creation, adoption, and circulation of a model of governmental intervention aimed at reducing violence, tied to specific settings and yet not restricted to them.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is somehow beholden to those who thought it was a hopeless idea. They made me sad and angry enough to keep trying. My work is in spite of them and thanks, instead, to all those who cared to show me it was worth pursuing. I am indebted to those who made me fall in love with my work, those who believed I could make it happen and kept asking me to “hang in there,” and those who never thought twice about lending me a hand or trying to comfort my insane working pace. My greatest gratitude is to those who kept me going and taught me how to laugh out loud even if times turned desperately grey.

I am deeply indebted to my committee members, for their time, patience, guidance, friendship, and confidence in me. My deepest gratitude is to George Marcus, for believing in my work, putting a twist in my ideas, being an endless source of inspiration, and becoming a unique mentor. To Jim Faubion, for going beyond generosity in mentoring me, for assuring me that things were coming along, and for devoting too many hours and all his care to my unfixable English, my work, and my ideas. To Steve Tyler, for guiding me the way he does, for making me smile and for calming me down by saying that he would tell me if things did not look good. To Pat Seed, for making my work more fun, and for putting all her energy and thoughts into making this happen. My deepest gratitude is to them and to the Department of Anthropology at Rice University. To Carole Speranza, who once told me this was do-able, reminded me to stand up for myself, and always lent me a hand when I needed it. To Nia George, for sharing all those stories along with my joys and sorrows in becoming an anthropologist. To Julie Taylor, for showing me many other sides of anthropology, for encouraging me to keep writing, for holding my hand when laughing or crying, for being such an unconditional friend.
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In Bogotá, my deepest gratitude is for all the people who generously shared their time, stories and insights with me at the Centro de Estudios sobre Desarrollo Económico (CEDE), the Departamento Nacional de Planeación (DNP), the Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID), the Banco Mundial (BM), the Metropolitan Police (MEBOG), Municipal Bogotá, the National Institute of Legal Medicine, and elsewhere. Their stories made my field research meaningful and are the soul of this work. To their generosity I dedicate my dissertation.

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Finally, my greatest gratitude is to my beloved parents, who never understood why I “killed” myself with this dissertation, but held my hand throughout it anyway. Their unconditional love, friendship and lifelong example gave me the strength to stand up and keep going. To my sister, for always being there and keeping me company. To Juan Pablo, who after suffering along every page, still lets me love him madly and more.
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE (1)
MAKING LEMONADE OUT OF LEMONS

A year and a half went just like this: Packing myself with coffee, stretching those ideas and squeezing them into a few pages, re-writing this part, asking for letters of reference, filling out never ending forms, going over and over on that paragraph, rushing to the post office... crying over letters of rejection, reshaping my proposal to make it fit reviewers’ commentaries, sending the application once again and waiting for that grant that never came. I did feel like a failure. Who wouldn't? And yet, going to Bogotá without funding was not as bad as going elsewhere. After all, I was going back home. However, the country’s economy is not doing well and the situation is not one of those in which you can just live out of daddy’s pocket. I was compelled to make a living and at the same time to figure out how to get my research done.

December 2002

A few days after my arrival in Bogotá, I bump into Fabio Sanchez, whom I had interviewed in summer 2001 when conducting preliminary fieldwork. Standing at the entrance of a local bookstore, we catch up on the past few months. Recently appointed as main director of the CEDE (a research center within the Economics School at the Universidad de Los Andes), Fabio was at that point principal researcher of a bunch of consulting projects on a variety of economic and social topics. As for me, I was about to begin my field research but I was also looking for a part time job and still sending out some grant applications. While handling one of his personal cards and writing down his home number, he said –I would like to read some of the stuff that you have written. We
should have coffee, may be next week, and talk a little bit longer. – On his way out of the bookstore he added – Ring me whenever. It was great seeing you again–

On the second week of January 2003, I began to work at the CEDE as researcher on a project that was seeking to assess the impact of recently adopted security policies in the reduction of both homicide and property crimes in Bogotá. A couple of weeks later, a fellow anthropologist called me to ask if I was interested in teaching a class at the Anthropology Department of the Universidad Javeriana. A week later, I had coffee with William Ramírez and Francisco Gutiérrez (two scholars of the IEPRI — a research center at the Universidad Nacional— where I had worked before coming to Rice). They offered me a part-time job in the collective research on violence in contemporary Colombia that the IEPRI was conducting. This was the beginning of a flood of offers to work that would enrich my research and at the same time affect my original fieldwork plans.

Meanwhile my work at the CEDE had put me in contact with Eduardo Wills (a researcher at the CIDER a research center on both development and regional dynamics also at the Universidad de los Andes). At this point, Eduardo was coordinating a course seeking to engage both police commanders and members of municipal Bogotá on the evaluation of governmental programs on citizen security and peaceful coexistence. Due to my interest on these topics I asked Eduardo if I could attend the course. He replied that, if I wanted, I should rather work as part of the academic team of the course.

By March 2003, I was at once Professor of the Anthropology of Fear course, researcher at the CEDE and the IEPRI, and academic advisor at the program on security and coexistence organized by the CIDER.
By the end of that same month, at the CEDE one thing had lead to the other: Maria Victoria Llorente (an expert on police, crime and security) asked me if I would like to work with her on designing a program for reducing violence in Cali (one of the major Colombian cities). After this project, we kept working together on a variety of projects. We wrote an article for a handbook on justice and policing and a collective paper on the Colombian Police; we also worked on the evaluation of governmental initiatives on security and coexistence in Bogotá and on the design of a program for preventing violence and crime in Managua (Nicaragua).

Also at the CEDE I worked with Román Ortiz (a Spanish expert on terrorism) on designing and developing indicators on defense and security to be used by the Colombian government. Additionally, through my work with Fabio Sanchez I was hired by the City Budget’s Office as the main consultant for defining city expenditure on security and coexistence in the next ten years.

My already busy days, however, were also devoted to field research. As such, a regular day would include: attending to meetings of one of the weekly city committees, going to the course on citizen security and peaceful coexistence, teaching at la Javeriana, meeting police commanders and members of municipal Bogotá, having lunch with one of my “key informants” or my fellow researchers, getting data for one of the projects in which I was working, meeting with the research team of one of these same projects, having coffee and interviewing someone, writing up a report, presenting preliminary results at a governmental institution, conducting archival research at a local library, transcribing interviews, and organizing my archive of relevant documents.
Living through those 48-hour days, I found my weeks to be as exhausting as they were exciting. All those job duties that at first might have seemed to be pure distractions for conducting my research became vital for me to gain access to what has become key places and people in my dissertation. Stories that enliven my research and helped me to articulate my work in the following pages illustrate the advantages of this mode of fieldwork access.

Not having a grant forced me to work for making a living. Such a non-ideal situation when conducting research for my dissertation was just about perfect (but at the same time exhausting) to me. It did help me by giving me access to people, places, and information that otherwise I wouldn't have had. However, it also affected my capability to follow the initial research plan and the form in which I foresaw (and foresee) my dissertation. Importantly, it, in some ways, marked the routes that my fieldwork took while in Bogotá. The actual research, resulting from my year and a half in Bogotá, is not exactly the same as my initially planned research. Even if the field sites that I had identified as relevant, were still relevant and equally studied, my work in Bogotá added other sites as well as a different perspective on the ways in which the settings and agencies that I was studying relate to each other.

Thus, my initial proposal might be seen as a pristine map, and my dissertation as the actual outcome of a fieldwork with the particularities that I have just mentioned. To put it in the most simplified manner, my dissertation addresses citizen security and peaceful coexistence, as ways of managing violence in contemporary Bogotá, as they circulate and as they are re-defined through a variety of settings including official and private
institutions, academic circles, governmental agencies, multilateral organizations and daily urban scenes.
INTRODUCTORY NOTE (2)  
ON EL PAÍS DEL SAGRADO CORAZÓN

Five minutes past the hour. Thirty-two girls in navy and white uniforms stand next to their desks. A teacher’s stern voice runs across the room: Corazón de Jesus (Heart of Jesus). The out of tune chorus replies: en vos confío (In you I trust). Voice and chorus alternate for three or may be four more times. They create a cadence that for generations has preceded the school lessons of those studying at traditional schools in Bogotá. Repeated for years, the Corazón de Jesus, en vos confío (Heart of Jesus in you I trust) prayer would become a landmark for yet another school day, yet another lesson. In a similar repetitive mode, Bogotanos –and to some extent almost every Colombian– would refer to their country as El País del Sagrado Corazón (the country of the Sacred Heart). Common in journalistic articles and public announcements, this phrase is also widely used in casual conversations. Unlike that cadence in school days, the phrase implies anything but trust. It serves as either opening statement or interactive remark when referring to events that are somewhat upside down, almost beyond absurdity, or notoriously twisted.

Events that prompt the El País del Sagrado Corazón phrase are too frequent and diverse to be easily counted or labeled. This wide range of daily incidents and national affairs, through which locals would frequently designate Colombia as El País del Sagrado Corazón, help rendering the country as one where anything can happen. A place where in a nationally broadcasted interview a player of the Colombian soccer team would
suddenly dedicate his recent triumph to the lords of the Cali cartel.¹ A country where the
main leader of a guerrilla group would miss the inauguration of the peace talks and send a
written communication instead, clarifying that he did not show up to meet with the
Colombian president because security measures were not good enough to guarantee his
personal safety. El País del Sagrado Corazón is what you, as a Colombian, call your
country when national affairs turn out disparate and absurd. Such a phrase was the email
subject used by a good friend of mine a few months ago, when attaching a newspaper
headline announcing that in Pasto (a midsized Colombian city) coca is sold and receipts
are issued for each purchase.

As bizarre national affairs do, daily incidents might also prompt the phrase El País del
Sagrado Corazón. Using this phrase is almost unavoidable when in downtown Bogotá
you see most street vendors selling pirate versions of the just released new Bogotá’s
Police Code, which among other things prohibits street selling. This is a phrase that you
might angrily roar in your mind when, in the aftermath of being a victim of
pickpocketing, the policeman standing at the next corner (to whom you just told your
story) tells you that he is by himself in that spot and he cannot help you, he needs to stay
at his spot in order to fulfill his mission: to protect the people. El País del Sagrado
Corazón would, perhaps, be the most frequent expression used by those to whom you
would afterwards narrate your pickpocketing experience and policeman encounter.

To say El País del Sagrado Corazón when listening to these stories, going through
these moments, or reading these headlines, is a way of stressing their absurd, twisted, and
upside down nature. At the same time, the phrase is a bitter but humorous way of

¹ One of the biggest Colombian drug-cartels that at that time was chased down by the national government.
confirming that the referred events are completely possible and altogether not surprising. After all, El País del Sagrado Corazón is a country where anything can happen. The widespread use of this phrase as synonymous with Colombia involves critique and resignation, laughter and impotence. This motley emotional and intellectual arrangement stems from local perceptions and experiences of the surreal ways of the unfolding of national and daily affairs. It is a puzzling mix, hard to explain outside from the specific contexts in which the phrase is used. Still, in its most general form, the use of El País del Sagrado Corazón as synonymous with Colombia is a bitter and deeply grounded but—to some extent—also joyful critique. This is a critique that stands between satire and irony, but it is not too far from cynicism.

The usage of the El País del Sagrado Corazón phrase in contemporary Colombia and the above-mentioned elements that are intrinsic to it, help frame my inquiry into governmental arts of managing violence in the Bogotá of the late 20th and early 21st century. They allow us to better understand the milieu in which these arts emerge and circulate, as well as the particular mood that accompanies such emergence and circulation. To this end, my inquiry builds upon what James Faubion (1993) proposes as the ethnographic study of tropes beyond traditional rhetoric. That, following Faubion, is the study of tropes as they are incarnated and executed in human actions: the ethnographic study of tropes as they can be seen. Such an enterprise is inspired in Harold Bloom’s work on the dialectics of poetry, which, as Faubion notes, does not imply that places, realities, and situations studied by the ethnographer are treated as poems. Rather, an ethnography informed by Bloom’s work addresses tropes as human actions and creations. Drawing from Faubion’s insights and his translation of Bloom’s ideas into
ethnographic analysis, this work addresses tropes as «tropes that neither represent nor reconstitute meaning, but instead curtail it.» (Bloom 1975:95; Faubion 1993:82).

According to the approach to tropes proposed by Bloom, “El País del Sagrado Corazón” stands as an exemplary trope that is best analyzed as a metonym—a part asserted to stand for the whole. Bloom shows in his analysis of poetry that metonym relates dialectically to the provocation to which it is a response: irony. Irony, on the other hand, unsettles meaning with its juxtaposition of discordant or dissonant elements, with its absurdity, and so leaves meaning in suspension. The El País del Sagrado Corazón phrase, as it is deployed in contemporary Colombia, is a metonymic resolution of the irony that is intrinsic to events, situations, and instances that prompt such a phrase. It is a replacement of the blank gaze of ironic surprise with the knowing smile of metonymic reduction.

The rhetorical force of both this phrase and its deployment is ambiguous. Ambiguity, in fact, might be constitutive of its force. The phrase not only expresses quite distinct insinuations from one occurrence to the next, but it can also suggest incompatible allusions at one and the same time. Sometimes, by means of metonymic reversal it cynically states that Colombia is precisely not El País del Sagrado Corazón. Other times, through metonymic fragmentation it optimistically states that Colombia might be a theater of the absurd but it is also El País del Sagrado Corazón. As such, it renders Colombia as a country where not only anything can happen but also it is in fact happening. Yet, at other times the phrase stands as an insinuation that is at once cynical and optimistic: Colombia is not El País del Sagrado Corazón in the way in which it was meant to be, but it is El País del Sagrado Corazón in a way as absurd, twisted, and upside
down as the events that prompt this phrase are. This simultaneity is better understood when looking at the local history of such a designation.

The bitter, metonymic, and somewhat humorous connotations of this phrase are relatively new; however, the designation of Colombia as the País del Sagrado Corazón has historical roots that go back to the 19th century. In her study on the usage of the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Colombia, Cecilia Henríquez (1996) shows that along with influential European usages there are also important local antecedents that include: the use of this image among Creole armies that in 1810 fought against Spanish troops and by those fighting in the civil wars that followed independence from Spain; the creation of groups devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that echoed European initiatives; the publication of newsletters such as El mensajero del Sagrado Corazón (the messenger of the Sacred Heart) that began circulating in 1867; the consecration of Bogotá to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1892; and the 1899 encyclical letter through which Pope León XIII endorsed the consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Given this local and international background, it was not surprising that in 1902 the Colombian State echoed the initiative of consecrating the country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that Bernardo Herrera Restrepo (Bogotá’s archbishop) had put forward. In April 1902, when archbishop Herrera promotes such consecration, the country was still enduring one of the most devastating civil wars in the Colombian history: the Guerra de Los Mil Días (War of the Thousand Days) that broke up in October 1899 and in which about 100,000 would be killed (Sánchez G and Aguilera Peña 2001).

Archbishop Herrera’s proposal comprises the celebration of a National Vote that implied the formal collective expression of a national wish for peace, a joint effort to
finish building a basilica devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the official consecration of the country to the Sacred Heart. The basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Paris was built through a similar initiative in 1871. Archbishop Herrera's proposal was very likely inspired by the French initiative (Henríquez 1996). The French basilica was meant to help prevent the misfortunes of both the church and the country. The basilica that would be built in Bogotá was meant to stop the war, guarantee peace, and prevent the country from undergoing similar episodes of untamed violence.

In May 1902, the Colombian President issued a decree supporting Archbishop Herrera's initiative. On June 22nd of that same year, Colombia was officially consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The edification of the basilica was finished a few decades later. Since then, and until 1994, when the consecration was derogated due to the freedom of worship sanctioned in the 1991 Colombian constitution, the Colombian President would confirm the country's consecration every June. Along with these official measures, the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus began playing a salient role in both private and public affairs. This was especially the case during periods of particularly acute violence—which was clearly not stopped by the 1902 consecration and in its most untamed modalities would flood daily Colombian lives.2 Despite the fact that the country is no longer officially consecrated to the Sacred Heart, even today Colombians commemorate the country's consecration every June and pray to the Sacred Heart for peace and for the cessation of violence.3

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2 A thorough review of the usage of this image in the Colombian history exceeds the scope of this work. For details on this topic, see among others Henríquez (1996).
3 See for instance reports about public acts regarding the Sacred Heart of Jesus that have been held in the past few years, particularly those held in June 2005 such as the Marcha de la Fe y del Amor (March for Hope and Love) that for the past 119 years has been held in Medellín.
As I said earlier, the contemporary usage of the *El País del Sagrado Corazón* phrase helps us to understand the milieu and mood that distinguish the recent emergence and circulation of arts of managing violence in Bogotá. Meanwhile, the local history of the designation of Colombia as the country of the Sacred Heart of Jesus parallels the nature of these same arts and their unfolding. Along with their shared aim of controlling violence, both cases unveil local, national, and international dynamics as they intervene in shaping initiatives devoted to achieve such a goal. The consecration of the country to the Sacred Heart as a means for stopping untamed violence and preventing its recurrence in the early 20th century, might be seen as parallel to the incorporation of novel —for local standards— concepts and techniques for better tempering violence in the late 20th and early 21st century. Additionally, the dual nature of the designation of Colombia as *El País del Sagrado Corazón* —a critique that combines satire, irony, and cynicism; and an initiative aimed at controlling violence— resemble the nature of contemporary arts of managing violence in the Colombian capital. In what follows I expand on these parallels as they inform my ethnographic study of the emergence and circulation of these arts and of the model of governmental intervention to which they are constituents.
SECTION 1
DOUBLE-VOICED ARTS OF GOVERNING

In July 2001, civil servants, journalists, scholars, and onlookers got together at the Cementerio Central (Central Cemetery) of Bogotá. This was the scene chosen by Antanas Mockus (at this time Bogotá’s Mayor) to display the latest data on violent murders in the city. Surrounded by hundreds of gravestones, Mayor Mockus highlighted the outstanding decrease in homicides experienced by the Colombian capital. He emphasized the magnitude of this reduction by pointing at the city’s homicide rate chart.

A few years later, in May 2003, an updated version of this chart served as backdrop for Mayor Mockus’ tears. During his presentation at an international seminar on local policies for preventing crime and violence, while showing the city’s homicide rate chart, his speech became halting and he began crying. Publicly shed, his tears stressed how moved he was by the outstanding reduction of violent murders in the city. In a less symbolic and emotional fashion, civil servants, scholars, and members of multilateral agencies have displayed this same chart in presentations, papers, reports, and brochures when referring to violence trends in the Colombian capital or when seeking to explain Bogotá’s outstanding achievements in the reduction of violence. It almost invariably stands as the preferred token for succinctly addressing the Colombian capital as an exemplary case of violence reduction.

In the Bogotá of the early 21st century, neither the decrease in homicides nor the labeling of the city as an exemplary case of violence reduction seem to be matters for debate. The main causes of such a reduction, however, are not yet clear and possible explanations are far from being conclusive or widely accepted. In fact, among local
authorities and scholars, debates on the main causes of the reduction of homicide in the city are still common. The actual effects of municipal initiatives aimed at reducing violence, locally cast as citizen security and coexistence policies, are at the core of these ongoing debates as well as main subjects of recent scholarly production. Simultaneously, these policies and the reduction of homicide experienced in Bogotá have served as main points in what, both locally and extra-locally, those working on the reduction of urban crime and violence frequently address as the Bogotá model of citizen security and coexistence.

How has Bogotá, capital of a country where homicide is the leading cause of death and political turmoil is always around the corner, become an exemplary case and main source for a model of governmental intervention aimed at managing violence? My work addresses this question through ethnography, building upon my fieldwork on crime, violence, security, and coexistence in Bogotá. This ethnographic enterprise, however, is not intended as another evaluation of the reduction of violence and crime in the Colombian capital. Rather, it is devoted to examining the unfolding of municipal initiatives aimed at reducing violence and their further framing as a model of governmental intervention for managing violence elsewhere. I examine these initiatives in terms of their crafting and deployment at the local level, the ideas and approaches to violence that lie behind them, and both local and extra-local dynamics that intervene in their further circulation as a model of governmental intervention.

This work draws from my anthropological work, but it is also embedded in my own struggles in addressing these topics in an ethnographic mode. I battle against getting trapped into the production of yet another assessment of best practices derived from the
reduction of violence that the Colombian capital has achieved. I continually struggle between a vehement refusal to depict Bogotá as a place only portrayed as overflowing with acts of violence and crime, and the intense realization that, at times, I might end up contributing yet another such representation. I wonder if this could be different. I cannot address these topics in a completely dispassionate way. I grew up and have spent the largest part of my life in the Colombian capital, a city where assaults, mugging, hold-ups, or even killings are likely to become daily experiences. My life has unfolded in a country where neither being nor having my close relatives blackmailed, kidnapped, or murdered is enough to make me feel exceptionally lucky. If not controlling violence and crime, what could be my deepest concern?

I have fought against this for so long, sometimes I am just about to give up. Perhaps, I have only pretended that I am struggling while letting myself get deeper into it. Still, my work is not about violence, nor crime, nor best practices for lessening these phenomena. My research attempts to render Bogotá not as an untamed place but as the locale for processes of creating, adopting, and circulating a model of governmental intervention for reducing crime and violence, particularly sensitive phenomena affecting contemporary societies. I study these processes at a historic moment: the transformation of Bogotá from a city frequently described as one of the most violent and chaotic cities in Latin America, to a city increasingly addressed as an exemplary case for other cities in the region in terms of violence reduction, urban governance, and the management of crime and violence.

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4 These assessments have already been done. In fact they are part of the ethnographic material that I collected in Bogotá.
This transformation unfolds in the aftermath of the Cold War and under the shadow of both the war on drugs and, more recently, the war on terrorism. These geopolitical shifts are not merely a broader context for my study. Redefinitions of violence and crime, of security and governance that are attached to these shifts, express themselves in particular ways at the local level. Recent citizen security and coexistence policies in Bogotá, as well as the model of governmental intervention that derives from the Bogotá experience in the reduction of violence, are in part local versions of those geopolitical shifts. I highlight the effects of these shifts by inquiring into a local version of them and by looking into the creation, adoption, and circulation of a model of governmental intervention aimed at reducing violence, which is tied to specific settings and yet not restricted to them.

My work examines the creation, adoption, and circulation of citizen security and coexistence policies in contemporary Bogotá as they relate to municipal efforts to lessen violence, to academic and expert approaches to violence, and to international agencies engaged in sponsoring initiatives aimed at reducing violence. Throughout these settings, I look not only at the ways in which policies are created, adopted, and circulated, but also at ideas of managing violence and of proposed ways of doing so. Additionally, I highlight dynamics, politics, experiences, and processes that intervene in the course of attempts to control crime and violence in the Colombian capital. In their revolving, these dynamics, politics, experiences, and processes follow diverse and particular paths. These paths resemble a complex form of Brownian movement that combines zigzagging, crisscrossing, colliding, intersecting, and paralleling. Such variable paths unfold at one side – sometimes underneath, sometimes beyond, some other times side by side, or even across – of attempts to control crime and violence.
This complex form of Brownian movement connects the settings where my fieldwork took place and has at its base the circulation of local governmental, expert, and scholarly elites. I address this circulation through the image of a carousel, which was meaningfully pointed out during my field research by a Colombian scholar and former high-ranking civil servant. He used this image when describing his own path as part of an elite that, in their moving across governmental, academic, and international circles, furthers the creation, adoption, and circulation of models of governmental intervention.

In ethnographically examining processes of creating, adopting, and circulating models of governmental intervention pertaining to the managing of violence in Bogotá, I take seriously this rather casually presented image of a carousel. In the U.S, if several high-ranking civil servants alternate between the government and prestigious academic centers, such alternation is not generalized or invariably expected. In Colombia, civil servants and scholars not only alternate frequently between governmental and academic positions, but such alternation is somewhat expected and a constituent of successful public and academic careers. Indeed, neither a limited flux between governmental and academic positions nor the generalization of such a flux are exclusive to the U.S or Colombia. However, when addressing the creation, adoption, and circulation of official initiatives, this generalized and expected flux generates a specific context in which it is common—and even expected—to find prominent scholars working at governmental offices or serving as governmental advisors. Similarly, civil servants frequently have resumes that include academic publications and teaching experience at renowned local universities. Additionally, at some point in their careers these civil servants and scholars might also work at international agencies, such as those promoting development, or serve
as consultants for these same agencies. Certainly, not every scholar and civil servant circulates through these settings, but many of them do. To be sure, those who circulate through all or some of these settings know each other. They often are part of the same crowd. They are the ones participating in a committee, acting as panelists at a seminar, attending an experts’ meeting, or publishing in an edited volume. They are the ones at the carousel, a meaningful image for expressing at once the idea of revolving around a set of settings and the idea of a circle or a limited group of people. These are salient features of the circulating elite to which many among whom I conducted fieldwork belong.

The mechanics of this metaphorical carousel, however, are less clear and simple than those of an actual merry-go-round. Revolving does not mean to come back to the exact same spot. Rather, it must also imply ascent. If, for instance, a scholar occupies a governmental position and then comes back to academia, he is expected to occupy a higher academic rank or a better-paid position. If, otherwise, he starts working at an international agency his position might vary in terms of the internal rank but both in terms of payment and prestige the new position must at least be similar to the former one. Thus, in terms of its mechanics, this metaphorical carousel looks more like a spiraling merry-go-round.

Revolving, on the other hand, does not necessarily imply holding a position at each and every station. Scholars might alternate between academia and international agencies or between the university and governmental institutions. Similarly, civil servants might work at international agencies, but never work at a university. Those who alternate between settings, however, are not necessarily excluded from the carousel. As long as they remain part of the same crowd – the ones at the committee, at the panel, attending
the meeting, or publishing in the edited volume— they belong to such a carousel. Thus, described in a more detailed manner and in terms of its mechanics, this carousel might look more like a merry-go-round that moves at once as a circle, a spiral, and a pendulum.

Revolving, in this case, is very seldom performed at the same speed. In fact, those within the metaphorical carousel revolve almost at their own pace. In less than a decade some might travel across governmental institutions, academic circles, and international agencies. Meanwhile, others might hold the same governmental position or remain at the same academic research center. As such, this carousel is like a merry-go-round that not only moves in circles, spirals, and pendulum-like swings, but also moves at once at different velocities. Revolving in such a carousel is, indeed, an art. It is not for everyone. Not knowing how to revolve or not being ever invited to do so, onlookers remain static at each of the settings through which those on the carousel travel. Onlookers do not circulate: scholars confined to a university or an academic research center, civil servants building their careers at municipal and governmental institutions, all those whose credentials are not adequate or whose professional paths are alien to the carousel.

Revolving —no wonder— is one of the best ways of describing my somewhat dispersed and hectic fieldwork. I revolved around a quite diverse array of settings and groups: research centers, scholarly gatherings, experts’ meetings, Bogotá’s City Hall, State divisions, municipal institutions, governmental settings, international agencies, private archives, and public libraries. While moving through these settings, I revolved around a heterogeneous group of people engaged in creating, implementing, and circulating governmental initiatives aimed at reducing crime and violence in the city. This group, among others, comprises: medical doctors, policemen, social scientists, high-ranking
municipal servants, economists, current and former employees of international agencies, mid-ranking civil servants, security experts, and consultants to both local and international agencies.

Besides characterizing and articulating the somewhat uncommon and apparently scattered set of settings and people among whom my fieldwork took place, the image of a carousel serves to better pose questions that guide my inquiry. What spins this carousel? What serves as main motor of this spinning? What effects does it have? Who is part of this carousel and what enables membership? In what ways do those within the carousel revolve? What mediates this revolving? What results from it? What dynamics are internally generated by this spinning and revolving? How does all this — spinning motors, memberships, ways of revolving, and the carousel’s internal dynamics — inform the creation, adoption, and circulation of governmental models of intervention? How does this relate to Bogotá’s emergence as an exemplary case of violence reduction and management?

My work addresses these questions through ethnography. But, how can an ethnography of this unfold without falling apart or sinking into the complexities that are intrinsic to scholarly and expert elites, crime, violence, security, coexistence, and governmental interventions in contemporary Bogotá? In other words, how can I walk through that jungle of ideas, issues, people, and settings without ending up puzzled? How can I revolve around that carousel without getting lost in vertigo?
ETHNOGRAPHIC MODE AND WAYS OF SEEING

A way around falling apart, sinking, puzzle, or vertigo is an ethnography informed by George Marcus’ remarks on the multi-sited nature of ethnography and ethnographic inquiry in the contemporary world (Marcus 1995). My research follows Marcus’ insights. It does so by adopting an ethnographic way of seeing in which staring and glancing are simultaneous. At one moment, you stare at municipal initiatives aimed at reducing violence in the city and at the settings in which these initiatives are created, adopted, and circulated. The next instant, you glance around at the circulation of scholars, experts, and civil servants. You glance at dynamics, politics, local experiences, and extra-local processes that intervene in this circulation. In short, you glance around at all that what follows the complex form of Brownian movement that I explained above and which paths accompany Bogotá’s becoming an exemplary case of violence reduction.

Unlike actual ways of looking at things, staring and glancing, as ways of ethnographic seeing, are equally deep and exhaustive. In a quite schematic manner, staring relates to the study of explicit aspects of governmental interventions (e.g. specific initiatives and settings in which these initiatives are created, adopted, and circulated). Glancing, on the other hand, leans towards the study of that which revolves around those same governmental interventions (e.g. the dynamics in the flux of experts and civil servants that intervene in the adoption and circulation of specific forms of knowledge for designing governmental initiatives). Simultaneous staring and glancing is an ethnographic mode for studying double-voiced arts of government.
AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF ARTS OF GOVERNING AND DOUBLE-VOICE IN CONTEMPORARY BOGOTÁ

This work ethnographically tracks processes of creating, adopting, and circulating municipal initiatives locally cast as citizen security and coexistence policies. I frame my inquiry into these processes in terms of what Michel Foucault calls “art of government” or “rationality of government” (Foucault 1991; Gordon 1991). This is the ways in which the nature of government or the conduct of conduct and its practice are thought. These, in terms of my research, are the ways in which initiatives for managing violence are envisioned as both adequate and practicable by civil servants, scholars, and experts. Within this frame, I look into citizen security and coexistence policies in Bogotá as initiatives linked to municipal, academic, and expert ways of envisioning and to some extent practicing the "artful management" at once of the governance of others and of the self's governance of itself (Faubion 2001; Foucault 1978; 1979; 1991; Foucault, Burchell et al. 1991) Foucault’s work is relevant in addressing recent processes of creating, adopting, and circulating citizen security and coexistence policies in Bogotá not so much in terms of describing these processes as identical to or derived from the ones studied elsewhere by this author, but because his work highlights key elements and questions regarding the rationales that render specific measures and initiatives both conceivable and adoptable (see among others: Gordon 1991; Pavlich 1999; Rose 1996).

In contemporary Bogotá the municipal incorporation of violence as a realm of governmental intervention renders this phenomenon not merely as a matter of policing, but also as a matter of a population’s management and welfare. Thus, it demands technologies and forms of knowledge production oriented towards better managing and
enhancing the life of Bogotanos not so much as individuals but as a population. As such, efforts to control violence in Bogotá fall under Foucault’s concept of bio-power, which is based on the management of a statistically constituted object, a population, and is most typically justified by claims to maintaining or enhancing the welfare of that population (Foucault 1978; Foucault, Burchell et al. 1991; Foucault and et.al 1997; Rabinow 1989). Official campaigns and measures aimed at regulating alcohol consumption as a way of reducing violence in Bogotá exemplify these forms of control.

The incorporation of the above-mentioned definitions and approaches to violence by municipal Bogotá, on the other hand, also implies a redefinition of the relationship between individual citizens and local authorities or the state that they incarnate. Recent citizen security and coexistence policies in Bogotá redefine violence as a realm of governmental intervention not only in terms of actions undertaken by local authorities but also in terms of citizens’ behaviors. Lessening violence, thus, becomes a matter of both municipal and citizens’ concern and accountability. If addressed in terms of Foucault’s concept of arts of government, initiatives aimed at reducing violence in Bogotá reveal shifts in the relationship between the individual citizen and the state, which are similar to the ones identified elsewhere within a similar framework for studying efforts for controlling crime and violence (see among others: Foucault, Burchell et al. 1991; Rose 1996; 1992; Smandyce 1999).

The milieu in which I ethnographically track down the unfolding of arts of governing and managing violence in contemporary Bogotá can be best characterized through the idea of double-voice. The simultenaiity of laughar and missgiving, distinctve of such
mileau, helps in explaining the idea of double-voice that informs my ethnographic inquiries.

As it is with local jokes for foreigners, laughing at a non-joke always demands an explanation. Laughing at the former differs from the later in terms of its reasons. While jokes are meant to be funny and therefore laughable, non-jokes are not laughable because they are funny but because they are disruptive and revealing.

Explanation dilutes laughter. A spontaneous laugh would break apart if elucidated. These are revealing moments that can be analyzed in terms of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice (Bourdieu 1977). Laughing at non-jokes reveals social and objective elements that are both structural and situational. As such, laughter reveals habitus, which Bourdieu defines as "the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations" (Bourdieu 1977). At the same time it reveals both objective conditions and objective potentialities that intervene in the production of habitus. In his theory of practice, Bourdieu characterizes habitus as almost unconsciously deployed: "It is because subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing that what they do has more meaning than they know" (Bourdieu 1977). Within a frame informed by Bourdieu's theory of practice, core elements at disruptive moments (e.g. laughing, doing, or saying) are hallmarks of double-voice. They are so as long as their rationale reveals objective conditions and potentialities, and at the same time allows a glimpse of the nature of such conditions and potentialities. In my research, this form of double-voice is found in those disruptive moments that both reveal and allow a glimpse of dynamics, politics, experiences, and processes that intervene in the course of attempts to control crime and violence in the Colombian capital. What revolves around the emergence and circulation
of both crime and violence management in contemporary Bogotá is vividly portrayed by the already discussed image of a carousel. Bourdieu's theory of practice helps elucidate linkages between that carousel and the creation, adoption, and circulation of initiatives aimed at controlling crime and violence.

Laughter might also come out of self-mockery, of making fun of oneself. Self-mockery reveals histories, experiences, and commentaries that revolve around efforts aimed at managing violence in contemporary Bogotá. None of these is the explicit subject of what is said or done in seeking to cope with violence. However, all are core elements in what is said or done. They shape, in different ways, the saying and doing. In this sense, self-mockery engenders dialogic relationships and double-voice, similar to the ones identified by Mikhail Bakhtin in his study of Russian literature (Bakhtin and Emerson 1984). As in the dialogic relationships studied by Bakhtin, self-mockery is inseparable from language but at the same time extra-linguistic. It exceeds both logical relationships and relationships oriented semantically towards a referential object. Self-mockery, like the dialogic relationships studied by Bakhtin, demands looking into the actual life of language: its social and cultural contexts (Bakhtin and Emerson 1984). By the same token, double-voice –the essential element in Bakhtin's double directed discourses or discourses that incorporate a relationship to someone else's utterance as an indispensable element– is intrinsic to self-mockery.

Dialogism and double-voice, in my work, are best understood by looking into the laughing prompted by instances of self-mockery that stand not so much as statements about the managing of violence in itself or in its most technical aspects; but rather, as instances that shift from the referential object of managing violence (e.g. better ways of
reducing juvenile violence) to a series of commentaries about what intervene in shaping discourses about ameliorating violence in contemporary Bogotá (e.g. absurdity, precariousness, resourceful cleverness, and the facing of unbearable situations). Self-mockery, in this case, reveals a totally different dimension of the managing of violence: one’s realization of the nonsensical conditions of the shaping of one’s own attempts to deal with an equally nonsensical violence.

Laughing might be misleading. It is a somewhat ironic, twisted, and upside-down view that reveals an equally ironic, twisted, and upside-down reality. As such, it could easily be misread as symptomatic of a detached view of national affairs and violence management. But in this case, neither humor nor self-mockery denotes mere detachment. Rather, they expose deep views into the entangled nature of one’s own engagement in managing violence. Entanglement is better discerned by looking into the opposite side of laughing. While conducting research in the Colombian capital, my fieldwork was framed not only by laughs but also by tense looks or even tears anxiously shed. Those were moments in which playfulness would be shadowed by misgiving. Violence, when you are seeking better ways of controlling it, would sooner or later talk back to you. To avoid exposing too sensitive research findings, to adopt a low profile, to leave the country, to resort to bodyguards, or to wear a bulletproof vest, are some strategies deployed by experts, scholars, and public workers alike when facing death threats due to their engagement in managing violence. Seeking better ways to manage violence in a country flooded by it would often turn into a discouraging and overwhelming enterprise.

Double-voice is confined neither to moments of deep misgiving, nor to instances of laughter, but to the alternation and simultaneity of these two sides of the same coin.
Double-voice is the mood of that carousel in which scholars, public workers, and experts circulated while creating and promoting better ways for managing violence. A carousel that in one spin might leave room for self-mockery and laughter, but in the next spin may project a shadow of fear, misgiving, and dizziness.

Double voice—both in terms of Bourdieu’s theory of practice and in terms of Bakhtin’s insights on the dialogic—is a constitutive element of the arts of governance and self-governance deployed in seeking to temper violence and provide security in the Colombian capital. Such double voice is better understood in terms of the local usage of the *El País del Sagrado Corazón* phrase discussed earlier. This usage creates an upside-down view of an already upside-down scene; it produces a second twist to an already twisted reality; and shows absurdity out of an absurd moment. The phrase, instead of putting realities back to “normal” gives them a second twist, renders them in a more upside-down fashion, and coats them with even more absurdity. Such is the double-voice that frames governmental, scholarly, and expert discourses and efforts pertaining to controlling violence in contemporary Bogotá. Such is also the double voice that frames the creation, adoption, and circulation of programs locally cast as citizen security and peaceful coexistence initiatives, which are aimed at managing violence and securing people’s personal safety in the Colombian capital.

Simultaneous staring and glancing is the ethnographic mode that informs my dissertation. Through it I examine double-voiced arts of governing that lie behind the creation, adoption, and circulation of initiatives aimed at controlling crime and violence. The following pages build upon my inquiry into the emergence and circulation of a model for governmental intervention, whose initiatives are locally cast as citizen security
and coexistence. To this end, my dissertation comprises four sections and four intersections that alternate as follows.

The present, section -**Double-voiced arts of governing**- offers a simplified conceptual guide to the remaining sections and intersections. It presents conceptual frames for the ethnographic study of initiatives aimed at managing violence and providing security in contemporary Bogotá. It proposes the concept of double-voiced arts of governing as a regulative idea in ethnographically studying the emergence, adoption, and circulation of citizen security and peaceful coexistence initiatives in Bogotá.

The first intersection – **City Landscapes I. From Chaotic City to Metropolitan Model**– presents an overview of Bogotá’s recent transformation from a city described worldwide as untimely violent, alarmingly insecure, and completely chaotic to a city regionally recognized as a promising metropolitan model of urban governance. It looks into locally underscored core elements in this transformation and presents them through a series of vignettes that depicts Bogotá as at once a “Scorpio City,” a “Metropolitan Miracle,” an “Incarnation of Urban Chaos” and an “Island in a land at War.”

The second section –**Municipal Arts of Managing Violence and Providing Security**– discusses ways in which citizen security and coexistence have become fields of governmental intervention and official modalities of urban governance. This section stresses how citizen security and coexistence initiatives are closely linked to recent governmental shifts in the capital, but sometimes result from contingencies faced by both municipal authorities and workers. Moreover, these initiatives are rooted in the history of the city.
The second intersection –**Drug Narratives**– looks into dynamics prompted by both the War on Drugs and Narco-terrorism that marked the late 20th century in Colombia. It focuses on U.S. strategies against drug-trafficking as they affect urban experiences of violence in Colombia due to the untamed waves of narco-terrorism that those living in Colombian cities in the late 1980s and early 1990s endured. It stresses the effects of these Colombian experiences as key context elements in the emergence of novel local definitions of violence (e.g. common violence).

The third section –**Academic Politics and Battles: Emergent Scholarly and Expert Elites**– depicts ways in which scholarly production, politics, and trends intervene in the definition of security and coexistence as both subjects of governmental initiatives and fields for governmental intervention. It tracks the notions of citizen security and peaceful coexistence that frame governmental initiatives. Secondly, it examines academic works and fields that in the past decade have had a salient role in the definition, implementation, and assessment of these initiatives. Finally, it tracks processes through which citizen security and peaceful coexistence have become a new field of expertise and a profitable one for academic and semi-academic work.

The third intersection –**On Information / Information Inc.**– looks into widespread uses of information and information management systems as key elements in the design, adoption, and circulation of initiatives aimed at tempering violence; as well as into the emergence and further development of local expertise and competing scholarly/expert circles.

The fourth section –**Modeling and Marketing Citizen Security and Peaceful Coexistence**, tracks down the incorporation of citizen security and coexistence into the
portfolio of the Inter American Bank, as well as Bank’s work in these areas. In doing so, this section looks into links and resonances between such international initiatives and dynamics that take place at both governmental and academic or expert circles at the local level. Key themes in this section are both the crafting and naturalization of intervention models of urban crime and violence management, at both a global and local scales, and spending money as a key element in both designing and implementing such interventions.

The fourth intersection and final part of this dissertation – **City Landscapes II. Gorgeous Monster**, addresses City Landscapes I (see above) as a mirror inter-section. It addresses security and peaceful coexistence as widespread themes as they appear in the Bogotá of the early 21st century. It inquires into the circulation and redefinition of these themes that have become constitutive elements of both city landscapes and daily discourses about the city. In it, I map ways in which these themes appear in Bogotá’s daily scenes, practices, and discourses. This mapping focuses on non-official and non-governmental settings, but relates them –as they echo, deny, subvert, or agree- to the definition and adoption of these themes within official and governmental settings (examined earlier in the preceding sections).
INTER-SECTION 1       CITY LANDSCAPES I.
FROM CHAOTIC CITY TO METROPOLITAN MODEL

Bogotá is at once a cosmopolitan village and a provincial metropolis. In the last half of
the century, the Colombian capital changed from a big town into a tremendous and
always growing city. Just in the last decade, its population grew from five to more than
seven million people. It is a city that belongs to everybody, but nobody seems to belong
to it. Bogotanos have seldom been committed to the city, and the city never seems to be
committed to anybody. In the past decade, it witnessed thousands of violent murders. For
the last few years, it has been a hostile refuge for internally displaced people who arrive
by the hundreds every day. It is an aggressive host for all of those who come from other
parts of the country, and a heartless space for growing numbers of both local and
newcomer unemployed. Thus, as in Mario Mendoza's novel (Mendoza 1998), Bogotá
may be better called "Scorpio City." The following vignettes and city-shots address the
Colombian capital as that cruel, joyful, cynical, frenetic, and passionate but heartless
"Scorpio City." They glimpse at both such a Scorpio nature and the contrast between
contemporary Bogotá and the Bogotá of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

SHOT NO. 1

A heavy sound along with a warm and dirty smell of burning gasoline invades the street.
Dozens of portable generators stand at the entrance of small shops. A grey-blue and noisy
smoke suffocates the city. It is almost 5 p.m., people walk down the street as if they were
catching a train. Some stop at bookstores or look at showcases, others get ready to spend the
next few hours at a crowded café. Cars and buses are stuck in a never-ending traffic jam. The
city gets ready for another evening of *apagón*. By 5 p.m., power will be gone. Except for some streetlamps, semaphores and lighting shadows coming from buildings that have built-in generators, darkness will rule until 8 p.m. For thirteen months, between 1992 and 1993, Bogotanos as the rest of Colombians, fixed their routines to daily electricity shortages. Although it was a national phenomenon, in the capital city the *apagón* was yet another symptom of Bogotá’s becoming a city unable to envision any future but to live by the day.

The smelly and gloomy Bogotá of the early 1990s was often described as a chaotic and hostile city. The rainy Colombian capital, where garbage was piled at every corner and grass was never cut, could hardly generate a strong attachment among its inhabitants. Rather, to complain about the city, its traffic jams, its lack of order and even its weather, was almost mandatory among Bogotanos. Such a growing disaffection with the city, however, was in part well founded. By the early 1990s Bogotá was a bankrupt city with little—if any—chance to avoid an imminent catastrophe. Neither streets nor public transportation were enough for millions who had to travel across the city. Daily experiences were a corroboration of what experts had been saying since the 1980s: thoroughfares in Bogotá were years behind the growth of both population and vehicle experienced by the city. In the Bogotá of the early and mid 1990s, going from one place to another was a nightmare. Streets were a collection of bumps. Drivers stuck in endless traffic jams would aggressively try to find shortcuts by making an extra lane or by driving on the sidewalks. Squeezing in the midst of stuck drivers and sidewalks filled with parked cars, pedestrians would equally stop buses and crossed streets at any point.

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5 In 1992 and 1993, due to a significant reduction on water reserves for electricity supply—in part because of meteorological conditions in part because of bad planning— the Colombian government designed mandatory electricity shortages all over the country for three hours in the morning and three hours in the evening. Such was the *apagón* (huge electricity shortage).
Street vendors trying to make a living and street people begging for money would harass both drivers and pedestrians.

Replicas of such a chaotic scene were all over the city and when combined with elements such as speeding buses, solitary streets and fast traffic avenues were meant to become emblematic spots of a shabby city where dread and danger had become part of everyday life.

Watch out for that car! It is 4 p.m. on a drizzling Monday and getting to the bus stop is a suicidal game. Walking through piles of papers, empty plastic bottles and trash would be easier if I didn’t have to keep an eye also on beggars asking for money, robbers looking for their next victim, and buses speeding at the side of the too narrow sidewalk.

The Avenida Caracas, one of the main avenues that runs from south to north, was one of those emblematic spots. In the early and mid 1990s, La Caracas –as local people refer to this avenue– was a living summary of the city. Garbage dotting sidewalks and main avenues, pockets of seldom cut grass, series of banners and overlapped posters at every wall were constitutive of the urban scenery in the Colombian capital. Going from one place to another was an everyday nightmare. Car traffic police in their blue uniforms were the blind authorities of an insane mixture of cars, buses, and people. La Caracas, the condensed summary of such a city, was also one of the places that –for quite good reasons– Bogotanos often related to fear and lack of personal safety (Niño Murcia 1998).
SHOT NO. 2

Living in Bogotá in those years was like tiptoeing on a tightrope over a sea of pickpockets, petty crime, and organized criminals. The city had become the backdrop for uncounted acts of violence and everyday scenes among which the worst-case scenario was not a possibility but the most likely experience. The death throes of a war between drug lords and the Colombian state that had sown the city with fear and terror in the late 1980’s would still shake Bogotá. Bombs and terrorist threats would remind Bogotanos that the war was not over yet.

April 15, 1993: A powerful car bomb ripped apart a busy Bogotá shopping center, killing at least 15 people and wounding more than 100. The blast wrecked the fashionable Centro de la 93 mall and nearby shops on the city's busy 15th Avenue in northern Bogotá, destroyed dozen cars, filled the air with a stench and left shoppers in panic and despair. Broken glass and pieces of wrecked cars carpeted the street, which was dominated by a large rainwater-filled crater where the bomb exploded. Gaping chunks of the concrete facade of nearby shops were missing. Hardly a single window in the area was left intact. Wounded victims lay on pavements groaning. Others wandered around in a state of shock or screamed to companions they believed were still trapped in the wreckage.

No one took responsibility for the blast, but the Government blamed the fugitive drug trafficker Pablo Escobar for the attack. When the van packed with 440 pounds of explosives was detonated at the Centro de la 93, the Colombian capital has already witnessed too many terrorist attacks. Since the late 1980s the city had witnessed the explosion of dozens of bombs at crowded places, governmental offices, and private buildings. By April 15 and only in the
first four months of 1993, Bogotanos had already endured four more big blasts and dozens of terrorist threats.

Acts of violence that distinguished such an untamed war were not the only phenomena by which fear and terror became part of everyday life. By 1993, the city had about 80 homicides per each 100,000 inhabitants. Bogotá was not only the capital of one of the most violent countries in the Western Hemisphere, but its homicide rate was higher than the already too high Colombian rate. With such a dubious record, Bogotá was characterized –both nationally and internationally– as one of the most violent and dangerous cities. Through the 1990s, the city and its almost seven million inhabitants witnessed more than 29,018 homicides (Acero 2000) and many more personal injuries. Fear, apathy and lack of pride in the city were widespread sentiments among Bogotanos.

The Colombian capital was the worst facade of a country falling apart. It was the vivid picture of a nation going down the hill. Bogotá’s daily experiences were not news anymore. They were not even for local newspapers that secluded city information to a couple of pages at the very end of their daily editions. The Bogotá of the early and mid 1990s was an always growing and ready to explode city.

**SHOT No. 3**

Bogotá - Thursday, June 7th of 2001

It's fucking cold! It is almost 3 a.m. The party is over. The vans that were supposed to drive people back to the parking lot are not here. They haven't come back since 2 a.m. They are gone. People try to call a cab. In order to send a cab the taxi-company needs an address. There is no actual address here. If there is no address, the company cannot send the cab. Location references are useless. There is no way that someone is coming here. It is too risky.
The party crowd, about 100 drunk and semi drunk people, start to panic. We are in the middle of nowhere. There is nothing but mountains and - of course - the Torres del Acueducto (a Bogotá waterworks site). The drunkest say they will go back to the parking lot on foot. People start calling friends who haven't come to the party, to see if they could pick us up. It is almost 4 a.m. There are no vans, no cabs, nothing. The party crowd is in total panic. We are kind of tired and I am almost frozen to death.

It is 4:10 a.m. The last model blue Volkswagen of a friend of a friend of a friend of mine is packed. We are a bunch of strangers trying to make conversation. The car gets to the Circunvalar (mountain beltway). People inside of the car took a deep breath and held it. We get completely quiet. Music gets louder. The car speeds along the Circunvalar. We make a right turn at 26TH street and then a right-turn into 7TH street. As a racing car it goes along 7TH street. No red lights, no stops. There is nothing but a continuous luminous line at each side, the music, and a bunch of beating hearts. Now it is 4:15 and we catch our breath at the parking lot. Warmly safe, I cannot stop thinking how good it would feel to stretch my body under the blankets. We were lucky. Yes, we were really lucky. There are all those stories. Groups of people randomly kidnapped. People getting assaulted: car, money and belongings stolen, women raped, the well-known paseo millonario (million dollar ride), both male and female drugged and abandoned somewhere in the city. Not to mention the many more who showed resistance and now rest in the cemetery with two or three bullets lodged between their backs and chests. How many stories I have heard, and how many more will I hear. Yes, we were lucky this time. The party was great, we danced for hours and drinks were free. If I could only take off my shoes, things would be better. We are hungry, I'm so hungry I could eat a horse, but I'm not as hungry as I am tired. - Let's go home –
I went back to Bogotá in June 2001. It has been a year since the last time I came here and two years since I moved from Bogotá to Houston. Bogotá is doing well. Really! The city looks gorgeous with all those parks, the bike paths, the Transmilenio, downtown, this place, and that part. Nevertheless, Bogotanos are not doing that well, unemployment rates keep growing, the economy is going bad, an urban war announced by the FARC, the recent bombs, and the frequent stories of victims of urban crime have put people under a permanent condition of stress. Advice from relatives and friends do not lie - You have to be much more careful, you know, things are complicated, watch after yourself - Words of warning, routines, and practices would soon show me how things have changed for both good and bad. Advice from relatives and friends do not lie, but words of warning as well as practices and routines associated with them are like knowing how to ride a bike. Once you have learned it you will never forget it. Moreover, when you have learned it well it becomes hard to explain how you do it; you just do it.

For Bogotanos, as it is also for most Colombians, there are not Ten Commandments but twelve. The additional two are common wisdom commandments whose exact origin and the history of their slangy formulation are hard to tell⁶. No dar papaya (do not give a papaya) and a papaya dada, papaya partida/tomada (a given papaya, a cut/taken papaya) are two commandments – perhaps the only two – that Bogotanos want so badly to observe. Actually, they are not two separate commandments but a couple linked by the slang expression dar papaya (to give a papaya), which might be translated in English as you are asking for trouble or you are setting yourself up. Therefore, in their most general

⁶ Along with this more generalized meaning, in the Colombian coast the slang meaning of papaya is also female genitals. There the expression dar papaya and a papaya dada papaya partida also have a meaning in sexual terms. The expression both in its social and personal safety meanings - perhaps the sexual one too - became popular in Bogotá as the eleventh and twelfth commandment in the late 1980's early 1990's.
form No dar papaya means do not be asking for troubles or do not be setting yourself up. Consequently, a papaya dada, papaya partida/tomada would then mean that if someone is asking for trouble of if someone is setting him/herself up, someone else (perhaps yourself) will give him/her trouble or will take advantage of the situation. In terms of personal safety and petty crime these two commandments are the survivor's rules of thumb. In social events their mastery is almost mandatory; in both public and private settings their basic meaning remains the same but they are displayed in different versions. In all cases, commandments are never learnt as a set of abstract rules; learning is mainly through experiences and specific situations. At the end, what is at the center is not the exact formulation of one or the other commandment but the constant awareness and generalized distrust that their learning and practice involve. As such, the mastery of the eleventh and twelfth commandments embodies the frightening condition of living through a stage of permanent alarm and total lack of trust in which one can be the next victim in every encounter.

**Civil Servant 1:** The idea is to encourage people to participate in the Civilian Security Schools. Schools are organized by the Metropolitan Police in each of the 19 localidades [Bogotá's administrative divisions]. At the Civilian Security Schools people learn to no dar papaya to delinquency. They learn obvious things that might not be so obvious for everybody. For instance if you get home in your car and you get out of the car to open the garage door, but you leave the door of the car open. That is dar papaya. (Misión Bogotá. Summer fieldwork 2000)

**Police 1:** When we say the Culture of Citizen Security we mean to teach people what we know from criminology, that victims have their part in letting crimes happen.

- How come?

**Police 1:** If I'm walking down the street and I'm walking in the dark late at night, I'm an easy prey for any delinquent. If I am used to going out at night and get drunk, the delinquent might say - that one me da papaya. Delinquents always look for the fool in the crowd, to the one who is giving him an opportunity. Then, the idea is to tell people not to give those opportunities, to tell them to be cautious. The idea is to generate a little bit of suspicion inside people, to teach them to be malicious, to tell them not to
offer opportunities to delinquents. The idea is to tell people: *No de papaya.* We always think that others are assaulted but not us, and that is so wrong. The most vulnerable are those who don’t have any suspicion. (Bogotá's Metropolitan Police. Summer fieldwork 2000)

Civil Servant 1: We used to give this [he gives me a handout like the one reproduced above] - to people at the pay tolls all weekend. In particular in those long weekends when so many people usually go out of town. There are some safety tips and warnings. On one side there are the tips and warnings for those who are leaving, on how to keep safe your home. On the other side there are the ones for those who are coming back on how to avoid holdup and robbery.

- I wonder if that made people who were coming to Bogotá even more afraid?

Civil Servant 1: No. They are the same ones who are living here. Besides, the point is not so much about fear as it is about how things are. People say - I go to Bogotá and Bogotá is quite dangerous - No, it is not as dangerous as people say, if you are not walking down the street showing your watch to everybody and if you are not wearing a gold necklace, nothing will happen to you. But *no de papaya!* If you park your car and you leave six packages in the back seat, of course they will open the car and take the packages. The point is to make people understand that. Do you get it? (Misión Bogotá. Summer fieldwork 2000)

"I never give key information by mobile phone. Success is not a triumph but a sentence, you become secuestrable and what your are trying to do all the time is no dar papaya" (David in *Muertos de Miedo*, Semana January 15, 2001 p. 24)

Informally learned through experience, always deployed according to the circumstances and deeply embedded in Bogotanos’ everyday life, analytically conceived the twelfth and

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7 A person with a high probability of being kidnapped
eleventh commandments stand between De Certeau’s notion of tactic (De Certeau 1998) and Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990). As tactics, *no dar papaya* and *a papaya dada papaya partida* are non-official practices and their deployment is indexical and attached to the particularities of a given situation and its context. However, unlike De Certeau’s notion of tactic, these two local commandments don’t involve resistance against an institutional order, neither are they totally isolated from social reproduction. Rather, they constitute widespread non-official ways of dealing with everyday urban situations that have become customary through everyday learning and reinforcing experiences. As such, they constitute what, following Bourdieu, can be described as a metropolitan *habitus*. This is a durable set of socialized practices that functions as a generative mechanism of appropriate practices (e.g. how to avoid setting yourself up or when and how to take advantage of someone setting himself up) in particular contexts.

**SHOT NO. 4**

I wish I had brought my jacket. It is quarter to nine at night and the Plaza de Bolívar is as crowded as in one of those demonstrations that had downtown as their main scenario. Students with their backpacks seat in groups close to the central statue; kids in colorful and thick coats walk hand in hand with women and men who—as in an outdoors cocktail—stop every now and then to say hello and chat for few minutes. Students, kids, men, women, teenagers, people from the neighborhood, those who parked their cars few blocks from there, those who came by bus, the ones selling candies and cigarettes, the ones buying herbal tea, everybody came to take a look at the cathedral wrapped in light balls as a seasonal attraction for this Christmas. It looks different. The lines of light drawing the shape of the building and the
illuminated tops of both Monserrate and Guadalupe\textsuperscript{8} make the whole picture appear as a hard to believe miracle. So does Bogotá.

Only few years later, that smelly and gloomy city is often described as a bright and cheery metropolis. The Colombian capital has become a hard to believe urban miracle that other cities through the region seek to emulate. Shifts witnessed by the city seem to have turned upside-down the widespread disaffection with the capital. To complain about the city is still common and to some extent well founded, but to praise public space and public transportation improvements, to recognize the adoption of new civilian behaviors and to take pride in the city are increasingly widespread attitudes among Bogotanos. The Bogotá of the late 20\textsuperscript{th} and early 21\textsuperscript{st} century has a good credit rating and a promising – but incipient– future.

Neither totally organized, nor completely anarchic, the city is in between the imminent catastrophe of past times and the promising forthcoming of the present and near future. Everyday experiences follow such a clashing pattern. Despite significant public expenditures on the road system, street bumps are still common and traffic jams are part of almost any trip across the city. However, drivers seem to be somehow less aggressive. Similarly, pedestrians seem to be more cautious. Crossing the street through the pedestrian path, instead of squeezing in the midst of the car traffic, is increasingly common. Changes of this sort are not independent of official efforts to promote the observation of minimum urban life rules and to generate both better roads and adequate public spaces. These effects, as I will explain later on this dissertation, relate to governmental shifts that in the past decade have had Bogotá as their main scenario.

\textsuperscript{8} These are two mountains located at the east part of downtown.
Sidewalks that are no more filled by parked cars but are exclusively for pedestrians, well illuminated and clean walkways, bike paths, and well maintained pockets of grass, are common in the Bogotá of the late 1990s and early 2000s. Many of those city spots that were once emblematic of a shabby city where dread and danger had become part of everyday life have gone through transformation processes that have made out of them emblematic spots of an ordered and safer city. This is the case with the once frightening Avenida Caracas, through which Transmilenio the new transportation system runs since December 2000.

A storm-like sound comes out of hundreds of shoes walking on the hard metal floor. At 6:45 a.m. on a weekday morning, the Calle 22 station is packed. College students running for their 7 a.m. class, women taking their kids to school or finishing their morning make-up routines, men in dark suits holding their portfolios, everybody is waiting for the glass doors to open to squeeze into an already packed bus. Coming in and coming out moments, as well as the inside of the crowed buses are the scenario of new –and few years ago hard to believe–behaviors among Bogotanos. The blue seats that are reserved for pregnant women, elderly people, adults carrying a baby and people with physical limitations, are strictly respected. To either not help people under the mentioned categories by facilitating their entrance to the bus or to occupy a blue seat and to refuse to yield it to a person for whom the blue seats are designed is often strongly sanctioned by the rest of the passengers. Coming in and coming out moments, as well as the inside of the crowed buses, are also perfect for pickpocketing. Petty criminals as well as street robbery experts take advantage.
*Transmilenio* is not only the fastest way to travel across the city, but also the most vivid and visible symbol of Bogotá's rapid transformation. Their silver and well illuminated stations and the modern red buses are the new face of the once chaotic and frightening *Avenida Caracas*. As with the *Caracas*, other parts of the city have witnessed important improvements, particularly through urban planning and public space recovery. This renovated and more affable urban setting has also been the scenario for what scholars, public workers and international organizations (Llorente and Rubio 2003) have called a "miracle." Incapable of remaining completely isolated from the Colombian war, Bogotá does stand aside from general dynamics of violence elsewhere in the country. Unlike other Colombian cities, in the past decade Bogotá has witnessed substantial reductions in its homicide rates, from almost 80 violent murders per 100,000 inhabitants in 1993 to less than 28 in 2003. By the standards of a country in which homicide is the leading cause of death, Bogotá is an intriguing but pleasant anomaly. While Colombia remains as one of the most violent countries in the Western Hemisphere, its capital has a rate lower than both the Latin American average rate and the rates of comparable cities such as Caracas, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and San Salvador.
SECTION 2
MUNICIPAL ARTS OF
MANAGING VIOLENCE AND PROVIDING SECURITY

I know the routine by heart. Having passed the gate I take out coins and metal objects from my pockets. I slide them together with my backpack under the glass and onto the black platform. Now, I push the green button and wait for the transparent door to open. I step inside the X-ray cubicle. The door closes behind me and classical music starts playing. I can see through the walls of the X-ray cubicle. Music stops. The door in front of me opens letting me go out. I raise my arms half the way out from my body standing in front of a female cop. She inspects me: arms, torso, back, belly and legs. I grab my backpack and open it for a cop to look into it. I tell them who I am meeting and walk into the building. I leave a photo ID at the front desk and get one of those cards with a smart chip inside. I know this routine as well as I know how to make a ponytail without looking in a mirror. I know it and its variations: walking through a X-ray arch, looking at a camera shooting my face when entering the building, having trained dogs sniffing at me. I have them so ingrained that a few months after leaving Bogotá, if distracted, I would still open my backpack and look for someone to inspect it when entering the library at Rice University.

Perhaps remote or even exotic when contemplated from the outside these are common routines in Bogotá.⁹ They mediate entering almost any institutional building, particularly if conducting research on governmental initiatives aimed at reducing crime and violence in the city. This section draws on my ethnographic inquiries into the processes of

⁹ First adopted during the narco-terrorism era in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, these and similar security measures have been reinforced due to recent terrorist attacks and threats (See City Landscapes I and City Landscapes II).
incorporating crime and violence into the agenda of municipal Bogotá and the processes of both developing and deploying governmental modalities for tackling these phenomena. How have violence and crime become institutionalized realms for governmental intervention in contemporary Bogotá? What city models inform such an institutionalization and the ways in which it translates into efforts to reduce crime and violence, which are locally cast as citizen security and peaceful coexistence policies? What kinds of polices are these? How do they relate to local dynamics and the city history? How are they deployed in contemporary Bogotá? What modalities of urban governance and arts of governing the city have emerged through institutionalizing, modeling, and deploying citizen security and coexistence initiatives aimed at tackling crime and violence in the Colombian capital?

These questions guide my ethnographic inquiry into municipal arts of managing violence and providing security in contemporary Bogotá. It comprises five dimensions: institutional settings where municipal arts unfold and are deployed; the crafting of a model of intervention and official initiatives that reflect these arts; governmental shifts that frame the emergence of such arts; city models put forward by local authorities that lie behind both the deployment of those arts and the shaping of specific initiatives; and both contemporary and historical experiences in the Colombian capital that deeply inform those same arts and initiatives. You might need to read the following pages as if they were a lineally ordered sequence of dimensions. But municipal arts of managing violence and providing security are better understood through a multidimensional reading. The following pages seek to advance in this reading. To this end, they offer five—overlapping, some times divergent, and some other times parallel—routes, instead of five fully-finished
pieces. Simultaneity and resonance –I hope– will pop-up as you meander along the following series of settings, local characters, official initiatives, governmental shifts, city models, historical moments, and local experiences.

**INSTITUTIONALIZING SETTINGS**

In the past few years local scholars and municipal authorities have sought to systematically reconstruct, explain, and assess processes that led to the outstanding drop of homicides in Bogotá, which lies behind the frequent denomination of the city as an exemplary case of violence reduction for other cities in the region (Acero 2002; 2003a; 2003b; Llorente, Escobedo et al. 2001; Llorente and Rivas 2004; Peñaloza Q, Carrillo et al. 2003; Sánchez, Espinosa et al. 2003). Although these evaluations do not always coincide in the identification of causes and logics of achievements witnessed by the Colombian capital, almost all of them coincide in highlighting the central role of the institutionalization of crime and violence as realms for municipal intervention. Such an institutionalization refers to both increasing city expenditure in areas pertaining to the reduction of crime and violence\(^\text{10}\) and the creation of municipal agencies and settings\(^\text{11}\) devoted to work on designing and implementing initiatives aimed at controlling crime and violence in the city. Are growing expenditure, new agencies, and novel settings

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\(^{10}\) In the past few years, municipal expenditure on security and coexistence has significantly increased. Between 1995 and 2003 it was about 170 million dollars. More than 70% of it was invested in the Metropolitan Police. The remaining percentage was invested on a variety of initiatives including preventative programs, campaigns promoting coexistence, the construction and renovation of facilities for retention, and support for agencies in charge of providing security and conducting juridical investigation. Even if security and coexistence expenditure represents only about 2.5% of the total city expenditure, it is higher than both expenditure on this sectors in other Colombian cities and what historically has been municipal expenditure in Bogotá on security and coexistence (Llorente and Rivas 2004).

\(^{11}\) These agencies and settings include the Subsecretaría para Asuntos de Convivencia y Seguridad Ciudadana (Subsecretariat for Issues of Coexistence and Citizen Security), the Observatorio de Crimen y Violencia (Delinquency and Violence Observatory), the Sistema Unificado de Violencia y Delincuencia SUIVD (Unified Information System on Violence and Crime), the Consejo Distrital de Seguridad (City Security Council) and the Comité de Vigilancia Epidemiológica de Lesiones de Causa Externa (Committee on Epidemiological Surveillance of Externally Inflicted Injuries).
pieces of a preplanned model for governing the city or are they products of convergent trajectories? How, through them, are violence and crime deployed as realms for governmental intervention in contemporary Bogotá?

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IT IS TEN TO SEVEN ON A BREEZY MORNING and taking my jacket off hurts. I leave it on the black platform and step into the X-ray cubicle. How many times have I stepped into it, how many more will I be scanned and inspected. At seven, and still holding the navy jacket in my hand I sit at the big table in one of the meeting rooms of the city’s Department of Government. Also sitting at the table are people from the Centro de Referencia Nacional Sobre Violencia CRNV (National Center for Violence Reference), workers from the Observatorio de Violencia y Delincuencia (Delinquency and Violence Observatory), members of the metropolitan police, workers from the district’s attorney office, and workers from other municipal institutions that also work on the reduction and prevention of violence in the city. Sitting at the head of the table: Hugo Acero. As head of the Subsecretaría para Asuntos de Convivencia y Seguridad Ciudadana (Sub-Secretariat for Issues of Coexistence and Citizen Security), he presides over the meetings of the Comité de Vigilancia Epidemiológica de Lesiones de Causa Externa (Committee on Epidemiological Surveillance of Externally Inflicted Injuries) that has convened in Bogotá since 1996.

It was March 2003 when I first attended this committee, most commonly referred by its acronym: CVELCE. In the past few years I had read and heard about it. Back in 2001, several civil servants who regularly attended the CVELCE explained the committee and its work to me. Since then, the CVELCE has been commonly presented to me as the
governmental setting in which several of the most representative measures for reducing violence in Bogotá had been envisioned and monitored. This is the case with measures aimed at reducing violence by regulating alcohol consumption, ameliorating injuries from car traffic accidents, and controlling the carrying of firearms among Bogotanos. By 2003, these measures had already become hallmarks of municipal efforts to protect life and prevent violence in the Colombian capital. At this time, the CVELCE was convening more or less regularly every Thursday or every other week. I began attending as soon as the meetings were resumed that year.

My first morning at the CVELCE I anticipated witnessing the work of an energetic group of people actively engaged in looking at violence data and discussing ways of tackling violence in the city. I expected attending a committee like the one often outlined to me by documents and interviews; but for the next seven months I found myself attending meetings in which public workers or even guest scholars would present their work and ideas about specific issues related to violence and violent deaths in the city. In 2003, the CVELCE convened irregularly from March to October. Every other Thursday coffee and tea were served a few minutes after the meeting had started. A woman carrying a huge tray around the room, while those sitting at the table stared at someone's power-point presentation, made some notes, read documents, or whispered a conversation on their cell phones without leaving the table. In such a context there were barely any debates on specific measures for tackling violence and injuries. The committee was nothing but a series of informative meetings.

The CVELCE was a fading setting with a glorious past. Its dissolution reveals some of the paradoxes of the arts of managing violence. Institutionalization seems to work against
momentum. The tackling of violence might be better envisioned within barely formalized settings, such as the early meetings so vividly described by those who used to attend. Municipal arts of managing violence might also be destined to vanish in front of any institutionalizing attempt. As it is with the violence that they seek to tackle, arts of managing violence in the city might unavoidably remain partially organized and partially spontaneous. Governmental ways of managing violence in Bogotá, perhaps, reflect a refusal to get rid of more customary modalities of governance in order to adopt new ones. They combine personalized ways of exercising authority and modern modalities of governing such as the use of sophisticated information systems discussed later on in the Inter-Section On information/ Information Inc.

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"PARDON ME DOCTORA,\textsuperscript{12}" a guy standing near my desk says, making me look up and away from the document that I have been writing up since the morning. At a glance I see the olive ribbon sticking out under his tie and near the jacket. I infer that he has a police ID hidden somewhere. "Pardon me, this, as you might understand, is for security purposes," he adds. I dig into my mind trying to remember from where I know his face. "May I ask you some questions?" he says in a rather apologetic tone. "Do you work here? Are these your home phone number and address? Do you live on the fourth floor of the building in the picture? You live with your parents, don't you?" Having outlined my life in Bogotá and after making some notes in his pocket-size notepad, he introduces

\textsuperscript{12} The word \textit{doctora} or \textit{doctor} (female an male doctor respectively) is one of the most frequent ways of addressing someone that is either in a higher social position or to whom one wants to show respect. By the same token, demanding the use of this designation is a way of marking social differences. In any event the use of the word doctor to refer to someone does not relate to an academic degree or particular profession.
himself as one of the mayor’s bodyguards. “I do apologize for all this, doctora; but I am commissioned to find out why you attended the past Consejo de Seguridad Distrital (City’s Security Council), the one that was hosted on February 26th?” he asks me whispering. For the next fifteen minutes I went on and on explaining to him my dissertation research, telling him where Rice is, showing him the university’s webpage and providing him with all kinds of answers on both my life and fieldwork in Bogotá. After this afternoon we would nod at each other or even say hello when encountering one another at meetings, events, and buildings.

Security goes beyond making you walk under the X-ray arch or inspecting you and your backpack, I told myself after the mayor’s bodyguard left my office. Then, I remembered my first time attending the Consejo de Seguridad Distrital: a tall guy in a dark suit standing near my seat, asking for a picture ID and inquiring if I was attending on behalf of a municipal institution and if so which one it would be. The Consejo de Seguridad Distrital assembles the city’s police commanders and local authorities. Access to it is highly restricted, but I managed to attend some of these meetings thanks to Hugo Acero, who invited me to those in which, as he said, not too delicate or grave topics would be discussed. Well, to be discussed is a manner of speaking. These meetings were anything but spaces for discussions or debates. Held at an auditorium, they consisted of a series of mainly informative presentations: from municipal Bogotá, from the metropolitan police, and perhaps from the army or any other institution relevant to the topic at hand. Almost invariably, lecturers would address their presentation to the mayor of the city. As such, presentations resemble staged results rather than matters for debate. Occasionally attendants would intervene, but participation is not encouraged. At best, police
commanders attending the meeting would be required to account for their actions in regards to either specific cases denounced by high-ranking municipal workers or periodic evaluations on crime and violence trends at the different city’s counties.

Security and coexistence measures are always debated elsewhere, at reduced circles, or even fortuitously when facing issues that demand prompt action, many civil servants would tell me. Meetings such as the ones of the Consejo, however, might serve other purposes. There is information exchange and compromise, many of the interviewees would say. There are also small decisions pertaining to measures previously agreed upon that give a sense of making decisions collectively. The staging nature of the Consejo reveals the secluded nature of these decisions and their political dimensions. Perhaps debating is not at the core in adopting measures of this sort, but rather the idea of debating. In fact, actual decision could hardly be carried out in a big group such as the one that attends the Consejo, but they do require general compromises. Such a performance reveals the salient role of politics and staging in the tackling of crime and violence, but more generally in developing and deploying municipal arts of managing violence in contemporary Bogotá.

Always debated elsewhere, measures put forward by municipal authorities for tackling violence are created behind the scenes. But what is behind the scenes? What lies behind such a staged citizen security and coexistence policies? As it is with slides and data prepared by someone else to be presented by the city’s Mayor at the Consejo Distrital de Seguridad, behind such a staging lie governmental structures and technologies. Behind the scenes are those civil servants who, on a daily basis, circulate through these structures and engage these technologies. These are the ones creating slides on crime and violence
trends in the city, attending extraordinary meetings due to a terrorist attack or other disturbing events, producing periodic reports on crime and violence in the city, mediating between official agencies and institutions that intervene in the creation and adoption of citizen security and coexistence policies. These are civil servants working at settings such as the Observatorio de Violencia y Delincuencia (Delinquency and Violence Observatory) and the Subsecretaría para Asuntos de Convivencia y Seguridad Ciudadana (Sub-Secretariat for Issues of Coexistence and Citizen Security), both of which represent governmental structures and technologies that are at the core of municipal arts of managing violence and providing security in contemporary Bogotá.

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Ten after ten on a scorching hot morning. I walk down the street. Hard to tell why, but in downtown Bogotá weather always feels extreme. I once was told that the intersection behind me is an esmeralderos\textsuperscript{13} meeting point, and this block is a pickpockets' training camp. I suppose this is true. I press my satchel against me, light a cigarette, and pretend I don’t care. It has to be true, none of the municipal servants who work around here has told me the opposite. Rather they have added more hold-up and mugging stories. I now walk through a cloud of street vendors publicizing candies, cell phone airtime by the minute, alarm clocks, and pirated versions of the recently sanctioned Police Code. Twenty after ten. I walk across the narrow entrance, show a picture ID, get registered in the visitors’ book, and climb four floors to the office where the Delinquency

\textsuperscript{13} Esmeralderos is locally used to refer to informal emerald traders or those that exploit emerald mines and then sell them outside formally regulated markets. There are several spots for this kind of trade in downtown Bogotá. Esmeralderos are often related to the local black-market or at least to non-regulated transactions. Also frequently, they are associated with mafia-like organizations, the widespread usage of forms of private justice or justice by one’s own hands, and vigilante squads (see among others Uribe 1992).
and Violence Observatory works. A big room divided by green panels into nearly six open working spaces and a round table sitting in the middle. Near the entrance is the desk of Sonia (a social worker) with whom I’d occasionally chat over lunch. Towards the middle section is the desk of Carlos (an anthropologist) with whom I’d talk now and then over coffee or even sometimes a cigarette. At the far left corner is the desk of Colonel Ricaurte (a former police member) with whom I am meeting today at 10:30 a.m.

“I have witnessed the transformation from information management in Excel to today’s sophisticated information management system in Oracle,” Colonel Ricaurte said summarizing his experience regarding the crime and violence information management system in municipal Bogotá. “All this was because of Alvaro Camacho. He created the first project for designing public policies on this in municipal Bogotá and had the idea of organizing an Observatory. The Observatory was first created at Cultura y Turismo (the institute on Culture and Tourism that is part of municipal Bogotá). This was not because of any particular logic, but because economic resources were there. This was part of the Urban Culture Observatory,” Colonel Ricaurte added answering my questions regarding the origin of the Observatory.

Bogotá’s Crime and Violence Observatory was created in 1995. Back then, Colonel Ricaurte was working at the Metropolitan Police and was the one in charge of providing information on violence and crime in the city. “If I knew the guy who was working here, then I’d provide information. But I could also not provide it. It was a matter of personal relationships,” Colonel Ricaurte explained. “It is not like that today. Today we have formal agreements with institutions and they have to provide information. Things don’t depend any longer on personal relationships but on institutional agreements.” These
formal agreements, for Colonel Ricaurte, are landmarks of the second phase of the Observatory. This phase, as he explained that morning, began in 1999. Two things fostered such a shift. On the one hand, the Peñalosa administration included developing the Observatory as a priority in its city governmental plan. On the other hand, the city began executing a loan project with the IDB (See Modeling and Marketing Citizen Security and Peaceful Coexistence) in which a significant amount of resources were assigned for developing information management systems on crime and violence in the city. The creation—at the Observatory—of the Sistema Unificado de Violencia y Delincuencia SUIVD (Unified Information System on Violence and Crime) is a landmark of this second phase.

“Things work here as follows,” Carlos told me in our first long conversation. “The information system at the observatory is a link between decisions made by the mayor and actual realities. Then, besides compiling information the system also, somehow, contributes possible solutions.” For Carlos, as it is with other members of the Observatory and other municipal servants, realities exceed numbers but often numbers are either the only thing available or they are somehow preferred over other data (See On Information / Information Inc.). Qualitative analysis has been done but there is not enough money or time to generate qualitative data likely to inform public policies. At best some research sponsored by municipal Bogotá might serve as a reference when addressing particular crime and violence dynamics in the city. Proposing solutions is, indeed, a function of the Observatory. To fulfill it, its members are expected not only to analyze those realities, but also to compile information on experiences on crime and violence control elsewhere. “On the other hand, there is also a lot of “producción casera
(home-made production),” Sonia explained to me during our first conversation. “Everybody has some technical criteria due to one’s professional formation, but your criteria also build up through working here and on these topics.” And, *producción casera* is, perhaps, quite common, particularly when dealing with crime and violence issues. Detailed analyses are desirable but not always possible. Time and economic resources are main constraints in performing these kinds of analyses.

Based on technical criteria or by *producción casera*, but more often by a combination of both, the analytical team of the Observatory –Colonel Ricaurte, Carlos, and Sonia– is expected to suggest and advise on ways of tackling crime and violence phenomena that the information management system shows as particularly problematic; but most important, that coincide with municipal agendas. That is, modalities of crime and violence that correspond to what municipal authorities have previously established as priorities and relevant crime and violence topics. “We know that all problems are very complex and need to be solved, but we cannot solve all of them at once,” Sonia said in one of our first encounters. “Some problems need to be solved right away, so we deal with them quickly. But issues that are weightier require more time. In fact among weighty issues we also need to establish some priorities.” In contemporary municipal Bogotá weightier issues are defined by the governmental agenda and by the population segments that are affected by specific modalities of crime and violence. Municipal servants, like the analytical team of the Observatory, are expected to suggest ways of tackling homicide as well as so-called “social-impact crimes.” The latter include bank robbery, but exclude mugging and holdups, two modalities of crime and violence that are
quite frequent in Bogotá and municipal servants, including those working at the Observatory, would witness—or suffer—on a regular basis.

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"I HAVE ALWAYS SAID THAT WHAT HAS BEEN DONE HERE SINCE 1995, is to begin working seriously towards having actual public policies pertaining to citizen security and coexistence," Hugo Acero, Bogotá’s sub-secretary on citizen security and coexistence, told me in 2000 when I first interviewed him inquiring about notions of security endorsed by municipal Bogotá. "There are several things that influence this," he added when I asked for the reasons for that shift happening in 1995. "First, there is the academic point of view that distinguished the municipal government, but also there is the fact that Alvaro Camacho came to work on this. He knows the topic and believes in integral policies. When appointed as advisor he had already put forward these kinds of things. Then, he had the opportunity to move from writing about this to actually doing things about it, and he developed a plan on security for the city. What I did was simply to continue Alvaro’s plan on security. I did reorient some aspects a bit but nothing else," Acero stated.

In 1995, the Consejería para la Seguridad Ciudadana (Advisor’s Office on Citizens Security) was created within municipal Bogotá. It was envisioned as the agency in charge of managing official initiatives aimed at reducing crime and violence in the city. That same year, Antanas Mockus appointed Alvaro Camacho as city advisor on citizen security. Camacho, a sociologist recognized for his work on urban violence and locally known as a violentólogo (See Academic Politics and Battles), was city advisor until November 1995, but kept working on security-related topics for a few more months while at the Observatorio de Cultura Urbana (Observatory of Urban Culture), a recently
created division of municipal Bogotá. For Camacho, becoming advisor on citizen security and working within municipal Bogotá, as he put it, was transitional. At that time he was waiting for the formalization of his position as researcher at the Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Relaciones Internacionales IEPRI (Institute for Political Studies and International Relations) at the Universidad Nacional (See Academic Politics and Battles). His appointment as city’s advisor, on the other hand, was somehow surprising. Camacho had met Mockus briefly, when he was invited to lunch with the then candidate for mayor. This invitation was through Rocío Londoño, a sociologist and professor at the Universidad Nacional who besides having worked closely with Mockus knew Camacho and his work on urban violence. “At that lunch, I might have said something that caught Mockus’ attention,” Camacho told me in 2003 when I asked about his appointment as city’s advisor. “But I have never been particularly fond of Mockus and of his ways of doing politics,” he added.

“Back then, security was not a main issue in the city’s plan of government. In fact, security did not have an independent budget. To work on security we had to create projects that relate to security but also to the priorities of the plan and that, as such, depended on different institutions within municipal Bogotá. We created a package of projects that related to security,” Camacho explained me when I asked about his work as city’s advisor. “This was no such a thing as a model, I didn’t create such a thing,” Camacho replied to my question on his model for city security, which, as I explained to him, had been mentioned by municipal workers as a core point of reference for later work on security and coexistence in Bogotá. “The need to work on security through diverse institutions and the notion of integral security that we sought to put forward gave a
distinctive character to the managing of security, which was, basically, defined as a public service and as intimately related to social issues rather than only to juridical or criminological aspects,” he added, insisting on the non-existence of a model per se, but rather the way in which things could get done at the moment.

Perhaps Camacho is right. Not having a budget for security, but a package of projects that relied on different institutions, might be a big constraint in creating a security model for the city. Still, the redefinition that he sought to put forward signals an incipient but very significant change in municipal ways of understanding and assuming security. Following Foucault’s insights(Foucault 1978; 1979; 1991) on modern arts of governing, this redefinition can be characterized as a shift from a disciplinary way of understanding security to the use of a bio-political rationality for managing it. Along with mentioned budgetary restrictions, municipal and local dynamics had a direct impact on the processes followed by such redefinition. Camacho’s work as city advisor, as he put it, was highly dependent on who was working at what institution. It mainly consisted in organizing projects, coordinating institutions, dealing with specific security issues, and convincing the mayor of the relevance of various initiatives. Additionally, it included a massive struggle for creating and introducing systematic ways of addressing security in the city, particularly for unifying very basic information on city crime and violence, as well as for improving information management and analysis. “Yet, this is by no means a model,” Camacho insisted. “I would rather say that there were some innovations. First, there was a redefinition of security as neither merely a matter of the police dealing with delinquents nor a social problem that should be managed in terms of ‘dangerous classes’ but as
integral aspect of city dynamics. Second, there was the creation of a city observatory on security and the publication of a brochure on this topic."

In 1996, Hugo Acero (a sociologist who had mainly worked at governmental settings such as the Presidential Advisor’s Offices on Security, Peace, and State Modernization) replaced Alvaro Camacho. A year later, Acero became Bogotá’s sub-secretary on citizen security and coexistence due to the transformation of the Advisor’s Office into the Subsecretaría para Asuntos de Convivencia y Seguridad Ciudadana (Sub-Secretariat for Issues of Coexistence and Citizen Security\textsuperscript{14}). Acero was the head of the Subsecretaría until December 2003, when he resigned and the recently elected mayor of the city, Luis Eduardo Garzón, appointed a new sub-secretary. Since its creation, the Subsecretaría has been in charge of managing municipal initiatives pertaining violence and crime management in the city.

Throughout these years, Acero has played a central role in designing and implementing measures aimed at reducing crime and violence in the city. For instance, on many occasions he has served as broker between municipal Bogotá and the police, which in Colombia not only has traditionally managed security issues but also is a national institution, therefore independent from the municipal government. He, at the same time, has been critical for providing continuity, lending coherence, and circulating initiatives on citizen security and coexistence that have been implemented in Bogotá since the late 1990’s. Simultaneously –and not without critiques– through such continuity and circulation Acero has become an expert on security and coexistence.

\textsuperscript{14} The Subsecretaría comprises a city’s crime and violence information management system and three main divisions: security, Municipal Jail and support of both Human Rights and justice. Its creation is a landmark in the institutionalization of crime and violence as realms of municipal intervention (Acero 2003).
By June 2004, Hugo Acero was no longer Bogotá's sub-secretary on citizen security and peaceful coexistence but had begun working as advisor for the National Police. That same month, Bogotá's Chamber of Commerce launched the *Mesa de Expertos en Seguridad* (Security Experts' Board). Through this initiative, the Chamber of Commerce sought to join together a handful of high-ranking civil servants at both the municipal and national level, and local scholars with extensive experience on security issues. The Board convened every other Wednesday at the headquarters of the Chamber of Commerce to debate strategies and action plans for providing better security in the city. Inside the climate controlled building, that painfully chilly morning that few minutes ago was blowing on my face becomes just a silent scene that can be watched through the window. At five before seven, those of us who have already arrived enter the room. A sip of back coffee and a bite to eat will soon vanish the remains of my morning drowsiness. Orange juice, coffee, and tea would be served at seven o'clock, along with a fancy plate of fruit, scrambled eggs wrapped in a crepe, and a neat tray of bread and pastries. As breakfast is served, the power point presentation on recent municipal initiatives on security and on crime and violence city dynamics starts.

Today's lecturer is Hugo Acero, whose slides summarize municipal initiatives pertaining to the reduction of crime and violence in the city. For those of us who have attended seminars and events in which the tackling of crime and violence in Bogotá has been discussed, today's presentation is yet another version of Acero's talks at those same seminars and events. Versions of the same account might include before and after pictures of renovated city spots; such as the ones that amazed those attending the "International Seminar on Policies for Preventing Crime and Violence in Urban Settings"
held in Bogotá in May 2003 and were powerful images when projected during Acero’s presentations at the Universidad de Los Andes both in August, 2001 and April 2003. Other versions might include detailed lists of achievements and products related to municipal initiatives such as the ones mentioned in December 2003 during the launching of publications based on researches on crime, violence, security, and coexistence sponsored by municipal Bogotá.

Tailored for different audiences, Acero’s account combines data on crime and violence dynamics in the city, and an overview of both governmental initiatives and municipal programs aimed at tackling these phenomena. This account—repeated by slides projected at different settings or by written documents periodically published by municipal agencies (Acero 2001; 2002; 2003a; 2003b; Alcaldía 2003; 1998; 2000)—is almost inevitably addressed as a model. As is the case with other audiences, civil servants and scholars sitting that morning at the Experts’ Board would participate in debates on “the model” when making reference to the series of initiatives accounted by Acero.

Usage of the word “model” might be simply a manner of speaking, but it might also be a good way to frame implemented initiatives for better circulation. In fact, the concept of model is more frequently used at settings that involve international agencies when referring to initiatives aimed at reducing crime and violence recently implemented in Bogotá. This so-called model, in essence, comprises an amalgam of governmental initiatives from diverse origins, such as those mentioned in the preceding pages, as well as the series of policies and campaigns aimed at tackling crime and violence mentioned later on this same chapter. These initiatives, policies, and programs are not necessarily part of a previously planned model. Rather, they result from independently promoted
innovations, pressing contingencies, more general political processes, and ways of envisioning the city endorsed by municipal authorities in the past few years; all of which are elements that might need to be accommodated or left outside when modeling such an amalgam into what is nowadays often referred as Bogotá’s citizen security and coexistence model.

**PATCHWORK MODEL**

The so-called Bogotá model on citizen security and coexistence draws from recent municipal efforts for tackling crime and violence in the Colombian capital. It is not, however, identical to the whole of the initiatives, programs, and strategies that municipal authorities implemented between 1995 and 2003.\(^\text{15}\) While some of them are highlighted, others are barely mentioned. This is almost independent of their actual role in Bogotá experience. For instance highly local elements on central campaigns in this experience are often left aside when addressing “the model.” By the same token, if pertaining to what nowadays are considered as key topics in violence prevention, such as reducing domestic violence and juvenile violence, local elements and initiatives might also be mentioned as anecdotal, and then, almost invariably, left aside. This is the case with the *vacunación contra la violencia* (vaccination against violence) that was held during the first Mockus administration as an initiative for addressing and –to some extent– stopping domestic violence, particularly child abuse. In 1996 two vaccination days were held in the Colombian capital. Bogotanos were asked to draw the face of the person that had

\(^{15}\) This period of time correspond to the period in which Bogotá changed from a widely described chaotic and untamed city, into an exemplary case of violence reduction and urban governance. It corresponds to the first Mockus administration (1995-1997), the Peñalosa administration (1998-2000) and the second Mockus administration (2001-2003).
mistreated them the most during their childhood. Then, they were invited to speak and fully express their feelings to the dummy. Following this, they were taken through a short ritual that included taking a couple of water drops (as an actual vaccine) and making a knot as part of a symbolic network of *buen trato* (good treatment). The actual effects of this initiative in terms of tackling domestic violence and child abuse are uncertain, but during his second administration Mayor Mockus frequently used scenes derived from it in introducing his talks. As at the international seminar on politics for preventing crime and violence in urban settings, held in Bogotá in May 2003, in which Mayor Mockus portrayed himself as going through this vaccination and discovering his own anger as a mistreated child.

Selectiveness in deploying strategies, initiatives, and programs included in the Bogotá experience when framing it in terms of a “model” is particularly evident in the case with initiatives pertaining to the improving of governmental capability to reinforce law. Equipping the metropolitan police and creating or renovating facilities to retain both criminals and people who commit misdemeanors represent important percentages of municipal expenditure on security and coexistence.\(^\text{16}\) This might be underlined when

\[^{16}\text{Between 1995 and 2003 municipal expenditure on citizen security and coexistence was about 170 million dollars. More than 70\% of this amount was invested in the metropolitan police. The remaining 30\% was invested on initiatives such as creating an information management system, building and renovating facilities for detention of crimes and misdemeanors, and sponsoring campaigns on citizen security and coexistence. The total amount invested on citizen security and coexistence represents only 2.33\% of the total city expenditure. However it represents a significantly higher percentage when compared to what other Colombian cities invest and to what Bogota used to invest on these topics. About 86\% of the amount invested in the metropolitan police was for improving police capabilities to reinforce the law and to serve citizens (cars, communications, and infrastructure). The remaining 14\% of the investment on the metropolitan police comprise equipments for criminal investigation, informatics, policemen welfare and training. As for city expenditure on facilities for reclusion and detention, this amount was about 11 million dollars and served for both renovating the city jail and building a temporary detention facility for misdemeanors. For a more detailed explanation of these amounts and city expenditure on citizen security and coexistence see Llorente and Rivas (2004).}\]
debating at local settings, but is barely mentioned when framing the Bogotá experience in terms of “the model,” especially when deploying it in front of non-local audiences.

Citizen security and coexistence initiatives implemented in Bogotá and the Bogotá model on citizen security and coexistence are not diametrically different. Differences between them, however, are significant enough to reveal some key elements of this “model.” To begin with, it is meant, mainly, to circulate, therefore nothing too local or hard to translate into other governmental styles is included into it. To be exportable, Bogotá’s experiences need to be turned into a model that gets rid of any extremely local element. On the other hand, “the model” needs to be appealing and suitable to be sponsored by international agencies. Thus, it has to conform to restrictions in terms of what can and cannot be sponsored by these agencies. This is particularly clear in the selective alluding to the above-mentioned strategies aimed at improving municipal capability to reinforce law. Exportable and likely to be both implemented and sponsored elsewhere, “the model” is not a device for actually governing the Colombian capital but above all a device for circulating the Bogotá’s experience on citizen security and coexistence. It is not, however, purposeless in terms of tackling crime and violence. For instance, institutional ways of working that congregate different governmental agencies for solving problems derived from violence and crime is extensively recognized as desirable strategy for coping with these kinds of problems. “The model” highlights the creation of such formal meetings. However, as was shown earlier, most decisions pertaining to security and coexistence initiatives implemented by municipal Bogotá actually take place outside those formalized meetings.
Such a “sanitized” version of the Bogotá experience is neither totally alien to municipal initiatives implemented in the Colombian capital through the past decade, nor is it a mere copy of them. Rather, it combines and masterfully balances the specificities of this experience, those elements that distinguish it, and those more exportable elements likely to be adopted and sponsored elsewhere. For instance, it incorporates those initiatives and programs that have become somehow emblematic of the Bogotá experience, but it does so through a careful translation in which extremely local elements, complex political processes and ideas that accompanied the adoption of these initiatives and their quite diverse origins are left aside. The following pages look into these emblematic initiatives and those elements that distinguish their generation and adoption at the local level. Through the examination of both emblematic initiatives and associated elements, I seek to stress the diverse origins of these initiatives and their not always totally coherent unfolding in the Colombian capital. I also seek to highlight how these initiatives, far from being pieces of previously conceived security and coexistence models, are more or less coherent pieces of diverse models for urban governance and ways of envisioning the governing of Bogotá, as well as products of both recent and the less recent governmental history of the Colombian capital.
Dear Citizen,\textsuperscript{17}

Recent research shows that about 90\% of homicides in the country are perpetrated by civilians who have nothing to do with narco-trafficking or armed subversion. Moreover, nearly 80\% of these homicides happened in the midst of street quarrels or at bars, resulting from differences between acquaintances or relatives.

Firearms carried by civilians are the main cause of homicides and of other crimes that are reported in the capital city. In many cases these homicides and crimes are perpetrated with legally registered weapons. The census of weapons confiscated during the perpetration of crimes between 1995 and the first trimester of 1996 shows this.

These self-evident truths are the main topics considered by Municipal Bogotá for insisting on the suspension, for six months, of all legal permits for carrying weapons that have been expeditied to citizens in Bogotá. Surveillance companies, security services, and those transporting values are not included in this proposed suspension.

Besides this proposal of disarmament, which main objective is to recover the monopoly of the use of weapons by State security institutions, this administration has implemented a global plan that has three other components:

To reduce homicide and highest-impact crimes
To generate modalities of State justice that are friendly and approachable by citizens
To increase citizen participation in tackling violence and the lack of personal safety.

It is necessary to acknowledge that as citizens and as authorities we cannot tolerate the increase of violence, neither we can consider that the best solution is in keeping arming civilians, nor, indeed, we can acknowledge that the State is incapable of securing citizens' personal safety.

I know that disarmament is a long process and one that requires the greatest effort of both State's institutions and citizens. But if we don't begin now, adopting measures like the proposed one and undertaking actions in the legal, political, and social fields, we would hardly achieve security and coexistence. What is worse, we would hand our children down an armed society that solves its conflict by perpetrating high levels of violence.

For Municipal Bogotá, the acceptance of this proposal by both the National Government and citizens is of extreme importance. This is in order to coherently advance on the work that is being developed towards peaceful conflict solution and the reduction of both domestic violence and child abuse.

Cordially,

ANTANAS MOCKUS SIVICKAS
City Mayor

\textsuperscript{17}The text that follows the drawing is a facsimile of the letter addressed to citizens of the capital wrote by Mayor Mockus and included in the Plan Desarme document (Alcaldía 1996)
By June 1996, when Bogotá’s city hall proposed a ban on carrying firearms, at least two diagnoses of violence supported this measure. Prohibiting the carrying of firearms by civilians was one of the recommendations put forward by the Comisión de Estudios sobre la Violencia (Commission for the Study of violence), whose final report was published in 1987 (See Academic Politics and Battles). Alvaro Camacho, former member of the Comisión, had until recently served as city advisor on security and coexistence. As such, he had insistently promoted banning civilian carrying of firearms as a way of reducing violence in the city. Similarly, by the mid 1990’s epidemiological reports on violent murders had highlighted the significant amount of homicides in which firearms were involved (See both Academic Politics and Battles and On Information/ Information Inc.). These findings were at the base of epidemiological claims for regulating civilian carrying of firearms. Besides, restrictions on carrying firearms had already been put forward by national authorities in 1993, when the Ministry of Defense sanctioned measures aimed at regulating civilian ownership and carrying of firearms. Under this national initiative, in December 1994 carrying firearms was banned in Bogotá on weekends and holidays.

As had been with initiatives nationally launched in the early 1990’s, the ban on carrying firearms proposed by Bogotá’s city hall in 1996 would face obstacles derived from institutional dynamics and politics that intervene in firearm fabrication and regulation. In Colombia, firearms are fabricated, imported, and commercialized by INDUMIL (acronym for Military Industry of Colombia), which is part of the Ministry of Defense and is managed by members of the National Army. INDUMIL provides firearms, explosives, and ammunitions to State armed forces and civilians. The National
Army is in charge of regulating civilian use of firearms through both permits (of ownership and carrying), as well as through decrees that temporarily restrict civilian carrying of firearms. Members of the National Police, on the other hand, are the ones in charge of reinforcing these restrictions. As such, in order to ban civilian carrying of firearms in Bogotá it was needed that the XIII Brigade of the National Army (the unit whose jurisdiction is the Colombian capital) issued a decree prohibiting civilian carrying of firearms, so members of the Metropolitan Police (part of the National Police) would be authorized to confiscate firearms carried by civilians in the city.

Historically, municipal attempts to ban civilian carrying of firearms had been supported by the National Police but often hindered by the National Army. Prohibiting civilians from using firearms might be desirable for municipal authorities and to some extent might facilitate police performance; but such a measure is less convenient for those issuing permits for civilians to own or to carry firearms, and, indeed, not at all desirable for those trading in weapons and munitions. Obstacles derived from the fact that those who are the least interested in prohibiting civilians from carrying firearms are the ones in charge of issuing a decree sanctioning such a prohibition have demanded significant lobbying from municipal authorities. These obstacles have also drive local authorities to resort to almost every measure available, such as declaring the capital as a whole as a espectáculo público (as undergoing a permanent public event) that implies an almost automatic restriction on carrying firearms within the city. This measure, for instance, has been used by city hall during the holidays when the XIII Brigade has refused to issue a decree banning civilian carrying of firearms.
In the midst of sorting out institutional obstacles in seeking to reduce violence in the city by controlling the carrying of firearms, municipal authorities have deployed two kinds of strategies: the reinforcement of police measures for controlling the circulation of firearms in the city, and the deployment of pedagogical campaigns for inviting citizens to voluntarily surrender personal weapons. The former has been through increasing police inspections and confiscations of firearms (both licit and illicit) that have resulted in the increment of confiscated firearms from less than 6,000 in 1995 to nearly 16,000 in 2003 (Llorente and Rivas 2004). The later has been through campaigns in which municipal authorities and different institutions such as private companies and the church have joined efforts to promote the voluntary surrender of personal weapons among Bogotanos. This is the case with the Regalos por Armas (Presents for Weapons) campaign launched in December 1996 in which citizens were invited to exchange personal weapons for vouchers (that could later be exchanged for actual goods and merchandise). This is also the case with the jornadas de desarme (disarmament days) lead by Father Alirio Lopez during the second Mockus administration. These jornadas de desarme were sometimes carried out in the entire city at once, but more often at specific communities or in the event of deals with local gangs. These and other municipal efforts to encourage Bogotanos to voluntarily surrender personal weapons and to desist carrying firearms were accompanied by advertising campaigns that stress the importance of respecting human life and the risks involved in carrying firearms. In 2001 about 6,500 weapons had been voluntarily surrendered (Llorente and Rivas 2004).

Beyond institutional obstacles, ways of overcoming them, and the deployment of appealing campaigns that distinguish recent municipal efforts for eliminating civilian
carrying of firearms in Bogotá, these efforts and the ways in which they have been put forward by city hall reveal some core elements in municipal understandings of the nature of violence in the city. These understandings are more or less explicit in both the above quoted Mayor Mockus letter and the *plan desarme* of 1996, in which violence is presented as the product of both widespread use of weapons and lack of tolerance:

The trend to value only one’s own prerogatives and to ignore others’, along with the trend to validate these prerogatives by means of force, astuteness, and intimidation derived from the use of weapons have generated a high level of intolerance of “others.” This has made possible that more than the fifth of the total national violent murders had taken place in Bogotá (Alcaldía 1996:1).

Statements that lie behind such a depiction of violence in the Colombian capital relate to ideas posed long ago pertaining to the widespread Colombian trend of solving conflicts by using violent means and the weight of “common” acts of violence in explaining the magnitude of violence in the country (See Academic Politics and Battles). This depiction also relates to characterizations of violence in terms of data derived from both police reports and autopsies (See On Information/Information Inc.) that support statements such as:

Recent research shows that about 90% of homicides in the country are perpetrated by civilians who have nothing to do with narco-trafficking or armed subversion. Nearly 80% of these homicides happened in the midst of street quarrels or at bars, resulting from differences between acquaintances or relatives, settling of scores by one’s own hands, or by domestic altercations...In 1995, the capital city housed 30% of the total of crimes perpetrated in the country and 5,387 of the 25,330 violent deaths that occurred in the country. Thus, it is not hard to deduce that if in 1995, 80% of homicides took place during street quarrels and at bars....and if 74% of these homicides involved firearms, then it is possible to believe that not only illicit arms used by delinquents are the ones generating the high number of homicides in the city...(Alcaldía 1996:2).
Inspired by these and similar statements, bans on carrying firearms were intermittently sanctioned and reinforced in the Colombian capital through the past three administrations.\textsuperscript{18} This has not been without detractors. Institutional actors such as members of the XIII Brigade and social sectors within the city have claimed that banning civilians carrying firearms goes against the right of “good citizens” to defend their lives, particularly when facing total lack of personal safety and the State’s failure in providing security to its citizens. According to most critics of this measure, instead of disarming “good citizens” municipal authorities should concentrate on confiscating illicit arms carried by delinquents. In contesting these critiques, municipal authorities have exhibited figures regarding both the possible participation of licit arms in acts of delinquency and the increasing risk of getting injured when carrying firearms.

* * *

“The little story behind this goes back to a government council in which the head of the Secretariat for Public Health vehemently stressed the need to define municipal measures pertaining to the use of fireworks during Christmas and New Year’s Eve. Each December more than 100 kids were badly burnt with fireworks and some of them had even died due to the burns. The secretary for public health proposed to launch a campaign called Healthy Vacations or Healthy December,” Mayor Mockus told me when in 2001 I asked him about the origin of municipal control of alcohol intake and night gatherings which are locally known as ley zanahoria (carrot law). “We looked at city dynamics in

\textsuperscript{18} For instance, between 1995 and 2000 this measure has been sanctioned and reinforced between April 1995 and April 1996, as well as in December 1996. It was once again sanctioned and reinforced for six months between January and June 1998, and for three months between September and November 1999. Later on it was sanctioned and reinforced for seven months between December 1999 and June 2000.
December and it was the most violent time of the year. Through the past few years December had been the most violent month of the year. Then, we decided to look at possible ways of controlling alcohol intake and the carrying of firearms during that month. Provisionally we started talking about Healthy December. But that is an ugly name. Then during a mass-media editorial meeting, right at the end, people from TV-Hoy [a news-show] asked what they could promote in December. They wanted to promote some municipal actions. Out of the blue I came up with the name diciembre zanahorio (carrot December). The idea was to test this initiative for a month.”

Bogotá’s City Hall launched the diciembre zanahorio in 1995. Private use of fireworks was totally forbidden; public gatherings and the selling of alcoholic drinks was prohibited after 1 a.m.; the carrying of firearms was banned and people were invited to voluntarily surrender their weapons. Supported by a decree and reinforced by the metropolitan police, these measures were strongly contested by those who felt that such a restriction was against their rights to either make a living or simply enjoy the city. Owners of bars and clubs organized several demonstrations against the measure proposed by city hall; similarly, fireworks producers and sellers protested against the measure, Bogotanos who didn’t feel like having restrictions in their holiday’s partying also participated in these demonstrations and protests. Nevertheless, the diciembre zanahorio was implemented in the Colombian capital. Besides reinforcing this measure through legal sanctions and police controls, municipal authorities put forward playful ways of promoting such a controversial restriction. Carrots became a favored theme for municipal campaigns: carrot stickers, a carrot kit, carrot cocktails, huge carrots hanging from the sealing at the mayor’s office, and actual carrots served at official meetings.
A few decades ago, Colombian teenagers and young adults used the term *zanahorios* (as) (carrot people) to make fun of all those whose behaviors were socially sanctimonious and proper (e.g. no drinking, no sex, few parties, etc). Years later, when looking for an appealing way of promoting preventive measures to reduce acts of violence and fatal injuries during the holidays, all of a sudden Mayor Mockus took it into his mind to use the name of *Dicembre zanahorio* (carrot December). The name was initially not welcomed by the mass media. "It seemed to them that it had negative connotations," Mayor Mockus said when telling me about the origin of this measure. "But I defended the term saying it did not matter. My struggle was partly because to me it is not pejorative to be *zanahorio*. Rather it was like saying let's affirm *zanahorios'* right to be *zanahorios*. Quite rapidly it turns out to be perfectly illustrated in relation to drinking alcohol. Very frequently someone who does not drink endures enormous pressures from the group to say: How come you are not drinking? It is a rebuff. Then, the minimal step is to say leave us alone so we can be *zanahorios*.

What in December 1995 seemed as a temporary and festive but somehow ephemeral municipal campaign —"an initiative to be tested for a month"— became a permanent and to some extent emblematic municipal modality of tackling violence and violent murders in the Colombian capital. In January 1996 when the effects of the *dicembre zanahorio* on the reduction of violence seemed promising but were still not totally clear, municipal authorities announced the permanent adoption of the prohibition of private use of fireworks and of both public gatherings and selling of alcohol drinks after 1 a.m.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{19} The ban on carrying firearms, as it was explained earlier, was reinforced intermittently due to the institutional dynamics that intervene in sanctioning this measure.
Between 1995 and 2003 Bogotanos got used to either observing the locally called hora zanahoria (carrot hour) and party only until 1 a.m., or joining one of several underground "after-parties" that were hosted every weekend in the Colombian capital. Owners of bars and nightclubs sought to go around the ley zanahoria (carrot law) that prohibits public gatherings and selling alcoholic drinks after 1 a.m. by giving their clients some sort of identification document and by turning their business into "private" clubs. With these exceptions, Bogotá’s party nights were over at 1 a.m. Holidays, which once were days for fireworks, alcohol, celebrations and all-night parties, were turned into what local authorities have promoted as diciembre zanahoria (carrot December). Throughout the year, Friday and Saturday nights, once almost never-ending partying nights, were turned into what municipal authorities promoted as rumba zanahoria (carrot partying).

Restrictions in alcohol consumption and public gatherings are, indeed, neither a local invention in the Bogotá of the late 20th century, nor exclusive of the Colombian capital. The ways in which these restrictions were launched and promoted by municipal authorities, however, exhibit particularities that go beyond the specificities of the ley zanahoria and hora zanahoria. These particularities refer to the incorporation of public health and epidemiology as main sources and tools for tackling violence (See Academic Politics and Battles), and their combination with municipal efforts to modify Bogotanos’ behaviors through pedagogical campaigns aimed at educating and to some extent

20 In 2003, Bogotá’s city hall launched the hora optimista (optimistic hour) by which public gatherings and selling alcoholic drinks were allowed until 3 a.m. The hora optimista was first implemented as an experiment for seeing if violent murders would remain at the same rates and if so, the measure would be permanently adopted. Municipal authorities launched a similar attempt during the Petrólea administration, but violent murders increased and public gatherings and selling alcoholic drinks were once again forbidden after 1 a.m. In 2003, however, the hora optimista succeeded. Violent murders didn’t increased. Since then, Bogotanos are allowed to party until 3 a.m. Sanctions for driving while drinking were reinforced as well as sanctions against private use of fireworks.

21 These restrictions were also accompanied by various campaigns aimed at making Bogotanos aware of the risk of driving while drinking. Enreque las llaves (give your keys to your friends) and conductor elegido (designated driver) were some of these campaigns. Similarly mass-media advertising was used to show the effects of driving while drinking. Additionally sanctions for drunk drivers were not only made more drastic but also strongly reinforced.
civilizing them. Diagnoses derived from public health, as the anecdote referred by Mayor Mockus about the origin of these measures shows, are at the base of restrictions in fireworks use and alcohol consumption in the Colombian capital. Similar diagnoses have served to support these kinds of restrictions in other Colombian cities and urban settings elsewhere. Additionally, epidemiological diagnoses have served to support the adoption of these measures and to positively assess their impact. As it is shown elsewhere these assessments are still matters for debate among local authorities and scholars (See Academic Politics and Battles). Pedagogical efforts undertaken by municipal Bogotá, on the other hand, are expressed in the above explained meaning of *zanahorío* and the municipal adoption of such meaning as an ideal of citizens' behavior and main figure in the creation and promotion of initiatives aimed at reducing violence in the city.

Both the first and second Mockus administration promoted the once mocked *zanahorío's* behavior as citizens' ideal behavior. "One day we painted three classes of *zanahorios,*” Mayor Mockus said in 2001 when explaining me the meaning of *zanahorío*. "The spiteful *zanahorío* who hates all who are not; the tolerant *zanahorío*; and the *zanahorío* that takes part in the collective happiness but allows himself the luxury of being uninhibited or has a hedonistic attitude that does not need drinks. Well, I had worked a bit on hedonism, supervising an academic monograph on hedonism as a moral option. The student I was supervising showed there the connection between hedonism and language, between human desire and language; and somehow, symbolic mediation, absolutely central to human pleasure. We recaptured there an old Platonic discussion that said hedonism might satisfy the higher criteria of ethical rigor. The condition of minimal calculations on the consequences of self-reading, on relationships with others, on the
objective world. At the end it was an update of Plato's strategy. There is the idea that zanahorio is ascetic, but no! zanahorio is he who has ways for pleasure that are more, say, zanahorios. Thus, being zanahorio is compatible with being a hedonist. Let's say that all this is almost the Utopia of a zanahorio hedonism." This hedonism is at the core of the forms of government of the self that the Mockus regime has promoted as "good civilian manners" among Bogotanos.

Beyond these disquisitions on the meanings of zanahorio, pedagogical campaigns promoted during the first and second Mockus administrations relate to Mayor Mockus' ideas about the vast gap between law, morality and culture in Colombia (Mockus 1994). Abysmal gaps between these three regulatory systems are expressed in epidemic forms of violence and diverse forms of clandestine activity that configure everyday realities in which law, morality and culture regulate individuals' actions and interactions in autonomous and often contradictory ways (e.g what is illicit might be culturally desirable).22 The overcoming of such a gap between regulatory systems is at the base of campaigns on cultura ciudadana (culture of civility), including those official initiatives that, within this frame, have sought to tackle violence and crime in Bogotá.

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22 Mockus' examination of systems of regulation of individuals' actions and interactions goes back to his experience at La Universidad Nacional and to his work in supervising a thesis on law, morality, and culture. More recently, he has addressed these three regulatory systems and their ways of functioning in Colombia in his academic and public presentations (fieldwork notes summer 2000 and summer 2001). Together with Jimmy Corzo -one of his closest collaborators - he has examined how these regulatory systems inform Colombian actions and interactions (Mockus 2001; Mockus and Corzo 2003; Mockus and Corzo n.d)
Once packed with dark buildings, shanty houses, smelly streets, and hundreds of so-called desechables (disposable people),\textsuperscript{23} El Cartucho is now just flattened land. In 2003, Colonel Rodriguez\textsuperscript{24} invited me to a series of police operatives, including the ones during the final stage of the demolition of El Cartucho. Always accompanied by the Capitan assigned to take care of me and to show me the operatives at El Cartucho, I trooped across what not long ago was the heart of the city’s black market, drug dealing, and violent murder.\textsuperscript{25} We walked down blocks without streets; blocks covered by dust, papers, and abandoned shoes. Covered by a sticky smell of burning garbage, under the gaze of policemen in the bullet-proof vests and armed with galil rifles,\textsuperscript{26} I attended the ejection of the few remaining pockets of people who for years inhabited El Cartucho, a city spot that had become the land of scary stories and fear (Niño Murcia 1998).

Still ongoing governmental interventions at El Cartucho have combined spatial, social, and police strategies. Started during the Peñalosa administration and continued since then, these interventions are part of a municipal program of renovation of highly

\textsuperscript{23} Desechables is the way in which kids, beggars, and young adults living in the streets are cruelly called. This is particularly the case those who wonder around the city starving and begging for money, getting high on basuco (a cheap local variant of crack) or on boxer (a cheap pale yellow glue used for wood that they inhale out of plastic bags). Such a cruel name, is the tip of an iceberg of frightening massacres locally addressed as “social cleansing” campaigns carried out by death squads which actions in the Colombian capital, as well as in other Colombian cities, have been frequently denounced by both local and international NGOs.

\textsuperscript{24} In 2003 Colonel Rodriguez was the commander of the Bacata district (one of the three police districts of the city). He as many other police members attended to the course on Gestión Pública en Seguridad y Convivencia offered by the Universidad de Los Andes, in which I worked as an academic advisor. Working on a paper to be published in a handbook of Criminal Justice Systems around the world I asked Colonel Rodriguez what were the basic weapons and items carried by an average street police. He invited me to go to the police station the next morning to take a look of the basic police supplies and for him to better explain me what they carry while on duty. That Thursday, having gone through the basics to the general principles of what to carry and what not to carry in carrying out particular tasks, Colonel Rodriguez invited me to witness a real security operation the coming weekend during a soccer game. Weeks later, when we met at a City Security Council, he invited me to another series of police operations: the ones at El Cartucho.

\textsuperscript{25} This part of the city was the most critical one in terms of violence. For instance between 1997 and 1999 it has an average homicide rate of 40,000 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (see Echandía in Llorente and Rivas 2004).

\textsuperscript{26} These are rifles used by both army and police members when combatting in rural areas and when dealing with war-like situations in urban areas in Colombia.
deteriorated city spots. In *El Cartucho* this program has consisted of demolishing the area for building a 20-hectare park as well as to renovate neighboring neighborhoods. Along with this, several social strategies have been carried out such as the relocation of recycling activities that used to be carried out in this area and the relocation of about 14,000 people who inhabited this part of the city (Acero 2003a; 2003c). Additionally, police operations aimed at disarticulating criminal structures that for so long have operated in this part of the city have been carried out throughout these years.

Municipal interventions aimed at renovating deteriorated city sites have been carried out throughout the city, particularly in downtown Bogotá, since the late 1990’s. Street vendors along with illicit traders who had their businesses at *San Victorino* were ejected and later some of them were relocated at neighboring buildings. Blocks formerly packed with shanty booths were turned into an open square made of stones and with a butterfly sculpture. Similarly street vendors were ejected from most city sidewalks. Meanwhile once deteriorated streets and abandoned parks were turned into clean, refurbished, and illuminated avenues and parks. Municipal interventions pertaining to public space were not confined to security but were part of the governmental program of the Peñalosa administration and of his aim to create a friendly city, where public space could be enjoy by everyone. Besides renovating deteriorated spaces, municipal authorities also engaged in building public libraries, improving the transportation system, and turning several streets into pedestrian paths. Improving public spaces was not only and not mainly a matter of security but a way of improving life in the city and of attaching people to the Colombian capital.
When municipal authorities refer to programs pertaining to public space as security policies, they often designate them as initiatives inspired by the New York experience, particularly the so-called broken windows theory. This frame, however, might be a later addition to municipal programs for improving public space. In 2000 these interventions were at the forefront of municipal initiatives, but when I interviewed city staff working on programs pertaining to citizen security, coexistence, and public space, the New York experience and the broken window theory were only rarely mentioned and not extensively or clearly explained. Still today, many of those who have worked at municipal Bogotá for several years remember the somehow embarrassing anecdote of that radio interview in which the head of the city’s Department of State during the Peñalosa administration was asked about the implementation of the broken windows theory in the Colombian capital. In answering this question, he strongly stated that if someone would break a window municipal authorities would make sure that broken glass would be properly picked up. Municipal authorities would assure that those whose duties involve picking up broken glasses would do so. Back then, the high-ranking municipal servant was corrected by one of the interviewers who explained that the so-called broken windows theory stated that disorganized spaces, dirty and deteriorated spots, were propitious for misconduct and as such were also propitious for perpetrating crimes. Such spaces were par excellence spots for lawless behaviors that facilitate the perpetration of

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27 These two references were often mentioned to explain security initiatives based on public space management during the Peñalosa administration. However, they were not extensively explained. Rather they were used as self-explanatory references. Among those using these references, the “New York” model basically refers to actions regarding public space and city order undertaken by the Giuliani administration in New York. The Broken Windows theory was a core element in these actions but it is not exclusive to the New York experience. In the early 1980s, James Wilson and George Kelling (1982) posed the theory that signs of decay, disorder, and incivilities, such as abandoned buildings, broken streetlights, garbage, and unruly behaviors (even if not considered delinquent behaviors in themselves), all invite potential criminals to an area. For explaining this idea, they used the image of a building where a window is broken. If that window is never fixed, more windows would soon get broken too and both the building and its surroundings would begin deteriorating.
crime and the –not always wrong– perception of lack of personal safety. The name of this theory was derived from the image that most clearly summarizes this principle: if a building’s window is broken and left as such, suddenly many more windows would be broken and the entire spot would start deteriorating. Ordered spaces deter disordered behaviors that are prone to generate criminal activities.

Conversant or not with the broken windows theory, during the Peñalosa administration municipal servants got engaged in generating what was locally known as espacios de orden (spaces of order) in which the improvement of public lighting and space was accompanied by both increasing police surveillance and by the work of guías cívicos (civil guides) who were in charge of showing Bogotanos rules in using the public space and pedagogically making them observe these rules. Similarly, municipal authorities engaged in a massive renovation of deteriorated areas, improvement of public spaces – particularly in downtown Bogotá–, and the construction of libraries, bike-paths, and parks in some of the poorest areas of the city. Most of these municipal efforts were continued during the second Mockus administration. By the early 21st century the Colombian capital looked prettier than a few years before, city spots once considered extremely dangerous were now praised as nice or at least not excessively dangerous. Public space renovation has brought some pride for most Bogotanos who seem ready to enjoy the nice city. Meanwhile, wandering around not yet renovated areas or hanging out near formerly deteriorated spots –perhaps waiting for being once again ejected– those who were once living in city spots meant to become nicer are now living reminders of the frightful recent past of these areas and of their still shaky transformation.
Mayor Mockus’ presentation of recent city homicide rates in 2001 at the *Cementerio Central* (Central Cemetery), mentioned earlier in this work, was part of a bigger event aimed at calling Bogotanos’ attention to the importance of preserving human life and of its sacred nature. To this end, an amount of mortal remains equal to the number to which homicides had dropped that year were removed from their graves. The slogan *La Vida es Sagrada* (life is sacred) was written in black ink at the top front of the now emptied mausoleums. Emptied graves were meant to remain as such and constitute what a few years later Mayor Mockus would refer to as one of the most outstanding ready-made monuments devoted to human life in the city. Such a monument can be seen at the south side of the *Avenida 26*, one of the most crowed avenues in the city, which among other things connects downtown Bogotá with Bogotá’s airport.

The event at the *Cementerio Central* is one of many possible examples of the ways in which the second Mockus administration sought to put forward the slogan *La Vida es Sagrada* (Life is Sacred) and adopted it as one of its main mottoes. What does it mean to declare life as sacred and to adopt such a slogan as chief municipal motto? How is such a motto translated into policies? How is it deployed through municipal initiatives aimed at reducing violence in the city? The right to life, Mayor Mockus’ memoirs of his second administration declare, is the most essential right included in the Colombian Constitution. It is the basis for other rights also constitutionally sanctioned (Mockus 2003:10).

When seen as a supreme constitutional right, the use of the adjective "sacred" to qualifying life might be understood in terms of the respect of the right to life above other rights. However, the use of this adjective in municipal Bogotá has a more complex origin.
During the second Mockus administration not only life but also public resources were frequently referred as sacred. “Well, this is like the footprint of my reading of Durkheim,” Mayor Mockus said in 2001 when I asked him about the widespread use of the adjective sacred in his administration. “I have been lucky in getting some gossip from social sciences; like little pills. I have been like a recycling being that gets fragments from social sciences; cute clues,” he added after explaining to me how he had begun reading Durkheim due to his own interests in the work of Basil Berstein and his previous knowledge of Kant’s philosophical works. “To look at Durkheim’s points of view seemed quite interesting. Soon I was drawn, very drawn, by this idea of the opposition between sacred and profane, as similar to the opposition between collective and individual. Then this is like a foundational matrix of social classifying.” Beyond this theoretical frame, Mayor Mockus added, there were many ways in which the sacred stands as the main cultural principle. “The cultural order par excellence is religion. The violation of the cultural order many times has strong extra-juridical sanctions…I, myself, had illustrated my theories about cultural rules by violating these rules. I had learnt that this has a huge cost. I saw all this as closely related to the idea of sacrilege. Messing with the cultural order in a society is more grave than messing with the juridical order.”

Perhaps inspired by Mayor Mockus disquisitions, but also by the disquisitions of those civil servants engaged in promoting the respect for human life among Bogotanos, the slogan *La Vida es Sagrada* has been defined and redefined as a municipal motto. From those looking for better ways to prevent traffic accidents to those seeking to encourage people to stop using firearms and violent means to resolve conflicts, municipal servants have framed their work by adopting such a slogan. “I think that the only true answer to
this is the ideal of protecting life because of life,” Father Alirio López, director of the La Vida es Sagrada municipal office told me, in 2001 when I asked him about experiences that had inspired him to work on encouraging Bogotanos to stop using firearms and violence to solve conflicts. “Such is Mayor Mockus’ model. He suffers the same as I do because of each violent death that occurs in Bogotá. Anguish and sadness run through our blood when a violent death occurs, but we also feel impotent. Why do we keep killing each other?” Father Alirio, who once as local priest in a working-class neighborhood and then as municipal advisor has worked on promoting the voluntary surrender of personal weapons and the use of non-violent means to resolve conflicts since the mid 1990’s, explained to me how violent murders in the city have been reduced thanks to municipal efforts for making Bogotanos aware of the importance of respecting human life. “This is a school of looking after life because of life. It is a school that makes people say: let’s get rid of our weapons. This is the school of conviction. Well, I insist on this, it is not because I am a priest that I do this. No! It is because I am deeply convinced that life is a gift and as such I’m responsible of preserving it. I’m responsible for those violent murders that are daily perpetrated anywhere in Bogotá. Why am I responsible? In this we need to go back to a famous phrase by Martin Luther King: I am no longer terrified by the bad acts of bad people, but by the silence of good people.”

Like Father Alirio, many municipal servants would address the La Vida es Sagrada motto as one that corresponds to basic universal principles which promotion stands as a human responsibility, a duty of good people. The governmental adoption of this motto, thus, seems not only unproblematic but also desirable and to some extent logical. In fact, many of my interlocutors would be shocked and show some surprise when I inquired into
the meaning of such a motto and the reason for adopting it. Protecting human life and promoting people’s respect for others’ life seems an aim that might be universally estimated as a good governmental enterprise. However, as a governmental enterprise, this aim is not always seen as a simple and unproblematic task. “What is particularly salient in the two Mockus administrations is the possibility of connecting philosophy to governance. That is, the combination of theory and political experiences, whose main challenge and proof of success has been the transformation witnessed by the city in the past few years. All this is at the core of Cultura Ciudadana (culture of civility),” Rocío Londoño, a sociologist who for a long time has worked with Mayor Mockus both as high-ranking civil servant in municipal Bogotá and as salient scholar at academic settings, explained to me in our first meeting. “The cultura ciudadana enterprise, however, brings to the fore the tension between order and individual freedom,” she said when telling me about the numerous debates between Mayor Mockus and herself on the implications of municipal initiatives aimed at promoting Cultura Ciudadana in general and the respect for human life in particular. “Mayor Mockus would put forward the protection of human life and for him such protection would justify any limitation of individual rights. However this was not everybody’s position in municipal Bogotá. In fact, such limitation might imply many complex situations that the local government had to bear in mind when designing these kinds of initiatives,” she stated when addressing the Noche de las Mujeres (women’s night), as an example of initiatives put forward by the second Mockus administration.

Municipal Bogotá created and promoted the Noche de las Mujeres as part of the La Vida es Sagrada enterprise. It consisted of a curfew for men on Friday night and was held
on March 9th, 2001. That Friday night was meant for women to go out, while men were supposed to stay at home. The entire city was run by women. Female police patrolled the city, women run fire trucks and other city services. Bars and restaurants offered special deals for women and organized shows for encouraging women to go out that night. Men who didn’t feel like observing such an uncommon curfew were asked to carry a “safe-conduct” pass listing their reasons for being out and not observing the curfew. The passes could be clipped from newspapers, printed off the Internet or picked up at any police station.

This bizarre initiative, as Londoño explained to me, was “a quite controversial but also well justified one. Its justification goes back to the inclusion, although incipient, of a gender perspective in the governmental program of the second Mockus administration. This along with the relation between gender and violence, which are expressed in the fact that one woman for every thirteen men are victims of homicide in Bogotá, made Mayor Mockus and his closer collaborators think about ways of highlighting this fact beyond plain statistics. That is, to show how women protect life and to do so by going beyond statistics. To do so through a communicative act that goes beyond numbers.” In saying this, she addressed the Noche de las Mujeres along with symbolic acts such as the one held at the Cementerio Central (Central Cemetery) as products of complex debates and disquisitions on how to better promote the respect for life among Bogotanos. As she stated, these are some among many examples of extreme measures and acts promoted by municipal authorities in order to generate reflection among citizens, beyond plain statistics, on the ways in which violence takes place in the city. These are communicative

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28 The following Friday, municipal authorities held a Noche de los Hombres (men’s night), which tuned to be not as festive and animated as the Noche de las Mujeres. The next Friday a Noche del reencuentro (reunion’s night) meant to bring together men and women
actions aimed at both breaking down common-sense positions pertaining to violence in
the city and modifying Bogotanos’ ways of relating to each other.

**GOVERNMENTAL SHIFTS: TWISTED POLITICS AND URBAN GOVERNANCE**

Initiatives, policies, and programs included in the Bogotá citizen security and coexistence
model are tied to broader governmental shifts that characterize the recent history of the
city. These shifts relate to new political and governmental tools nationally introduced
since the 1980s and incorporated by city authorities since the early 1990s, as well as to
novel modalities of practicing politics and exercising authority that were adopted and
deployed by municipal authorities since the mid 1990s.

**RENEWED GOVERNMENTAL TOOLS AND POLITICS**

New political and governmental tools nationally introduced and locally incorporated in
the past two decades reflect significant legislative changes. At the national level, these
changes comprise measures that since the 1980s have sought to decentralize political and
economic power and to change the ways of exercising politics in Colombia. Measures
aimed at decentralizing economic resources management and the exercise of political
power approved throughout the 1980s such as the popular election of mayors approved in
1986, were seminal steps in a long path towards decentralization. The Colombian
Constitution of 1991 moved forward on this path by establishing mechanisms of political
and economic decentralization and by providing constitutional tools to facilitate citizens’
active participation in politics and governmental affairs. It also introduced changes by
which both legitimacy and political power were increasingly relegated to the local
arena. Legislative changes at the local level include measures aimed at improving city economic resources and governmental autonomy. As Mayor of Bogotá, Jaime Castro (1992-1994) fostered such improvements by designing and promoting legal statutes and measures that would provide municipal Bogotá with tools to manage both administrative and economic matters in a more autonomous form. By the mid 1990s and thanks to these achievements, Bogotá went from a totally broken and ungovernable city, to a city with promising access to economic resources and legal tools to govern itself in a more autonomous way.

Legislative and constitutional measures concerning decentralization gave more autonomy to local governments but also forced local authorities to build legitimacy and political power not mainly by building relations with the central government but by addressing and managing local issues. This was particularly the case with the voto programático, a system introduced by the 1991 Constitution by which candidates must submit a program of government and citizens have the right to ask elected candidates to resign if they are not following their programs of government. The voto programático is a core element in governmental shifts that characterize contemporary Bogotá, particularly those shifts that relate to the exercise of governmental authority by the Mayor of the city. A recent evaluation (Riveros 2002) of governmental shifts in contemporary Bogotá points out new ways of building legitimacy and the emergence of new forms of

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29 These initiatives relate closely to processes and events that shocked the Colombia of the late 1980's. The assassination of several presidential candidates, particularly the shooting to death of Luis Carlos Galán in 1989, the overwhelming waves of terror that at that time flooded the country, and Colombians increasing discontent with politicians were pivotal elements of the so-called septima papeleta (seventh ballot paper) movement. A group of students and young professionals promoted a ballot paper in favor of an institutional reform, particularly of forming a national assembly in order to change the country's political constitution during the presidential elections of 1990. For detailed analysis of these processes and an evaluation of their further developments, see among others Dugas (1993).
30 For detailed assessments of the decentralization processes in Bogotá and their relation to the exercise of governmental power see among others García and Zamudio (1997) and Rojas (2002)
leadership as main elements in these governmental shifts. For the authors of this evaluation, what has marked the difference between Bogotá and other Colombian cities is the correspondence between on the one hand governmental initiatives and people’s actions, and on the other hand ideal models of city, society and citizen that local authorities have sought to promote. Processes witnessed by Bogotá haven’t been smooth and without any conflict; however, correspondence between proposals made by candidates and actions carried out by them as elected authorities has strengthened democratic modalities of governing, as well as fostered both the legitimacy of local authorities and the capability of governing the city.

Besides strengthening governmental power at the local level, constitutional and legislative measures that characterize the Colombia of the late 1980s and early 1990s, together with the processes that led to their approval, were also the backdrop of the emergence of new modalities of exercising politics and of the launching of new faces into the political arena. An incipient renovation of Colombian politics was evident in 1994, the first electoral year in which new constitutional tools that allowed and facilitate a more active civilian participation were promoted. All over the country and especially in its chief cities civic candidates who declared themselves independent - which meant not as dependent on one of the two traditional political parties - appeared by the dozens in the political arena. Moreover, the process that led to this new Constitution fostered the debut of new faces in the political arena and the introduction of alternative ways of doing politics.\(^{31}\) Distributing condoms in the streets, promoting games of civility, talking with

\(^{31}\) Bogotá’s councilman Juan Carlos Flórez, elected member of the City Council for the first time in 1994, was one of the first civic/independent figures to debut in Bogotá’s political arena. As he would tell me when I first interviewed him in 2001, for him, as it was also for others who participated in these processes, the Constitutional Assembly of 1991 was the pivotal moment for his move into politics.
people in the buses, and sending messages to the media by carrier pigeons, these civic/independent candidates twisted the country's ways of doing politics. Priests, ex-members of guerrilla groups, minor drug lords, common citizens, religious leaders, doctors, sportsmen, T.V. stars, scholars, and renovated traditional leaders were equally addressed under the vague but catchy category of *antipolíticos* (anti-politicians). Their uncommon ways of doing politics and of twisting the Colombian political arena were widely addressed as *antipolítica* (anti-politics), particularly by the local media. As such, the concept of anti-politics that had been widely used to refer to the exercise of power by force instead of through politics, particularly common in dictatorial regimes (Loveman and Davies 1989) was used in the Colombia of the mid 1990s to refer to a totally different—and to some extent opposite—phenomenon.\(^\text{32}\)

In 1994, so-called *antipolíticos* were elected as mayors of nine large Colombian cities. Such was what Francisco Gutiérrez (1995) calls “the seismic revolution of the anti-politicians” of which the Colombian capital was the epicenter. A pivotal moment of this "revolution" was the election of Antanas Mockus as Mayor of Bogotá.\(^\text{33}\) As both candidate for Mayor and as Mayor of the city, Mockus would shake Bogotá’s political arena not only through uncommon public acts, but also by twisting the ways of practicing politics and of exercising political power. Communication, pedagogy and symbolism were the core elements of the style of exercising politics and political power embodied by Mockus. His mayoral “anti-campaign” employed symbolism and uncommon public acts, rejecting those elements associated with the traditional exercise of politics, and reshaping

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\(^{32}\) For an overview and a critical analysis of the use of the concepts of *antipolítica* and *antipolíticos* to address the shifting Colombian political arena see Rivas Gamboa (2002).

\(^{33}\) For detailed descriptions of Mockus’ campaign and landslide victory in the mid 1990s, see Gutiérrez (1995) and Peña (1995)
Bogotá’s political arena. In a city used to political speeches in massive demonstrations and expensive politician’s campaigns in the local media, Mockus’ anti-campaign broke all political schemes.

Following Gutiérrez (1995) Bogotá’s political shifts in the 1990s and the success of Mockus’ anti-campaign in the Colombian capital showed, among other things, important changes in the ways of practicing politics. Whereas most bipartisan politicians remain experts in the traditions of the plaza pública (public square) practices in politics such as massive disquisitions and demonstrations, critical/civic politicians appear mainly as experts in creating buen registro (appear quite appealing to the mass media). If Mockus incarnated this new modality of practicing politics, Enrique Peñalosa, his successor, was—although in a different manner—also an incarnation of these novel ways of creating and exercising political power. While Mockus political style and way of exercising authority heavily relied on pedagogy and symbolism, Peñalosa’s political style and modality of exercising authority had its sources in modern urban management expertise and the technocratic use of expert knowledge for governing the city. As such, both Mockus and Peñalosa, together with the official initiatives that characterized their administrations, incarnate novel modalities of practicing politics and of both creating and exercising authority that distinguish the political arena of the Bogotá of the late 20th and early 21st century.

**Alternative Ways of Envisioning and Governing the City**

Since the mid 1990s, municipal authorities have sought to implement alternative ways of managing the city. The past three administrations have sought to implement two main
city models in governing the Colombian capital. The first model proposes to transform the city and its dynamics by means of educating Bogotanos and modifying their behaviors through official campaigns promoting *Cultura Ciudadana* (Culture of Civility). Local authorities define this concept as a frame that regulates the behavior of the citizens by establishing minimum common rules that make possible relationships among citizens and between them and their environment (Alcaldía 1998) The second model proposes to transform the city and its dynamics by constructing a modern and friendly city as a way of improving urban life. It stresses generating adequate and ordered urban spaces by means of both improving city’s infrastructure and regulating people’s behavior.

For the standards of a city where official initiatives were often marked by short-term views and confined to issues such as repairing streets and improving public services, these city models and their adoption as constitutive elements in the design and implementation of official initiatives was revolutionary. The definition of a culture and urban space as main fields of governmental intervention was also revolutionary. In spite of possible critics against them, these models and the initiatives derived from them are salient governmental tools and main frames for emergent modalities of governance that distinguish contemporary Bogotá.

**Urban Governance: Civilian Manners**

The light turns red. A bus stops half the way on the pedestrians’ path at a busy intersection. People start to cross the street squeezing into the path that the bus has left empty. A mime comes out of the walking crowd. He walks towards the bus, jumps few steps back, sticks his face on the front window, hugs the front of the bus, sticks his face and hands on the left side window. Without any success, the mime

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tries to make the driver to move out of the path. People stand at both sides of the street. The driver shows no willingness to move the bus. A traffic policeman shows up and walks towards the bus. The driver looks nervous. The mime stands next to the bus. Silently, the policeman gives a ticket to the bus driver. The driver is upset and people start to clap. The light turns green. Mime and police jump onto the sidewalk, people keep clapping.\textsuperscript{35}

Having won the 1994 elections for mayor by a landslide, Antanas Mockus turned upside down municipal Bogotá. Through playful and uncommon modalities of exercising authority and of governing the city, Mockus and his government team designed and implemented a series of campaigns aimed at transforming Bogotanos' behaviors. Championing what they called \textit{Cultura Ciudadana} (Culture of Civility) such campaigns deployed a dramaturgical front guard that included street mimes ready to mock people who disobey traffic signs, such as the one described above. Mayor Mockus cast himself as \textit{super cívico} (super civilian), a superhero of civility, appearing around town dressed in a Superman costume. Seeking to draw people’s attention to the systems that regulate their manners, the first Mockus administration deployed a variety of pedagogical campaigns. This is the case with cardboard policemen dummies – behind which there might or might not be a real policeman – standing at corners and intersections, which beyond their effect on preventing people from disobeying law were a device to draw people’s attention to the role of both authority and self-governance in regulating their manners and behavior. To figure out if there was or if there wasn’t a real policeman behind the carton dummy, people had to get very close to it. As such, if someone was about to disobey law, for instance to make a forbidden U-turn, he or she would have to either take the risk of getting a ticket -if there was a real policeman behind the carton dummy- or to simply

\textsuperscript{35} Mayor Mockus referred this episode as an example of creating social regulations in Bogotá. Mayor Mockus presentation was held at La Universidad de Los Andes on June 28, 2003 in a training course for members of both the Metropolitan Police of Bogotá and municipal Bogotá (Fieldwork notes 2003).
avoid disobeying law. Similarly, and seeking to forge self-regulation and social regulation among Bogotanos, municipal authorities promoted the use of double-sided cards with a thumbs-down sign and thumbs-up sign that drivers were to deploy like soccer referees as an alternative way of venting their customarily aggressive manners. The Colombian capital was flooded—and to some extent shocked—by icons, slogans, and performances aimed at promoting cultura ciudadana, some of which were also aimed at tackling violence such as the ones discussed at the end of this chapter.

In 2000, Antanas Mockus was elected as city mayor for the second time. Unlike his first victory, the second one was not a landslide. Nor was Bogotá of the early 21st century the same city that in the mid 1990s served as the main setting for Mockus’ uncommon and novel initiatives. By 2000 the Colombian capital was far from being that chaotic and gray city of the mid 1990s. It had already witnessed significant transformations in public space, social indexes, and both crime and violence reduction. In his second administration, Mayor Mockus deployed a dramaturgical front guard similar to the one deployed in his first administration. His second administration put such a front guard forward in promoting the protection of life, voluntary observation of the law, and civilian resistance to terrorism and war. To this end the local government designed initiatives such as the Noche de las Mujeres mentioned earlier that consisted in a curfew for men aimed at highlighting differences in both the frequency and way in which males and females participate in acts of violence. Similarly, they launched campaigns such as drawing black and yellow stars on spots where pedestrians had been killed by cars, as a way of drawing Bogotanos’ attention to the value of being careful as both driver and pedestrian in order to protect everybody’s life.
The Bogotá of the early 21st century, has also been the main scenario for terrorist attacks perpetrated by the FARC and other criminal organizations. To face these attacks, municipal Bogotá put forward a series of symbols and symbolic acts aimed to encourage people to peacefully resist war and terror. Mayor Mockus personally promoted such resistance. For instance, after guerrilla threats against the life of every Colombian mayor, Mayor Mockus began wearing a bulletproof vest with a heart-shape hole right on the top of his heart. Such was his symbolic way of resisting terror and war. Similarly, the local government sought to promote collaborating with the authorities and refusing to act in ways that might contribute to war and terror such as paying ransom for a kidnapped person and taking justice in one’s own hands. Sponsoring campaigns seeking to generate these behaviors, Mayor Mockus began to exhibit a *sapo* (frog) hanging on his neck. When seeing from outside the *sapo* might look as a nonsensical or randomly chosen symbol, but in the Colombian context it is a powerful one. It has a significant connotation, particularly within the Colombian internal war in which *sapo* is the slang expression to refer to the person who gives information about one group involved in the armed confrontation to another group also involved in such confrontation. The use of this symbol by the second Mockus administration sought to give *sapo* a positive connotation: the person who helps local and national authorities to fight against terrorism and illicit armed groups. The *sapo* hanging from Mayor Mockus neck was a symbolic invitation to collaborate with state authorities.

In short, governmental initiatives devised by Mayor Mockus relate to his earlier-mentioned ideas about the vast gap between law, morality and culture in Colombia (Mockus 1994). Based on these ideas and moved by the aim to overcome the gap
between law, morality and culture, the two Mockus administrations sought to create social systems of regulation and to teach Bogotanos "good civilian manners" by sponsoring pedagogical campaigns.

**Urban Governance: Public Space**

Parks, theaters, public libraries, and sidewalks are all spaces that belong to everybody. Therefore, every person who visits these spaces must feel that he or she is respected...

It is quite clear that if a human being is treated with respect he or she had to respond the same way. On the contrary, when people don't have access to parks, when the parks to which they have access are in bad shape, when walkways are too narrow, when footpaths are dark or badly illuminated, when they are full of bumps, when sidewalks are irregular and filled by parked cars and street vendors, when there are no trees but piles of garbage and trash. When all this happens, it is hard to picture citizens who won't throw out papers in the streets, who won't break car traffic rules, who will pay their taxes or who will be kind (Peñalosa 2001).

Due to his radical position pertaining to public space, particularly in terms of renovating city sites and introducing new rules for their use, early on his administration, Mayor Peñalosa was nicknamed *El Faraon* (the Pharaoh). The Peñalosa administration was devoted to creating attractive spaces able at once to invite people to enjoy them, but also to prevent people from disobeying city regulations. The installation of *bolardos* (small cement poles) at the external edge of sidewalks as a device to prevent drivers from parking on sidewalks and the demolition of fences and gates around residential areas to allow everybody to use enclosed parks were some of the measures enforced by Mayor Peñalosa in order to stress the public nature of urban spaces.

As soon as deteriorated city sites were transformed into pleasant areas, fancy public buildings were built, and public spaces were made beautiful and enjoyable, increasing numbers of Bogotanos began praising Peñalosa's ideas about public space and the
nickname became less popular; it was almost forgotten. Nowadays, almost no one would call Mayor Peñalosa El Faraon. However, such a nickname might make more sense today than before due to the magnificent character of most of the constructions carried out during his administration. Superb public libraries built in working-class and poor neighborhoods, the longest — according to the local government — tree-lined footway in the world, enormous public parks, huge — for Bogotá standards — sidewalks, and a modern transportation system, are some examples. The capital changed from a city widely seen as dirty and ugly into a city with many pleasant spots that its inhabitants might be willing to show with some pride. As a hard-to-believe miracle, the renovated Bogotá is often portrayed through before and after pictures.

![Figure 3 Before (top) and after (bottom) pictures of El Cartucho, one of the city spaces most dramatically renovated in the past few years. Pictures taken from presentation on seguridad y convivencia en Bogotá by Hugo Acero, head of Bogotá's Secretariat for Citizen Security and Peaceful Coexistence between 1996 and 2003.](image)

Forging a democratic society, modifying Bogotanos behaviors, and fostering their identity as residents of the capital city, were main goals that Mayor Peñalosa sought to
achieve through the creation of organized, clean, and safe public spaces. To transform Bogotá into a friendly city, one where kids would be able to play and enjoy public spaces, are ways in which he would frequently explain his efforts for both renovating city sites and creating new rules for using public space in the Colombian capital.\textsuperscript{36}

Municipal workers during the Peñalosa administration differently frame these goals in terms of inspiring international experiences. For some of them, Francesco Tonucci and his enterprise of both redefining urban settings from children’s point of view and creating a city devoted to children’s joy and safety in Fano (Italy) is a major source of inspiration. The Spanish version of \textit{La città dei bambini: un modo nuovo di pensare la città} (The City of Children: a new way of thinking the city) --several municipal workers would tell me when I interviewed them--was an almost mandatory reading during the Peñalosa administration.\textsuperscript{37} For others, however, programs pertaining to public space that were promoted by the Peñalosa administration were rather inspired in the so-called broken windows theory that, among other things, informed urban space recovery in New York.\textsuperscript{38} This is particularly the case among municipal servants working on municipal efforts for tackling crime and violence.

\textsuperscript{36} For a detailed overview of Peñalosa’s ideas about the city and its governance see among others Becassino (2000)
\textsuperscript{37} The relation between the work and initiatives of Francesco Tonucci and the city model formulated by Peñalosa was first pointed out to me by Ismael Ortiz, who has been member of the \textit{Instituto Distrital de Cultura y Turismo} (Bogotá’s Institute for Culture and Tourism) since the first Mockus administration. (Fieldwork notes 2003)
\textsuperscript{38} The relation between initiatives promoted by the Peñalosa administration in Bogotá and programs inspired by the broken window theory that were carried out in New York was pointed out by several members of \textit{Misión Bogotá} when I interviewed them in 2000 (Fieldwork notes 2000). Official evaluations of city achievements on security have also addressed this relationship. See among others Alcaldía (2000)
NOVEL MODALITIES OF GOVERNING AND REPACKED CIVILIZING ENTERPRISES

The culture of civility and public space—as municipal authorities have built upon them—are core elements of emerging modalities of governance that characterize the Bogotá of the late 20th and early 21st century. Both governmental initiatives on the culture of civility and official campaigns on public space point towards the generation of new behaviors—more “civilized”—among Bogotanos and the modification of their relation to the city. These initiatives have the same goals, but they endorse different strategies and governmental logics. While an emphasis on the culture of civility seeks to create and strengthen social regulations as generators of both collective behaviors and spaces for them, an emphasis on both recovering and creating public space seeks to generate special devices able to modify and regulate people’s behaviors. Beyond these differences, initiatives centered on the culture of civility and those focused on public space that have been recently promoted by municipal Bogotá can be equally addressed as civilizing enterprises.

The term civilizing enterprise derives from the concept of civilizing process that Norbert Elias (2000) uses to refer to the gradual molding of conduct and restraint of drives that have accompanied the emergence and further development of modern western socio-political regimes. According to Elias, increasing efforts aimed at restraining conduct and drives steam from rising social interdependence and division of functions that makes a large number of people dependent on one another. These efforts also relate to the formation of socio-political regimes that have at their base the monopolization of
the use of physical force. This permits but at the same time imposes ways of interacting according to codes of behavior that exclude the use of physical force by individuals.

Elias’ concept of civilizing process illuminates relations between the codification of conduct and drives, the promotion of self-steering, and the formation of modern socio-political orders; all of which are central elements in the initiatives recently championed by municipal Bogotá. In fact, some of the scholars and public workers who have participated in the creation and promotion of these initiatives often quote Elias’ concept of civilizing process when elaborating on the logics of municipal efforts pertaining to the behavior of the unruly Bogotanos. However, these initiatives, unlike the processes studied by Elias, are temporarily constrained. They entail specifically designed interventions instead of long-term processes of the unfolding of both behavioral molding and state formation. As such, they might be better understood as civilizing enterprises. That is, as concrete efforts aimed at modifying a specific conduct that is cast as negatively impacting social and urban dynamics by means of championing the adoption of behaviors that correspond to an ideally conceived good citizen and would enhance life in the city.

Recent initiatives championing self-steering among unruly Bogotanos exemplify novel modalities of managing the city, yet are not entirely new official endeavors. When Mockus and Peñalosa launched their civilizing enterprises, Bogotá had already witnessed similar attempts to promote good civilian manners and behaviors. How different are contemporary civilizing enterprises from earlier ones? Are recent and past official campaigns just a series of steps in a long and still ongoing governmental effort aimed at educating Bogotanos and transforming them into “civilized” people, therefore actual
citizens? Are recent and earlier campaigns pertaining to Bogotanos behavior just different versions of the same civilizing enterprise? How does each of these campaigns relate to the specific moment in the history of the city in which it has emerged? Moreover, what does this series of civilizing enterprises reveal about municipal arts of managing violence and providing security in the Colombian capital?

To begin answering these questions, the following pages examine municipal initiatives from the late 1940s and the late 1970s, as well as their relation to those launched by Mockus and Peñalosa since the mid 1990s. To be sure, previous civilizing enterprises in Bogotá are not confined to these two periods. Throughout the history of the city it is possible to find similar campaigns and municipal efforts. However, initiatives publicized by local authorities in the late 1940s and 1970s, as is also the case with the ones advertised since the mid 1990s, more clearly express an aim of molding conduct and promoting self-steering among Bogotanos. Additionally, civilizing enterprises from these three periods address quite similar—and in some cases identical—issues. Still, each of them exhibits specific approaches and modalities of managing the city. Looking into these civilizing enterprises also allows tracking this kind of municipal effort as it relates to key moments in the history of the city.

Earlier civilizing enterprises and the relation between them and similar contemporary enterprises reveal key elements of the ongoing but somewhat fitful civilizing process that the history of the Colombian capital encompasses. In this civilizing process, unruly urban

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35 An exhaustive list of these municipal efforts before the mid-1990s is not available at the moment. Still some of these efforts include: the promotion of the use of bicycles instead of cars through the Día de la Cícleta (Day of the Bike) launched in the early 1970s, the municipal program of the Buen Vecino (good neighbor) publicized in the early 1980s and aimed at improving relations within the community, and the promotion of the Siete Principios Capitales (Seven Capital Principles) aimed and infusing those main principles in the life of the city that was launched in the early 1990's. (See local newspapers El Tiempo and El Espectador).
behavior recurs along with municipal memory lacunae about previous efforts aimed at reforming such unruliness.\textsuperscript{40} The following review of municipal efforts aimed at promoting self-steering among Bogotanos reveals core elements and distinguishing features of such a civilizing process.

The formation of the stratum of traditional elites in Bogotá can be tracked back to the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, when a mix of local aristocratic families and affluent newcomers merged into what later on would become the city's old money and ruling class. By the second half of the century, aristocratic families were dramatically impoverished due to the economic crisis endured by the city (Mejía P 1999). Also in those years, relatively affluent newcomers who had money but lacked a locally prized lineage sought—and managed—to melt into aristocratic circles.

Besides surnames, origin, family history, and wealth, proper manners, well spoken Spanish, and refined but measured behavior are some of the elements that Bogotanos and especially local elites have historically used to characterize the so-called \textit{gente decente} (decent people). Unlike in Europe where actual courts served as sources for codifying such manners, language usage, and behaviors, in the Bogotá of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, where courts never existed and local elites were neither noble nor affluent (Londoño 1984; Zambrano Pantoja and Bernard 1993), those elements were inspired and often borrowed from elsewhere. Invariably, adaptations were needed. Indeed, members of the local elite were fond of Europe and European lifestyles. From fashion to authors and even language, local elites in Bogotá would make every effort to follow European trends.

\textsuperscript{40} During the second Mockus administration (2001-2003), \textit{DC Periódico} (Newsletter of Bogotá’s Institute for Culture and Tourism) published a note on the \textit{Semana de la Cortesía} campaign that municipal authorities launched in 1949. Although this publication addresses the campaign as an antecedent of what is nowadays known as Culture of Civility. Nevertheless this reference was never part of the design and deployment of initiatives aimed at transforming Bogotanos behavior promoted by municipal Bogotá since the mid-1990s.
Keeping up with those lifestyles and trends in the Bogotá of the 19th century was not only difficult but also key in marking social differences. In the isolated capital\(^4\) of a rather poor and to some extent newborn country, access to imported goods such as fancy clothes, wine, tea, and books, as well as the actual performance of courtly and European social routines were limited. Elites, in spite of themselves, were not very affluent and the Colombian capital was more a big town in the middle of the Andes than a cosmopolitan city. In that town-size Bogotá\(^2\) of the late 19th and early 20th century neither clear-cut different racial features\(^3\) nor truly belonging to nobility could be invoked for clearly marking social differences. Additionally, even elites could be badly impoverished. In such a context, marking social differences was tricky but at the same time all the more important. Besides those hard to follow European lifestyles, refined manners along with a particular combination of wit and clever humor were important sources for marking social distinctions.

\(^4\) In the mid 19th century traveling from Bogotá to the Atlantic coast of Colombia (to where imported products would first arrive) signified a long and quite uncomfortable trip that would take at least two months. In the late 19th and early 20th century time required to go from the capital to the coast was reduced due to some transportation improvements. In the 1920s, SCADTA, the first air transportation company in Colombia, reduced the nearly 14 days trip along the Magdalena River into a 10-hour flight. Travel-times summarized here were ideal averages. Weather conditions and mechanical failures were both very likely and would delay travelers. The transportation of goods from the coast to the capital and vice-versa required longer journeys. It is worth remembering that: the Colombian capital is located 2,600 meter above the sea level, Honda (the port-city on the Magdalena River from where Bogotanos would depart to the coast and both people and goods from the coast would arrive) is located at 182 meters above the sea level, the 1,550 km long Magdalena River runs south to north across Colombia and connects Bogotá to the coast through a quite tropical geography.

\(^2\) In the mid 19th century Bogotá had about 30,000 inhabitants and by the end of the century it had about 40,000. Few years later, in 1918, the Colombian capital had 144,000 inhabitants. By 1938 about 330,000 persons lived in Bogotá and by the mid 20th century the city had 650,000 inhabitants(Zambrano Pantoja and Bernard 1993). Remarks on the size of the Colombian capital are clearer when looking at the size of US cities in the late 19th century. By 1890, New York city had 1,515,301 inhabitants, Chicago had 1,099,850 and about 230,392 lived in Washington D.C.(Gibson 1998).

\(^3\) To be sure, racial discrimination against indigenous and black people has marked the Colombian history and, in spite of important constitutional achievements in preventing it, such discrimination is still common nowadays. Uneasiness in using racial features to mark social distance relates to the internal differentiation of big majorities of self-called whites or mestizos that correspond to upper and mid social classes.
Social and behavioral codes were often reproduced through manuals prescribing manners, behavior, and usages (Londoño 1997). The most famous among them was the *Manual de urbanidad y buenas maneras, para uso de la juventud de ambos sexos, en el cual se encuentran las principales reglas de civilidad y etiqueta que deben observarse en las diversas situaciones sociales, precedido de un breve tratado sobre los deberes morales del hombre* (Manual of urbanity and good manners for youth of both sexes that comprises the most important rules of civility and etiquette that ought to be observed in diverse social situations and preceded by a brief treaty on moral duties of mankind), which was written in the mid 19th century by Manuel Antonio Carreño, a Venezuelan musician, educator, and diplomat. This manual, often referred to as Carreño's Manual, was a widespread reference in most Latin American countries (Londoño 1997). Used for generations and until relatively recent as a school textbook, today Carreño's Manual is rarely read by local elites in Bogotá. To be sure, contemporary Bogotanos and local elites differ in various aspects from the ones who resided in the city in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Nevertheless, even today mentioning the need to read Carreño or the lack of knowledge of the content of his manual are still common ways of pointing out someone's improper manners.

Despite great differences between contemporary and historical Bogotanos, good manners, proper behavior, and correct language usage are still key elements in distinguishing those who are *gente decente* (decent people) and those who are not. Civilizing enterprises created and endorsed by municipal authorities since the mid 20th century have built on this local tradition of praising specific manners as good and proper.
In August 1949 the Bogotá’s City Council approved specific measures for putting into practice what at that time was called an «experiment in social discipline» regarding the campaign promoted by the Mayor’s Office as the *Semana de la Cortesía*. This campaign was aimed at publicizing car traffic rules among both drivers and pedestrians, as well as at inviting them to observe these rules. Local authorities described this campaign as «an excellent attempt oriented towards airing social discipline habits and spontaneous subordination to the law by means of direct persuasion instead of coercion.» (Consejo de Bogotá 1949). According to the same authorities, the campaign would demand the benevolence of those in charge of reinforcing the law in order to «...better convince *el pueblo* (the people) that spontaneous subordination to the law is on people’s own benefit and that if the State uses coercion it is only due to the lack of deep-rooted habits of social discipline.» (Consejo de Bogotá 1949).

The use of the word *cortesía* (courtesy) for promoting desirable behavior among the unruly Bogotanos but particularly among *el pueblo* (the people) denotes efforts aimed at introducing manners that were locally defined as courtly and that were meant to help infuse order into the city. The concept of social discipline, used in this campaign for encouraging the observation of law by means other than coercion, suggests the pedagogical tone of these efforts. These two terms –courtesy and discipline– reveal the flavor of this campaign: a massive dissemination of proper manners, particularly among those who might totally lack them, as main regulators of daily interactions in the city. Massively disseminated good manners, according to local authorities, were meant to serve to overcome customarily disrespectful relations to the law and tempering Bogotanos’ behavior.
The Semana de la Cortesía campaign highlights Bogotanos' puzzling ways of relating to law. In the Colombian capital, observing the law as a spontaneous or voluntary act rather than as a response to the exercise of authority has historically been –at best– a remote possibility. Such disrespect for law and governmental efforts to shift it are salient elements of both this and later campaigns. The Semana de la Cortesía addressed these elements through car-traffic rules. Strikingly, these rules –or most exactly the non-observation of them– are central themes in more recent campaigns. As we will see later on in this section, the recurrence of this theme as the subject matter of municipal civilizing enterprises reveals complex relations between municipal initiatives for governing the city and particularly sensitive issues or critical moments in the history of the Colombian capital.

Aside from such complex relations, the emphasis on car-traffic rules might be justified due to the essentially urban character of both these rules and the interactions that they regulate. Links traced by local authorities between widespread good manners among drivers and pedestrians, and generalized observation of the law among Bogotanos, however, are not unproblematic. Critiques of such a link and of the relationship –or gap–
between municipal efforts and daily urban scenes in the Bogotá of the mid 20th century are most clearly depicted by contemporary humorous commentaries on these efforts.

Figure 5
"Semana de la Cortesa"
Cartoons in local newspapers
Bogotá, 1949

These cartoons, which might be seen simply as common reactions to municipal efforts for promoting the Semana de la Cortesa, are satirical commentaries on both the logics that lie behind the municipal campaign and those that accompany public routines of local upper classes or those who could afford having a car. They pose critiques of the presumed link between courtly behavior and the observation of the law. The cartoons also reveal how good manners are widespread, and yet observing the law might never become part of daily city life. Importantly, these critiques are quite often directed towards members of the local elite, instead of towards el pueblo (the people), the explicit target of this campaign. Moreover, they suggest how chaotic urban scenes might in large part be due to the coexistence of refined courtly manners and rampant violations of basic car-traffic rules, both of which were widespread among local elites.

In the late 1970s municipal authorities assumed the task of disciplining and humanizing the city. To achieve this goal, they adopted what official documents of those years deminate as a «new social approach founded on solidarity and discipline.» The Cartas del Alcalde (letters from the Mayor) were one of the main tools put forward by
City Hall in seeking to temper the unruly Bogotanos. The periodically released *Cartas del Alcalde* consists of brief reflections on generalized behavior and urban affairs negatively impacting daily life in the city. Neither courtesy nor courtly manners are at the base of the idea of social discipline depicted in *Cartas del Alcalde*. Instead, the promotion of this idea often invokes citizenry, citizenship, solidarity, social conduct, and responsibility. Desirable behaviors derived from such an idea of social discipline are linked to more or less universal principles, rather than to locally-defined proper manners. Similarly, and in contrast to municipal representations from the late 1940s, observing the law does not appear as a spontaneous behavior but as a rational one. It relates to both universal principles and the pragmatics of truly modern urban life. For instance, in order to promote the observation of basic car-traffic rules, *Cartas del Alcalde* poses questions about widespread actions against those rules. These questions also highlight the illogical nature of Bogotanos’ customary ways of driving.

Why don’t you commit yourself to observing car-traffic norms? What’s the purpose of driving on the left lane when you are in front of a line of cars and by doing so you would block traffic coming in the opposite direction. What’s the purpose of speeding in narrow streets while putting the life of kids at risk? Why park in a non-parking spot? Why advance into an intersection when a line of cars is in front of you and by doing so you will block the intersection? What’s the purpose of honking at the car in front of you when the light is red and the car cannot go? (Alcaldía 1978)

Reasoning, universal principles, and general remarks on modern urban life are core elements in the attempt to discipline and humanize Bogotá that authorities sought to achieve through *cartas del Alcalde*. These elements are at the base of ideas about city management and city dynamics that were incipiently introduced in the late 1970s and extensively adopted by municipal Bogotá since the mid-1990s. To be sure, local authorities from the late 1970s do not relate directly to the Mockus and Peñalosa
administration. Initiatives promoted by these two mayors in Bogotá in the 1990s are by no means derived from governmental models adopted by the Gaitán Maecha administration in the late 1970s. Nevertheless, concepts and initiatives put forward by the latter show elements strikingly similar to the ones adopted and promoted by the former. This is particularly the case with elements stressed in the late 1970s such as broader conceptualizations of the realm of security, and public space management efforts aimed at protecting people’s life.

Although strikingly similar, initiatives put forward in the late 1940s and late 1970s are neither explicit nor direct antecedents of the ones publicized since the mid-1990s. None of the former was used for designing and advertising the latter. Nevertheless, as previous governmental enterprises also aimed at improving urban life by modifying Bogotanos’ behavior, both the Semana de la Cortesía and the Cartas del Alcalde are local references that help in understanding core elements of recent municipal initiatives. As it was the case in the late 1940s, recent attempts to temper unruly Bogotanos focus on promoting good manners and proper behavior. Earlier and current initiatives coincide on building upon such a traditionally praised element in the Colombian capital. However, while the 1940s initiative advocated for ideas of courtesy and social discipline, the ones from the 1990s sought to build on notions of civility, culture, and citizenship.

The incorporation of universal principles such as the ones linked to the notion of citizenship or the ones attached to the idea of solidarity were also a key element in campaigns aimed at tempering unruly Bogotanos that local authorities undertook in the late 1970s. Unlike these earlier efforts that strongly relied on Bogotanos supposed reasoning on the logic and pragmatics of observing basic norms for improving urban life,
recent initiatives have frequently relied on performative devices for stressing those logics and pragmatics.

Initiatives aimed at tempering unruly Bogotanos that were launched in the Colombian capital since the mid-1990s combine deeply local features such as the praising of good manners with universal elements such as citizenship and order. This is particularly the case with initiatives launched during the first and second Mockus administrations in seeking to generate cultura ciudadana (the culture of civility) among Bogotanos. These initiatives include behavioral codes and prescribed manners, but address them through ideas of culture as at once deeply local and yet universally informed ways of inhabiting the city. They recognize Bogotanos’ distinctive modalities of being urban subjects and at the same time rely on those same modalities for tempering unruliness by deploying culturally embedded means of social control. They resort to playful and sometimes even humorous remarks on the lack of proper behavior or adequate urban manners.

The culturally rooted nature of Cultura Ciudadana initiatives is best understood when looking into the ways in which local modalities of humor have historically served as social-control devices among Bogotanos. Today, as in the past, local humorous creations are often deployed to mark social differences. Among aristocratic circles of the 19th and early 20th century, mastering as well as enjoying wit and clever humorous remarks was a source of social distinction, clear proof of one’s ample knowledge of language. Contemporary elites are still fond of these forms of humor, but more common are the hilarious remarks on the lack of familiarity with luxury, modern practices, proper
Spanish, and the use of foreign terms.\textsuperscript{44} Mastering and enjoying this stereotyping mockery denotes one's capability to identify those faults and at the same time to make fun of them without risking one's own social position. Permanent efforts to avoid being the victim of such mockery, or of any hilarious remark on one's lack of familiarity with adequate behaviors and usages, show how in Bogotá humor serves as a strong—and sometimes even cruel, but playful—modality of social control.

As a civilizing enterprise, \textit{Cultura Ciudadana} and its application of Bogotanos' ways of being urban subjects in order to mold their own unruly behaviors echoes the notion of \textit{Kultur} that Elias highlights as a core element in the civilizing process that took place in Germany (Elias, 2000). On the other hand, earlier civilizing enterprises such as the \textit{Semana de la Cortesía} (Week of Courtesy) and \textit{Cartas del Alcalde} (Letters from the Mayor) and their prescription of adequate behavior stand closer to the idea of \textit{civilité} that was at the base of the civilizing process in France. According to Elias, the process followed in Germany was deeply informed by the internalization of the idea of \textit{Kultur} or the form of cultivation that characterized the German middle-class intelligentsia. This was clearly distinguished from German elites who more clearly endorsed and represented courtly standards closely linked to a prescriptive set of norms of proper manners, behavior and usages. Such standards and prescriptive codes relate to the idea of \textit{civilité} that Elias identifies as a core element in the civilizing process in France, where middle classes and elites shared standards of socially proper behavior, manners, and usages.

Differences and similarities between civilizing enterprises in Bogotá since the mid-twentieth century can be drawn in terms of \textit{Kultur} and \textit{civilité}. Earlier enterprises appear

\textsuperscript{44} Examples of this kind of humor might be found in many TV series and soap operas, as well as in the work of local authors. See for instance Montaña (1987).
closer to the latter and more recent enterprises stand closer to the former. Regarding this, it is worth highlighting that Antanas Mockus, who has championed *Cultura Ciudadana* since the mid-1990s, as well as most of his close collaborators, can be characterized by their scholarly past and strong academic formation, as well as by their lack of close ties with traditional aristocratic circles. In contrast, municipal authorities from the late 1940s and late 1970s were members of those circles. This helps explain the difference between the civilizing enterprises described above as well as illuminating the particular combination of prescriptive, deeply local, and strongly culturally informed elements that distinguish contemporary instants of Bogotá’s civilizing process.

Why, in spite of these differences, do both earlier and recent civilizing enterprises touch on recurring issues pertaining to Bogotanos’ unruliness in daily urban interactions? Why do these efforts aimed at tempering such unruliness emerge at specific moments in the history of the city? Moreover, what do those recurring issues and this series of enterprises reveal about municipal arts of managing violence and providing security in the Colombian capital? Elias’ characterization of the unfolding of civilizing processes helps to begin answering these questions, particularly his observations on the relation between these processes and the formation of socio-political regimes that have at their base the increasing monopolization of the use of physical force. These civilizing enterprises in the Colombian capital, however, do not follow this path. Their launching corresponds to historical moments that, instead of confirming the official monopoly of the use of physical force, seem to question such a monopoly.

April 9, 1948: Jorge Eliecer Gaitán (member of the liberal party and popular leader) is fatally shot in downtown Bogotá. A few hours later, he dies. The mob has already
 lynched his assassin and now takes to the streets. Main buildings and public transportation are set on fire. Looting, devastation, and murder go on for several days. Snipers kill anybody walking down the street. Trapped at schools, offices, and residences, those who are not part of the mob look for ways of securing some food, reaching home, or finding out what had happened to their loved ones. During the Bogotazo, between 1,500 and 2,000 were murdered. The capital was turned into a battlefield: burning buildings and dead bodies were scattered over the devastated city. For Bogotanos, particularly those who witnessed such mass destruction, after the 9 de Abril, Bogotá would never be the same. The Bogotazo is ingrained in the memory of the city and of the country. It is often referred to as the event that detonated La Violencia (The Violence). 45

Between the late 1940s and the mid-1960s, Colombians witnessed untamed acts in a bloody partisan confrontation in which thousands would cruelly die.

Along with these historical accounts, the 9 de Abril or Bogotazo also constitutes a vivid image and point of reference. Jorge Orlando Melo (1997), a Colombian historian, refers to the iconic permanence of this event as the «9 de Abril Syndrome.» For him this reference denotes and reveals widespread fears, particularly among the traditional elite, of the emergence of populist leaders and movements that would threaten the established political order. To say 9 de Abril or Bogotazo is to say chaos and unruliness, the insanity of a furious mob leading to total devastation. In September 14, 1977, president López (in Melo 1997) resorted to this iconic reference when he described the Paro Cívico Nacional (national civic strike) as «un pequeño 9 de Abril» (a small 9 of April).

45 Although local historians have shown how La Violencia has important antecedents in the ongoing violent confrontation between members of the two traditional political parties that characterize previous decades in Colombia, the Bogotazo or 9 de Abril is still the most common point of reference for the detonation of such and untamed period in the history of the country. See among others Guerrero Barón (1991),
The 1977 Paro Cívico Nacional was the zenith of a series of social protests and massive demonstrations that took place in Colombia through the 1970s. Economic measures recently adopted by the national government, along with increasingly deteriorated social and working conditions were at the base of strikes and demonstrations. The late 1960s and 1970s in Colombia are often associated with left wing youth—mostly students and intellectuals—seeking to hacer la revolución (make the revolution). Along with public workers and unionists, they would actively participate in the numerous demonstrations and strikes that throughout the decade had Colombian cities as their main scenario. On September 14 1977, all those who were seeking to improve economic, social, and working conditions supported the Paro Cívico Nacional. Even the capital had to stop: there was no public transportation, schools and universities didn’t open, a vast majority went on strike—either by choice or due to the impossibility to get to work—and main streets were blocked by demonstrators or by hundreds of tacks that were dropped to prevent vehicles from driving from one place to another.

In the recent history of Bogotá, the Paro Cívico Nacional is recalled not only because of its impact on city daily activities, but also because of the street violence that accompanied it. Following presidential directions the national army and the police battled to establish order a sangre y fuego (by blood and fire). Many were killed and many more were injured. Additionally and in order to temper the city, a curfew was sanctioned. The unfolding of the Paro Cívico Nacional in the capital was a frightening preview of a period in which official repression would be wildly used.

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46 For more detailed accounts of the Paro Cívico Nacional see Alape (1980) and Delgado (n.d)
Social activists as well as leftwing intellectuals and all those who sympathized with them were classified as dangerous and highly threatening to the security of the State. To be part of social protests, to support leftist ideas, to participate in social movements, or to be an active unionist were all classified as taking part in subversive actions against the State. Activists and demonstrators were often accused of being active members of guerrilla groups, particularly of the recently created M-19.\(^7\) Incapable of responding to social demands and of preventing the emergence of urban guerrillas, which might share some common elements but are totally different phenomena, the Colombian State resorted to repression. In 1978, the infamous *Estatuto de Seguridad* (Statute for Security) was sanctioned: individual rights were seriously limited; tortures and enforced or involuntary disappearances were widespread and fearfully frequent.

In 1993, chaos and murder were salient features in the Colombian capital. Homicide rates picked up that year and went higher than the already elevated national rate. Throughout the previous few years, untamed waves of narco-terrorism and a war that was no longer fought in the hinterlands had flooded Bogotanos’ daily lives with terror and fear. Additionally, crimes such as armed robberies, mugging, and violent hold-ups, along with emergent criminal modalities such as the *paseo millonario* (million dollar ride) had become painfully frequent and unavoidable elements of daily experiences. In the mid-1990s Bogotanos pointed out security as by far the most serious problem of the city (Camacho 1994; 1997; Cambio 1993; Restrepo 1994). The state’s incapacity to provide security to its citizens was not the only problem in the capital, issues such as poor public

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\(^7\) The M-19 first came to public attention in January 1974, when M-19 militants stole the sword of Simon Bolivar and announced that the sword would not be returned until Colombia had been "truly" liberated via a popular and nationalist revolution. This highly symbolic act was the first of a series of specially symbolic but also very violent and destabilizing.
transportation, impossible car traffic, half-done public works all over the city, rampant indifference, insufficient utilities supply and growing distrust in local authorities were other salient features of the Bogotá of the early and mid 1990s.

In 1993, a mainstream Colombian magazine described Bogotá as a city that had been taken by El Chiras (Cambio 1993). Such a description was as vivid as visceral for contemporary Bogotanos. El Chiras is a locally famous hobo who used to pick-up garbage in the streets of the Bogotá of the early 20th century. Until recently, his figure was widely used by adults to scare kids. For generations, Bogotanos grew up thinking that if they misbehaved, one of these days El Chiras would pick them up and take them away along with the garbage in the streets. For those Bogotanos who in the mid-1990s identified security as the main problem of the Colombian capital and who for the past few years had endured waves of terror, widespread fear, escalating murder, and increasing city chaos, Bogotá could be described as—at best— as a city effectively taken over by El Chiras.

The above images of Bogotá—a devastated city due to political turmoil in the late 1940s, an “at stake” capital due to social and political unrest in the late 1970s, or the unmanageable urban setting of the mid-1990s— show the effects of increasing interdependence and the need for codifying social interactions. This is a key element in what Elias describes as civilizing processes. These images also suggest a quite weak official monopoly on the use of physical force, which as Elias’ work shows is also a key element in such processes. The relation between these images and the civilizing enterprises launched in Bogotá through the second half of the 20th century reveals how puzzling a civilizing process in Colombia might be. This relation reveals how in Bogotá
the official monopoly on the use of force neither precedes nor accompanies efforts aimed at promoting self-steering among Bogotanos. Rather, such a monopoly appears as incipient but somehow achievable through that self-steering. Therefore, the municipal arts of managing violence and providing security that serve as an instrument of civilizing enterprises might be better described as part of a civilizing process both fitful and vacillating, as well as impulsive and undeveloped.
INTER-SECTION 2   DRUG NARRATIVES

«At night Bogotá is almost deserted. There was a dry chill in the air as we drove up Thirtieth Avenue, which was bathed in a vacant fluorescent glow. I can remember each instant of what followed. I said good-bye to my friend as they dropped me off at the front door of my house. I made a mental note that the military security guards who had been posted there since my disappearance had been pulled back. "It’s strange," I thought. "Why aren’t they here?"
When I closed the pale green wooden door, I could hear my friend’s car driving away in the distance. I started to climb the stairs. Suddenly I had the hellish feeling of being torn apart, hulled into the air, and slammed to the floor as if a catapult had suddenly seized me. Then all was still.
In the silent aftermath, I found myself at the bottom of the stairs, a cloud of gunpowder wafting about. My mother and sister came running, screaming for help. I regained my senses and took a mental inventory. I was not badly hurt, but I could feel that my back was bleeding, that splinters of wood from the door had dug into me like projectiles.
I looked around. The whole entrance to the house had been ripped apart. The bomb, I was sure, had been timed for my arrival.
I struggled to my feet and went upstairs. A few minutes later the phone rang. I jumped to answer it. Hoping that it was Guillermo Cano, my boss, calling to find out what happened. It was not.
"The bomb was set by MAS, bitch," said a man with a deep voice. "The next time, we’ll kill you."
I dropped the phone and collapsed into a chair.» (Duzán and Eisner 1994:13)

Night of April 30, year 1984: Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, Minister of Justice, is shot to death on his way home. His murder, among the first in a long series of assassinations that would take place during the second half of the 1980s in Colombia, would soon after be declared a drug-related act of violence most likely associated with Lara Bonilla’s determined actions against drug trafficking and support of extradition treaties between Colombia and the United States. The deterrence of those promoting actions against

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48 MAS is the acronym of Muerte a Secuestradores (Death to Kidnappers), an organization created by drug lords after a daughter of one of them was kidnapped by the M-19 (a guerrilla group) on November 12, 1981. This organization sympathized with the anti-Communist crusade launched by the Colombian army. Maria Jimena Duzán, a Colombian journalist, was victim of one of their attacks due to an interview she had conducted with members of the M-19. See more details in Duzán and Eisner (1994).
49 The campaign against drug trafficking launched by the Betancur administration (1982-1986) and led, in part, by Lara Bonilla included destroying Tranquilandia a drug processing laboratory of the Medellin Cartel and the biggest
narco-trafficking and supporting extradition, indeed, were at the core of the merciless war against the Colombian State that drug lords, particularly the Medellín Cartel and especially Pablo Escobar, led between the mid 1980's and early 1990's. During those years, Colombians painfully learnt that Escobar’s power and capability to intervene in national destinies was far beyond his futile attempts (such as the ones he pursued in the early 1980’s) to become a public figure by going into politics. Escobar would prove to be as entrepreneurial and savvy at making money, as he was heartless and extreme in fighting his enemies.⁵⁰

...Guillermo [Cano] was no stranger to controversy and danger. In the late 1970s he had come out against his own party and condemned the torture and abuse of human rights that had characterized the liberal government of Turbay Ayala. In the 1980s, the newspaper would take on the financial establishment by daring to denounce white-collar crime, mismanagement, and fraud at one of the nation’s most important financial conglomerates...

...Building on that contentious economic battle, Guillermo decided to open a new front. The newspaper would report on the growing threat of drug dealing and the criminal enterprise that was swelling around it...

On the morning of September 7, 1983, I saw Guillermo suddenly run through the newspaper’s city room. He was heading to the photo library, calling all the while for Luis de Castro –don Luigi– a veteran reporter who was the newspaper’s institutional memory. Guillermo, it was clear, had come up with an idea. He was certain that he had once seen a picture of Escobar printed in his newspaper. He had Don Luigi ask the librarian to pull all the files on people named Escobar.

"Here it is," said don Luigi, with a cigarette stuck between his teeth, after having flipped through all the files. He held up a photograph of two prisoners jailed on drug charges in Medellín. One was Pablo Escobar...

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⁵⁰ Laboratory in the history of the country. In March 1984 the Colombian police not only destroyed Tranquilandia but also detained those working in it; confiscated airplanes, vehicles and weapons, along with chemicals used for drug processing; and seized a significant number of tons of cocaine.

⁵⁰ Besides the assassination of the Colombian justice minister Lara Bonilla, only between 1984 and 1985 drug lords and narco-trafficking organizations orchestrated a variety of actions including: bombing the U.S. embassy in Bogotá, plotting the murder of the U.S. ambassador in Bolivia, kidnapping and executing a DEA agent in Mexico, and the murder of 19 members of a coca eradication project in Perú. In Colombia, just in those two years, the drug lord’s “war” on the State had already signified dozens of murders among police members and functionaries of the judicial apparatus. Still, the most untamed acts in this war were yet to be seen (See among others: Camacho Guizado, Thoumi et al. 1999; Carpenter 2003; Thoumi 1997; 2002; Tokatlian 1994; 2000).
The story exploded the next day. Until that moment, all the talk of Pablo Escobar and drug dealing, including Galán's accusations, was the stuff of tantalizing-yet-unproved rumblings that he was amassing a fortune as a don of the cocaine dealers in Medellín... The photograph that Guillermo found was perfect. It had been taken in June 1976 in the Bellavista jail in Medellín, where Escobar had been jailed on murder and drug-dealing charges...

...It was a quick reversal. Escobar had been repudiated by the political class that had helped him climb to prominence, rejected by the same oligarchic circles that welcomed him to their sumptuous feast of power and by the church officials who had so willingly accepted his money. Shunned by society, Escobar was forced to move his power base underground. After operating freely despite the insinuations and rumors that surrounded him, his fate had been changed forever by a newspaper article...

At 7 p.m., on December 19, 1986, Colombia radio reported that "two assassins on a motorcycle, no more than twenty years old, posted at the newspaper exit, fired on the car of the publisher of El Espectador, who apparently was gravely wounded." Cano was taken from the car and quickly driven to the nearest hospital. He died en route (Duzán and Eisner 1994:28-31,43).

While those living in the Colombia of the mid 1980's, particularly in major cities, were on the verge of enduring a frightening and apparently non-stop bleeding of their country and their lives, those living in U.S. big cities seemed to be about to attend to what in those years was commonly described as a major historic disaster caused by one of the worst threatening menaces against the economic, social, and moral strength of the nation and of its people: crack consumption. Often referred to as a pandemic phenomenon and widespread practice, particularly among youth in inner cities, crack consumption was frequently described as an issue that urgently needed to be controlled due to its overwhelming magnitude and devastating effects.

The message was clear: if unstopped, drug consumption, particularly crack, would badly hinder the future of the United States and of its people.\(^\text{31}\) By the mid 1980's, neither national alarm and concerns regarding drug consumption nor what many authors have

\(^{31}\) On these issues and the ways in which crack consumption was addressed at that time in the United States see, among others, The New York Times and Washington Post editions of those years.
called drug scares (see among others, essays in McShane and Williams 1997) were new in the States. 52 Nevertheless it wasn't until the mid 1980's that the U.S. government announced more aggressive actions for combating crack and cocaine consumption. To do so, the Reagan administration (1981-1989) adopted a strategy already put forward by preceding administrations: trying to shut off the supply. Difference between this and previous efforts was primarily one of degree. Through the early years of the Reagan administration important efforts in this direction were undertaken (see among others: Camacho Guizado, Thoumi et al. 1999; Carpenter 2003; Hartlyn, Schoultz et al. 1992; Tokatlian 1994). However, it wasn't until 1986 that one of the most decisive actions in what years later would be known as the U.S. War on Drugs was taken: drug trafficking was declared to be a threat to the security of the United States. The National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 221, signed by President Reagan on April of that same year, asserted:

The national security threat posed by the drug trade is particularly serious outside U.S. borders. Our primary concern are those nations with a flourishing narcotics industry, where a combination of international criminal trafficking organizations, rural insurgents, and urban terrorists can undermine the stability of local governments; corrupt efforts to curb drug crop production; and distort public perception of the narcotics issue in such a way that it becomes part of an anti-U.S... or anti-Western debate. (NSDD in Carpenter 2003:30).

The Colombia of the mid 1980's, indeed, was a good personification of one of «those nations». Homeland of the leading drug cartel in cocaine trafficking, often addressed as

52 In fact, not even the dynamics of crack and cocaine trading within the country were totally unknown. As early as June 1980, a report in the Washington Post called attention to ongoing war due to drug trafficking, particularly cocaine, that had turn Miami into a battlefield. The testimony of the chief of Dade County summarizes the confrontation between already established drug traffickers and newcomers mostly from Colombia “The Hell's angels can't hold a candle to these crazy Colombians. They make the Mafia look like Boy Scouts. They have absolutely no regard for human life...and they have us outgunned, outmanned and outspent.” See “Cocaine Cowboys” in Washington Post June 22, 1980 p. A1 for an overview of the establishment of Colombian drug-traffickers in Miami see among others Fillippone (1997).
paradise for drug lords who in those years led an anti-U.S. movement aimed at deterring extradition. Also known as the kingdom of both rural and urban leftist armed groups that in those years had begun to be known as narcoguerrillas, the country was destined to become the epicenter of U.S. efforts to temper the recently declared national security threat.

On the second day of the siege, smoke could be seen pouring out of the building. Rather than negotiate, the military and the police launched an apocalyptic assault. It is not known whether the fire was caused by the assault or whether the fire was set. But the flames destroyed everything, including the files of the pending extradition cases and testimony about torture allegedly conducted by members of the armed forces. Ninety five people, including twelve justices –half the Supreme Court– were killed.

On November 12, 1985, with the ruins of the Palace of justice still moldering, a volcano that had lain dormant for 200 years erupted with all the ferocity that only nature can muster, sending a torrent of mud down on the helpless town of Armero. More than 20,000 people were buried...

...that week in November 1985 was one of the most wrenching and unforgettable times I've experienced. It seemed as if Colombia and Colombians were being punished by God. (Duzán and Eisner 1994:40-41)

By 1986, in stark contrast to the Reagan myth, it was becoming evident that a sinister new force was at work: the alliance between drug dealers and right-wing paramilitary groups. This alliance was responsible for the bombings around Bogotá aimed at supposed leftist targets and guerrilla sympathizers...[...][...Initially their alliance was defended as an effort to combat leftist guerrillas and the Communist onslaught. As such, it won favor form rightists at home and abroad, notably members of the fervently anti-Communist Reagan administration...

What took the form of an anti-Communist front quickly revealed its true character: this was a witch-hunt against anyone to the left of center. These death squads were not fighting guerrillas on the battlefield but assassinating civilians in hit-and-run attacks. They lashed out at those who defied them or got in their way –judges, journalists, and any police and military personnel who they could not evade or co-opt. By 1989 this rightist alliance with the drug bosses, which evoked fear at home and was little understood abroad, was responsible for killing 40,000 Colombians since 1987, among them three presidential candidates. Everyone had a friend or relative who had fallen victim to bombs or bullets...

The death squads began issuing lists of their intended victims. The names were sent to newspapers offices around the country, provoking panic at first, then a sort of badge of courage for those who had made it to the lists without flinching. Although we started to take the threats for granted, many of those marked for death were, in fact, murdered. Human rights groups were organizing demonstrations to pressure the government for answers and for civil guarantees. In August 1987 alone twenty-five people were murdered in Medellín. Among them was Hector Abad Gomez, a prominent member of the Liberal
party and president of the Antioquia State Committee on Human Rights. Abad Gómez was also a professor at the Universidad of Antioquia, the province of which Medellín is the capital. About twenty fellow professors and a number of journalists, whose names had appeared on the death list along with Abad Gómez, fled into exile following his murder. Some are still in exile today. (Duzán and Eisner 1994:70-71)

The tortuous road that extradition followed in Colombia reflected the tremendous contradictions that the measure produced among Colombians. Despite the pressures from Washington for Betancur to apply the law, during the first two years of his tenure he did no such thing, arguing that it was an instrument that erodes the country’s sovereignty. In Colombia, where nationalism evaporates easily in profound regional rifts, extradition became a national issue. In the eyes of those Colombians who knew little about Washington’s antidrug strategy, the U.S. treatment of the problem had unjustly converted Colombia into a nation of hoodlums and drug dealers. “Instead of trying to extradite Colombians, they should first try to catch the bosses. Or can it be that there are no American drug bosses?” This was the general reaction from people on the street. The day that the Reagan administration ordered economic sanctions against Colombia for the release of Ochoa, that conviction was evident; it was as if extradition would designate Colombia the only culprit in the drug problem. In that context extradition became an unpopular symbol of oppression, which in turn exacerbated a latent nationalism that Colombians hadn’t recognized they felt. The drug dealers ably exploited this perception in the early 1980s; they lobbied against extradition and successfully employed those nationalistic arguments, which touched a nerve in Colombia, not only in intellectual circles but among the majority of the middle and lower classes (Duzán and Eisner 1994:86).

Meanwhile, in the United States drugs had gained a top position among national security threats. In 1986, candidates for U.S. Senate addressed drugs as central topic in their campaigns. Two years later, in April 1988, a CBS-New York Times poll showed that for nearly 50% of respondents drug trafficking was the number-one international problem (Carpenter 2003:32). No wonder, drugs were also a key issue during the 1989 presidential election. The Bush administration (1989-1993), among other things, signified a renovated set of foreign policies in which the War on Drugs—as an

increasingly militarized enterprise and still as a supply-side war—would acquire a notorious position.

On December 10, 1989, a bomb containing more than two tons of dynamite exploded at 7:30 a.m. in front of Maza Márquez's headquarter. The explosion was so massive that it was heard from one end of Bogotá to the other (Duzán and Eisner 1994:135). In 1989 and 1990, 25,000 Colombians died in the escalating violence that attacked every segment of society (Duzán and Eisner 1994:136).

In the meantime, Colombians were enduring some of the bloodiest years in the recent history of the country, particularly in its big cities and especially in the capital. In Bogotá, bombs, selective assassinations, random murders, and untamed terrorist attacks had already become part of daily life. August 18, 1989 was a decisive date in this ongoing war on drugs both in Washington and Bogotá. At 8:40 p.m. and during his last public speech in his presidential campaign, Luis Carlos Galán was shot to death. Considered by many the next Colombian president and one of the few that might lead the country out of such an untamed wave of terror and violence that through the past few years had flooded Colombians' daily lives, Galán was also known for his combative statements against narco-trafficking and drug cartels. His brutal assassination was, in many ways, also the shooting down of any hope left for millions of Colombians. Not surprisingly, it involved the Medellín cartel and Pablo Escobar.

One week after the death of Galán, the declaration of a war on drugs by Colombia and the United States was the top item in the news around the world. From one moment to the

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55 Maza Márquez was at this time main director of the DAS and as such the nation's chief of police investigations.
56 See City Landscapes as well as Colombian newspapers El Tiempo and El Espectador, and the Colombian news magazine Semana of these years.
57 The obscure networks and episodes that led to what many Colombians might classified as one of the most painful and devastating murders in the recent history of the country, however, have just begun to be clarified. In May, 2005 evidence provided by "Popeye" who for years worked for Escobar and is now in a Colombian prison showed even more obscure ties involved in Galán's assassination and led to the incarceration of former Senator Alberto Santofimio, a local politician who is well-known for his close relation to drug cartels and particularly to Pablo Escobar. According to Popeye's testimony, Santofimio's advice was straight: "Pablo, kill him. If he is the President he will extradite you." (in Semana May 16-22, 2005). See among others the May 2005 editions of El Tiempo and Semana.
next, Colombia saw itself invaded as never before by news media from around the world...
In short order, this invasion by the news media managed to alter Colombia’s image. Colombia’s problems were not well understood; nobody knew who was who in the cartels; it was not clear whether the country was governed by Pablo Escobar or Barco. The only thing anyone knew was that Bush and Barco had declared a war on drugs in a country called Colombia.
This declaration of war, which the world celebrated optimistically by way of their television screens, came across differently in Colombia. A few days after the measures were approved, the entire Barco cabinet began receiving the first telephone death threats at their homes. “no matter how many bodyguards you have, we are going to kill you. We know the position of the Council of ministers on extradition, and we have infiltrated palace security,” said a letter signed by the Extraditables\textsuperscript{58} [...] the concern about death that the ministers felt was even more evident on the streets and in places of business. The war of nerves intensified even more when a communiqué from the Extraditables was sent to the news media, declaring total war on the oligarchy and on all Colombians who supported extradition.(Duzán and Eisner 1994: 159-60).

After Galán’s murder, the Colombian government launched and even stronger offensive against the Medellin cartel. The Bush administration offered emergency military aid to Bogotá. This aid was a first step in the launching of Bush’s Andean Initiative.\textsuperscript{59} The subsequent definitions of Colombia as the epicenter of narco-trafficking and derivatively U.S. national security threats reached one of its highest moments. The end of the Cold War catalyzed the War on Drugs promoted by the Bush administration. By the late 1980’s and early 1990’s left-wing groups and those that sympathized with their ideas including armed groups were no longer U.S. national security threats or particularly threatening “internal enemies” in the Western Hemisphere. Rather, drug lords and narco-

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Extraditables} (the ones to be extradited) was the name chosen by drug-lords in their war against the Colombian State, its efforts to control drug-trafficking and particularly its attempts to sanction extradition treaties.

\textsuperscript{59} The Andean Initiative was launched in September 1989 by the Bush administration and was in great part derived from the new NSDD that president Bush signed in August 1989.
trafficking—along with their associated narcoguerrillas—were meant to occupy the now practically empty spot of frightening hemispheric troublemakers.  

We were completely helpless. People were being killed not only by contract, but simply because they were on the street at the wrong time. I couldn’t tell which was worse (Duzán and Eisner 1994:143).

The day that our newspaper was destroyed, bombs exploded at the offices of both the Conservative and New Liberal parties in Medellín, killing one person. In addition, three bombs blew up the branches of the Cafetero, State, and Commerce banks in Medellín. Three fincas (country estates)—belonging to Augusto López, the president of Bavaria, the nations’ larges brewery; Edgar Gutiérrez Castro, an ex-interior minister; and Ignacio Vélez Escobar, president of the conservative party in Antioquia—were set on fire. Two explosive devices, each with forty pounds of explosives were found and deactivated at the Medellín bureaus of the nation’s two principal radio networks, Caracol and RCN. There were terrorist attacks against popular restaurants in Medellín, Bello, and Itagüí as well...

In Bogotá, “the war,” as people were calling it, was less visible. Nevertheless, the attacks had been aimed primarily at the financial sector... (Duzán and Eisner 1994:165)

By the late 1980’s and throughout the 1990’s the U.S. government would not only allocate important amounts of money for supplies and training meant to enhance the effectiveness of Colombian Public Forces in charge of combating drug production and trafficking (see for instance Goldsmith, Llorente et al. 2004), but it would also put increasing pressure on the Colombian government for endorsing the by then hemispheric War on Drugs. Efforts to control narco-trafficking, to disarticulate drug cartels and to capture their main leaders in the Colombia of the late 1980’s and early 1990’s cannot be seen as simply direct effects of U.S. demands. They also respond to local concerns regarding the effects of drug related activities in the country’s internal dynamics.

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60 The War on Terrorism more recently launched by the U.S. government has implied important shifts in this geopolitical landscape. Effects of these shifts in Colombia are yet to be seen. The War on Drugs still occupies a core position in U.S. – Colombia foreign relations. However, changes due to the War on Terrorism cannot be underscored. Colombian armed groups are already reclassified as not only related to narco-trafficking, but also as terrorist organizations. Today, Colombian armed groups, particularly guerrillas, and their leaders are increasingly considered part of the hemisphere’s threatening terrorists. Indeed, their actions are not too far from terrorism (e.g. bombs and attacks perpetrated in the past few years). Still this reclassification might signify possible major shifts in the near future.
However, U.S. foreign policies did play a central role in setting the tone of the responses of the Colombian State.

In the midst of this geopolitical mesh, Colombian cities became scenarios of untamed waves of violence and terror. By the late 1980’s and early 1990’s extreme acts of violence were just rampant daily issues, particularly in big Colombian cities. To be sure, drug-lords and narco-terrorism were by no means the only source of murder and fear.\textsuperscript{61} However, they did contribute waves of terror and death that exacerbated urban lives already permeated by other modalities of crime and violence.

Four months of all-out war against the drug dealers were beginning to take their toll. Bogotá seemed like a bombed-out city. Although the economic losses were incalculable, the purported “war on the oligarchy” declared by the Extraditables had affected people from the middle and lower classes the most; they had been the principal victims of the bombings and terrorist attacks...

In the affluent suburbs, especially around Eighty-second Street, a bohemian district that was the equivalent of New York’s SoHo, the salsa clubs and restaurants were empty. In this area, usually a hangout for teenagers who attended the best private schools, one could find clutches of Colombian and foreign reporters circling the streets in search of news. The cantinas were not empty, although fewer people went out on the streets. The atmosphere was charged in anticipation of the sudden danger lurking everywhere. Army units patrolled the streets; the people who ventured out to dine or drink with friends did so daringly, with the feeling that anything might happen. That at any second a bomb or the sound of gunfire might pierce the silent chill.

A friend of mine who worked at a clothing store told me a rumor she had heard. “They say that Pablo Escobar and the Mexican are planning an attack on eighty-second street to retaliate for so many sicarios having been killed in Bogotá and Medellín. They say they want the rich people to know what it’s like to have one of their children killed.”

But the stronger rumor, coming in several different versions, was that a luxury car had run over a man in the Calera district and had left him there to die. The dead person, so the rumor went, was Rodriguez Gacha’s son, and the Mexican had decide to take his revenge

\textsuperscript{61} Besides narcoterrorism, sources of death, fear, and terror in the Colombia of the late 20\textsuperscript{th} century include, among others: a never-ending dirty war that in those years helped in exterminating the UP a recently created left-wing political party, uncounted—and uncountable—massacres perpetrated in great part by paramilitary squads, actions and attacks perpetrated by leftist armed groups, frightening “social cleansing” campaigns that are common in some urban centers, and the increasingly frequent resource to sicarios (minors that work as hitmen, hired assassins) in most Colombian cities. Not to mention modalities of crime and violence that are also common elsewhere in urban settings and that were particularly common in Colombian cities. About these ones see City Landscapes. An overview of modalities of crime and violence that distinguish these years and of their trends exceeds the purpose of this work. However, some of them and their effects in the Colombian capital are addressed through the work. Additionally, and for more detailed reports, see the abundant local academic literature on these topics.
by setting off a bomb in a discotheque on Eighty-second Street so he could kill some rich kids. There was no indication that this was really so but such was the atmosphere; at private schools, bomb scares were regularly emptying out classrooms all over town… But it was not all paranoia and wild imagination. The police found and took away a dynamite pack that had been hidden near the door of a school attended by Barco’s grandchildren…[…]…a bomb was also found before it could blow up the offices of El Tiempo. And three weeks after the attack at El Espectador, a terrorist bomb destroyed the Santander regional newspaper Vanguardia Liberal; a telephone caller said the Extratidables took credit for the attack.

Everyone went to sleep with the fear of being awakened by the sound of a bomb going off. The explosions bounced off the mountains, and their impact made the windows in my apartment, located at the foot of the mountains, vibrate. But the sound was like a short, echoless thud (Duzán and Eisner 1994:169-171).

…There were no tears in her eyes, but the desolated expression on her face said it all. ‘I only heard the shots. I didn’t know what was happening because I had never heard machine gun fire before. They call us violent, but the thing is that we can’t even recognize the sound of a weapon.’ She only remembered having seen the body of her husband spread out on the floor. She threw herself on top of him to protect him, then tried to pick him up. Bernardo was taken to the hospital, where he died shortly thereafter. His was the 1, 357th murder of a member of the Patriotic Union. (Duzán and Eisner 1994:241)

The Boeing 727 Avianca jet, serial number HK1400, took off from El Dorado airport in Bogotá at 9:15 a.m. on April 27, 1990. It was carrying 120 people on its one-hour flight to Barranquilla. The captain, Fabio Munévar, was banking toward the area of Cota, eight minutes into the flight, at an altitude of 17,000 feet. Suddenly, two alarms sounded from the cabin. ‘A minute after we had turned off the fasten your seat belts sign, we heard a lot of noise, as if there were busts of gunfire inside the plane. We thought that it might have been the front bathroom door because someone happened to go into the bathroom at that moment.” But within seconds of hearing the booms, the flight steward came to the cockpit and told them it had been machine gun fire.

The Capitán realized immediately that it had been an attack on Carlos Pizarro, the presidential candidate for M-19’s nascent political movement. Pizarro had been last to board the aircraft, surrounded by eleven bodyguards…[…]…Pizarro had been killed by a lone assassin, who was shot by Pizarro’s bodyguards in a hail of gunfire on the plane.

The murder movie was being played again. Carlos Pizarro was the fourth presidential candidate murdered in Colombia in fewer than six months. There was still a month and a half until the presidential elections. How many more candidates would fall? (Duzán and Eisner 1994:241-242)

The daily nature of violence and its constitutive role in shaping urban experiences in the Colombia of the late 20th century was out of the question. These experiences are the edge of a string in a spider’s web of drug narratives in which the «worst historical disaster»
menacing U.S. cities due to the crack epidemic consumption in the 1980’s and early 1990s appears at once as the opposite string edge but also as a twin one.

As opposite edges of the same string, the foretold devastation of major U.S. cities and the one endured by those living in big Colombian cities are linked by a series of continuous and colliding drug narratives including: the War on Drugs launched by the U.S. government, the efforts of the Colombian State to lesser the effects of illicit drug trafficking and related activities in Colombia, and the responses of both drug-lords and cartels to these renovated strategies.

On May 27, in one of the bloodiest presidential campaigns in Colombian history—in which four of the six candidates were killed—Cesar Gaviria was elected to a four-year term as president. He was the first president elected on a platform to undertake constitution reforms, reforms that could eventually reshape the closed Colombian system with the notion that it was necessary to “reform for peace”…all of us who were still living felt like survivors of a bloody war in which we lost the most important members of an entire political generation. The majority of Colombian households had experienced death close at hand. Mothers lost their children, brothers lost their cousins, and cousins lost their best friend. No matter how hard we tried, we could never be the same…

Two months after taking office, President Gaviria issued a series of decrees that sought to subject the drug traffickers to the Colombian justice system, using to that end a legal means broadly employed by the U.S. justice system: the plea bargain…

On July 14, 1991, the National Constituent Assembly, responsible for writing Colombia’s new constitution, removed the bitter chapter on extradition from the text of the draft document. One day later, the head of the DEA in Miami, Tom Cash, said “Colombia has surrendered to the drug dealers.”

The U.S. Department of State, slightly more circumspect, called it a decision of the Colombian people that would have to be respected. Nevertheless, a State Department spokesman made it clear privately that the United States disapproved of the decision, which, he said showed Colombia’s shaky commitment to the war on drugs (Duzán and Eisner 1994: 255-57).

On the other hand, if seen as twin string edges, these two devastations—the foretold and the endured one—exemplify ways in which drug narratives serve as contexts for redefinitions of violence and for its reshaping into the realm of governmental
intervention. Drug narratives in each of these cases are, indeed, of different sorts. Although crack consumption is an actual and vivid problem faced by many U.S. cities, drug narratives linked to the crack panic are mainly rhetorical and as such they serve to rephrase issues linked to drug consumption and governmental ways of handling it in the United States. Drug narratives witnessed by Colombian cities, on the other hand, are vividly experienced as far as they are mainly produced by acts of untamed violence aimed at contesting efforts to deal with narco-trafficking. For many, drug narratives linked to the crack panic in U.S. cities served mainly for hiding and avoiding social issues, at best for treating them through the wrong lens. In Colombia, drug narratives serve as exacerbating elements in the generation of contexts in which notions such as “common violence” emerged and would gain relevance.

The notion of “common violence,” as it was defined in the Colombia of the late 1980s and as it has been adopted in Colombia since then, does not pertain mainly to drug-related violence. In fact, “common” and drug-related violences are frequently addressed separately. Nevertheless, waves of narco-terrorism and drug-related violence exacerbated urban experiences of violence and contributed in setting a milieu in which to address violence as “common” results all the most meaningful. In such a milieu, the moniker “common violence” would comprise quite diverse acts such as hold-ups, bombs, selective murders, kidnapping, or random killings; all of which would be seen as part of the same continuum of violence: the one constantly piercing Colombians’ daily lives. This was particularly the case in urban settings that had become scenarios of untamed acts of violence that, to some extent, were without precedents in Colombian major cities.
Such was the context in which local scholars put forward redefinitions of violence, along with novel understandings of security and ways of managing violence. The following section examines the unfolding of those redefinitions and their relation to the emergence of citizen security and coexistence as fields of academic and expert production in the Colombia of the late 20th and early 21st century. Through the past few years, these redefinitions have intervened in setting public agendas. They have done so in a context marked by increasing alarm due to violence and its direct effects on urban life, particularly among those social groups for which this was an experience without precedents: local urban elites.
SECTION 3
ACADEMIC POLITICS AND BATTLES: EMERGENT SCHOLARLY AND EXPERT ELITES

“So all this is what I have always said: We, Colombians, kill each other because we are not Swiss.” This shocking and yet not totally unfamiliar statement went almost unnoticed by the crowd of public workers and scholars who, for the past few hours, had been debating on city expenditure on security and coexistence. It was a third party concluding remark of a long debate between the representative of the Secretariat on Security and Coexistence and the director of the Center for Studies on Economic Development (CEDE). The public servant insisted on the need to address risk factors. She emphasized advantages of using a public health oriented model. The economist replied showing the virtues of a model derived from complex formulas inspired in the economic theory of crime. After almost four hours meeting in a room without windows and heated by a too sunny afternoon and the video projector, everybody left the room with an agreement: scholars hired as consultants will include more on preventative programs and municipal workers will look carefully at the proposed model. Months later and after attending to several of these meetings, the document on the projections for security and coexistence expenditure was approved. Its actual use by municipal authorities, however, remained uncertain due to the recent election of a new City Mayor.

The meeting on expenditure is a condensed illustration of the variety of understandings of violence that are deployed and intervene in the processes of defining and adopting governmental initiatives aimed at reducing crime and violence, locally known as citizen security and coexistence policies. Similarly, it evidences academic
trends and works that in the past decade have had a major influence in the processes of implementation of these policies. In this section, I depict ways in which scholarly production, politics, and trends intervene in the definition of security and coexistence as both subjects of governmental initiatives and fields for governmental intervention. To this end, I first track the notions of seguridad ciudadana (citizen security) and convivencia pacífica (peaceful coexistence) that accompany governmental initiatives aimed at reducing crime and violence in contemporary Colombia. Secondly, I examine academic works and fields that in the past decade have had a salient role in the definition, implementation, and assessment of security and coexistence initiatives adopted in Bogotá.

**Introductory remark: Frightening milestones**

It is said that each generation has its own milestone events, but in Colombia these are often made out of untamed episodes of violence and terror. Those who grew up in big cities in the Colombia of the late 20th century had theirs. As milestone events, violence and terror are linked to insane acts like the siege of the Palace of Justice in 1985; rampant hired murders including the shooting to death of public figures, that were particularly frequent between the late 1980’s and through the 1990’s; and the bombing of crowded places that was prevalent at that same time during the narco-terrorism era, but is still common these days. In contemporary Colombia, fear and murder are also important marks for urban generations. They appear in those many stories about groups of people randomly kidnapped in the nearest surroundings or even in residential areas within the city. They also appear in daily gossips about ongoing so-called “social-cleansing”
campaigns that are carried out mostly in shantytowns within the city. Murder seems to be always around the corner, quarrels that are said to end with someone shot to death. Fear and murder are always present in daily stories about people getting assaulted: car, money and belongings stolen, women raped, the well-known *paseo millonario* (million dollar ride), both male and female drugged and abandoned somewhere in the city. Not to mention the many more who showed resistance and now rest in the cemetery with two or three bullets lodged between their backs and chests. Fear and murder are indelible marks for urban generations in contemporary Colombia due to a constant and disturbing apprehension of becoming the next victim of these and other modalities of crime and violence. For those growing up in big cities in the Colombia of the late 20th and early 21st century, safe streets are utopian and neither terror nor violence have ever been totally confined to the far countryside.62

From special sections on armed conflict that have become part of local newspapers and daily headlines reporting on crime and violence trends, to quite diverse modalities of facing acts of violence as they occur on daily basis, murder and fear appear as everyday experiences in Colombian cities. Measures to avoid being the next victim of crime and violence have become part of daily routines and activities as quotidian as going to a mall, driving a car, entering and exiting any building, or walking down the street. These measures together with proliferating surveillance and security devices exemplify ways in which violence and terror, murder and fear, impact urban daily lives in contemporary Colombia. The emergence and flourishing of scholarly communities of experts on

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62 In the past decade, violence trends in Colombia are also marked by the concentration of acts of violence in urban settings. According to Police reports, between 1990 and 2003 and average of 72% of acts of violence against human life were perpetrated in urban areas (Policia Nacional 1990-2004).
violence and crime, some of which are examined in the following pages, also exemplify ways in which violence has become a constitutive element in Colombian experiences of the late 20th and early 21st century. For international comparisons, however, none of these examples offers a clear enough picture. The magnitude of violence in contemporary Colombia might be better portrayed through what nowadays stands as the preferred way of internationally depicting violence: homicide rates.

Homicide rates in Colombia increased dramatically between the mid 1980's and mid 1990's. From 1983 to 1993 these rates increased 366 percent. While between 1988 and 1997 the average homicide rate in the Americas was 14.7, homicide rates in Colombia were above 70 (Villaveces 2001). In the past two decades the country has exhibited rates that by international standards are extremely high. At the peak in 1991, the national homicide rate was 79.3 per 100,000, but rates within the country—at city and town level—can be dramatically higher than the national rate for this same period. For instance, in 1991 the homicide rate in Medellín, one of the major Colombian cities, was 419. Through the past decade this city has exhibited outrageous rates varying between 123 and 419 (Policía Nacional 1990-2004). Even if less dramatically, through the past decade several Colombian cities and towns have also exhibited homicide rates significantly higher than the already high national homicide rate. Even though in recent years the national homicide rate began to fall, it is still very high (in 2003 and according to Police reports it was 52) and only comparable to countries at war or civil conflict.
Forging Convivencia and Seguridad Ciudadana in Such a Violently Wounded Country.

These outrageous numbers are silent mirrors of a torn-apart country, where millions had faced total lack of personal safety. A country that in 2001, Gonzalo Sánchez (2001:3), a Colombian scholar recognized for his work on violence, would describe as one in which violence has become an omnipresent and highly intertwined phenomenon: «At least since the 1980s the distinctive feature of Colombian politics is the multiplicity of violence.» —He would state— «Colombian violence has been multiple in terms of its origins, objectives, geography, modi operandi, and strategies. And in all the violence, questions of pragmatism and immediate gain would seem to be winning at the expense of ideological commitments. Organized crime, guerrilla struggle, dirty war, and diffuse social violence —differentiated forms of violence but quite often intertwined— can be part of a single situation» Sánchez would conclude.

In such a context and since the early 1990’s, governmental initiatives aimed at reducing violence have been articulated around the notions of convivencia (coexistence) and seguridad ciudadana (citizen security). In tracking the official adoption and usage of these notions, they proved to be common but hard to define or even grasp. They remain as a promising fissure for digging into understandings of violence that exist behind governmental initiatives and academic production regarding violence in contemporary Colombia. The first part of this section contributes to such an inquiry.
ON CONVIVENCIA

In contemporary Colombia, Convivencia\textsuperscript{43} (the way in which peaceful coexistence is more frequently designated) is the most common term when addressing alternative and preventative initiatives aimed at reducing violence. But, what exactly does convivencia mean? How does it relate to violence? By what means do initiatives aimed at controlling violence and providing security articulate convivencia as a realm for governmental intervention? To answer these questions I first sought to track and characterize usages and meanings of convivencia within governmental institutions, where this notion is particularly common. In spite of its widespread and extended usage, convivencia seems almost impossible to define. Difficulties in defining it, however, vary among governmental agencies involved in designing and implementing initiatives that are cast as convivencia policies. Most of those working at the national level would explicitly point out the problematic nature of this notion in terms of its conceptualization and its lack of clarity both at the conceptual and practical level. Meanwhile, those involved at the local level seemed more confident of the definition of convivencia. But at best, they would offer a series of theoretical references and a description of concepts that relate to this notion, enumerate episodes that relate to its governmental usage, or mention hypothetical examples that talk about convivencia.

\textsuperscript{43} Throughout this section I have chosen to use convivencia instead of coexistence to stress the local nature of this notion, its usage and ways of circulating. Latter on, I use coexistence to refer to meanings embedded in the usage and circulation of this notion. The use of this notion in contemporary Colombia poses numerous and suggestive questions. For instance, in its historical origins convivencia is a distinctly Hispanic concept and originally referred to the relationship among Jews, Christians, and Muslims in medieval Iberic Peninsula during the period of Muslim rule. In its original use it is not quite as strong as tolerancia (tolerance) but it does mean that people get along together without armed struggle (see among others Glick 1992). It is worth mentioning that both tolerancia and convivencia are used simultaneously in contemporary Colombia. However, these terms are not used to refer to people who endorse different fates, but to refer to people with different political preferences and to common citizens in their daily interactions. The former are more often addressed through the concept of tolerancia (tolerance) and the latter through the notion of convivencia.
Through these criticisms, theoretical references, episodes, and examples, *convivencia*—or most exactly the lack of it—serves to address a variety of issues that might affect people’s daily life: a conflict with your neighbor, domestic violence, a quarrel in the street etc. Similar definitions are also common among scholars and former state workers. For those who endorse these definitions, the lack of *convivencia* has at its base Colombians’ incapacity to peacefully manage and solve daily conflicts. This, on the other hand, would most likely evolve towards even more grave acts of violence. Thus, different modalities of violence—the one used for solving daily minor conflicts, the one employed for dealing with everyday quarrels, that one that corresponds to an act of domestic violence, the one involved in an assault, the one that generates minor personal harm, and that one that results in a homicide—are part of a spectrum. This is a spectrum in which modalities and acts of violence are only separated by the degree of violence that each of them involves. Is violence in Colombia the product of a generalized lack of *convivencia*? Are *convivencia* initiatives meant to tackle all modalities of violence included in that spectrum? If not, towards which modalities are they directed? Is the Colombians’ lack of *convivencia* a historical continuity or is it a recent issue?

None of these questions can be easily answered, but they serve to sketch out uneasy governmental and academic usages of *convivencia* as responses to violence in contemporary Colombia. Indeed, the lack of a single and universal definition of *convivencia* per se is not problematic. After all, there is a minimum consensus on what it might be: it refers to interpersonal relationships and conflictual situations, it alludes to daily or at least common situations involving conflict, and it relates to violence. This vaguely limited—or limitedly vague—notation, however, starts being problematic when
either translated into official initiatives for reducing violence or incorporated into scholarly theories about violence in Colombia. Why does all this seem problematic? A good way to begin answering why is by going back to what an economist and recognized scholar for his work on violence and crime related topics replied when, in 2004, I asked for his personal definition of *seguridad ciudadana* (citizen security) and *convivencia* (coexistence):

What a hard and boring question! I don’t think we should spend too much time on looking for a definition of security, because there is not much trouble and there aren’t major contradictions or debates. The part about *convivencia* is much more relevant, because it is a sort of magic word that has been used for giving a “social touch” to criminal problems or problems involving criminality. This, malformation (the idea that problems derived from crime and violence are products of the lack of *convivencia* among citizens), has been very useful. For instance, it has allowed working on this area without been confined to security agencies. (Colombian Scholar – Economist - IDB’s consultant)

This response lays out central and uneasy elements of the widespread usage of *convivencia* in contemporary Colombia, particularly in governmental initiatives cast as *convivencia* policies and campaigns. This “magic word” has become a sort of mantra – and to some extent the favored one– when addressing violence and when seeking to alternatively deal with it. Through such a mantra, violence appears as a byproduct of the lack of *convivencia* that results from the absence of civilian behavior among Colombians or from their misbehavior as citizens. The lack of *convivencia*, in this sense, is basically the lack of common rules and values or codes that are considered as distinguishing features of citizens and citizenship. These, for instance, are rules, values, and codes that intervene in solving interpersonal conflicts. Consequently, initiatives aimed at reducing violence through *convivencia* translate into campaigns and policies aimed at educating people and making citizens out of Colombians –somehow predominantly violent or with
a clear trend towards violence— and make them behave as citizens—well-behaved and non-violent people— through regulatory and self-regulatory mechanisms. This civilizing enterprise often involves the promotion of tolerance, whose absence is frequently addressed as one among other features that lie behind a somehow intrinsic Colombian trend towards aggressive and violent behavior.

Pedagogical enterprises seeking to overcome an alleged lack of civility among Colombians, however, are not totally new in the country. For instance, in the late 1940’s and late 1970’s municipal authorities in Bogotá built upon notions of courtesy and social discipline in their governmental campaigns aimed at educating people on “proper citizen behaviors” in order to improve the city’s quality of life (see Municipal Arts). Tolerance, on the other hand, was commonly used in attempts to overcome bloody episodes of political partisan violence that characterize the history of the country at least until the second half of the 20th century, and were particularly acute in the period of La Violencia, (The Violence) between the late 1940’s and the mid 1960’s. More recently, tolerance and convivencia were frequently predicated in ideal—rather than actual—processes of reincorporation into society—and sometimes politics—of ex-members of guerrilla groups.

Notions of social discipline and tolerance, their historical usages, and their relation to contemporary ways in which convivencia is deployed as a mantra to deal with violence in Colombia, relate to what the economists quoted above refers as a “social touch.” They, however, show routes to go beyond the utilitarian dimension of such a “touch.”

64 These processes of reincorporation resulted from peace agreements between guerrilla groups or fractions of groups and the national government, particularly since the mid-1980s. Actual outcomes of them, however, were marked by waves of dirty war in most cases. The systematic extermination of the UP (the political party created by ex-members of the FARC) is an example of the effects of those dirty war waves. Selective assassinations and involuntary disappearances are common elements in such a war (see among others: Bergquist, Peñaranda et al. 2001; Campos Zornoza 2003; Giraldo 1996).
Contemporary notions of *convivencia* are in several ways a denatured and summarized version of expression used earlier, and yet they also denote novel modalities of foreseeing the reduction of violence through a civilizing enterprise. As in them, *convivencia* presupposes an intrinsic Colombian lack that, as with social discipline, hinders civility and, as with tolerance, triggers violence. Unlike with notions used earlier, contemporary usages of *convivencia* aim at lessening modalities of violence that neither relate to political partisan confrontations, nor to guerrilla warfare or armed conflict. Rather, they address modalities of violence that involve common citizens. As such, a distinctive feature of *convivencia* in contemporary Colombia is its strong link to *seguridad ciudadana* (citizen security), which has also become a sort of mantra for dealing with violence in the Colombia of the late 20th and early 21st century.

**ON SEGURIDAD CIUDADANA**

*Seguridad Ciudadana*\(^{65}\) is commonly used for describing official attempts to manage the effects of so-called “common” crime and violence in contemporary Colombia, particularly in urban areas. Not clearly definable, but graspable by default, *Seguridad Ciudadana* basically denotes the providing of security to the people, rather than to the state. The emergence and official adoption of this notion in the early 1990s is in part a byproduct of processes that accompanied the end of the Cold War era. As is the case with most Latin American countries, in Colombia the past two decades were characterized by important shifts in governmental ways of addressing security. The fading away of the National Security Doctrine in the late 1980’s and 1990’s is at the base of such shifts. This

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\(^{65}\) As I have done with the notion of *convivencia*, throughout this section I have chosen to use *seguridad ciudadana* instead of citizen security to stress the local nature of this notion, its usage and ways of circulating. Latter on, I use citizen security to refer to meanings embedded in the usage and circulation of this notion.
Doctrine endorsed a bipolar vision of the world that distinguished the Cold War era. It adopted such visions in terms of internal enemies, rather than in terms of external superpowers and enemies. In Latin America the National Security Doctrine was grounded in the identification of such internal enemies –commonly left wing groups and those supporting left wing ideas– as threats against the state, the regime, and society, which as such needed to be controlled and defeated.

The history of the National Security Doctrine in Latin America is linked to processes that go back to the 1950s and 1960s. The Cuban revolution and US approaches to Latin America as a region marked by political instability, whose main fuel was communism and potential communist uprisings that represented major hemispheric security threats, are core elements in these historical processes. The flourishing of a National Security Doctrine in Latin America during the second half of the 20th century was not independent from US foreign and regional policies. However, the emergence of such a Doctrine had at its base military developments and trends, as well as processes that involved local armies, mostly in South American countries and particularly in Brazil and Argentina.66

Colombian authorities and the army, indeed, adopted core elements of the National Security Doctrine. However, according to Leal (Leal B 1994; Leal Buitrago 1994) this adoption was not identical to the one in those other South American countries -- particularly Argentina and Brazil-- where the Doctrine was originally formulated. In terms of national security, in Colombia, the mid 1960s --when members of the national army most clearly began addressing and incorporating elements derived form the National Security Doctrine-- were distinguished by two main elements. First, the national

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66 For a review of the origin of these doctrines in Latin America and South America, along with those particularly relevant elements to understand their unfolding in Colombia see among others Leal (1994)
army already had extensive experience in combating guerrillas, particularly in rural areas. This was due to the partisan confrontation that had had the country as its main scenario between the late 1940s to the mid 1960s, a period meaningfully known as La Violencia (The Violence). Second, by the mid and late 1960s armed groups confronted by the army were shifting from mainly partisan guerrillas and self-defense groups of armed peasants, to guerrillas who defined themselves as revolutionary and embraced left-wing ideologies. This shift was paralleled by increasing polarization -both within and outside the national army- in regards to emerging guerrilla groups.\textsuperscript{67} In such a context, elements derived from the National Security Doctrine were increasingly favored. However, it wasn’t until the mid and late 1970s that this Doctrine had its most prosperous time in Colombia. That was the time of the Turbay administration (1978-1982), when the infamous Estatuto de Seguridad (Statute of Security) was sanctioned and reinforced.\textsuperscript{68} Tortures, enforced or involuntary disappearances, and human rights violations, to be sure, might still be too common in Colombia. They were, however, particularly frequent and rampant in the Colombia of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Not only active members of guerrilla groups but also scholars and intellectuals, students and social activists saw their lives pierced and scarred by the Colombian version of the National Security Doctrine. In fact, this was the

\textsuperscript{67} A detailed and exhaustive review of these processes within the Colombian national army can be found in Leal (1994)

\textsuperscript{68} The Estatuto de Seguridad was sanctioned as an exceptional measure through the Decree 1923 of 1978, which was sanctioned under estado de sitio (state of emergency) and introduced several modifications to the Colombian criminal law (código penal). Some of these modifications consisted on strengthening sanctions against crimes such as kidnapping, carrying firearms, and acts of violence. However these modifications also comprised important limitations to the freedom of expression and controversial measures pertaining to both state tools to control crime and violence, and state mechanism for judging and punishing acts considered as criminal acts. Controversial measures comprised by the Estatuto de Seguridad include: the redefinition of public demonstrations and similar activities (e.g. strikes) as criminal activities against “public order”; censorship and limitations on information released by national media as well as information transmitted through other forms of public communication; the definition of both political acts (e.g. strikes and demonstrations) and criminal acts (e.g. homicides) as equally part of those behaviors that according to the national criminal law were subject to punishment; and the establishment of new rules that allowed members of the army and of the national police to judge and sanction those who perpetrated criminal acts according to the definitions introduced by the Estatuto. (For more details on this measures and their application in Colombia see among others: Leal Buitrago 1994; Reyes, Hoyos et al. 1978)
case with several scholars who years later would contribute alternative understandings of both violence and security.\textsuperscript{69}

The adoption of the National Security Doctrine in Colombia endorsed a State-centered definition of security and emphasized understandings of violence as predominantly political. In subsequent years, these definition and understandings would go through important shifts, particularly due to the adoption of the notion of \textit{seguridad ciudadana}. This notion introduced a definition of security as security for the people, rather than for the State. As such, it implies understandings of violence that address this phenomenon as one with diverse and multiple manifestations, and tend to differentiate such manifestations in terms of so-called “social” or “common” violence, and political violence. The latter is often seen as an easily definable category, often used for denoting acts of violence perpetrated on behalf of ideological principles held by armed groups that fight against the state and the established regime. In practice, such a denomination tends to be exclusively used for referring to acts of violence perpetrated by left-wing guerrillas.\textsuperscript{70} The further category, on the other hand, is far from having a clear-cut definition. Rather it tends to comprise all those other acts of violence that are not likely to be considered political violence. How is such a wide category used to address specific acts of violence? What modalities of violence does “social” or “common” violence comprise? In what ways does it differ from other kinds of violence that also affect

\textsuperscript{69} See, for instance, reports on Human Rights in Colombia for these years, along with reports on specific cases issued by United Nation (http://www.hchr.org.co/documentoseinformes/publico.php3). Among local works on this topics see Giraldo (1996) but particularly Torres Sánchez, Barrera Téllez and et.al.(1982) which comprises frightening and detailed records of those who were detained, tortured, and even killed by State public forces between 1970 and 1981.

\textsuperscript{70} The notion of political violence is commonly used in contemporary Colombia. Its usage, however, has been subject of various academic debates and disquisitions. This disquisitions revolve around issues such as whether paramilitary should be considered as political actors, whether the used classification is adequate or not due to its emphasis on actors’ intentions, and whether some acts perpetrated by those considered as political actors should rather be considered plain acts of violence and crimes.
Colombians? What processes have led to its characterization as “social” or “common”? How do the understandings of violence implied by the notion of *convivencia* relate to understandings of violence as “social” or “common,” embedded in the notion of *seguridad ciudadana*?

None of these questions has a simple answer. Rather, each of them points both to complex processes that are at the base of contemporary usages and understandings of *seguridad ciudadana* and *convivencia* in contemporary Colombia, and to uneasy relations between these two terms and recent redefinitions of violence that inform governmental interventions aimed at managing it. This section tracks down those processes and relations through the examination of the emergence a further transformation of security, coexistence, and violence—as it has been redefined— as academic and expert fields. The following pages have as their main backdrop the end of the Cold War, which prompted a gradual decay of the National Security Doctrines, and the dramatic increase of violence experienced by the country and mainly fueled by narco-trafficking and drug-related violence. Local scholars and experts on these topics have pointed out these two processes as main contextual elements of new ways of addressing security that emerged in the Colombia of the late 1980’s and 1990’s, along with underlying redefinitions of violence. Understanding the role of these processes in the unfolding of notions of citizen security and of “common” violence in contemporary Colombia requires keeping one eye in the Colombia of the mid and late 1980’s and the other eye on processes that affected the country and were also salient in that decade but had their main scenario elsewhere: the United States. This bifocal mode of seeing allows the identification of drug narratives such as the ones depicted in the inter-section that precedes this section, which are
constitutive elements of the context in which notions of “common violence” and citizen security emerged in contemporary Colombia. As such, these drug narratives serve in many ways as backdrops for scholarly attempts to come to terms with both violence and security in the Colombia of the late 20th and early 21st century.

"More than the violence in the mountains, the violence that is killing us is the violence in the streets”
(Sánchez G 1987:18)

By the late 1980’s, Colombia ranked high among the most violent countries in the Western Hemisphere. Since then, the country has held the dubious honor of ranking among the most violent countries in Latin America, which is considered one of the most violent region in world. Also since the late 1980’s the Colombian situation has been frequently addressed both through the notion of cultura de la violencia (culture of violence) and by making reference to a now famous expression used by Gonzalo Sanchez in 1987 when seeking to call attention to the fact that in Colombia the impact of violence derived from the internal armed conflict that for decades has characterized the history of the country was less than the impact of other forms of violence. “More than the violence in the mountains, the violence that is killing us is the violence in the streets” (Sánchez G 1987:18 my translation from Spanish), he wrote in the late 1980’s when seeking to stress the overwhelming effects of those modalities of violence not related to armed conflict.

At this time, Sánchez was the coordinator of the Comisión de Estudios Sobre la Violencia (Commission for the Study of Violence) that convened in 1987. Seeking for ways to manage violence, the national government commissioned a diagnosis of violence in Colombia from a group of nine academics and a retired army general. This diagnosis
was published in 1987 under the title Colombia, Violencia y Democracia. The work of the violentólogos (violentologists) (see Villaveces 1998) – the way in which scholars who were part of this group would since then be locally known – was seminal for further attempts to address violence in the country, particularly among those working on urban violence. According to the violentólogos urban violence in Colombia is a phenomenon hard to construe due to its particularly diffuse nature, and it is more social than political. That is, it comprises mainly modalities of violence that mediate interpersonal relationships both at public and private levels, while acts of violence related to fighting against the state are very limited. Consequently, for controlling urban violence the Colombian state would need more than just willingness to negotiate or actual negotiations – which for most violentólogos would be desirable for dealing with political violence. Rather, Colombian authorities would need to pursue actions for strengthening peaceful social relationships among citizens (Comisión de Estudios 1987:56). Similarly, if seeking to reduce urban violence, authorities should also adopt initiatives that, among other things, serve to regulate alcohol consumption, to control the carrying of firearms by citizens, and to eliminate private modalities of exercising justice (Comisión de Estudios 1987:62-71).

Understandings of violence put forward by the Comisión through this diagnosis, particularly ideas regarding the “cultura de la violencia” (culture of violence), the great impact of the “social” or “common” violence, and the need for strengthening peaceful relationships among Colombians influenced official initiatives through the following decade, especially in the early and mid-1990s when initiatives locally cast as seguridad ciudadana and convivencia polices emerged. This influence might be explained by the
circulation, adoption, and interpretation—or even misinterpretation—of those ideas, and by the direct involvement of violentólogos in the designing of these policies. Interactions that distinguish the redefinition of violence in Colombia, initiated by the Comisión, and the further development of seguridad ciudadana and convivencia policies aimed at controlling violence, along with the unfolding of these topics both at scholarly and governmental circles, resemble what Ian Hacking (1995:6) calls a public dynamic. According to this author, public dynamics are «the dynamics of relations between people who are known about, knowledge about them, and the knowers».

In the case at hand, Hacking’s idea of public dynamic is used to refer to the advent of the notion of “common violence” and derived conceptual frames (e.g. cultura de la violencia) and their effect in the definition and redefinition of violence as a phenomenon affecting the Colombian population. Schematically, such an advent and further processes can be characterized by three general movements: initial attempts of the violentólogos to address violence outside the realm of armed conflict and political violence, which would be more or less endorsed by other local scholars working on these same topics; efforts undertaken by both violentólogos and other local scholars to put forward the urgency of adopting preventative governmental treatments of violence and any means of treating this phenomenon by going beyond the customary use of public force; and the gradual—but to some extent accelerated—incorporation of predominantly quantitative and increasingly technical approaches to violence and its management. The following pages look into...

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71 This is the case with Alvaro Camacho, a recognized violentólogo working on urban violence, who in 1995 was appointed as Bogotá’s advisor on seguridad ciudadana and convivencia. Camacho not only set important bases for initiatives aimed at reducing crime and violence in the Colombian capital, but also participated actively in governmental initiatives on security during the 1990’s.
vagaries, unfoldings, and shifts that characterize these processes, as well as into their effects within academic and expert circles.

**Pioneer Strategies for Tackling Violence**

"Could you please turn the volume down?" Alvaro says to the waitress after asking for two black coffees and an ashtray. In Bogotá, Fridays are somehow louder. We just had lunch in a crowded restaurant near the Universidad de Los Andes, where both of us now work. I met him several years ago, in 1997, when I started working at the IEPRI, a social research center at the Universidad Nacional. Academically recognized, the IEPRI is also locally known for being sort of the symbolic home of the violentólogos. When I first met Alvaro, he was main director of the IEPRI. After lunch we walked to a nearby coffee shop. In the past hour and a half we have been talking about my work; now after a sip of black coffee I begin asking Alvaro about the earliest reference to *convivencia* both as a governmental policy and as one linked to *seguridad ciudadana*. Well—he replies—for Bogotá, the earliest more or less similar attempt that I know was "the good neighbor" campaign promoted by Pastrana when he was mayor of the city. Later on, the Castro administration also sought to somehow promote these topics. However—he continues after a quick drag—the earliest direct reference to *convivencia* was during the Gaviria administration. This was through the two national strategies to reduce violence, but particularly through the second one. According to Rafael Pardo, who at that time was national advisor on security, the book *Colombia, Violencia y Democracia* was a main reference in designing these strategies, especially the second one. He says, before sipping his coffee.
In May 1991, the Colombian government issued the first phase of the *Estrategia Nacional contra la Violencia* (National Strategy to Reduce Violence), which was meant to serve for organizing a governmental security program. It was an innovative—at the time—initiative for managing both “social” and political modalities of violence that prevailed in the country. The designing of this strategy was led and promoted by Rafael Pardo, who during the Gaviria administration was appointed first as Presidential Advisor on Defense and National Security, and then as Minister of Defense.\(^72\) He introduced important changes and innovative initiatives, including the *Estrategia Nacional Contra la Violencia*. A group of young scholars, who at this time were working at the Presidential Advisor’s Office on Defense and National Security, and a group of members of public armed forces were in charge of designing this strategy. Additionally, draft versions of the strategy were discussed with scholars locally recognized for their work on security and defense, including some of the above-mentioned violentólogos.

In October 1993 and under the title “*Seguridad Para la Gente*” (Security for the People), the Colombian government sanctioned the second phase of the *Estrategia Nacional Contra la Violencia*. This document was a pioneer attempt to put into practice the principles regarding *seguridad ciudadana* and *convivencia* introduced by the 1991 Colombian Constitution. As such, it is one of the very first documents issued by the national government that endorses a definition of *seguridad ciudadana*, which according to this document, is «a state or condition of well-being, in which both pacific resolution of conflicts and wide interaction between authorities and communities prevail»

\(^{72}\) The appointment of Pardo as Minister marked a significant shift in governmental crime and violence managing in the recent history of the country. He was the first civilian taking charge of the Ministry of Defense, a position that until then was traditionally occupied by the main commander of the Colombian Army. Since then, only civilians have been appointed for this same position.
(Presidencia de la República de Colombia 1993:11 my translation from Spanish). Similarly, this document addresses convivencia as a governmental goal that relates directly to the above-defined seguridad ciudadana, and foresees its generation through creating and improving of mechanisms for conflict resolution (Presidencia de la República de Colombia 1993).

As Alvaro Camacho told me that Friday afternoon, the second phase of the Estrategia Nacional Contra la Violencia echoes several ideas posed by the violentólogos in 1987. It concurs in stating that highest percent of Colombians were victims of acts of violence that don’t relate to political violence. Additionally, it echoes recommendations made by these scholars for reducing urban violence, particularly homicides: acting upon alcohol consumption and controlling the carrying of firearms by citizens. Nevertheless, Camacho would also pose strong and—to some extent—illuminating critiques to this document. This is a notable initiative, but also a half-baked attempt—Camacho wrote in 1994. The document defines seguridad ciudadana in terms of pacific resolution of conflicts and citizen participation, but fails in establishing areas of intervention for these purposes. Rather, established main areas of intervention relate more to menaces against the State than to those affecting citizens’ personal safety on daily basis. This failure had at its base what Camacho refers to as a governmental misunderstanding of state and society as equal and as the same, which is clearly expressed a central statement included in the official document: «the security of the State is the security of the people.» Besides—he continues—Seguridad Para la Gente reduces citizens’ protection to the protection of defenseless “good citizens” against “dangerous classes,” by means of strengthening

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73 These two aspects have been two main areas of governmental intervention through security and coexistence initiatives that have been adopted and implemented in Colombian cities in the past decade.
public forces mainly in their coercive capability. Meanwhile – Camacho concludes— the official document treats in a quite abstract manner those aspects that more clearly related to citizens’ welfare and that are at the base of an actual policy on seguridad ciudadana. This is the case with elements such as mechanisms to improve social relationships, democracy, justice, and equality (Camacho 1994).

Seguridad para la Gente and Camacho’s critiques of this document reveal uneasy governmental translations of the ideas posed in 1987 by the violentólogos into official efforts to reduce violence. Moreover, they reveal governmental and academic struggles to define and put into practice both seguridad ciudadana and convivencia. Similar translations and struggles are also present in governmental efforts that since the early 1990s have been cast as seguridad ciudadana and convivencia programs, particularly in the Colombian capital and in major Colombian cities such as Medellín and Cali. Recent initiatives and pioneer attempts to forge convivencia and seguridad ciudadana in Colombia have not only had to struggle to translate academic ideas into governmental actions, their main struggle has been the one intrinsic to the managing of violence affecting people’s daily lives in a country overflowing with violence. «The lives of most Colombians born after the Second World War and, in particular, after the massive insurrection flowing the assassination of the popular leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán on April 9,1948, have been spent under the sing of violence» –Gonzalo Sánchez wrote a few years ago (2001:1)– «Although this is quite often perceived as simple repetition of previous experiences, it is, in fact, a violence that has progressively invades all spheres of public and private life,» he added.
By the mid 1990's notions of cultura de la violencia (culture of violence), convivencia (coexistence), seguridad ciudadana (citizen security) and "common" violence, along with concepts such as intolerancia (lack of tolerance), aggressiveness, and even collective madness had become part of a regular lexicon used both within and beyond academic and governmental circles for addressing Colombian experiences of violence and of the lack of personal safety. The country witnessed the bloom of a variety of diagnoses and interpretative statements regarding such overwhelming violence. These diagnoses and interpretative statements began to flood Colombia in the early 1990s and by the second half of that decade had already become common characterizations and widespread explanations of violence.

Verdicts about violence in Colombia that became popular in the early and mid-1990's, partially adopt the violentólogos' diagnosis, which was released in the late 1980s. These verdicts were common expressions of ongoing efforts to put forward the notion of

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24 For details on the work of these scholars and further developments, as well as for analytical insights on their impact in terms of local understandings of violence in the Colombia of the late 20th century see Villaveces (1998)
“common” violence – that is, to render violence as a phenomenon affecting Colombians’ daily lives and as one whose roots were not confined to political and armed confrontation. At the same time they express the aim of putting forward the need of scientific diagnoses and interventions to control violence. The latter was particularly the case with alternative and preventative initiatives. Emergent diagnoses that incarnated such efforts gained relevance due to relatively recent experiences of untamed acts of violence that in an almost daily basis fashion had had Colombians cities as their main scenarios through the late 1980s and early 1990s. These acts had at their base the drug lords’ merciless war against both the Colombian State and all those who had stood against drug trafficking or who had supported extradition. To be sure, these were not the only acts of violence that affected Colombians’ daily lives in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Neither was drug trafficking the only cause of violence, nor were drug lords and cartels the single perpetrators of it. Still, in those years, narco-terrorism and acts of violence linked to drug trafficking exacerbated experiences of violence in Colombia and especially in its major cities.

In this context, emergent diagnoses that addressed violence as “common” and sought to render visible everyday experiences of violence outside armed conflict would become particularly appealing. Yet, while giving visibility to those experiences, they would at the same time hide some of their salient perpetrators: drug trafficking and organized crime. Making visible and hiding are not simple procedures. Their partial fulfillment and uneasy relations are clearly expressed in the texts and images reproduced above. For instance, they depict daily scenes and acts of violence that don’t relate to armed conflict or to organized crime, but at the same time they include elements –and even acts– that relate to
modalities of violence clearly linked to organized criminal structures. Nevertheless, these popularized diagnoses would stress the "common" nature of violence by means of both emphasizing how common people are its main victims, and highlighting its main causes: Colombians' generalized aggressiveness, lack of non-violent means for solving problems, and endemic use of violence.

The extensive use of the term "common" violence, due in great part to the widespread circulation of these popular and illustrated diagnoses, helped in transforming what initially was a mainly descriptive concept—for referring to diverse incidents involving violence—into a category that would be used to classified those incidents as violent. The emergence of this category, thus, implied an expansion of what would be understood as violence. Its extensive use signified a growing number of incidents that since then would be considered under the category "violent." The increment of violence in the Colombia of the late 20th century, particularly in its cities, however was not a mere semantic effect. During those years homicides increased at a dramatic pace. Already growing figures of violence would increase due to dynamics and trends in violence and by the adoption of a new category: "common" violence. Importantly, the classification as violent of a larger range of behaviors and incidents would reinforce the idea of endemic and generalized violence. Additionally, this would provide a prosperous terrain for further diagnoses and governmental initiatives that would endorse understandings of violence in terms of a continuum from minor conflicts to grave acts of violence, thus a continuum from coexistence to citizen security.

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75 According to data from official records, between 1990 and 2003 the average homicide rate (homicides per 100,000 population) in Colombia was 66. The average homicide rate for this same period in major Colombian cities was 48 in Bogotá, 240 in Medellín, and 98 in Cali. Highest rates during this period and in these three cities concentrate in the first part of the 1990s and were: 80 in Bogotá, 419 in Medellín, and 132 in Cali. The highest national homicide rate in this period also correspond to the early 1990s and was 79.
The adoption of understandings of violence linked to these diagnoses and to their effort to put forward definitions of “common” violence both within academic circles and at governmental spheres, along with the further development of coexistence and citizen security policies that would endorse them, might be better understood in terms of what Barbara Nelson (Nelson 1984) describes as processes of setting public agendas pertaining to social problems. According to her, both mass media coverage and the popularization of scientific findings pertaining to a given social problem, along with what is politically suitable, that is the topics and ways of addressing specific social problems that are most likely to succeed, play a salient role in setting public agenda processes. In Colombia, through the 1990’s daily headlines, chronicles, and reports flooded national newspapers with a myriad of frightening episodes of violence: doctors being killed by their patients, defenseless citizens shot to death at any street, insane taxi drivers robbing and killing their passengers, raped women assaulted in public buses, random shootings at any public or private building (see Colombian newspapers El Espectador and El Tiempo between 1990 and 2003). Such an untamed and daily violence was also depicted through what would become one of the most common genres to address violence: numeric reports, statistics, charts, percentages, and rates. Though the 1990’s, this genre –along with diagnoses and chronicles pertaining to violence– became common features of daily newspapers (See On Information / Information Inc.as well as El Espectador and El Tiempo between 1990 and 2003).

Along with these narratives, contemporary governmental initiatives pertaining to the reduction of violence have recognized the more or less generalized effects of violence in peoples’ everyday lives, but had avoided dealing explicitly with highly organized
criminal structures. Rather, these initiatives have underlined the effects of the occurrence of crime and violence of elements such as: the lack of "civilized" behaviors, the lack of control upon risk factors, a series of somehow insane behaviors, or the effects of elements such as disordered spaces and gaps between the police and the people. In this milieu two trends in studying and diagnosing violence would gain a salient role in what Nelson calls setting public agenda processes. This is the case with the epidemiology of violence and the economics of violence. Although differently, and putting forward interpretations of violence that to some extent oppose to each other, in the past few years epidemiological and economic approaches have introduced increasingly technical ways of managing violence.

**ACADEMIC EXPERTISE (S) AND SAVVY EXPERTS: THE SURVEYING OF SUCH A WOUNDING VIOLENCE**

I hate nametags as much as drinking out of Styrofoam cups. But conferences are more than scholars pretending they don’t care that a secretary misspelled their names, nice clothes with marks left by cheap pins, and a ruined coffee aftertaste. They are also about scholarly small talk: Who chats with whom, what do they talk about, who handles his business card. Likewise, they involve elaborated hierarchies: Who presents a paper and who makes commentaries on it, who is on this or that panel. Moreover, they are ruled by a subtle academic protocol: who is invited, who is expected to cancel, who will surely show up, and who hopefully won’t. Wandering around conferences is a way of starting the mapping of local academic networks and intricate territories. So it was in making sense of networks and territories in which local scholars and experts working on violence, crime, security, and coexistence circulate. Like that conference in 2001 to which only
epidemiologists and municipal workers were invited; or the one in 2003, in which epidemiologists had their own panel, while economists were almost all over the place, and some violentólogos were invited to comment on some of the presented papers.

Indeed, in contemporary Colombia epidemiologists and economists are not the only ones studying violence and crime (for a map of scholarly trends among those engaged in the study of violence see among others: Llorente and Rivas Gamboa 2004; Rubio 1999; Sánchez G and Peñaranda 1991). Neither are their studies the only references available on these topics. Nor, again, are epidemiological and economic works always taken as primary sources for designing governmental initiatives in these areas. However, both epidemiology and economics have played a central role in designing and assessing recent governmental initiatives aimed at reducing violence and crime. The remaining sections of this chapter seek to characterize these two fields as they address violence in Colombia. They additionally examine ways by which epidemiology and economics have become sources of reference for designing and implementing public policies aimed at controlling crime and violence in Colombia.

**The Epidemiology of Violence**

In its most basic definition, epidemiology is "a branch of medical science that deals with the incidence, distribution, and control of disease in a population" (Merrian-Webster ). It addresses violence as a non-infectious disease by counting injuries –fatal and nonfatal-- caused through violence and by examining elements that are most commonly associated with the occurrence of these injuries. From this perspective violence is a non-infectious disease that becomes a public health issue when it affects the welfare of a population. In practice, epidemiology often describes violence in terms of the number of homicides –
fatal injuries caused by others—and those elements that are most commonly associated with this kind of violent murder. Thus, epidemiological studies of violence have as their main source forensic reports of victims of homicides.

This approach to violence is at the base of seguridad ciudadana and convivencia policies implemented in Bogotá since 1995, particularly those oriented towards controlling alcohol consumption and the carrying of firearms. The ways of implementing these policies in Bogotá and the campaigns through which local authorities promoted them were strongly tied to the political style of Antanas Mockus and of his Administration (see Municipal Arts). The guiding principles of these policies, however, address the epidemiological approach used a few years earlier in designing similar policies in Cali, another Colombian city.

**Epidemic Violence (s): Risk Factors and In-Tolerance Spirals.**

In contemporary Colombia, the epidemiology of violence is often associated with Rodrigo Guerrero. He is commonly recognized as the creator of this approach to violence and as its main promoter both within the country and in international organizations like the Pan-American Health Organization-PAHO and the Inter-American Development Bank-IDB (See Modeling and Marketing of Citizen Security and Peaceful Coexistence).

"...Once elected mayor [of Cali] and having acquired the compromise of resolving the issue [of security] I called together political and civic forces in the city (ex-members of guerrilla groups, the communist party, unions, the association of industrialists, the chamber of commerce, the bishop, the universities, etc.). For three months we met periodically to define a plan of action that afterward was named DESEPAZ, acronym for Development, Security, and Peace...As one could expect, due to my epidemiological
training, I influenced the group in adopting a strategy recommended within epidemiology for studying and controlling diseases of unknown origin (this is why there was a lot of emphasis on the use of information; on the study of descriptive variables such as time, manner, and place; on identifying risk factors, etc.). At that time we began to call this work the "epidemiology of violence,"" Guerrero said, endorsing such an intellectual paternity when I interviewed him by email in April 2001. "All this began during my campaign running for mayor of Cali. At this time I accepted the challenge of making out of security a priority for governmental action. I did this in spite of what advisors recommended: to address and emphasize more positive and tangible things. I talk about this in some of the papers that I'm sending you," he added, attaching several articles and papers.

In 2000, Andrés Villaveces, a Colombian medical doctor and Ph.D. in epidemiology who had recently evaluated the impact of official bans on carrying firearms in Cali and Bogotá, was my first contact with the epidemiology of violence in Colombia. I first contacted him by email. Also by email he introduced me to Rodrigo Guerrero and Alberto Cóncha-Eastman, as well as to others who have been working with Guerrero in promoting an epidemiological approach to violence in Colombia. As not directly associated to initiatives led by Guerrero, but also salient in positioning a public health approach to violence in Colombia, Villaveces mentioned Saul Franco. I would meet him a few years later in Bogotá. A Colombian medical doctor and professor at la Universidad Nacional, he is recognized in academic circles both in Colombia and elsewhere in Latin America, where he and his works are known for putting forward the study of violence as a public health issue and for a holistic approach.
There are slight but important conceptual differences between the work of Guerrero and the work of Franco, which are expressed in the definition of violence that each of them embraces. In defining violence, Guerrero adopts the definition proposed and used by the Center for Injury Prevention at the Center of Disease Control-CDC in Atlanta. According to this definition, violence is «...the use of, or the threat of using, physical force with the intent of doing harm to others or oneself» (Guerrero 1996:96). Meanwhile, Franco proposes a more extended and somewhat complex definition of violence. According to him, it is

...the imposition of force in the service of a particular interest or group of interests. It consists of acts committed asymmetrically and in a specific direction, with the consequent denial or limitation of one or more of the rights of its victims. It is not, as is generally believed, the product of genetic determination, randomness, or the absence of logic. It is a conscious and intelligent human activity with a clearly defined purpose that arises from development of certain types of relationships between humans. It is, accordingly, both changing and historic. It is expressed in concrete acts but requires and assumes particular contexts, motives, legalities, and value systems. However, it does not end with the acts themselves, but rather generates new processes and responses, producing individual and collective changes and consequences (Franco 1997:171).

Differences between the epidemiology of violence incarnated by Guerrero and the study of violence from a public health perspective that Franco represents are also expressed in the ways in which the work of each uses epidemiology to address violence. In a simplified manner, these differences can be summarized as follow: The epidemiology of violence is the core and most central aspect in the approach to violence proposed by Guerrero. His works and the works developed within this approach often focus on punctual modalities of violence and are oriented towards the design of specific measures seeking to ameliorate their effects. On the other hand, in the holistic public health approach proposed by Franco, epidemiology is one among many tools used to address
this phenomenon. Works within this approach often address elements beyond epidemiological measurements such as cultural and historical processes, contextual aspects at the national level, and acts of violence such as massacres and social cleansing that are not subjects of an epidemiological account and analysis.

Although their works exhibit important differences, Guerrero and Franco coincide in several basic points. Both of them stress the nature of violence in Colombia as epidemic but at the same time subject to prevention. They also agree on the relevance of public health and epidemiological tools for making political decisions and defining governmental actions. Regarding this, both authors underline the urgency and advantages of improving information systems on crime and violence. At a more general level, their works lean towards a characterization of violence in Colombia as a phenomenon closely tied to the widespread lack of tolerance among Colombians and their failure or unwillingness to solve problems through non-violent means.

Laying out differences and similarities between these two authors is helpful for examining how these fields relate to local understandings of violence and governmental initiatives to contest it. For this same purpose, it is worth looking at differences in the circulation of these to figures and their works. The work of Franco and the approach to violence that he represents are more commonly addressed by scholars working on violence and by governmental employees who have an extensive training in epidemiology and public health. Similarly, differences between his proposed approach and the approach used by Guerrero are more clearly identified by these two groups. On the other hand, public workers engaged in the design and adoption of policies that address epidemiological principles are often familiar with the work and approach of
Guerrero but seldom address Franco’s work and public health holistic approach that distinguishes it. Among these workers, as is also the case with epidemiological literature that circulate within governmental settings, to say “Rodrigo Guerrero” is almost synonymous with saying “epidemiology of violence.”

The circulation of Rodrigo Guerrero and Saul Franco and of their ideas serve to characterize the ways in which epidemiology and public health have influenced local understandings of violence and governmental attempts to contest this phenomenon. More than the approach to violence proposed by Franco, the one put forward by Guerrero is at the core of the epidemiology of violence that since the early and mid 1990’s Colombian authorities have addressed as a useful and promising tool for designing initiatives to reduce the effects of violence.

**LOCAL GENEALOGIES: OBSCURE PAST AND BRIGHT RE-INVENTIONS**

The epidemiology of violence –so enthusiastically addressed as a novel approach to violence and governmental tool to manage this phenomenon in the Colombia of the late 20th century– has, however, a long history among Colombian medical doctors, particularly among those trained in public health. This local history goes back to the Medellín of the early 1960’s, where in November 1962 the First Colombian Congress on Public Health took place. Back then, Hector Abad Gómez, a Colombian medical doctor, proposed to advance epidemiological studies of violence. His talk was published soon after under the appealing title: *La Violencia Necesita Estudios Epidemiológicos* (violence needs epidemiological studies) in *Tribuna Médica*, a local and weekly publication on medical topics.
The almost 2 pages article published in 1962 came to my knowledge as part of the thick package of photocopies that a member of the National Institute of Medicine handed to me when conducting preliminary field research in Bogotá in 2001. It is perhaps the earliest published epidemiological effort to address violence in Colombia. In it, Abad Gomez proposes to understand violence in Colombia as a public health issue. For defining violence as such, he addresses both the work of Charles E. Winslow, who in 1920 pointed out the prolongation of life as one of the main purposes of public health, and the public health principles recently endorsed by the World Health Organization, which relegated to this field the seeking of the population’s full enjoyment of physical, mental, and social welfare. Based on e-codes to designate death by external cause (from E.980 to E.955) used in the Annual Demographics published by the United Nations, Abad Gómez defines violence in terms of homicides and injuries intentionally inflicted by others (Abad Gómez 1962:11). Following this, he characterizes violence as

...a worldwide and epidemic disease, generated by the human mind, which sometimes becomes pandemic like during world wars, but more frequently expresses itself though national epidemic outbreaks in certain countries and regions. The causes of these outbreaks are sometimes known such as national, religious, or political fanaticism, but some other times haven’t been fully studied. In Colombia, this epidemic outbreaks, national or confined to large areas, have had known causes and have become too common. (Abad Gómez 1962:11).

Along with these definitions, Abad Gómez proffers national statistics and epidemiological analyses akin to the ones offered by more recent epidemiological works on violence. As it is with more recent literature in the epidemiology of violence, Abad Gómez stresses the multiplicity of causes generating violence, on the urgency of addressing it through scientific methods, and on its variation through time and space. His argument, however, differs from the one that guides contemporary efforts to promote and
adopt the epidemiology of violence in Colombia. In Abad Gómez's proposal the metaphorical use of the word "disease" for describing violence is less metaphorical than it is in most recent literature. "Why does an individual get ill with violence? What makes this disease a transmissible one? Under what circumstances it is more likely to spread out through large human groups? What kinds of individuals are more likely to get it? What form does it take in different types of individuals? What form does it take in different times? And what form does it take in different regions?" (Abad Gómez 1962:12). These are some of the questions that he proposes to answer through an epidemiology of violence. In posing them he stresses the study of individuals that exercise violence. The main source of such an epidemiology of violence is, thus, the study of perpetrators of violence.

This proposal was one among many academic attempts that in the 1960's and early one the 20th century equally focused on perpetrators of violence in seeking to explain the magnitude and permanence of this phenomenon in Colombia. Some of the hypotheses posed at this time build on racial, demographic, and psychiatric elements as main explanatory causes and elements to consider in seeking to manage and reduce violence. These and similar arguments have been refuted within academic circles. However, they have significant elements in common with hypotheses posed more recently. These common elements include the emphasis on using scientific methods for addressing and contesting violence, the use of scientific knowledge derived from public health, social sciences and psychiatry to do so, an understanding of violence as a phenomenon strongly linked to a widespread incapability of resolving issues through non-violent means, and
the conception of violence as a phenomenon that is subject to prevention. The search for alternative ways of addressing and controlling violence is also a salient common element.

... It is interesting to advance these hypotheses and in this way to avoid means of "solución a la brava" (solutions by force) that are deployed on a daily basis. Or the similla similibus corantur often deployed in trying to cure violence with violence. As we have already seen through a long historical period, the main outcome of these methods is the exacerbation of violence. (Abad Gómez 1962:10).

The First Colombian Congress on Public Health echoed these ideas in a manifesto that claimed the urgency of advancing epidemiological analysis of violence in Colombia in order to prevent future outbreaks of this phenomenon. Neither this manifesto nor the ideas exposed by Abad Gómez had a salient impact in the addressing of violence in the Colombia of the mid 20th century. In fact, in the local literature on violence, the short article published in Tribuna Médica proposal stands as a solitary first reference of the attempt to introduce a public health and epidemiological approach to violence. Almost ten years later, in 1970 Vicente Jimenez, a medical doctor working in Cali, published "Epidemiología de las muertes por causas externas" (Epidemiology of deaths due to external causes) in Acta Médica del Valle, an academic local journal (in Caicedo 1989).

These two articles published between 1962 and 1970 constitute the core of a scattered literature that marked the earliest attempts to use epidemiological approaches in studying and managing violence in Colombia. Nevertheless, it is possible to deduce that the use of public health and epidemiology for such a study continued through the work of these two and other medical doctors. Reading between the lines in the latter literature it is clear that at least courses on public health and violence were taught at academic centers such as the Escuela Nacional de Salud Pública in Medellín. However, the publication of various
epidemiological and public health studies of violence wasn't until the 1980's, when several articles and compilations appeared.

This literature has similarities but also differences with the proposal launched by Abad Gomez's in the early 1960's. Doctors advocating for an epidemiological and public health approaches to violence in the 1980's in Colombia included considerations on mental and psychiatric aspects. Through these considerations their works address perpetrators, even if not in an extensive and detailed manner as Abad Gomez did two decades earlier. Unlike the work of this author, works published in the 1980's concentrate on victims, rather than perpetrators. They also privilege the analysis of local dynamics instead of national ones, and point out specific risk factors such as alcohol consumption and carrying firearms.

Neither the literature from the 1980s nor the one published two decades earlier is referred to in the most recent literature on the epidemiology of violence and the use of public health to approach violence in Colombia. Works published in these fields in the 1990's seldom, if ever, make reference to the pioneer article of Abad Gómez or to the works that followed it. This silence might relate to the lack of knowledge of this earlier literature. It might also respond to academic politics involved in the generation of new fields of knowledge production. In this sense it is worth pointing out how, for instance, Guerrero uses definitions and conceptual elements from the CDC in Atlanta but doesn't address literature published a few years earlier on the epidemiology of violence in Cali and elsewhere in Colombia. On the other hand, such silence might in part also be due to conceptual differences and shifting academic trends between earlier and contemporary

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76 When in 2001 I pointed out the articles on the epidemiology of violence written by Abad Gómez in 1962 to Andrés Villaveces and through him to Rodrigo Guerrero, both of them were surprised. Guerrero, was particularly explicit about the interesting and surprising finding of this publication.
works. In this sense, a major difference is the shift from focusing on perpetrators, as was proposed in the early 1960's and still addressed in the 1980's, to exclusively focusing on victims, as is more common nowadays.

In spite of the silence and conceptual differences pointed out above, there are important continuities between earlier and more recent literature on public health and epidemiological approaches to violence. For instance, in both cases violence is conceived as an epidemic phenomenon but one that is subject of prevention. Similarly, in all these literatures there is a call for using so-called more scientific approaches to violence, instead of contesting it through violence. Also both earlier and more recent works stress the non-inherent nature of violence in Colombia but relate its permanence to certain widespread willingness to solve problems and disputes through violent means. As such, they lean towards a characterization of violence as the product of casual disputes framed by a widespread lack of tolerance and capability to use peaceful means in resolving these disputes.

**MEDICAL TWISTS IN AMELIORATING VIOLENCE**

Local genealogies of epidemiological and public health approaches to violence in Colombia show a relatively long—even if partially obscure—tradition within academic and medical circles. How could we explain that these approaches had for decades remained somehow confined to those limited circles, and only recently had gained a salient position in the design of governmental initiatives aimed at contesting violence? What traditions and trends within epidemiology and public health have gained such a salient position in governmental arenas? Which debates and trends still remain confined to academic and more specialized circles? How could we explain that publicity and this
confinement? In other words, why and by what means was the epidemiology of violence inserted into governmental spheres in the 1990’s and, since then, has become a governmental tool for contesting violence in Colombia?

The governmental adoption of epidemiology to manage violence in contemporary Colombia relates to endeavors undertaken by the above-mentioned medical doctor Rodrigo Guerrero and Juan Luis Londoño, an economist who at this time had been recently appointed as Minister of Health. These two figures would play a central role not only in the insertion of the epidemiology of violence in Colombian governmental spheres, but also in its insertion into extra-local initiatives aimed at controlling and managing violence in the country and elsewhere in Latin America. This is the case with the citizen security and peaceful coexistence programs sponsored through a loan-project by the Inter-American Development Bank-IDB that is discussed later on this dissertation.

To some extent, the personal and professional networks of both Guerrero and Londoño boosted the “public” inclusion of the epidemiology of violence. Its successful “public” inclusion, however, might be better understood as a byproduct of extra-local initiatives mentioned and addressed elsewhere, and, on the other hand, a broad adoption by both the national and local government of epidemiological and public health principles in designing initiatives and models of intervention. At that time, to mention just some examples, epidemiology and public health became frequently used tools to address a variety of issues including alcohol consumption, epidemics of cholera, widespread types of flu, and even aggressive behaviors. Also at this time, epidemiology and public health were main sources and points of references in campaigns seeking to prevent AIDS and
promote the use of condoms. The Colombian government massively launched these campaigns in the early and mid 1990’s.

The insertion of epidemiological approaches into governmental ways of addressing violence was also through the institutionalization of state agencies meant to officially address violence according to epidemiological ways of approaching this phenomenon. This is the case with the Centro de Referencia Nacional Sobre Violencia CRNV (National Center for Reference on Violence) that was created in 1995 (See On Information/Information Inc.). This is also the case with the Comité de Vigilancia Epidemiológica de Lesiones de Cause Externa (Committee on Epidemiological Surveillance of Externally Inflicted Injuries) that since 1996 convenes in Bogotá (See Municipal Arts). Although these and other entities that endorse the epidemiology of violence have been institutionalized, their approach to violence has remained confined to specific modalities of violence and to those agencies that deal directly with such modalities. Similarly, the use of the epidemiology of violence in designing governmental initiatives has only been through punctual measures. For instance, and perhaps with the exception of municipal Cali in the early 1990’s, local authorities in Colombian cities have not necessarily endorsed the epidemiology of violence as main way of approaching violence, but they have frequently translated epidemiological approaches to violence into semi-dry laws and bans on carrying firearms. Measures of this sort were implemented in the early 1990’s in Cali and since the mid 1990’s in Bogotá (See Municipal Arts).

The adoption of these measures in the Colombian capital has been simultaneous to significant drops in city homicide rate. Although city homicide rate began diminishing in 1994, a year before the implementation of these measures, they had been frequently
proclaimed and commonly accepted as main causes for city achievements in the reduction of violence. By the late 1990's statements supporting such a direct causality between epidemiologically inspired measures and the reduction of violence seemed to be winning a long debate between those advocating for these measures and the ones contesting them. This, however, is far from being a closed debate, or one in which winners and losers are clearly definable.

**THE ECONOMY OF VIOLENCE AND VIOLENT CRIME**

"Have you heard about the latest research by the CEDE at the Universidad de Los Andes?" Hugo Acero, the city advisor on security for the past three administrations, asked me. "No, I haven't," I replied, making a note to myself about searching for both the people working at the CEDE on these topics and their research reports. "Well you should also take a look at that," he added, before ordering his secretary to print a hard copy of his latest document on the reduction of violence in Bogotá, which in part was also a response to findings reported by the CEDE. At ten after eight in the morning and after an hour and a half interview, I left Hugo’s office with a list of people to contact and a hard copy of Hugo’s thick document in my backpack.

In summer 2001 I went back to Bogotá for conducting preliminary research. Hugo was already—and would be even more—a key person in my research. Interviewing him was critical for mapping possible research sites and topics. Few weeks later, I met some of the scholars working at the Centro de Estudios sobre Desarrollo Económico CEDE (Center for the Study of Economic Development). "It is quite clear that homicides have dropped significantly, but most important it is not at all true that people will kill each other anywhere in the street out of an impulse or because they are drunk. That is so not true,"
Fabio Sánchez said while stirring his soup. We had lunch for the first time at a Colombian restaurant near the Bogotá office of the CEPAL (Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean). At that time Fabio used to work part time at the CEPAL and part time at the Universidad de Los Andes, where he was researcher at the CEDE and professor at the School of Economics. Few weeks later we had lunch with him and María Victoria Llorente, another researcher at the CEDE and co-author of the report that a few weeks ago Hugo had brought up. After an hour or so of going back and forth between numbers and references to investigations done elsewhere, I had barely touched my tomato and basil pasta. I couldn’t put my finger on what seemed to be an interesting but somehow radical view of urban crime, violence, and security.

Radical and controversial—for the national context—points of view, along with the emphasis on the use of empirical, mostly quantitative, data for analyzing violence, armed conflict, and crime are main characteristics of the work conducted by Paz Pública (Public Peace), a group of scholars that since 1996 have worked on these topics at the CEDE. They have put forward diagnoses of violence and crime in Colombia that contest commonly accepted hypotheses regarding these phenomena. Additionally, these scholars have critically assessed governmental initiatives aimed at controlling crime and violence, which draw on those commonly accepted hypotheses. In 1999, municipal Bogotá hired María Victoria Llorente, Rodolfo Escobedo, Camilo Echandía, and Mauricio Rubio—all of them either working at the CEDE or closely related to this research center—to characterize violence resulting in homicides in the capital. The main findings of their research were published in 2002 by the Mayor’s Office and were presented as part of municipal efforts to advance in understanding and analyzing crime and violence in the
city. However, the findings of the research conducted by CEDE researches were controversial. They, to some extent, contradicted municipal interpretations of the outstanding reduction of violence recently witnessed by Bogotá. By using mainly economic approaches to violence, these researchers showed that semi-dry laws as well as the combination of voluntary surrender of weapons and general bans on carrying firearms implemented in Bogotá had contributed, at best, in 14% and 8% respectively in the city homicide reduction.

Findings and recommendations included in the controversial CEDE’s report were contested by municipal Bogotá and only partially adopted by local authorities. However, this research project was a milestone event in the introduction of an economic approach to crime and violence for addressing both these phenomena and their governmental treatment at the municipal level. What understandings of violence lie behind this approach? In what senses do these quantitative analyses differ from the epidemiological ones? How does this economic approach and resulting diagnoses relate to the ones derived from other fields that were put forward a few years ago? In which ways governmental agencies address economic approaches to crime and violence when designing and implementing initiatives cast as *seguiridad ciudadana* and *convivencia* policies?

**CONTESTING RANDOM VIOLENCE AND THE LACK OF TOLERANCE**

The widespread and random nature of violence along with relations of causality between acts of violence and a somehow generalized Colombian lack of tolerance and trend towards the use of violence for dealing with conflictual situations, are two ideas that scholars working at the CEDE have strongly sought to contest. Acts of violence in
Colombia, according to them, might be alarmingly frequent but are far from occurring anywhere or to be perpetrated by everybody. Rather, these kinds of acts concentrate in areas where, for instance, the existence of criminal structures and organizations facilitates the perpetration of violent crimes and at the same time hinder the capability of controlling violence (Echandía 2000; Llorente, Escobedo et al. 2001; Rubio 1999; Sánchez and Núñez Méndez 2001). Economic understandings of violence endorsed by scholars working at the CEDE are based on complex cost-benefit relations. In a simplified way, violence is more frequent where and when costs involved in perpetrating violent acts are lower than potential rewards or benefits derived from these kinds of acts. Violence, thus, is likely to be controlled and to some extent prevented by reducing potential benefits derived from violent acts or by increasing the cost of perpetrating them. Far from being the product of impulsive behaviors, violence and violent acts respond to more or less rational cost-benefit relations.

Consequently, in Colombia governmental efforts in this area have been somewhat misguided. Educating people on citizens’ behaviors and civilian codes, or promoting tolerance might be desirable and in some degree increase people’s support for specific policies, but they have little to do with actual reductions in violence. If wanting to efficiently tackle violence authorities should focus on breaking down positive cost-benefit relations tied to the perpetration of violent acts. Additionally, in order to be efficient, policies need to be directed towards those areas where violence is more frequent. For instance, restricting people’s access to firearms might help in reducing violence, but doing so in an entire city is highly inefficient in terms of reducing violence.
In contesting generalized hypotheses on crime and violence in Colombia, researchers at the CEDE have put forward vigorous critiques, particularly against what they call Inspirational Myths for Public Policies. These myths refer to explanations of violence in Colombia that build upon the notion of cultura de la violencia (culture of violence) and those that build upon the existence of causas objetivas (objective causes) of violence. Against these widespread explanations of violence in Colombia, researchers at the CEDE have explained violence in terms of organized crime structures and prevailing organized crime. Besides stimulating academic debates, these scholars have posed strong critiques against public policies that endorse those “inspirational myths” (see for instance Llorente, Escobedo et al. 2001; Rubio 1999).

**Local Genealogies: Supply on Demand**

«Such a relative removal from violence is truly evident among most of my fellow economists,» Armando Montenegro stated in 1995. «Our profession has dozens of professionals with good degrees from international universities who produce an amount of work capable of sustaining three or four specialized journals,» the, then, director of the DNP (National Department of Planning) pointed out. «Common topics of study are appealing but quite often don’t relate to some of the most acute problems of the country…economic studies on social problems and more specifically on incentives for perpetrating crimes or on the effects of crime on productivity are much less frequent,» Montenegro added (Montenegro in Deas and Gaitán Daza 1995: IX-X).

These words are part of the prologue to one of the pioneer works in the economic study of violence in Colombia, which is part of *Dos Ensayos Especulativos sobre la*
Violencia en Colombia. This book, published by FONADE and DNP in 1995, includes an essay by Fernando Gaitán, a Colombian economist, that along with the prologue lays out the main features of economic approaches to violence in contemporary Colombia. To begin with, these approaches understand violence as a social problem. Therefore it can basically be addressed as any other social problem within economics. This is through more or less complex calculations of cost-benefit relations in order to explain the dynamics of violence, assess the effectiveness of adopted policies directed towards violence control, and recommend more effective policies for reducing and controlling violence. Another salient feature of the study of violence by contemporary Colombian economists, particularly among those working at the CEDE, is the posing of strong critiques against commonly accepted hypotheses on violence in the country.

Economic studies of violence in Colombia might still be described as somehow incipient. However, in the past few years, economic literature on crime, conflict, and violence in Colombia has grown significantly. Local scholars and policy makers have witnessed the explosion of economic studies of violence in Colombia in the past decade: from studies seeking to measure the magnitude of violence, to works seeking to analyze its impact on resource allocation, production, wealth distributions, or institutional performance; this literature also include studies examining the geographical dimension of violence and its effects, as well as works assessing the impact of governmental policies aimed at controlling violence in the country (for a review of this literature see among others: Llorente and Rivas Gamboa 2004; Rubio 1999; Sánchez and Núñez Méndez 2001). Why have these topics suddenly become subjects of economic studies? Is such a
scholarly explosion a response to the dynamics of violence witnessed by the country in the past decade? Is it the product of academic trends and leaders?

The boom of economic studies of violence in Colombia relates to the creation of the Justice and Security Division at the DNP in 1993, and to the above-mentioned study commissioned to Fernando Gaitán by Armando Montenegro. This was simultaneous with increasing demands for both civilian participation in these topics and detailed knowledge in order to design governmental initiatives for effectively managing violence. Such demands relate to shifts in the governmental management of violence and the providing of security, which took place during the Gaviria administration (1990-1994). These shifts are exemplified by the creation of the Presidential Advisor’s Office on Defense and National Security, and the appointment of a civilian as Minister of Defense. In such a context, economic approaches to violence were not only promoted within governmental institutions, but also increasingly demanded by eager governmental agencies seeking ideas, concepts, and interpretations pertaining to violence that were suitable for designing public policies aimed at reducing it in Colombia (Montenegro in Deas and Gaitán Daza 1995). At the risk of oversimplifying it, the emergence of economic studies of violence in Colombia resembles basic demand and supply relations. However, it also involves networks of power such as those deployed at the DNP and the local academy.

**MICRO AND MACRO MONOPOLIES**

Networks of power among academic centers and governmental offices in contemporary Colombia are at the core of what Alejandro Gaviria casually described as “the carousel.” A vivid image, used by him to refer to his own circulation among academic circles, governmental offices, and international agencies. The same image that I have borrowed
from him to frame my work. One on which he would expand during our interview. "I myself took part in this history," Gaviria, former sub-director of the DNP told me when referring to the starting point of economic studies of violence in Colombia. As a young professional at the DNP in the early 1990's, Gaviria worked closely to economists interested in the study of violence, included Fernando Gaitán. "All this was due to Armando Montenegro's interest on the topic, as well as to the fact that at that time economists who were also interested in it were equally working at the DNP." Gaviria, now researcher at the CEDE, explained to me. "Later on, when I was working on my Ph.D. I had to write a paper. Since I had the data and I was interested in the topic, I worked on this and wrote that article that you have seen." He continued, before addressing more general aspects of the emergence of economic studies of violence in Colombia. "Those were the early 1990's, the era of Pablo Escobar. It was a time when we knew that this was a core issue in addressing development, not only in terms of its relation to the Gross Domestic Product, but a core issue in itself," Gaviria pointed out. "That was the time when the first nucleus in the economic study of violence in Colombia was born. A few years later, part of what had been done there got to the CEDE. It began with Mauricio Rubio. Then, Fabio has kept studying this. Well, I too had some flirting with the topic," he concluded.

Close connections with mainstream governmental agencies, such as the DNP, and a fluid circulation of high-ranking governmental employees and top researchers, are distinguishing features of the CEDE. They are as well of the Economics School at the Universidad de Los Andes, to which the CEDE belongs. Frequently those working at the CEDE also work as advisors for governmental agencies or are appointed to evaluate
 initiatives, design programs, or provide diagnoses. Also very frequently scholars working at the CEDE and at the Economics School move to a high-ranking governmental position or come from a high-ranking governmental position. The CEDE is part of institutional networks, but also researchers working at this center commonly share professional and even social networks with those working at governmental institutions.

Institutional and professional networks, which were vividly described by Gaviria as a carousel, along with the use of economic approaches to violence in generating knowledge that is more or less suitable to be translated into public policies, and the simultaneous development of managerial skills for dealing with governmental and international agencies are at the base of what outside the CEDE might be perceived as an emergent but strong monopoly on consulting and research work on crime, conflict, and violence. Indeed in the past few years, the CEDE has gained a salient position in the production of knowledge on crime, conflict, and violence in Colombia. Scholars associated to this research center exhibit outstanding records of research and consulting projects on these topics. Such a dominant—and even monopolistic—position, however, contrasts with the somewhat secondary place that the study of crime, conflict, and violence has within the CEDE. Out of the handful of scholars working on these topics only a few of them will exclusively devote themselves to the study of crime, conflict, and violence. While they occupy an uneasy position within the CEDE, those working on these as well as other topics perform smoothly as CEDE researchers.

While scholars associated with the CEDE flow smoothly within institutional networks, their findings and ideas pertaining violence are not translated in equally smooth ways into governmental initiatives and interventions. Priced by extra-local developmental agencies
such as the Inter-American Development Bank (See Modeling and Marketing Citizen Security and Peaceful Coexistence), and somehow favored—even if with some reserve—by governmental agencies at the national level, cited scholars working closer to economic perspectives on violence are frequently referred by members of municipal Bogotá as questionable. For instance, findings included in the controversial CEDE’s report on homicides in Bogotá, have seldom if ever been core references in creating seguridad ciudadana and convivencia policies in Bogotá. Rather, municipal authorities have often contested these findings, casting them as missing the point of what violence, crime, and security are in the city.

**LOCAL CIRCULATIONS AND TRANS-LOCAL FLOWS**

“No se mate la cabeza mija (don’t kill yourself gal) digging into all this,” Hugo Acero, city advisor on seguridad ciudadana and convivencia, would tell me on the phone. “Once, I remember, they asked me to theoretically frame my work,” Hugo said, talking as if he were racing against the clock, as he usually does. “When they asked that I said, let me take my work to a frame shop and ask them to put a very theoretical frame on it.” After short laughs on both sides of the phone, he continued. “I don’t like theories, theories are constructions out there (somewhere) and theorists could kill themselves finding out and critiquing and talking about this or that theory.” In those days he was terribly busy, but kind enough to talk on the phone about my most urgent questions. When things get settled, he said, we’d have lunch or maybe coffee. “Theories such as epidemiology or any other are just concepts. What we have done here is not take a frame but look at different experiences and take and apply things that have worked elsewhere or that might work here,” Hugo said replying to my question about the importance of the
epidemiology of violence. “We have taken from here and there and elsewhere. This is not to say that I hate theories, I just don’t like them, I don’t think that the work of theorists can be very useful in what we do,” He stated. “Theorists are in universities and universities pay them to come up with theories. Meanwhile those of us who are engaged in creating and implementing public policies have more or less 5 minutes to solve things. When you have a street vendor yelling at you that you have to solve his situation or when you have people menacing you on the phone, you don’t have time for theories,” Hugo added. “That is at the core of differences between those into theory and those into public policies. When you are in public policies you have to do things now and soon,” Hugo strongly stated. “I am a left-wing neo-liberal so I can look at and hear all those theories with some patience but when they ask me what do I think or what do I propose I just can say that the main point is not what concept are we using but how are we going to put it into practice,” Hugo continued, emphasizing the gap between scholars and policy makers. “The point, to me, is that yes we can have this or that concept and we could discuss it and at the end come up with a great concept; but then when you are putting it into practice you might get lost, you might not be able to put it into practice because it is just a concept,” Hugo would conclude, before letting me know that he had to hang up now, but that we should get together for lunch soon.

OUT OF SERENDIPITY AND RECOGNITION

Time gaps, as well as those derived from differences between constraints imposed on policy makers and those that scholars face in academia are, indeed, important mediators in translating scholarly knowledge into governmental initiatives. There are many
examples of ways in which these gaps are overcome, and have been overcome, in designing interventions aimed at managing violence in contemporary Colombia. Recommended four-year pilot programs that have to be squeezed into a couple of months, complex ways of measuring the impact of violence forced into official indicators that rely on scarce information available; translating academic research findings into public policies is a never-ending story of accommodating the ideal to the actual, the conceptual must to the politically possible. Understandings of violence, especially policy makers' inclinations towards and familiarity with certain ways of approaching violence, however, are also salient mediators in these translation processes.

"My initial concept was not convivencia, but cultura ciudadana (citizens' culture)," Antanas Mockus, mayor of Bogotá, would begin in answer to my question on convivencia as a realm for public policies. " Somehow, in what might be seen as a very candid manner, I initially associated the idea of citizenship with those rules that regulate relationships among strangers, in which there are no clear roles," Mockus, who in 2003 was mayor of the Colombian capital for the second time, would add. "Now, through all my first administration we built an approach to security clearly centered on protecting life and heavily influenced by a work that I had barely knew but had positively impacted me: Rodrigo Guerrero's work in Cali. His epidemiological work stresses on focalization: let's study maps and let's look at hours, to figure out where and when we most urgently need to take care of life in the city. And all this was through risk factors, which can be tackled while skirting debates about causality and non-causality relationships pertaining to violence," Mayor Mockus would explain before referring to several official campaigns aimed at reducing violence that were implemented during his first administration. "Then,
all this is like a story in which, I do recognize that looking at violence as a disease might involve some danger, but it is also very helpful. Particularly, if people say: I do want to stop being violent, as if they were saying that they want to overcome any other disease.” Mayor Mockus would summarize the usage of epidemiological approaches to violence in his first administration. “Well, all this is a too long drawn story to answer your question. I remember that I used to talk about the guachecito (little misbehaved) that each of us carries inside. Today I would rather say the atajista (the one looking forward to taking shortcuts). To me, all this is about mutual-control. Unlike the Catholic tradition that stresses personal self-control, my view was rather based on social censorship, on everybody else’s reactions acting as main regulators of people’s behavior,” Mayor Mockus recapitulated his ideas and governmental initiatives. “But, well, cultura ciudadana seemed to be too novel for international settings. Then, one thing that helped me to begin talking about convivencia was the IDB’s loan project. Also, there was the fact that it was desirable that from one administration to the next o the topic didn’t have a very personalized hallmark such as cultura ciudadana. Then, convivencia was a more commonly shared language, less biased towards the regulatory power of culture,” He said before dilating upon core concepts pertaining his idea of cultura ciudadana.

Due to the scholarly background of Mayor Mockus, academic serendipity in coming upon ideas about violence that somehow match one’s own distinguish the ways in which research findings and disciplinary approaches have been translated into seguridad ciudadana and convivencia policies in Bogotá, particularly during his two administrations. With him, however, as also with members of municipal Bogotá, political recognition also mediates the ways in which those research findings are addressed and
therefore incorporated or rejected in designing official initiatives. “I would say that today I understand better the arguments of the countervailing arguments,” Mayor Mockus would conclude, after reviewing ideas about violence posed by scholars working on this topic from an economic perspective. “But for so long, they –particularly Mauricio Rubio– became very sarcastic in saying that we were oversimplifying everything and that we were thinking that violence was in alcohol and weapons, that for us everything was confined to quarrels among drunk guys. Still today it is possible to, every now and then, run into a text that poses these critiques. Not any longer by Mauricio, because he has evolved a lot in his approaches to violence and now he looks at this with many more shades,” he would add, referring to the research work and findings of scholars who like Rubio have criticized municipal interpretations of the reduction of violence in Bogotá.

“They generate all this research and they look into all these theories and all that to prove only one or two hypotheses,” Hugo Acero would state that morning on the phone referring to the same group of scholars and the academic work they have produced. “For instance, they look at alcohol and at the ban on carrying firearms, but they fail to take into account the carrots and sticks that have been implemented in Bogotá, where by the way there have been more sticks than carrots,” Hugo would make his concluding remark on scholarly work and theories regarding violence reduction in Bogotá.

Besides, institutional structures and processes also intervene in governmental adoptions or rejections of approaches to violence. For instance, municipal workers in Bogotá often refer positively to elements derived from the epidemiology of violence when referring to governmental measures such as those seeking to control alcohol consumption and the carrying of firearms among Bogotanos. Such a generalized
acceptance of epidemiological approaches might be fostered not only by the creation of the CRNV but also by the fact that many municipal workers have had some training in epidemiology or at least have been in contact with epidemiologists for long periods of time. Additionally, the epidemiology of violence favors the kinds of measures that local authorities have identified as main reasons for the outstanding reduction of violence in Bogotá. As such, and even if not fully implemented in the Colombian capital (See Municipal Arts), the epidemiology of violence is commonly better accepted than economic approaches to violence. The latter are not only newer to municipal Bogotá, but also they are unfamiliar to most municipal workers, who rarely have training in economics. Furthermore, this approach has been predominately used for assessing the reduction of crime and violence in the city and has generally figured in critiques of policies and measures implemented in Bogotá that are locally esteemed as the main causes of the outstanding reduction of violence in the city.

If scholarly works and approaches to violence are so differently addressed at municipal levels, how do they end playing a salient role in designing and assessing recent initiatives aimed at reducing violence? To begin with, views of these approaches at the national level differ from the ways in which they are viewed at municipal levels, particularly among those national agencies such as the DNP that are in charge of managing resources for sponsoring so-called seguridad ciudadana and convivencia policies. In fact, within these national agencies epidemiological approaches are more likely to be criticized and to some extent rejected, than are economic approaches. Such differences in accepting and rejecting approaches to violence also exist between governmental agencies at the national level and among international sponsoring agencies
(See Modeling and Marketing Citizens Security and Peaceful Coexistence), which often combine—at times somewhat uncritically—epidemiological and economic approaches violence. Can these differences be explained as mere matters of what agency pays for what work? Are they also framed by academic serendipities and political recognitions? How, beyond affecting the translation of research findings into public policies, do these differences also affect scholars’ work and academic dynamics? How do scholars advocating for one or another approach to violence locate themselves in the midst of such divergent adoptions and denials?

**OFFICIAL BOOSTERS, PRIVATE MONOPOLIES AND BEATING BITTERNESS**

Translations, adoptions, and denials that mediate the incorporation of scholarly knowledge in designing policies aimed at reducing violence, are links of a chain made out of governmental initiatives and academic enterprises that have fostered the rise of expert elites. Their rise can be tracked in terms of governmental efforts to deal with violence by drawing on scholarly knowledge, academic trends and enterprises in the study of violence, and uneasy translations of academic knowledge into *seguridad ciudadana* and *convivencia* policies.\(^7\)

A more or less common governmental way of drawing on academic knowledge for dealing with violence in contemporary Colombia is through commissioning local scholars adept at studying violence to provide diagnoses and recommendations for managing it. Official commissions boost the rise of expert elites and the fashioning of particular

\(^7\) Later on in this dissertation I show how these elites interact with extra-local agencies like developmental banks, and how to some extent scholars and banks mutually relay one on each other (see Modeling and Marketing Citizen Security and Peaceful Coexistence).
understandings of violence. Indeed, they are just one of many elements that intervene in the rise of these expert elites and the fashioning of understandings of violence. Institutional, governmental, academic, and social networks also play a central role in this. Similarly, modalities of violence and particularly untamed acts of violence witnessed by the country also mediate emerging expertise and the circulation of understandings pertaining to violence. Likewise, the constraints—academic and non-academic—that local scholars face in studying violence are important mediators in such emerging and circulating. However, governmental efforts to draw on scholarly knowledge in designing official strategies to reduce violence reveal salient features of both such strategies and the local expertise that emerge in their designing.

Governmental agencies are expected to incorporate diagnoses and recommendations resulting from scholarly commissions, which, however, are often only partially embraced or even strongly rejected. This uneasy translation of academic knowledge into public policies, along with scholarly initiatives aimed at promoting novel approaches to violence and periodic intensification of violence that are accompanied by demands for state action to control this phenomenon, are all elements that frame the governmental appointment of scholars and their commission to provide a diagnosis and guidance for reducing violence. Governmental use of commissions for drawing on academic knowledge in managing violence reveals spiral-like cycles of scholarly struggles to provide knowledge and guidance suitable for designing public policies and governmental struggles to translate such knowledge and guidance into public policies.

Such endless cycles result in amalgamated and changing understandings of violence that inform so-called seguridad ciudadana and convivencia policies in contemporary
Colombia. These cycles spin the production of diagnosis on violence, whose fate seems to be getting lost in translation and as a result is unsuitable for designing initiatives aimed at controlling this phenomenon. “A theorist might spend 10 years building a theory of a social phenomenon,” Hugo Acero stated when characterizing those dealing with violence from academic settings. “Then, when his theory is ready the social phenomenon has changed so he has to start building a new theory to explain the new phenomenon,” he would add stressing gaps in timing between scholarly work and policymaking. This self-perpetuating picture of academic work, however, is not too far from resulting pictures of spiral-like cycles of scholarly diagnoses and official measures that characterize governmental and academic efforts to come to terms with violence in contemporary Colombia. Violence management seems to be an endless game in which both knowledge production and policy making mutually self-perpetuate themselves.

Spiral-like cycles of self-perpetuation are neither mere circular movements nor a deadlock. Rather, they imply a particular way of displacement both in knowledge production and policymaking. This displacement, along with the promotion or denial of specific approaches to violence, might be better grasped in terms of what Jean-François Lyotard (1984) characterizes as the nature of knowledge in modern societies. To be sure, academic trends and their relations to both processes of knowledge production and policy making in contemporary Colombia are not identical to the ones described by this author. The former illustrates but at the same time differs from the latter. Lyotard’s insights are useful for understanding processes, cycles, and displacements through which both epidemiological and economic approaches to violence have acquired leading roles both in knowledge production and policy making in the past few years. According to this author,
and important shift in the nature of knowledge is the shift from knowledge as an end in itself to knowledge to knowledge to be sold and consumed in order to make decisions. This is knowledge not as revelation or as a question of truth, but in more pragmatic terms: knowledge as a question of performativity by means of proof and technology. Within this frame, it is not surprising that epidemiological and economic approaches gained a salient role in the production of knowledge meant to be “consumed” by those making decisions on governmental initiatives aimed at managing violence. This, at the same time, might explain trends adopted by local scholars in the study of violence.

Such a redefinition of knowledge also helps in understanding the emergence and rapid expansion of violence and security –along with related topics– as expert fields in contemporary Colombia. Following Lyotard, it could be said that this is an almost natural product or expected result of the increasing consumption of scholarly knowledge and of the increasingly frequent validation of knowledge in terms of its pragmatic aspects. Moreover, the emergence of these expert files might also be described by following this same author. According to him, under the above-mentioned redefinition of knowledge, access to data becomes a prerogative of experts. This, as the inter-section that follows this section shows, is a key element in understanding both academic and governmental affairs pertaining to violence management in contemporary Colombia.

Still, neither the emergence of such an expert elite nor the fluctuation between epidemiological and economic approaches can be fully understood without looking at the particularities of those engaged in the above-characterized spiral-like and endless cycles of scholarly diagnoses and official measures. Even if resulting scholarly trends are not always esteemed at governmental agencies. Local scholars flow –sometimes smoothly,
some times uneasily– through such a burgeoning expertise. At the academic level, belonging to this fluorescing expert elite often involves complex protocols and scholarly politeness, but it equally generates bitter fights among those working on violence. Simultaneously, the fluorescence of such a group of experts often results in scholars becoming nomad elites, whose strength lies in their immersion into local monopolies of the work on violence, as well as in their ability to spin in carousels that join together academic circles, public offices, and international agencies.
INTER-SECTION 3 ON INFORMATION / INFORMATION INC.

Information on crime and violence is everywhere. It is in tables and charts dropped at the side of journalistic reports, particularly common in local newspapers since the mid 1990s. It is in bits of quantitative data displayed close to daily headlines, that after a while go unnoticed. It is in charts and maps showing trends of crime and violence in the city that are frequently included in governmental documents, scholarly reports, and international brochures. In contemporary Bogotá, information pertaining to crime and violence (which basically means numbers and quantitative data) is everywhere and it has become the favored way of addressing these phenomena.

Information on crime and violence in the city is an issue. It is a pressing one when you need to get “the numbers” for the report on which you are working, but no one seems to have such data. It is a missing link when seeking to evaluate initiatives aimed at reducing crime and violence. It is particularly pressing, when, at the shadow of an international agency lending money to develop these initiatives, some accountability on expenditure and its effectiveness is in demand but there are neither baselines nor data to perform any assessment. It is a legendary character to be found nowhere, particularly among scholars and civil servants who proclaim that public policies cannot be properly designed in the absence of information, even if many of them would also stress how distrustful statistics on crime and violence are. Remarks on how policemen distort information are common but not as frequent as all those shared stories on the aftermath of having your wallet stolen. Police reports are not always made at the same jurisdiction but at the most convenient location. Rarely they involve a stolen object, which will require going to court and following more formal procedures. Often they consist of a report of “lost” personal
belongings, which is good enough for getting a duplicate of your ID, canceling your credit card, and getting a half-price mobile to replace the “lost” one.

Information on crime and violence is a daily companion. It is a tyrant that ought to be twisted for those many policemen whose performance depends on “positivos” (positive points).\textsuperscript{78} It is part of one’s making a living among those working at national and municipal systems of information management such as the CRNV and the Municipal Observatory that were created a few years ago. It is part of daily pursuits of the epidemiologists generating information on injuries in the country, and of those writing up monthly reports about crime and violence in each of the city divisions or creating power point presentations to be projected at governmental meetings. Information on crime and violence is a strong statement when addressed at these meetings, but at the same time it is a statement waiting to be tempered. As was the case with the dramatic increment in homicides in Chapinero (a city division) during the first three months of 2003 that most municipal servants and authorities would refer to as the “Efecto Nogal” (Nogal Effect).\textsuperscript{79}

In these contexts, information refers mainly to numbers. These are not raw numbers, but numbers that have been turned into quantitative data, numbers that have become counting facts and are deployed through numeric narratives such as tables, charts, and, in the most visual version, maps. The blooming of these narratives relates closely to the development of systems for managing information on crime and violence created since the mid 1990s at the national and municipal levels, as well as at private settings. As

\textsuperscript{78} A positivo (positive point) is the unit used for evaluating the performance of police members. They result from the balance between acts of crime and violence (e.g. a homicide, a stolen car, a case of burglary, etc.) that occur in their jurisdiction and actions against crime and violence (e.g. catching a criminal, recuperating a stolen item, retaining a suspect, etc.) that are performed in that same jurisdiction.

\textsuperscript{79} This name and expression are meaningful, since the increment in homicides in that period and that part of the city was in great part due to the explosion of a car-bomb in the night of February 7\textsuperscript{th} of 2003 at a social club and one of the most common elite gathering spots in Bogotá: El Nogal.
authoritative ways of addressing crime and violence in the city, maps, charts, and tables, as they are frequently displayed by mass media, academic reports, and official publications, parallels the flourishing of quantitative expertise on crime and violence. The speedy unfolding of those narratives and this expertise has been simultaneous to governmental initiatives that increasingly favor the use of information when managing crime and violence in the city.

Information on crime and violence in contemporary Bogotá comprises such a tangle of numbers, institutions, figures, experts, graphic displays, systems for managing information, and governmental initiatives. It is like a hologram that can be read in various ways, a holographic image that if seen carefully can be rendered in its different faces.

These ways of reading and seeing builds upon what Jean and John Comaroff (2004), among other anthropologist working on urban crime and violence, have highlighted as the preeminence of maps and charts in addressing these phenomena in contemporary societies. My proposed way of reading and seeing builds upon the work of these scholars and in doing so it seeks to go further. The following pages go beyond saying that the various ways of displaying information on crime and violence are merely disguising devices for avoiding, simplifying, or even hiding “real” experiences of crime and violence. Statements like these are common, but they simply miss the point. Information displays reveal logics pertaining to crime and violence management, as well as to presently favored governmental modalities of addressing social and political phenomena. Maps, charts, and tables ought to be taken as complex numeric narratives. These narratives are constitutive elements of fieldwork plots that in contemporary Bogotá can be better understood if seen through at least two lenses. The first lens is inspired by Foucault’s
concept of bio-power and his observations on modern arts of governing (Foucault 1978; 1979; 1991; Foucault, Burchell et al. 1991). The second lens echoes the visual expression of “avalanche of printed numbers” used by Ian Hacking (1998) and his approach to the blooming of printed numbers as a surface phenomenon in the emergence of different modalities to render and at the same time generate social problems in contemporary western societies.

The simultaneous use of these two lenses reveals the complexities and logics that numeric narratives on crime and violence comprise. Additionally, it unveils ways in which these narratives serve in contemporary Bogotá for making sense of, for putting one’s finger on, or for rendering violence and crime as overwhelming phenomena. What does this bifocal way of rendering imply? How are those numeric narratives constructed in contemporary Bogotá? Why are they favored ways of storytelling when addressing crime and violence? The following pages are an experimental, rather than conclusive, attempt to begin answering these questions.

**THE COATING OF “EPIDEMIOLOGICAL ARGOT”**

“Make sure that the clerk you are visiting signs the form and writes down your exiting time,” the security guard at the front desk says after both entering my national ID number in the computer and using a web camera for taking a picture of my face. She gave me a small piece of paper, which would be the mentioned form, and a plastic tag that I would have to carry somewhere where guards can see it. A few minutes later I jump into the elevator. I ride upstairs along with three women in their medical outfits and a guy with a bright orange plastic vest, who also carries a motorcycle helmet under his arm. I ride upstairs feeling that I move away from that other part of the building where autopsies are
performed on a daily basis, beaten women are checked, badly injured men and women are examined, and brutal rapes are diagnosed. As the elevator lifts I feel I move away from all that for which the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences is better known. I move away from the pockets of people waiting at the principal entrance for the dead body of a beloved relative. A moving scene that is made more frightening and crude by the surroundings of the Institute: the remains of El Cartucho, a recently flattened area that used to house the heart of the city’s black market along with hundreds of street people and terminal drug addicts both of whom are rudely called “desechables” (“disposable people”).

The sliding doors open for letting me go out and into the Centro de Referencia Nacional sobre Violencia CRNV (National Center for Reference on Violence). An enormous rectangular area with long series of small offices paralleling each other and between them a hive-like series of divisions and desks. The CRNV doesn’t occupy the entire floor but a handful of offices and working spaces. Most of them were temporary shelters for listening about the creation of the CRNV and inquiring about the work that is conducted at this Center.

In March 2003, for the first time I formally met Luz Janeth Forero, medical doctor and main director of the CRNV. Among other things, she handled to me an unpublished document about the history of the CRNV that she wrote up several years ago. The origin of the Center goes back to 1994 when initial ideas about shifting from managerial usage of information collected at the Institute of Legal Medicine to the use of information for seeking to explain violence were posed and began to be developed. The adoption of a scientific approach for interpreting violence was at the core of this shift. Initial steps
include training on field epidemiology at the National Health Institute-INAS and a workshop on externally caused injuries held in Bogotá. Lecturers at this workshop were both from the Centers for Disease Control-CDC in Atlanta and Emory University. It was a decisive antecedent in the formal creation of the CRNV that began working in April 1995 as a division of the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences.

"Let me tell you a bit about what lies behind all this," Wilson Hernández, a statistician who has worked at the CRNV since the creation of this division, told me in 2003 when recalling the earliest times of the Center and the participation of the CDC in the process of the creation of the CRNV in Colombia. "This exchange was due to the fact that North Americans saw Colombia as the epicenter of a earthquake called violence, which from here will expand through all South America and Central America and at some point will get them. Then, they felt they had to get ready in order to confront this issue. So then, they sought to conduct research on the phenomenon of violence and to do so they first sought to create international cooperation with the National Health Institute-INAS here in Colombia. They sent a couple of Mexican epidemiologists: Victor and Carmen Sánchez, husband and wife. They came to the INAS for creating what at that time was called the Program for Applied Epidemiology, whose main goal was to study violence. Unfortunately—or fortunately for us—the INAS doesn’t deal with violence or mortality or anything like that. All the data about these was here at the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences. So they first convinced Dr. Gloria Suarez to matriculate in the Program of Applied Epidemiology that was taught here in Bogotá." He explained to me before sipping from one of the pale green plastic cups in which coffee and herbal tea are served at the Bogotá’s office of the CRNV. For him, North American interests and
the active engagement of the CDC in the conduction of epidemiological research on violence in Colombia were salient in the earliest days of the CRNV. These were clearly evidenced in their sponsorship of trips for doctors working at the Colombian Institute of Legal Medicine to visit the CDC, seminars on epidemiological approaches to violence, publications and training courses on this same topic.

Initiatives involving the CDC and leading to the creation of the CRNV, however, didn’t happen in a totally pristine context. As Hernandez told me, by the mid 1990s some researchers had already attempted to address violence through information collected at the National Institute of Legal Medicine. This was the case with a work on the use of firearms and its effect on mortality in Bogotá, conducted in 1994.\(^{10}\) Additionally, for several years the Institute of Legal Medicine has been processing information through its Oficina de Informática y Estadística (office of computing science and statistics) and by the early 1990s it had already begun publishing quantitative data in Medicina Legal en Cifras (Legal Medicine in Numbers). But, as Hernandez would put it, this was “managerial information.” That, as he explained to me, was “information regarding the number of autopsies that had been done or reporting on the number of medical procedures and lab tests that had been performed.” Initiatives involving the CDC were launched in this context and affected both the perception of quantitative data pertaining to violent deaths and the treatment of numbers within the National Institute of Legal Medicine. According to Hernandez, these initiatives first made the Institute realize the value of the information collected as well as potential uses of this information in terms of both studying violence and making recommendations for controlling it. Importantly,

\(^{10}\) During the Gaviria administration (1990-1994) efforts to control violence included attempts to control and better regulate the carrying of firearms. This particular research work, according to Hernández, was conducted in response to an initiative of the Presidential Office.
those initiatives introduced significant shifts in the treatment of information, which since
then are extensively treated by using what Hernández referred to as “epidemiological
argot.”

Beyond the details spelled out by Hernández regarding the interests that accompanied
the creation of the CRNV—whose support or denial at this point is not only hard to pursue
but pointless—his story highlights several core elements in understanding the blooming of
both the adoption of technical approaches and the use of quantitative data in seeking to
understand and temper violence in the Colombia of the 1990s. To begin with, it reveals
uneasy combinations of local and extra-local processes and interests that, as is discussed
elsewhere, frame recent developments pertaining to both the understanding of violence
and its management in contemporary Colombia. Importantly, it depicts a salient shift that
distinguishes these developments: the shift from “managerial information” to information
coated by “epidemiological argot.” If looked through a lens inspired by Foucault’s work
on the rationalities of government, this is a shift from collecting and using information
aimed at monitoring the performance of an institute, to the collection and usage of
information oriented towards managing a population. In other words, a shift from a more
discipline-oriented use of information to a more bio-political usage of information. In
terms of the work at the National Institute of Legal Medicine and the CRNV, this shift is
expressed in the difference between counting and recording how many autopsies were
performed by each unit and each doctor, to the recording of individual characteristics
(age, sex, etc) and contextual information (time, place, mode, etc) of the victims on
whose bodies such autopsies are performed and the circumstances that turned them into
victims.
Such a shift might be better grasped when looking into both further developments in the process of creating the CRNV and the ways of conducting analysis on violence at this Center. Initial steps in the formation of the CRNV included creating a System for Epidemiological Surveillance of Externally Caused Injuries, training those workers from the Institute of Legal Medicine who would be collecting and providing information to this System both in Bogotá and elsewhere in the country, and the creation of a monthly newsletter for publishing short articles on specific topics pertaining to violence in the country. The created System for Epidemiological Surveillance has, since then, been based on data collection in terms of four main variables: individual, time, place, and circumstances. These variables were used to collect information on eight kinds of personal injuries: homicides, injuries due to common violence, suicides, car accidents, injuries due to car accidents, other accidents, domestic violence, and possible sexual assaults. Through the work on these eight areas and since its creation, the Center has sought to fulfill its institutional mandates.

«The mission of the CRNV is to provide the country with analyzed information about violence indicators that are generated through the Colombian medical and forensic system in order to support public policies, programs and activities aimed at controlling and preventing violence. It is envisioned as advisory and consultant entity for the various organizations, public and private, that are engaged in designing policies for controlling and preventing violent trauma for them to contribute in the reduction of factors that generate violence in Colombian society.» (Forero)
In seeking to fulfill these mandates, the CRNV has gone through processes of refining information collection by adding variables such as possible motives (of the violent death, particularly of homicides), specifying mechanisms, and standardizing cohorts. Similarly, in the past few years it has expanded the geographical spectrum of information by including other parts of the country besides Bogotá. Today, it collects information from almost each and every place in the country where the National Institute of Legal Medicine has a branch. These processes have been effected mainly through internal training and technological improvements, but they have not been always smooth and are far from being over. “In all this we work as is done at any other medical institution,” Luz Janeth Forero explained to me when describing ways of collecting information at the CRNV. “When a person arrives at the emergency room each and every doctor who deals with her needs to fill out a chart in which basic information such as age, sex, and diagnosis ought to be recorded. For doctors this chart is the daily SIS form, for us it is the same, it is the recording chart.” These steps in collecting information have remained the same but the ways of collecting such information are, as she put it, going through a transitional period. “Let me show you for you to better see the stone age history of the CRNV,” she said while asking one of her assistants to bring one of the paper sheets on which not long ago information was collected. Walking me through daily charts and monthly summary charts that used to serve for recording and collecting information, she explained: “We used to get the monthly summary charts. In them a lot of information was lost. For instance, information pertaining to the address at which an injury took place or the exact age of the victim was simply lost. Medical doctors don’t report to us this way any longer. Now we have a computerized system in which they collect and report
information all at the same time. A person working on an autopsy or putting together the
diagnosis from an autopsy is at the same time filling information into our system. They
send us information for each case as a database through a data transfer system.” These
new way of collecting and reporting information has several advantages pertaining to
data analysis due to the possibility of cross-referencing information in many different
ways. Importantly, information on the date on which an injury took place is easier to get.
“This is very, very important,” she stressed. “For us, epidemiologically speaking, what is
really important is not when the person died but when he or she was injured. Because that
was when violent factors were generated,” she stated before going into several examples
for illustrating the importance of this variable.

Current technological improvements at the CRNV relate in part to the loan project
signed in the late 1990’s by the Colombian government and the Inter-American
Development Bank, whose specifics are discussed elsewhere in this work. The creation
and development of this Center and the official usage of quantitative information in
seeking to manage violence, to which it is devoted, parallels in many ways the recent
history of the Observatory on Crime and Violence that since 1995 has functioned in
municipal Bogotá. Both the CRNV and the Observatory are active participants in local
governmental settings such as municipal committees described elsewhere as part of
emergent arts of managing crime and violence at the municipal level. These committees
are devoted, at least formally, to address those phenomena in the city, as well as to come
up with possible initiatives to lessen their effects (See Municipal Arts). Both the CRNV
and the Observatory, on the other hand, are clear expressions of significant shifts in
official approaches to violence that characterize the past few decades in Colombia and
particularly in its capital. The use of quantitative data for rendering violence—as a phenomenon affecting the health of a population, disturbing city dynamics, or hindering the performance of both the city and the country—is a core element in redefining violence as a realm of governmental intervention. This redefinition of violence is a salient aspect of the above-mentioned shifts, which in this sense resemble ways of governing and exercising power that Foucault calls bio-politics (Foucault 1978; 1979; 1991; Foucault, Burchell et al. 1991). The CRNV and the Observatory, along with the stories and practices that have their main scenarios in these two settings show similar but distinct versions of the unfolding of bio-politics as modern arts both of managing crime and violence and of providing security in contemporary Bogotá.

"That was done in Bogotá in the mid 1990s but we didn’t address it in terms of epidemiology. Guerrero had already put forward the use of epidemiology when he was mayor of Cali and after that he began promoting it elsewhere. In Bogotá, at the very beginning we didn’t address it in terms of epidemiology but in terms of information,” Alvaro Camacho said over our after-lunch cigarette. The idea behind Bogotá’s Observatory on Crime and Violence, as he would explain to me that afternoon, was first to have unified and reliable information on both acts of violence and crime that were taking place in the city; and second, to have a sense of the trends and main characteristics of these acts, as well as of the places where they were occurring. These ideas were at the base of Camacho’s initiative of creating an Observatory on Crime and Violence when working as city advisor on security and coexistence in the mid 1990’s. As is explained elsewhere (See Municipal Arts), this initiative relates closely to the redefinition of security as an integral part of city dynamics that in the mid-1990s Camacho sought to put
forward when working at municipal Bogotá. The development of municipal systems for managing information on crime and violence, particularly the attempts to transform them into a tool meant to serve local authorities for designing security policies, reveal elements that distinguish the unfolding of such a redefinition. Figures pertaining to crime and violence in the city that municipal Bogotá has published over the past few years are physical remains of those systems. These publications are storytellers of the evolution of official systems for information management, but they are also marks of continuities and variations between those earliest systems and the current ones.

The earliest publications are black and white newsletters. A handful of pages reporting on violent murders and crimes, according to data provided by the Institute of Legal Medicine and the metropolitan police respectively. In both cases basic statistics are accompanied by analytical remarks and calculations conducted by the Observatory. Violent murders are arranged in two main categories: homicides and car accidents. Additionally, they are addressed in terms of victim’s sex and age, alcohol content in victim’s blood both for car accidents and homicides, place where the murder was perpetrated or the accident took place, vehicle involved if it is a car accident, circumstances in which the murder occurred and type of weapon used to perpetrate the murder if it is a homicide. Reported crimes include: burglary, hold up, bank assault, and both car and motorcycle theft. Occasionally these earlier newsletters include detailed maps of city divisions that concentrate a significant percentage of homicides. In these maps victims are represented as dots of various shapes that also serve to show alcohol content in victim’s blood and type of weapon involved in the murdering. Additionally,

81 Regarding this variable, for instance, one of the earliest publications points out: “48% of murders don’t have information, 11% took place during a hold up, 10% during a quarrel or while arguing, and 5% were perpetrated by unknown aggressors.”
city divisions are often compared to each other in terms of both number of murders and homicide rates. More recent publications are colorful, have more pages, and almost invariably include maps. Information included in them comprises violent murders and crimes. The first ones are divided into four categories: homicides, car accidents, suicides, and accidental murders. The second group includes: personal injuries, car theft, motorcycle theft, burglary, business assaults, and bank assault. Sources of information for these groups are the National Institute of Legal Medicine and the Metropolitan Police, respectively. Basic statistics are presented along with calculus performed by the Unified Crime and Violence Information System, which since the late 1990s is part of the Observatory. Recent publications include more categories both in the violent murders group and the crimes group. Besides, information considered under each of these categories differs from that considered in earlier publications.\textsuperscript{82} For instance, violent murders are addressed in terms of victim’s age and only in some cases victim’s sex, alcohol content in victim’s blood is not reported, and vehicles involved in car accidents are not reported but instead figures report on victim’s condition (pedestrian, passenger, car driver, bike rider, etc). Still, as it is in earlier publications the place where the murder or the accident took place is reported, as well as both circumstances in which homicides occurred\textsuperscript{83} and type of weapon used to perpetrate them.

\textsuperscript{82} In what follows I concentrate on violent murders due to the argument that this exploratory piece is seeking to put forward. Future inquiries on this will address more deeply both the information considered when addressing violent murders and crimes in these municipal publications. The latter are more extensively treated in recent publications than in earlier ones.

\textsuperscript{83} Regarding this variable, for instance, a 2003 publication points out: “Information on motives wasn’t established for 44.8% of the cases at least during preliminary investigation. This might hinder further clarification of murders and might be a source of impunity. As for the remaining murders, revenge was salient and corresponds to 36.5%, quarrels account for 26.8%, murders perpetrated during hold ups account for 17.6%, terrorism relates to 8%, and a smaller percentage was due to domestic violence (13 out of 956 cases) and to lack of social tolerance (8 out of 956 cases).”
The above-summarized review might not be a thorough examination of continuities and variations between earlier an recent municipal publications; however, it outlines salient elements in the introduction and adoption of both novel definitions of violence and artful ways of providing security that derive from those definitions. To begin with, the absence of an explicit use of an epidemiological approach, rightfully stated by Camacho, can be proved in the fact that none of the earliest publications mention such an approach. However epidemiology and epidemiological approaches to violence do permeate municipal publications since their earliest issues. Epidemiological traces might be in great part due to the source of information for reporting violent murders, which in this case is the National Institute of Legal Medicine, but they might also functionally overlap non-epidemiological understandings of violence that also characterize municipal efforts to provide security in contemporary Bogotá. For instance, the reporting of elements such as alcohol content in victim's blood and the type of weapon used to perpetrate homicides while paying particular attention to the use of firearms are elements that correspond to epidemiologically identified risk factors of violence, especially of homicides. These same elements, however, are also central in the diagnosis on urban violence in the country that were put forward in the late 1980s by the Comisión de Estudios Sobre la Violencia of which Camacho was a member (See Academic Politics and Battles). Moreover, in Colombia alcohol consumption has been historically blamed as causing delinquency, hindering progress, and generating deviance\(^4\). As such, numeric narratives permeated by epidemiology reveal one of the several ways in which municipal treatment of security in contemporary Bogotá is marked by the introduction --as

\(^4\) Historical and contemporary statements against alcohol consumption differ from one to another, yet they also exhibit continuities in terms of the problematization of alcohol consumption as a social and cultural practice that ought to be modified in order to improve collective welfare. See among others the work of Sandra Arévalo (2004)
functional overlapping—of increasingly common technical tools and statements to address violence.

This functional overlapping is also exemplified in the two main categories used to report violent murders: homicides and car accidents. From an epidemiological point of view both modalities belong to violent murders as far as they affect life of the population; thus they ought to be addressed in terms of risk factors. These same categories, on the other hand, are part of events considered under criminal definitions by the police as far as they ought to be both sanctioned and investigated since both generate personal damages. The introduction of these categories in municipal reports on crime and violence corresponds to both points of view—epidemiological and criminological. The reporting through figures pertaining to victim’s sex, age, and alcohol content in blood, as well as to circumstances in which the murder took place denotes the introduction—and also functional overlapping—of technical approaches aimed at preventing these violent murders as means for providing security.

Bio-politics of crime and violence revealed in numeric narratives published by municipal Bogotá over the past few years are also distinguished by the increasing incorporation of technical tools. Differences in earlier and current maps such as the use of dots to represent single cases and their circumstances in the former, and the use of rates for comparing different places in the city in the latter, show an increasingly favored way of addressing crime, violence, and security as issues pertaining to a population’s welfare instead of events affecting the lives of single individuals. Crime and violence figures published by municipal Bogotá over the past few years show shifts in the ways of addressing violence as a realm of governmental intervention that are similar to the ones
expressed in the history of the creation and further developments of the CRNV. In both cases violence is rendered as a realm of intervention as far as it is render as a phenomenon affecting a population and both violence and the affected population are addressed through numeric narratives.

**BEYOND DATES, FOOTNOTES AND PAGE NUMBERS**

“But there are not numbers in it!” Fabio Sánchez, an economist who for the past few years has become well known for his studies on crime and violence, said while looking at one of my most recent papers. He had asked to read something that I had written recently and while in the States, so I gave him one of my favorite papers. After a long time writing about crime, violence, and security from an ethnographic perspective, his reaction was at once a bit funny and yet somehow shocking. “Well, there are a couple dates and page numbers all over it,” I replied playfully. We laugh. Laughs were, perhaps, the best way to hide nonsense: nonsense, for him, in addressing crime and violence without numbers; nonsense, for me, in requesting such a way of addressing crime and violence in an ethnographic paper. “O.k., I’ll read it,” he promised. Few days later he made some remarks on stories that were included in the paper that he had found interesting. He also pointed out how fancy the topics that I have studied were, and how nicely done my paper was. Encouraging commentaries, indeed, since they came from the director of a prestigious research center in Bogotá. Yet, not a single remark on my statements regarding crime, violence, or security. Not a slight mention of these.

Sharp observations on the lack of numeric narratives in my work would, later on, prove to be the rule rather than the exception. To be sure, there are many others that address crime, violence, and security outside such narratives, but authoritative discourses
quite often require numbers. Crime and violence figures along with numeric narratives based on them are predominant in the Bogotá of the late 20th and early 21st century. Maps, charts and tables are as common in mass media, as they are almost mandatory in academic and governmental documents. Crime and violence figures, however, are not new in Colombia, neither in its capital. For more than four decades the Colombian Police has published *Revista Criminalidad*, an annual report on the number of crimes and acts of violence in the country. Nevertheless, it was not until the 1990s, particularly since the mid-1990s, that figures and numeric narratives gained a salient position. This relates to redefinitions of violence and security that, as I argue elsewhere in this work, distinguish the past decade and are marked by the adoption of more technical ways of approaching both this phenomenon and providing security (See Academic Politics).

These more technical approaches, along with figures and numeric narratives converge in a spiral-like progression. Much like a feedback loop; as technical approaches become more desirable, the production of figures and data rises, and the faster demand for numeric narratives grows. Conversely, as these narratives become authoritative statements, demand increases for figures, and these technical approaches acquire a salient position. This spiral-like progression surfaces as an avalanche of printed numbers, similar to the one described by Hacking (Hacking 1998). In the Bogotá of the late 20th and early 21st century percentages, rates, ratios, average values, absolute numbers, charts, maps, and tables are some of the most common ways of picturing and addressing crime, violence, and security. Epicenters of such an avalanche include the CRNV, the municipal Observatory, the Chamber of Commerce and *Bogotá Cómo Vamos?* (Bogotá, how are we doing?), all of which publish newsletters and produce numeric narratives that every now
and then made their way to national newspapers or are reshaped by academic reports and expert assessments.

From the *Bogotometro* to complex econometric calculus and periodical overviews, in contemporary Bogotá crime, violence, and security are preferably addressed through numeric narratives. The emergence, production, use, and circulation of these narratives are embedded in symbiotic relationships in which governmental agencies, research centers, and circles of experts are involved. These relationships are common fields for regret, blame, battles, and jealousy; but they are also channels for cooperation and mediation among municipal, academic, and expert settings. These uneasy relationships are also the main contexts for the circulation, definition, and redefinition of information beyond figures. That is, information as an entity that is referred to as a cultural subject through, for instance, the expression “culture of information” which is frequently used among civil servants. Addressing information beyond figures also implies treating it as an object, a good that is meant to be kept, traded, circulated, and possessed. The following stories outline core elements of these understandings and usages of information –as a cultural subject or as good– that intervene in both the generation of numeric narratives and their becoming favored ways of addressing crime, violence, and security in contemporary Bogotá.

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85 This neologism results from making a word out of the name of the city (Bogotá) and the idea of measuring most straightforwardly expressed in the suffix *metro* (meter) as in *termómetro* (thermometer). It appeared in the late 1990’s in *El Tiempo* the most important national newspaper. Since then, it has been used to present data of city dynamics on various aspects, particularly on those aspects pertaining to crime and violence. Data for the *Bogotometro* is processed by *Bogotá Cómo Vamos*? (Bogotá, how are we doing?), which is a private consortium engaged in measuring city dynamics on particularly sensitive issues.
INFORMATION PANACEAS AND THE PREDICAMENT OF INFORMATION

"This whole process came to a conclusion: you cannot have public policies if you don’t have information. Thus, systems for information management were defined as a priority,” Gustavo Salazar, a lawyer and social scientist who in 2003 was working as civil servant at a national governmental office, said when explaining to me the processes followed in developing the IDB’s loan-program for supporting coexistence and citizen security in Colombia86. For him, as it is also for other public servants, scholars, and workers of the IDB, the lack of information pertaining to the trends and dynamics of crime and violence in the country hinders any attempt to successfully define public policies and to assess their impact. To be sure, Salazar doesn’t deny the usefulness of non-quantitative information. In fact he stresses the importance of including knowledge derived from qualitative approaches in both designing and assessing public policies aimed at managing crime and violence. However, as he would point out, quantitative information is crucial in contemporary Colombia due to the emphasis on policies’ efficiency and impact.

"Institutions jumped into a new stage without fulfilling the previous one. They moved from designing public policies in a total vacuum of information, to include in their design indicators of efficiency and impact. But this has been in a vacuum of information pertaining to the phenomena that these policies seek to control. There is a total lack of information on this! What this generates, then, is an extremely perverse situation,” he stated before mentioning examples of the ways in which establishing goals and using indicators without having information on actual dynamics and at the same time using

86 This loan program was sanctioned in the late 1990’s by the Colombian government and the Inter-American Development Bank. About the processes that lead to this loan program and for a more detailed view of it and its development see: Modeling and Marketing Citizen Security and Peaceful Coexistence.
these goals and indicators for evaluating both public workers and members of the police might be generating spurious reports on crime and violence in the country.

Producing spurious reports is perhaps one of the most common accusations when assessing the processes by which information on crime and violence is generated. For civil servants this is often the fault of the police and those collecting information, for scholars this is most commonly a by-product of the lack of skills in collecting and processing this information, for policemen and those collecting information this is in great part due either to constraints faced in the process of collecting information or to citizens' reluctance to report crimes and acts of violence. For citizens neither civil servants, nor scholar, nor the police manage to provide an accurate picture of what is really happening, not to mention that reporting a crime is just wasting one's time. Accusations regarding the production of spurious reports are a never-ending story and always someone else's fault. I won't go into such a dead-end inquiry here. Rather, I would like to concentrate on what lies behind Salazar's ideas about the customary generation of spurious reports. "The main problem in all this is that in the case of the police what you have is that the institution that is expected to generate this information is also subject of surveillance and evaluation according to existing figures," Salazar said during our second meeting and answering my questions about the usage of information. "Additionally, the gravity of a crime determines the quality of its report. For the police such gravity relates to the possibility of hiding or not the occurrence of a given crime. For citizens it relates to the willingness to report it or not. Beyond this, you don't find any interest in reporting and collecting information on crime and violence." This lack of interest, according to him, is in part due to the usage of information for evaluating the
performance of institutions and institutional actors involved in designing and implementing security policies. However, it is also due to the novel nature of information usage in these fields in Colombia. As he would put it: “Information in Colombia is still under construction. There is still not enough culture of information in Colombia. In many ways we had moved towards this, but we are still too far from it.”

As an antidote to spurious reports, the “culture of information” might be understood as that what lies behind the providing and collecting of information on crime and violence beyond anxieties pertaining to one’s own evaluation, but for the sake of information as a critical tool for designing and implementing public policies. Among those other civil servants who agree with Salazar on the urgency of fostering a “culture of information” in the country, this concept also refers to the adoption of information management systems beyond mere technological improvements. “There was a total lack of clarity regarding the work on information,” Mariana Escobar, a political scientist, who for the past few years had worked as a high-ranking worker at the same national governmental office where Salazar works, said when explaining to me initial steps in developing the IDB’s loan-program for supporting coexistence and citizen security in Colombia.87 “That was just creating an information system for each and every institution but there was not a statement of the necessity of creating a national system for information management on criminality, misdemeanos, and violence, for instance, as a way of working with national sources. There was not a statement on, let’s say, processes pertaining to the quality of information, the culture of information, or the validation of processes of collecting information between different primary sources.” As such, and as Escobar would explain

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87 See preceding footnote on this loan-program.
through various examples, the concept of “culture of information” also refers to standardized methodologies for working with information among different institutions as well as for reporting and collecting information about a crime or an act of violence. It refers to necessary skills and understandings for collecting and using information in the adequate—according to technical standards—manner.

Among civil servants, the concept of “culture of information” is not always used to refer to a faulty but desirable element. It is also commonly used to refer to an excessive and, to some extent, damaging trend towards favoring information. “I have always said that there has been too much emphasis on information,” Luz Janeth Forero, medical doctor and main director of the CRNV said when explaining to me the ways in which the CRNV intervenes in governmental settings where policies aimed at controlling violence are designed. “Information is important, but I think it has been overestimated. Everything gravitates around the number itself. I have always said that numbers need to be complemented. I have always insisted on this. Information is not everything.” These remarks, all the more surprising since they come from the director of one of the epicenters of the production of quantitative information, relate to what Forero pointed out as one of the hardest tasks as director of the CRNV: to make people look beyond the number itself. “It is very hard. We have a culture that worships information and numbers. Thus, it is hard to make people to go beyond this. It is really hard because you need to have numbers and you need to show things through concrete numbers. For instance, you need numbers in order to address homicides and to show that they dropped, increased, or remained the same. For all this you need numbers, but the constraints of those numbers are never taken into account,” she said. “Numbers, after all, are the main evidence. In
spite of any constraints, numbers are evidence and numbers are important because they are numbers. I think that all this is due to the fact that hard sciences have been traditionally favored in the country and to a widespread tradition by which for things to be seen as true and valid, they need to be proved through mathematics and numbers,” she stated when addressing the relationship between information and the design of public policies on security in contemporary Colombia.

Excessive favor of numbers, or what Forero denominates a widespread culture that worships information, is also labeled by other workers at the CRNV as “the metaphysics of numbers” or the use of numbers in absolute and ultimate statements. Civil servants working outside CRNV and at other epicenters of information management and production, often make similar remarks pertaining to the use of information for designing public policies in security. “To me, figures are just indicators but they don’t prove social realities,” Carlos Alvarez, and anthropologist who for the past few years has worked at the municipal Observatory said when referring to the ways in which he has sought to come to terms with the use of figures for addressing crime and violence. “To me this has to be addressed in situ. I mean, you might put into evidence a problem through empirical data by using epidemiology or a similar methodology, but once you have done this you need to get closer to realities. That would ideally be through fieldwork, but conducting fieldwork demands an amount of time that is not compatible with the work of the Observatory.” Besides the lack of time, as Alvarez would then point out, the preeminence of the use of quantitative methodologies also relates to the authoritative charisma of numbers. “One of the great obstacles in using social sciences for addressing this is that they, unlike hard sciences, don’t provide quantitative data. For most people what is
actually valid is data. Nowadays you cannot say that violence is dropping if you don’t have a figure. You need, for instance, to say that it is dropping by 40%. Even if you know that this information is not totally accurate because statistics are just indicators, still you have to acknowledge that numbers are more authoritative.”

The preeminent use of numbers and their authoritative nature, along with the urgency of using information beyond figures, are common remarks among civil servants, particularly among those civil servants who, as is the case with Forero and Alvarez, work at settings in charge of processing this information. These remarks might at first look as opposite to the ones made by those civil servants who, like Salazar and Escobar, advocate introducing and promoting a culture of information. Nevertheless, these apparently opposite points of view have both similarities and differences. To begin with both of them recognize the importance of numbers in contemporary ways of designing public policies as well as the urgency of both qualifying information and improving its uses. While those who favor a “culture of information” advocate more training and a deeper understanding of information, those who regret the excessive use of number and the widespread favoring of information as authoritative datum advocate the use of complementary and alternative ways of knowing. These differences take us back to the idea of information and numeric narratives as a hologram. As it is in an actual hologram: the closer you are to information management and data production the less clear you see the whole image, but the farther you are from processes involved in the generation of figures the less aware you are of the details that generate such an image.
SHOW ME THOSE NUMBERS!

The vicinity of the above-mentioned hologram is a terrain ruled by figures and quantitative data. From mainstream academic and expert meetings to municipal committees and reports of different sorts, numeric narratives are extensively favored as authoritative statements and have become almost mandatory when addressing security in contemporary Bogotá. Numbers, indeed, have become a common and preferred language among those who inhabit these settings. However, the use of this language does not always lead to smooth dialogues. Figures might often become a defective "Babel Fish"\textsuperscript{55} between numeric narratives that serve to address crime and violence in the Colombian capital. Epidemiologists, economists and high-ranking municipal workers engage in Byzantine debates on whether a given percentage means a significant contribution or a marginal participation in the reduction of violent murders.\textsuperscript{89} To be sure, these phenomena are also the subject of debates and scholarly production outside this quantitative vicinity; but, unless they are put forward by a high-ranking municipal worker or by the mayor of the city, non-numeric narratives are increasingly less authoritative statements in terms of managing crime and violence in the city.\textsuperscript{90}

In this context, quantitative data, or information as it is often referred to in contemporary Bogotá, resembles a precious good. As such, it is motive of inter-

\textsuperscript{55} Douglas Adams introduced the Babel Fish in his \textit{Hitchhiker's guide to the galaxy}. It is a small and yellow fish that, when inserted into the ear, simultaneously translates from one spoken language to another. Over the past 30 years and based on this idea, translation systems such as Systran have been developed. More generically and in the realm of computers and computer sciences, Babel Fish denotes systems and software that by means of multilingual dictionaries provide translations.

\textsuperscript{89} This is particularly the case with ongoing debates on the effects of measures aimed either at regulating alcohol consumption or at forbidding civilian carrying of firearms, and their impact on the reduction of homicides in the Colombian capital (see among others: Acero 2003; Llorente, Escobedo et al. 2001; Sánchez, Espinosa et al. 2003; Villavec es 2000).

\textsuperscript{90} This is even the case with Mayor Mockas, whose approaches to violence are recognized for being mainly inspired by philosophical ideas and concepts derived from the social sciences. Along with fancy and clever references to philosophy, social sciences, and local anecdotes, his presentations on crime and violence in the city and on ways of controlling these phenomena would almost inevitably include numeric narratives or references to them.
institutional jealousy and complex politics between governmental agencies. Reluctance to provide information is a common complaint against institutions that collect data on the occurrence of crime and acts of violence, such as the police or the Institute of Legal Medicine. The history of the municipal Observatory exemplifies jealousy between institutions in sharing information, as well as ways of going around it in order to gain access to that same information. "If I knew the guy who was working here, then I'd provide information. But I could also not provide it. It was a matter of personal relationships," Colonel Ricaurte, former member of the police and current worker at the Observatory, explained to me when recalling the early history of the Observatory and the days when he was in charge of managing information at the metropolitan police. Deals, transactions, and agreements mediating information access among official institutions are also laid out by the personal archive of Alvaro Camacho. This archive, to which I had access due to Camacho's sympathy for my academic pursuits, contains not only bits and pieces of his work as a scholar recognized for his studies on urban crime and violence but also the written memory of the time when he was city advisor on security and coexistence. In the midst of articles, reports, newsletters, and handwritten notes, a handful of memos tell stories about the politics involved in gaining access to information. This is the case with a computer given by municipal Bogotá to the Institute of Legal Medicine, as part of the agreement by which the Institute assented to providing information on the occurrence of deaths and injuries in the city.

When working outside governmental institutions and seeking quantitative data, gaining access to information is also subject to constraints and politics. If you know the person in charge of managing the data that you need "getting the numbers" —a polite way
to refer to one’s own begging for those desperately needed figures—might be as fast as an email or a phone call. However, if you don’t know the clerk in charge, gaining access to the same data might become a dragging and hopeless exercise of writing dozens of memos to unknown civil servants and waiting for their reply. Sometimes, “getting the numbers” might also turn into a battlefield between those conducting research or working as consultants and those working at official institutions. Lawsuits and other legal actions such as filling out a request with juridical implications, or, when possible, asking a high-ranking civil servant within the same institution to intervene and make the clerk release the information, are all strategies used by those demanding data. To invoke decrees and institutional statutes pertaining to required agreements for providing information, releasing summarized figures (not quite suitable for detailed quantitative analyses), or, if nothing else, providing the requested information only in hard copies instead of in magnetic format (which clearly demands enormous amounts of time and work in order to be transformed into data suitable for conducting an analysis), are some possible responses used by those keeping the information.

As it is in actual battlefields, in this one, there are neither perfectly good nor absolutely evil characters. In such a race to lay claim to information, everybody gets to play sometimes lamb and sometimes wolf. This is the case with off-the-record stories about the X group of researchers who work as consultants for municipal governments in small Colombian cities and make lots of money due to their fancy diagnoses, in which one of the main products are figures on violent murders that had occurred in these cities. Civil servants working at the Y institution refuse to release information to the X group of

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91 This kind of petition more frequently refers to what is locally known as *derecho de petición*. In it information is requested by invoking the constitutional right of knowing about the given subject. (e.g. to knowing about violence in the city).
researchers, unless some sort of agreement is formalized so the institution would get something in exchange for that information. The X group of researches claims that information is public, and works through their networks for contacting the Colombian Attorney General in order to make those clerks release the figures that are needed for their diagnoses. Civil servants facing a very likely dismissal due to their contesting such a petition by highlighting that an agreement is mandatory for releasing information, particularly if profit is being made out of the very same information — provided for free. This is also the case with the somewhat anarchic series of descriptive categories by which civil servants catalog requested data. The unorthodox nature of the usage of these categories is better revealed when after a phone call to one of the clerks you’ve known for ages you finally get the needed figures in an attachment; and, then, you decide to go through the pile of memos rejecting your petition for accessing this same information. A hard to explain linguistic turn by which the data that a few minutes ago was catalogued as “no problem I’ll send you the file,” can be also described in those memos as “top secret and not suitable to be revealed for public security reasons,” or as “not collected by this institution,” or even as “not available at the moment.” This, additionally, is the case with unsaid rules of thumb among researchers: personal networks should always be at hand when seeking access to data; but obtained figures on the other hand are seldom — if ever — meant to be shared. Information, in plain words, is fully public either within your private network or until it reaches your hard disk. In short, when it comes to getting or sharing information, both demanders and keepers might better be seen as upright scoundrels.

Processes that have led to information’s becoming a precious and jealously kept good are part of the underground of the above described overflow of printed numbers. This
underground reflects on the surface bringing into light the ways in which crime, violence, and security are addressed as realms for governmental intervention and are understood through increasingly common use of quantitative data. Indeed, this data generates partial readings, which often hide—or even ignore—individual experiences of crime and violence. These readings might erase many key aspects of these two phenomena. But, stepping aside from most common critiques of the widespread use of quantitative data, I prefer looking at it as a key—and to some extent unavoidable—element in the processes that lie behind recent governmental shifts in Bogotá.

Redefinitions of violence at academic and official settings, along with the introduction of procedures meant to enhance city governance and the design of public policies pertaining to security, are two of those processes. The former are closely linked to governmental interventions aimed at controlling crime and violence as phenomena affecting a population. The introduction of new procedures, on the other hand, is clearly exemplified by the adoption of indicators of the impact of both designing and assessing those governmental interventions, which relates to municipal shifts in managing the city and the sponsorship of security and coexistence programs by international agencies. In this context, the use of numeric narratives seems imperative. Neither populations nor indicators of impact, as they are defined in contemporary Bogotá, can be addressed outside standardized statistics. Thus beyond possible critiques of the widespread use of quantitative data and of the favoring of numeric narratives, these are symptoms of governmental shifts and processes of the adoption and circulation of arts of managing crime and violence and of providing security that are described elsewhere in this work.
SEPTEMBER 2004 (EPILOGUE)

By Fall 2004, when I came back to Houston to write up my dissertation, and after spending a rough year and a half working among experts on security in the Colombian capital, I knew that when an economist talks about regressions he is not making reference to hypnosis but to complex numeric processes. Having worked for nearly twenty months with figures and quantitative data, I became incipiently savvy in the usage and crafting of numeric narratives. Astoundingly, throughout this period I even developed a certain quantitative taste. "So, how did you like the report?" Fabio Sánchez, the economists mentioned a few pages earlier and with whom I had been working for the past few months, asked me when working on the literature review for a collective paper. "Well, the introduction is interesting but the chapters are somewhat poorly written. Still, appended figures provide comprehensive and detailed numbers, which is very useful."

My response was followed by his smiling look. "Do you mean numbers besides dates and page numbers?" he replied making a playful reference to one of our first encounters. Inevitably, we laugh. My tense laughing, I guess, was a startling realization that I might actually have meant that.
SECTION 4
MODELING AND MARKETING CITIZEN SECURITY AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

Figure 7
"The Wise Men" Bogotá, 1996
This cartoon was published on January 7th 1996 in El Espectador, a Colombian newspaper that circulates nationwide. In it, the cost of gasoline, mandatory taxes, and utilities appear as high as the clouds. Standing in front of a camel: a woman carrying a baby and a man raising his arms. On the top of the camel and looking towards the couple, the Wise Men; who appear as officials of three international agencies: the International Monetary Fund (IMF/FMI), the World Bank (WB/BM) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB/BID).

Although not always depicted as riding an oversized camel, international agencies are common references among local experts and public workers when discussing feasible governmental initiatives. This is generally the case when looking for feasible public policies in areas such as health, education, and employment. In the past few years, international agencies have also become frequent references when discussing feasible response to the lack of personal safety and the upsurge of violence. In contemporary Colombia, and increasingly elsewhere in Latin America, the Inter-American Development Bank–IDB is often addressed when discussing initiatives aimed at improving citizen security and coexistence, or when deliberating about strategies for reducing violence.

This section focuses on the processes that have accompanied such figuration of the IDB. It looks into resonances and links among the incorporation of violence reduction in
Bank's portfolio and further design of initiatives aimed at controlling violence, academic trends and battles among Colombian scholars engaged in searching ways of controlling violence, the circulation of many of these scholars as experts on citizen security and coexistence, the launching of municipal enterprises cast as citizen security and peaceful coexistence initiatives in Bogotá, and the circulation beyond local realms of citizen security and coexistence campaigns that local authorities have promoted in the Colombian capital.

For elucidating the links that these resonances reveal, I build upon the notion of global form and global assemblage put forward by Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier (Ong and Collier 2005). These authors use the notion of global form to refer to contemporary universals, which they define based on Max Weber's concept of universal or the «phenomena whose significance and validity are not dependent on the "props" of a "culture" or a "society"» (Ong and Collier 2005:10). According to Ong and Collier, global forms have a distinctive capacity to assimilate different contexts and to code them in ways that allow controlling and evaluating. At the same time they are relatively independent from exclusively social or cultural limits. Depending instead on infrastructure, technology, and governmental agencies and apparatuses. Global assemblages articulate global forms in specific situations. Within this frame, I understand the incorporation of violence reduction into the Bank's portfolio and its further work on initiatives for improving citizen security and coexistence, as a global form. I address the relation of such incorporation to both the flourishing of a mobile elite of Colombian scholars and experts, and the circulation of Bogotá's experiences in citizen security and peaceful coexistence as a global assemblage.
The crafting and naturalization of intervention models of urban crime and violence management are distinctive of these global form and assemblage. In what follows, I present what might at first sight seem as a random set of stories attached to the processes of sponsoring, designing and implementing citizen security and coexistence initiatives in Colombia. I use this apparently random set of stories to track down and characterize such crafting and naturalization. One way to read this section—and the one I suggest to follow—is by looking at the, sometimes hidden between lines, some other times explicit, practice of spending money. Spending money is a key element in such global form and assemblage. Spending in action, as I explain later on this section, is at the core of processes of designing and implementing IDB’s initiatives pertaining to violence reduction and the promotion of both citizen security and peaceful coexistence.

**Economics of “Non-Economic” Issues**

«Good morning to you and welcome to our house, which is just as much your house and Latin America’s house. It is a great pleasure for me to receive you here, and I do appreciate the time you have all decided to set aside for this seminar...[...]. . . I am sure you are wondering what could have inspired a lending agency to invite you here to reflect on the ethical and social aspects of development...[...]. . . the fact is that this is a very special Bank: it is a Latin American institution committed to the society, the people, and the deep-seated problems of Latin America. Commitment to the region means taking on issues which are not normally found on the agendas of conventional Banks, but which are fundamental to the life of our people.

These “non-economic” issues are the ones that are unnerving and worrying much of Latin America today. Moreover, violent crime is a worldwide challenge. It is impossible to speak of development as long as the quality of life of our peoples is being perturbed and threatened by violence and the lack of safety. Social development must encompass these variables that so profoundly affect their everyday life. Which is why gatherings of this kind, which brings together economic and social policy makers, intellectuals from academia, and spiritual leaders, all united in their concern over the endemic violence, provide an opportunity to examine these topics freely. You are here exclusively as individuals, not to represent governments or the world of politics or religion; you are friends coming together to reflect entirely independently, with no other goal than to offer broad guidelines to help the Bank find new approaches to improving the quality of development in Latin America.
We may at best conclude that this is not an issue the Bank should address, or that there are aspects and problems that could provide the basis for specific actions at some future date. I believe these topics will be the leading issues on the agenda in the next century, here and through the world. And to take the view that this is not a fit subject for this agency would be a dangerous simplification. The Bank must find a way to generate the kind of thinking that will serve to redefine its mission of service to government and peoples alike. It has from the outset been the Bank of the Latin American citizen, a focus that brings together more than 75 percent of our population and just about everything that happens in the region is connected to the life of its human settlements and forms part of our agenda.» (Iglesias in Inter-American Development Bank 1996: 1-2).

With these words, Enrique Iglesias (at this time president of the Inter-American Development Bank -IDB) welcomed the participants of the 1996 conference on Ethics, Violence and Citizen Security that was held at the headquarters of the IDB. Many of these meetings and research works were seminal for both opening new credit lines and designing novel loan projects such as the incorporation of violence reduction into Bank’s portfolio and further design of initiatives aimed at controlling violence that in the past few years the Bank has begun promoting throughout the region. This conference was part of a series of annual meetings sponsored by the Bank, which were meant to address critical challenges affecting Latin American societies and development in the region. Since 1993 the Bank has sponsored colloquia on various topics including poverty, education, social reforms, democracy, and regional economy.

These colloquia were one of the closing points of the crisis that the IDB had endured in the past few years. They were meant to be main inputs for a renewed Bank that in the following years would recover its leading position as lending organization in the region. Similarly, work conducted by members of the Latin American Research Network, created in 1991 at the Research Division of the IDB, was envisioned as main source for such a renovated Bank.
AFTERMATH OF THE "LOST DECADE"

In Latin America, the 1980's are known among economists as the "lost decade." Unlike the decades between 1950 and 1980, a period of significant economic growth through the region, the eighties were years in which economic growth per capita in most Latin American countries was either zero or less than zero.\textsuperscript{92} Going through such an economic crisis, Latin American countries faced a dramatic diminishing of the quality of life and growing poverty. At the same time, they witnessed the exponential growth of their external debt and the significant reduction of their credit rating. Sinking in their negative economic growth, Latin American countries were unable to perform either at the national level or in the international arena.

As one of the leading multilateral funding providers in Latin America, the IDB was strongly affected by the regional bankruptcy of the 1980's. Nevertheless, the economic setback experienced by the Bank in that decade was the product of processes that had taken place in the preceding years. The regional economic bankruptcy was just one among them. In the 1970's the recycling of oil-surplus funds prompted a financial bonanza, which demoted the IDB as a leading provider of capital for the region. The availability of alternative—and to some extent more easy to access—sources of capital undermined the importance of the Bank to the more creditworthy countries. At the same time, funding ideas of multilateral developmental agencies, such as Banks, were questioned and seen with increasing skepticism in the region (Tussie 1995).

\textsuperscript{92} Data from the IMF shows that between 1950 and 1999 Average Annual Per Capita Growth (GDP) in Latin America was as follows: 2.1\% (1951-59), 3.0\% (1960-69), 2.9 (1970-79), -0.3\% (1980-1989), and 1.4\% (1990-99). Colombia was an exception of the negative economic growth experienced throughout Latin America during the 1980's. Between 1951 and 1999 GDP in the country was: 1.4\% (1951-59), 2.0\% (1960-69), 3.4\% (1970-79), 1.1\% (1980-89), and 0.9 (1990-1999). For details on this data and data for other Latin American countries see Weisbrot and Rosnick (2003).
The economic bankruptcy of the 1980’s was the last straw of a crisis that menaced the IDB for a decade. Disbursements declined sharply from 1984 to 1987, while the region’s debt owed to the Bank—as well as to other international financial institutions—grew dramatically (Tussie 1995). In 1987, for the first time, the IDB registered negative numbers in its flows to the region.\(^3\) The boosting of external debt and the negative economic growth hindered borrowing countries’ payment capability. Besides, both financing markets and the dynamics of developmental enterprises imposed constraints to Banks sponsoring developmental initiatives. Furthermore, the urgency of alleviating poverty and diminished social conditions in most Latin American countries posed new demands for agencies sponsoring development in the region. As such, the bankruptcy of the 1980’s didn’t help in solving the crisis experienced by funding agencies, but catalyzed it and delayed its overcoming.

In 1988, Enrique Iglesias was appointed president of the IDB. His main goals—and challenges—were to expedite the sanction of the Seventh Replenishment\(^4\) and to chart a future course for the Bank. The Seventh Replenishment was agreed in 1989. Also at this time, the Bank underwent several organizational changes. These changes were products of both an internal review process and the work of a review committee convened by

\(^3\) In this year, the Bank registered a negative flow of $219.6 million dollars (Bruggmann 1991:23). Also in 1987, the aggregate net of multilateral flows (from IDB, World Bank and IMF) to the region were negative numbers (Tussie 1995:53).

\(^4\) The Replenishment—as a document and as an IDB mandate—is the product of periodic exercises aimed at generating agreements negotiated by the shareholders of the Bank, which set priorities and targets for Bank action over a multi-year period. Such exercises take place when there are periodic capital replenishments. In addition to providing injection of new resources, these exercises are meant to provide a negotiating environment among shareholders to agree on priorities, build trust and reach political compromise. Resulting agreements and Replenishment document constitute one of the three major elements in the guidance system with which the IDB has functioned for several years. Other two elements in this system are the Agreement Establishing the Inter-American Development Bank (the Charter), which establishes the broad enduring purposes of the institution; and regular decision-making by the Board of Executive Directors on policy issues. For details on this and other aspects of the IDB, as well as for specifics on Replenishment documents see www.iadb.org.
Iglesias in 1988. Suggested changes included overcoming rigidities inherent to the project approach and restoring inflows by looking for policy-based loans, focusing on social capital and public sector investment, addressing environmental protection and including it in every project at the design stage, and increasing technical cooperation. A significant change, also suggested and undertaken at this time, was to increase the number of non-regional representation among Bank’s staff. Also in the late 1980’s, the IDB went through major structural reforms including the creation of a new organization chart and downsizing.

By 1991 the Bank had begun regaining its historical role as major source of multilateral funding in the region. In 1994, the sanction of the Eighth Replenishment invigorated such a resurgence by bringing more resources to the Bank. Furthermore, it introduced important shifts by establishing new goals and areas of work including reducing poverty and promoting social reforms (Tussie 1995).

Two main dynamic forces that had their focal point on development banks framed the emergence of such a renewed IDB. On the one hand, local authorities and social actors at borrowing countries where major reforms had been recently implemented had begun to resent the effects of these reforms. On the other hand, international agencies, mainly NGOs with headquarters in Washington D.C., had been lobbying for the introduction of new topics and perspectives in development projects and at development organizations. This was the case with topics such as environment, social impact and political legitimacy.

In facing these two forces, banks opened new lines of work. Issues such as the rule of law, legitimate governments, active participation of civil society, transparency and accountability were defined as core elements for both politically feasible and sustainable
reforms. By the late 1990's, these issues had been incorporated by development Banks mainly as issues of governance and/or good governance. They were also designated as core issues for designing and undertaking initiatives. Under such label, banks have begun to work on a variety of projects and topics that stand apart from most traditional enterprises sponsored by this type of organizations (Tussie 1997).

In such a context, the IDB sponsored the above-mentioned colloquias on critical challenges affecting Latin American societies and development in the region. These meetings exemplify the introduction of new –more participatory– forms of working promoted by the Bank. On the other hand, they also express the Bank’s interests in identifying topics of intervention and credit lines that responded to mandates introduced by the Eighth Replenishment and demands posed by both NGOs and locals, but at the same time were appealing as direct responses to interests of borrowing countries. Additionally, in late 1997 the Bank established the Social Development Division (SDS/SOC) within its Sustainable Development Department.\footnote{This department addresses five main themes: Environment and natural resources; Human resources and social development; Information technology for development; Infrastructure, financial markets and private enterprise; State, governance and Civil society.} Through it, the IDB has sought to address social issues that cut across sectors, particularly poverty which reduction was included in the Bank’s mandates and has been identified as a problem affecting countries throughout the region. Since its creation, SDS/SOC has devoted to work on sensitive social issues and emergent topics within the Bank’s agenda. Its work has focused on women and indigenous groups,\footnote{Work with these groups has been through the Women in Development Unit and the Indigenous Peoples and Community Development Unit.} but has also included technical and conceptual support on childhood development, health, urban development, the
formulation of social policy, and violence prevention and control (Inter-American Development Bank since 1998).

**REPLENISHING THE MARKET: THE SEARCH FOR NEW CREDIT LINES**

Disclosure policies, renewed organization charts, research networks, regional encounters, and participatory exercises, are some of the more or less novel modalities of working recently adopted by the two most important multilateral banks in Latin America. In the early 1990’s, the IDB incorporated innovative modalities of work such as the creation of a Research Network (1991) and the hosting of region-wide conferences on challenging topics for Latin American development. In the mid 1990’s, both the World Bank and the IDB introduced participatory modalities of work in the region. The adoption of these modalities relates not only to the Banks' interests in new ways of working, but also to the inclusion of new topics in their agendas and their seeking to open new credit lines.

In 1996, the World Bank sponsored what at that time it saw as a promising and innovative participatory exercise. Unlike in previous years, for the elaboration of Colombia Country Assistance Study (CAS annual document based on which the loans and projects are defined between the Bank and the borrowing country), the Bank held meetings both in Washington D.C. and Bogotá. The latter joined workers within the Bank whose work related to the country, the former included a meeting with members of governmental institutions and with members of the civil society. Besides being a public document, the resulting CAS called attention to the urgency (most clearly expressed in meetings held in Bogotá) of investing on the generation of peace and the amelioration of the effects of armed conflict (Arboleda 1999).
Early in that same year, the IDB held the above-mentioned conference on Ethics, Violence and Citizen Security. This meeting didn’t imply the introduction of a radically new modality of working within the Bank, but was the continuation of innovations introduced three years earlier. However, the central topics of the 1996 conference were novel in the Bank’s agenda. This shift relates to various contextual elements, among which two are worth mentioning. To begin with, the Bank had recently worked on justice reform projects in several Latin American countries (Biebesheimer and Payne 2001; Iglesias and Inter-American Development Bank. 1999). Furthermore, a dynamic group of Latin American scholars97 engaged in both the study of crime and violence dynamics and in the design of initiatives seeking to reduce and prevent these phenomena, were at this time working at the IDB and at institutions closely related to the Bank.

The combination of these contextual elements draws a complex modality of intervention in which ideas and models are not merely imposed from outside but neither are they totally crafted from inside. Rather, this modality of intervention results from complex processes of importation and exportation of ideas and models. These processes relate to equally complex dynamics that involve the flow of scholars within local and global arenas, the existence of networks of expertise, the seeking for funding both by national authorities and entrepreneurial governmental workers, and the effects of both

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97 This group included Colombian scholars and experts who had and would play a salient role in fostering systematic approaches to violence, particularly through epidemiology and economics. This is the case with Rodrigo Guerrero, Mauricio Rubio, and Juan Luis Londoño. Among scholars from other countries who have also led novel and systematic approaches to violence, and who had worked closely to the IDB, was Hugo Frühling, a Chilean expert on security and policing. Salient figures in gathering this group of scholars and experts at the IDB, as well as in promoting research on violence and violence-related topics within the Bank were Ricardo Haussman, Venezuelan, who at the time was a high-ranking official. Haussman promoted the creation of a Network of Research Centers within the Bank and the conduction of several research projects on violence. Similarly, Luis Ratnoff (Chilean) who at the time was also a Bank official, played a decisive role in organizing initial meetings, such as the colloquias mentioned at the beginning of this section, to discuss particularly sensitive issues affecting Latin American societies and ways of dealing with them (About these and other key actors see among others: Inter-American Development Bank 1996; Londoño de la Cuesta, Gaviria et al. 2000).
constraints and trends that mark contemporary work at multilateral development organizations.

**THE 1085-88/OC-CO OPERATIONS AND THE CO0213 LOAN PROJECT**

On February 25th, 1998, President Samper’s administration and the IDB signed a loan for supporting actions aimed at providing citizen security and building peaceful coexistence. The approved loan was for 57 million dollars and counted for 12.8% of the total loans signed in 1998 by the Colombian government and the IDB. The loan project included a national subprogram and a municipal subprogram to be developed in Bogotá, Cali and Medellín. The nearly 100-page loan project document states as the loan’s main objective: “to contribute to the reduction of violence and insecurity in some Colombian cities by strengthening actions aimed at preventing, counterattacking, and controlling identified factors that relate to criminal and violent acts” (Inter-American Development Bank 1998: 1 my translation from Spanish). Through this loan project, Colombia became the first borrowing country where such a novel and promising area of work within the IDB was put into practice. In March of that same year, another IDB borrowing country, Uruguay, signed a similar loan project (Inter-American Development Bank 1998).

In order to advance the loan project’s main objective, several areas of work and activities were defined. At the national level, the project would support initiatives such as: promoting a reliable system of information covering delinquency and violence, updating the judicial framework, providing funds for conducting research on security and

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98 These numbers are used to identify the loan project for citizen security and peaceful coexistence signed between the Colombian government and the IDB along with the operations comprised in this loan project. Operations included in the CO0213 loan project are the national operation (1085/OC-CO) and municipal operations (1086/OC-CO, 1087/OC-CO, and 1088/OC-CO) in the Colombian capital and two major Colombian cities (Cali and Medellín). Although the number of the loan project is CO0213, those working on its implementation would more frequently refer to it as the 1085-88/OC-CO.
coexistence related issues, financing citizen education programs, sponsoring security and coexistence initiatives in Colombian cities other than the ones included in the municipal subprogram, supporting the police and community outreach, and developing a national strategy of communication and violence prevention. At the municipal level, the program would finance programs proposed by the municipalities themselves or in collaboration with the private sector and civil society organizations. These would include the creation of local observatories of crime and violence, programs for minors and at-risk youngsters, initiatives seeking to improve access to justice and to strengthen both municipal justice and law enforcement institutions, programs aimed at improving both citizen education at the local level and civil society participation (Inter-American Development Bank 1998; Inter-American Development Bank 1998; Inter-American Development Bank 1998?; Inter-American Development Bank 1999).

**FLASH STANDARDIZING APPROACHES TO VIOLENCE**

At the IDB headquarters, tasks pertaining to the design and development of this loan project corresponded to both the Regional Operations Department 3 (RE3) and the recently created Social Development Division (SDS/SOC). RE3 mostly helped in

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99 The IADB comprises three Regional Operations Departments. Regional Operations Department 1 (RE1) prepares the operational program and monitors the project portfolio in Southern South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil and Chile). It also supports the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America initiative, contributes to research and knowledge dissemination activities, and produces some of the Bank’s intellectual products. Regional Operations Department 2 (RE2) is responsible for IDB operations in Mexico and nine Central American and Caribbean countries (Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama). It also supports the Plan Puebla Panama initiative, conducts national consensus-building efforts by leading various Consultative Groups, contributes to research and knowledge dissemination activities, and produces some of the Bank’s intellectual products. The Bank’s Financial Services Subdepartment (FSS) resides within RE2 and coordinates co-financing activities, the Japan Special Fund and technical cooperation funds for the entire Bank. Regional Operations Department 3 (RE3) prepares the operational program and monitors the project portfolio in Northern South America (Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela) and the Caribbean (Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago). It also supports the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America initiative, contributes to research and knowledge dissemination activities, and produces some of the Bank’s intellectual products.
preparing the loan project document and, along with the IDB office in Bogotá, monitoring its undertaking. SDS/SOC was in charge of both providing technical advisory support for developing the loan project and contributing in creating and disseminating knowledge pertaining to central topics of the loan project. Additionally, designated workers from the Bank’s office in Bogotá and those working on similar topics in Washington, even at other divisions within the Bank, were also part of the group who produced the loan project document. Advisory support reflects the Bank’s understandings of violence and its reduction. In this case, such support combined approaches derived from previous work at the Bank on similar topics, and ideas pertaining to the control of crime and violence put forward by Latin American scholars and experts working at or with the Bank. IDB’s approach to violence might be elucidated through loan project documents and the various events pertaining to violence reduction that the Bank has sponsored in the past few years. However, it is best expressed in the four following points:

Violence is in large part a learned behavior, and one of the earliest opportunities for an individual to observe and learn violent responses is at home. Domestic violence, in other words, is intimately linked to social violence. Thus, while domestic violence is deserving of attention in its own right, Bank efforts to reduce social violence also incorporate actions to reduce domestic violence in order to maximize project impact.

Programs emphasize the prevention of violence rather than the treatment of its symptoms, largely because prevention measures are generally more cost effective. At the same time, it must be recognized that prevention and treatment are not either/or options; rather, they are located along a policy continuum.

Both comprehensive, multi-sectoral interventions and interventions targeted at specific

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100 This group comprised: Rodrigo Guerrero, Ana Lucía Muñoz, Andrew Morrison, Kevin McTigue, Natacha Marzolf and Rafael C. Hernandez. Fernando Carrillo also collaborated in the production of the document. It is worth noticing the presence of Rodrigo Guerrero, who as the section on Academic Battles show has led the epidemiological approaches to violence in Colombia and elsewhere. It is also worth mentioning that Andrew Morrison is often described by IDB’s officials as one of the violentologos (violento-logists) of the Bank (fieldwork interviews). Morrison has recently moved to the World Bank to keep working on similar topics. These two names exemplify the circulation of scholars and experts, as well as the relationship between these kinds of initiatives and the path of such circulation.
risk factors are appropriate policy responses to violence. The advantage of simultaneously addressing multiple risk factors must be weighed against greater cost and more complex implementation.

The design of projects to reduce violence must be participatory and involve all sectors of society, including national and local governments, non-governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society (Inter-American Development Bank 1999:1).

Put forward for the first time in the late 1990’s, these guiding points have since been endorsed by those working on violence control and prevention within the Bank. They have also framed the work of both scholars and policy makers involved in initiatives promoted by the Bank. Since then, these guiding points have been frequently reproduced in official programs, newsletters, working papers, bulletins, reports, proposals, and other kinds of written documents either produced as part of an initiative sponsored by the Bank or in seeking such sponsorship. As such, they have become part of the common, and to some extent mandatory, language of all of those whose work relates to both the Bank and topics pertaining to violence management. Repetition, in this case, acts as a vehicle for naturalizing ways of approaching violence.

What ways of approaching violence are privileged in the above quoted guiding points? In other words, what ways of addressing and combating violence are favored by the IDB? Why are these ways favored? IDB’s approach to violence stresses prevention in seeking to control violence. Statements supporting preventative initiatives often highlight cost-effective reasons. However, favoring these types of initiatives also responds to limited realms in which the Bank can operate:

“Types of activities and items eligible for funding are limited and defined,” an IDB official explained to me while spreading jelly on toast. As most workers at the IDB headquarters, he would visit the Colombian capital—or any other capital city—for just a
few days to meet with high-ranking civil servants and local scholars, as well as attending numerous meetings and presentations. In spite of his busy schedule, he was kind enough to make room for me and my questions about the 1085-88/OC-CO operations. The night before, we agreed to have breakfast at his hotel. At 6:50 a.m. we sat at one of the few tables available at an exclusive Bogotá’s hotel. A half-Spanish half-English buzz fills the room. Popular among travelers and locals for business meetings, the hotel’s dining room is packed with ties and dark suits. “Activities and items are limited and defined from the point of view of how they may or may not become repressive,” he explained before taking a bite of toast. “They are carefully delimited for avoiding activities and items that might end contributing to repressive actions,” he added sipping orange juice.

Those working at the IDB office in Bogotá and at governmental agencies involved in the execution of the 1085-88/OC-CO would also call attention to restrictions on both activities and items that could be included in an IDB loan project. Some would describe these restrictions as a Bank’s somewhat naive way of securing its neutralidad política (political neutrality), which would rest on the Bank’s avoidance of activities pertaining to public order, human rights, and criminal punishment. Others would describe these restrictions as perhaps understandable in terms of Bank’s mandates, but total nonsense in the Colombian context. “When people from the IDB come to see how the loan project is evolving and attend presentations at law-enforcement institutions such as the National Police, the whole scene is hilarious,” a high-ranking civil servant said recalling salient moments in the undertaking of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations. A busy government official, he suggested lunch in order to answer as many questions about the project as he could. As agreed, we met around one o’clock at one of the trendy and casual restaurants a
few blocks away from his office; a nice spot in the not-so-nice north side of downtown Bogotá. "It is very hard to trace a sharp division between things that pertain to security and coexistence, and those that pertain to public order. How could you clearly separate them?" he asked rhetorically, while spooning chunks of avocado into his tortilla soup. "But, you know, the Bank does not allow funding things for public order and defense," he added before taking a spoonful of soup. "So well, more than one IDB official gets goose bumps when visiting the National Police. For them all this seems terrible," he said in a formal, but also jocular tone, making both of us laugh.

Besides corresponding to previously defined funding restrictions and cost-effective considerations, IDB’s approach to violence incorporates and synthesizes diverse ways of approaching this phenomenon. It combines what at local academic and expert circles, discussed earlier in this dissertation, often appear as not only different and discernable approaches to violence, but also sometimes almost opposed ways of addressing it. For instance, guiding points quoted above echo epidemiological ways of approaching violence, but at the same time incorporate elements derived from the economic study of violence. In academic and expert circles, these two approaches are discernable. To mention just one example: evaluations of the Bogotá experience, discussed in preceding sections, carried out by those endorsing an epidemiological approach to violence differ in key points from the ones performed by those whose approach to violence derived from the economic theory of crime. Moreover, two scholars working within one of these approaches might not even agree one to each other.

Similarly, the above quoted guiding points that comprise the IDB’s approach to violence combine categories used by what at academic circles are seen as different and
differentiable approaches to violence. For instance, the category “social violence” that corresponds to predominately qualitative approaches to violence such as the ones endorsed by the violentólogos (violentologists) described in a preceding section, is used to refer to the kind of violence that the Bank seeks to intervene. Nevertheless, IDB’s approach to “social violence” privileges quantitative oriented approaches and numeric narratives more clearly linked to approaches to violence endorsed—even if in different manners—by both epidemiologists and economists.

The hybrid nature of IDB’s approach to violence reflects dynamics and processes that have framed the incorporation of violence reduction, improvement of security, and promotion of coexistence into the Bank’s agenda. The circulation of scholars and experts whose work endorses different ways of approaching violence is a central element in these dynamics and processes. IDB’s approach to violence might be read as a hybrid and somewhat rootless assemblage of ways of addressing and managing violence, one that misunderstands what at local academic and expert circles appears as different and differentiable. Yet, such a rootless combination might be better understood as the product of both the particularities of the adoption of these topics by the Bank and its urgency of generating a technical sounding approach. That is, an approach general enough to appear as feasible and endorsable under diverse local contexts. Generality and replication, however, seem elusive when dealing with violence. Guiding points quoted above are, at best, a broad outline of what at specific local contexts might be actually undertaken. Local stories and contingencies, as preceding sections show, are at the core of what nowadays are prized as successful ways of managing violence. The following pages show how contingency is also constitutive of the design and development of the IDB’s loan
project for citizen security and coexistence in Colombia, and more broadly to the Bank’s engagement in violence management.

MEMORIES OF AN ELUSIVE HISTORY

The 1085-88 / OC-CO operations that constitute the CO0213 loan project were the product of dynamics both within the Bank and among Colombians involved in academic and governmental work. However, it also relates to multilateral initiatives and local processes that took place in the mid 1990’s. Tracking the history of this initiative, particularly of its conception and envisioning process, has been like a detective enterprise. The result is a handful of stories on possible origins for this loan project and its comprised operations.

This was proposed as a quite small loan. I think there were about 20 millions ... It was seen as a small loan. Then, it was more like a supportive gesture, a supportive gesture towards this attempt. In the past few years, it has gained some importance, the IDB, I think, has gained a good position in this topic. It has done so very strongly in the Latin American realm. Then, this is one of those loans that get approved almost without going through long debates, because this is one of those loans that doesn’t compete against other loans (Economist- former DNP sub-director I)

The loans were negotiated very quickly and at any time now both the nation and the three cities had their loans on their backs. But all this was without any previous learning process, without any preliminary training or preparation, without missions from the Bank for strengthening the loan project and negotiating it. (DNP worker – Justice and Security Office IV)

The loan was approved even without minimum requirements such as an operating plan. This was in part due to the coming presidential elections in Colombia. Logics at that time were: let’s approve now and we’ll figure it out later. Would it had been better to wait? Yes, it might had been better. However, the loan project also lacks focus because back then it wasn’t possible to focus it and define it in a more precise way. (IDB Worker – IDB Headquarters – Regional Operations Department 3 I)

I have that part of the story a bit incomplete, because I came to work to the Bank at the very end of 1997. Back then, the loan project was already running... I don’t know if Bogotá was the one that led it or if it was an initiative from the national government. But Bogotá was at the
foreground in this initiative. If the whole idea came from Bogotá it came from both Mockus and Paul Bromberg. If it came from the national government instead, then it came from Arturo García who at that time was sub-director of Planeación [National Planning Office-DNP]. When I came to work here at the Bank, both Arturo García and Paul Bromberg were already working on this... You know, there were people already working, there were actors already moving this and the Bank was also doing so. (IDB Worker – Colombia’s IDB Country Office)

There were some previous experiences, particularly one that I do think was a major influence for us; also, back then, there was a good attitude towards this. Such was the milieu. The IDB had hired a person called Rodrigo Guerrero... When Rodrigo Guerrero was Mayor of Cali, he addressed this topic with some depth. I think he is a doctor... He had worked something within Medicine that I think was a key element in all this and it is epidemiology. And he had this idea running. Then, he sort of came to us with this idea, and with us, he found a space for developing it. (Economist- former DNP sub-director I)

How important was Rodrigo Guerrero in all this process?

Well, I think Rodrigo Guerrero was important. Well, Rodrigo Guerrero has both an academic background and practical experience. At the end, let's say, this attempt to aterrizar [to bring all these ideas together and make them graspable] all this into a proposal was Rodrigo Guerrero’s idea. They [the Bank] knew about the Cali experience, about which they said: well here we have a set of successful public policies. And what these Banks are looking for, in the end, are successful public policies. (Colombian Scholar – former IDB worker and former DNP sub-director II)

The Bank began to work on topics that relate to security and coexistence based on petitions for support made by two countries: Colombia and Uruguay... On the other hand, security did stand up as a critical issue at almost any meeting with borrowing countries. This is because, since several years ago violence levels have grown in an important number of these countries. (IDB Worker – IDB Headquarters – Regional Operations Department 3 II)

Guerrero sold the idea to the Bank. At that time he was well known for the initiatives that he had carried out as Mayor of Cali. Without really knowing what they – both Guerrero and the Bank – wanted, they designed the loan project and approved the loan... Within the Bank, the loan project was envisioned and promoted by Rodrigo Guerrero (who at that time was working for the Bank). The initial idea served as key element for the preliminary version of the project. The project went through several committees. The main critique was the lack of clearly defined investment targets. Nevertheless, the loan was approved. (IDB Worker – IDB Headquarters – Regional Operations Department 3 I)

In 1997, Planeación was beginning to enter into the topic of peace. Let's say that in the national debate the idea of the importance of considering the cost of violence began to have echo... This was due to that work [Los Costos Económicos de la Violencia (Economic Costs of Violence) by Martha Badel and Edgar Trujillo]. It generated an entire debate and a reflection about how much the cost of
violence was for Colombia. In other words, the debate about violence went from the political and sociological realm to economic terrains... Besides, let’s say, the pendulum of the debates about internal armed conflict was leaning towards political negotiations even if there was no room for political negotiations... Then Planeación began to enter into the topic. The IDB wanted to help Colombia in making peace. There was a working team at the IDB in Washington, which Rodrigo Guerrero was part of. Rodrigo was a consultant for the Pan-American Health Organization and the IDB for those topics, that’s it. Then, under that epidemiological approach, the IDB began to sponsor Colombia in the reduction of violence under that epidemiological approach... That’s the origin of that program. (DNP worker – Evaluation of Public Policies Office)

No, I think that the way it went was that Rodrigo Guerrero made both the Bank and us buy the idea. I do think it was that way.

You mean, that he is like the link between both parts?

Yes. He began to develop the idea and then he proposed it to the IDB. They might have addressed this at an international seminar. He was working on a consulting project for them and he might have proposed the idea then. And after that, I remember that we had a meeting with Juan Carlos and Rodrigo, and he proposed the idea in that meeting. Somehow we found the idea to be catchy and sounding. Then, Rodrigo Guerrero might have been the one who catalyzed this. He was the one who led all these studies and this whole story along.

You mean that he was the one who went to Planeación and told you: see this, I have this proposal?

Yes. Now, because of all that previous work... there was the sensibility and the attitude for that. (Economist- former DNP sub-director I)

Well, I do think that loan project had many problems since the beginning. Of course it was the very first one, let’s say it was like a first experiment... That was an initiative that came from Mockus and Bromberg. In the end, Bogotá knew why they wanted the money. You know, at the end somehow they were in a well advanced process of building public policies for strengthening, let’s say, public institutions in close relation to this topic and to many topics. They were covering almost the totality of the spectrum that comprises public interventions. Even if with some difficulties, but let’s say that Bogotá made the petition to the IDB and Bogotá used the nation as guarantor of that loan. (DNP worker – Justice and Security Office I)

But was it an IDB initiative, I mean was it the IDB the one who came here and offered it?

No, I do think it was an initiative of the Colombian government, a petition coming from the Colombian government... The government asked the Bank for help on this. Then the Bank put Rodrigo Guerrero... It seems to me that such was the genesis of that program. It was like that. I do think that the government was the one that had the initiative. Because the government realized that there was a favorable coincidence, coming from the simultaneity of the urban approach through culture that was taking place in
Bogotá and that was gaining strength, and on the other hand, all those ideas coming from the epidemiological approach. All of this, in a moment in which there was a lot of interest in working on reducing violence. There was a lot of interest in reducing violence. (DNP worker – Evaluation of Public Policies Office)

I came to work here and this had already started... I’m telling you, I don’t know if it was the Bank that came to sell the idea or if it was these people who went to the Bank looking for support. But when I came to work here we were, let’s say, in the process of creating the project with the cities and of creating the project with the nation. Let me tell you, that little creation process was a hard one. That document that you read was a hard one to get done. To come out with a decision of what has to do with coexistence and security, was really something. To manage to agree on what kind of activities we would sponsor, was also very complex... The project is from about December 1997 or January 1998 at the latest... Frankly, I don’t know what could have happened before September 1997... Neither the Bank nor the country had any experience. I am telling you this because of what I just told you about the process... Then we came out with that agreement on general categories... Well, and there was also the guru on selling ideas: Rodrigo Guerrero who at that moment was well-recognized... Then Rodrigo was the one who would say: no, we need to do something about young people. Then, young people were included as a category. It was like if he was the one blessing our final decisions. For the Bank this was fundamental. 

That he was taking part in this process? Yes, that he was part of this process. (IDB Worker – Colombia’s IDB Country Office)

As such, orally tracking the history of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project revealed an initiative with multiple origins, but no certain genesis. Whose idea was it? Presumably, Rodrigo Guerrero was a key actor, perhaps in making the Bank engage in work on the prevention of crime and violence or making the Colombian government engage his ideas and seek for a loan to develop them, or maybe both. But it is also likely that it was the upshot of ongoing processes within governmental institutions that had previously engaged in seeking ways of managing crime and violence; or perhaps, the product of initiatives led by local authorities seeking funding for previously envisioned campaigns aimed at improving urban life by reducing crime and violence. Nonetheless, it is also very likely that it had been an outcome of the process of renovation
which the IDB had engaged a few years earlier and of the dynamics that characterized multilateral financing organizations working on development in the 1990’s. Moreover, the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project might have been a byproduct of a “happy coincidence” of all these processes and dynamics.

_ANNALS OF AN ELUSIVE HISTORY_

Unlike libraries and public archives, private and institutional archives are seldom meant for reviewing documents. Rather, they are repositories of that fax, this memo, and that other letter that someone at the office may need or an external audition might request. There are no desks or tables to sit and read for hours. I make myself as comfortable as possible in today’s vacant desk, sitting in the right corner. The IDB agent in charge of coordinating the 1085-88/OC-CO at the IDB Colombia country office has kindly helped me gain access to different sources of information, including the IDB local archive. Following a request issued by her, a secretary gives me two brown files: the loan project file and the _Misiones_\textsuperscript{101} file. The two thick folders are –so far as the IDB agent at the Colombia office can tell– the only written institutional memoirs of the beginning of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project. They preserve those initial moments of the process of crafting the loan project, its “real” origin.

When the IDB and the Colombian government signed the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project, the country had already had certain previous experiences that might relate to the process of defining this loan project document. Also by 1998,

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\textsuperscript{101} Although _Misiones_ stands for missions I would like to keep the Spanish word since it is part of the common language among both IDB workers and governmental workers involved in the development of the loan project. These are, basically, visits of IDB employees working at the IDB headquarters in Washington D.C at the Regional Operation Department 3, to which Colombia belongs.
local authorities, public workers and Bank officials had gone through a number of activities, including meetings, conferences and round tables. These archival antecedents of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan are of two kinds: those that stand as possible, but not directly related antecedents and those that relate more directly.

Indirect antecedents include experiences such as the Red de Solidaridad (Solidarity Network)\textsuperscript{102} and a project seeking to reduce and prevent murders in violent areas of the country led by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Colombia and a group of Jesuits. Seeking to find funding for this latter project, its leaders contacted a group of governmental and international organizations, including the IDB. More or less directly related antecedents include the previous work on information management at the Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences Institute through the creation of the CRNV (National Center for Reference on Violence) and the activities carried out by this center. Antecedents also include programs aimed at reducing violence and promoting coexistence that local authorities in Cali and Medellín had promoted a few years earlier and the creation of incipient, but working systems for crime and violence information management in Bogotá. The study of the dynamics of violence in Colombia by both economists and epidemiologists was a salient antecedent. Similarly, the program Vida, Salud y Paz (Life, Health, and Peace) promoted by the Colombian Ministry of Health, was also an important antecedent.

\textsuperscript{102} The Red de Solidaridad Social was created as a Presidential initiative in 1994. Three years later it was re-defined as national public institution. It is the agency in charge of executing social programs led by the Colombian President office. As such, the Red de Solidaridad Social has its antecedents in previous efforts such as the Secretaría de Integración Popular (Office of People’s Integration) created in 1975 and the Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación (National Plan for Rehabilitation) that was created in 1982.
Additionally, in 1997, various meetings on successful and feasible initiatives for reducing and controlling violence in Colombian urban settings took place. These meetings brought together local and national authorities, scholars, businessmen, private institutions, NGOs and multilateral organizations. Most of them were held in Medellín (one of the major Colombian cities), but some of them, particularly some of the earliest, took place in Cali (also one of the major Colombian cities). Some of these meetings were explicitly oriented towards obtaining funds from multilateral financial organizations. This was the case with a meeting held in Medellin in which the Mayor’s Office proposed a program for promoting security and coexistence in Medellín and surrounding areas. This program was proposed to the World Bank, the IDB, the Pan-American Health Organization and the World Health Organization. Members of municipal governments of Bogotá, Cali, Medellín and Pereira also attended this meeting. Similarly, another meeting brought together the Comité Empresarial del Valle (Valle’s Entrepreneurs Committee), the DNP (National Planning Office also called Planeación) and Luis Fernando Duque (a doctor working on the prevention of violence in Medellín). The purpose of this meeting was to consider the possibility of asking multilateral organizations for a loan in order to fund programs for preventing violence and promoting coexistence in both Medellín and Cali. At this time, Bogotá was designated as a possible but not certain third beneficiary of these envisioned loans.

Besides the written testimonies of meetings, conferences, and round tables, the IDB archive contains written testimonies of Misiones. Perhaps the most salient term within the common language shared by IDB agents and local employees engaged in the development of an IDB loan project, the term Misión denotes a set of activities. It denotes
deadlines, trips, reports, meetings, hectic days, and accounts of one’s actions. The use of the word Misión is not gratuitous. Activities summarized in this term are somewhat close to the word’s connotation within religious congregations and diplomatic spheres. As it is the case with other international agencies that also use this term to describe their visits to borrowing countries or countries whose performance is of interest for the agency (see for instance Harper 2000), the word Misión designates the deployment of expert knowledge and guidance, often from the international agency, meant to help the country at hand to make better decisions. In the case with the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project, the deployment of expert knowledge and guidance serves different and interconnected purposes: to explore whether proposed activities are feasible and to help in attuning them, to help the country in making decisions regarding proposed activities, to audit how those activities are performed and how they should be undertaken, etc. As such, Misiones stand as key procedures in planning and undertaking an initiative both in terms of the particularities of the initiative (which activities should be carried out) and the more general nature of the Bank’s business (how resources should be allocated and spent). In tracking down the history of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project, I will concentrate on the first characteristic of Misiones, but I will go back to their second characteristic later on this section.

As makers of times and terms in the processes of defining and carrying out a loan project, Misiones stand as milestones in the history of any IDB loan project. Tracking down of moments that preceded the signing of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project goes back to April 1997 when the first Misiones associated with this loan project took place. The possibility of working on a project on citizen security was
first discussed in a *Misión de Preidentificación* (Pre-identification Mission). A few weeks later, a *Misión de Identificación* (Identification Mission) took place. Its main purpose was to talk further about the citizen security project. This *Misión* included a meeting in Medellín in which peaceful coexistence was mentioned for the first time and discussed as a core element in the envisioned loan project. This *Misión* also established required tasks necessary to advancing on this loan project. These tasks included setting appointments with the DNP sub-director, the Mayor of Bogotá and people of Pro-Antioquia.

Between August 15th and October 9th of 1997, a second round of *Misiones* took place. These *Misiones de Orientación* (Orientation Missions) included several meetings with both high-ranking workers at national institutions and local authorities of several Colombian cities. Local authorities of Bogotá, Bucaramanga, Cali, Cartagena, Medellín and Pereira participated in meetings held as part of this series of *Misiones*. One of the main outcomes was a general agreement about three elements that the loan project should include. These elements were: a) the creation of security and coexistence committees, b) the creation of an executive management office or unit, and c) the definition of institutions in charge of developing the proposed loan project.

On December 1997, the loan project was refined based on a report written by Rodrigo Guerrero. A medical doctor working on the prevention of violence from an epidemiological perspective, Guerrero was ex-mayor of Cali and working as a consultant for the IDB. The results of a *Misión de Preanálisis* (Pre-Analysis Mission) that took place in the first weeks of that same month were also the main sources for redefining the loan project. At this time, the main elements for the national component of the loan were
defined. These elements were: a) information management systems and databases in order to develop epidemiological surveillance systems, b) research, c) justice-related initiatives. As for the loans for cities, by December 1997 Bogotá was the only city with a proposal and an outlined program, but Enrique Peñalosa, recently elected mayor of the city, had not signed the loan. Meanwhile, the recently elected mayors of both Cali and Medellín had already signed the loan, but neither of these cities had a proposal or an outlined program. The process of elaborating the loan project document and of getting it signed continued through 1998. It included two more Misiones: a Misión de Análisis (Analysis Mission) that took place in January and a Misión de Negociación (Negotiation Mission) that took place in February. Through the latter, the loan project was finally signed. In the following years and up to the end of the loan project, several Misiones Administrativas (Management Missions) took place as part of the development of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations.

As such, going through a pile of brochures, institutional publications, handwritten notes, reports, memorandums, and minutes, ended adding yet another story. The main outcome of these oral and archival inquires is a handful of stories. They might not clarify the history of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project, but they certainly reveal both the historical turn that the loan was taking when I was conducting my inquiry and institutional dynamics that characterize both the present moment and the moment when the loan was proposed.

In 2003, when I began inquiring into the history of this loan project, Bogotá had already become renowned for its outstanding improvements in security, particularly for the significant reduction in homicide rates experienced by the city. The mayor and
municipal officials were frequently invited to give talks on such impressive achievements. The Colombian capital was, to some extent, the Cinderella of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations. In early stages during the formulation of this loan project, both Cali and Medellín were enthusiastically addressed. Bogotá, on the other hand, was addressed with some reserve. A few years later, towards the end of the loan project, those two cities were barely mentioned. References to the capital were frequent. This turn questions not only the relationship of the initially formulated loan project to its final outcomes, but also actual links between Bogotá’s security achievements and this loan project.

My inquiries took place during the final stage of the loan project. Its execution was programmed to conclude in 2003, but some initiatives continued through 2004. This was, in part, to finish ongoing initiatives and in part because allocated resources remained only partially executed. In developing the loan project, the initial amount had been cut by several million dollars due to delays in allocating and executing resources. Through the unfolding of this enterprise, allocating and executing resources had proved problematic. Overall, there were no concluding evaluations on actual effects of initiatives funded through the loan project, not even in the widely publicized case of Bogotá.\textsuperscript{103} The lack of evaluation was all the more pressing due to the aftermath of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations envisioned by IDB workers and Colombian officials. Developing so-called

\textsuperscript{103} Evaluations of this experience, particularly in terms of the impact of the loan project are hard to carry out in full due to the lack of baselines and nonexistent data to assess crime and violence dynamics that had been subject of initiatives sponsored within this loan project. Existing evaluation on initiatives developed within this loan project in the Colombian capital are partial and might remain as such due to limitations on information about dynamics previous to the implementation of initiatives under evaluation. In September 2004 (when I concluded my field research in the Colombian capital), CENDEX, a research center at the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, had just released an evaluation of some initiatives that had been developed in the capital as part of the IDB loan project (Peñaloza Q, Carrillo et al. 2003). Additionally, several document assessing more broadly experiences in the reduction of crime and violence in the city had been released in the past few years. From official publications to academic and technical reports, these documents illuminate some aspects of the Bogotá experience but are far from being conclusive. For an overview of existing literature and of the Bogotá experience itself see Llorente and Rivas (2004).
second-generation loan projects or similar loan projects elsewhere in the region was a frequently expressed short-term endeavor among IDB workers. Government officials at both municipal and national agencies, on the other hand, often described having a second loan project as highly desirable to both sustain ongoing initiatives and develop those that remained partially completed.

In tracking down the origins, design and development of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations, I frequently heard reluctance to either appropriate or claim authorship of the initial design. Attempts to explore origins with those directly involved in crafting the original loan project document were often followed by hermetic responses or absolute silence. This, in part was due to their very busy schedules. However, as I would learn from others involved in developing this project, silence was also a way of avoiding professional risks associated with claiming authorship of an initiative while actual results were still uncertain. While none of my interlocutors would seek to endorse authorship of the initial design of this loan project, they would often underscore their active participation in the further process of developing it. Indeed, they have actively participated in this enterprise. However, their eager efforts to stress such participation might also relate to perspectives of working on similar initiatives in the near future.

HECTIC STORIES: SPENDING IN ACTION

"These kinds of investments are like Christmas Trees: under them you can find almost anything"

With these words, the IDB agent in charge of coordinating the loan project on security and coexistence at the IDB Colombia country office described the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project when reviewing the experience of developing
this project. Her review was part of a series of papers presented at the International Seminar on Security and Coexistence held in Bogotá by the IDB and the DNP. The two-day seminar was held in June 2003 at the Universidad de Los Andes and got together IDB workers, researchers and governmental employees who were working on security and coexistence-related topics in Colombia and elsewhere. Besides drawing up a balance sheet of recent initiatives seeking to provide security and build coexistence, the seminar was meant also to be a space for debating the relationship between research and the challenges of public policies on these topics.

Unlike papers presented at the international seminar, informal recounting of experiences attached to the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project made by those involved in their design and implementation reveal a series of rather uneasy and hectic episodes. These episodes reveal how in developing this initiative the explicit goal of improving citizen security and peaceful coexistence can get dissolved into a maze of institutional shifts, dynamics, and procedures. To be sure, those involved in designing and implementing this loan project genuinely underscore finding and promoting better ways of controlling crime and violence as loan project’s main goals. Still, activities and routines that they are required to undertake in order to design and implement this initiative overshadow such main goals. Borrowing Bruno Latour’s ideas about the study of production of science and technology as the study of science in action (Latour 1987), experiences attached to the process of developing the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project might be better cast as spending money in action. They are better understood not so much as managing crime and violence or as improving ways of controlling these phenomena, but as the search for better ways of auditing the
allocation of resources and managing expenditure for combating crime and violence. Processes attached to the developing of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project are better understood as spending money in action.

Among IDB workers, experiences attached to the design and implementation of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project show how spending money is contingent on governmental trends derived from the interaction of the Colombian government with other international agencies, as well as those that derive from governmental shifts such as the election of a new president, the election of new local authorities, or the appointment of a new high-ranking official. These governmental trends affect the unfolding of initiatives promoted by the Bank, because they reflect on the interest on borrowing money from the Bank. For instance, the signing of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project were significantly delayed due to the election of a new Colombian president and new local authorities throughout the country.

“We had to go through an enormous lobbying effort and we wasted a lot of time in that. We wasted a lot of time because it was a huge effort for convincing the new people that the projects were worth signing,” a Bank’s official working at the IDB’s office in Colombia said when recalling how in 1998 recently elected authorities were reluctant to sign the loan project. “When the loan project was ready to be signed new authorities were elected. Up to, let’s say, January 1998 all that had been done was to negotiate the contents of the projects. Authorities changed and then the loan projects needed to be signed by them, even though they didn’t participate in the negotiation process. This was a problem,” she stated before recalling how the administration of President Pastrana, who was elected in 1998, began canceling all previously negotiated initiatives. “Imagine this!”
she exclaimed. “We had the loan project already negotiated and ready to be signed. Besides, the Bank had invested a lot in this. Let me tell you that the Bank did pay for consulting studies,” she added stressing the impact of new governmental trends in developing the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project. “Then, we had the agreements between the Colombian government and the International Monetary Fund,” she continued. “The government had to cut as much expenditure as possible and, of course, they sought to cut what was less appealing to them: right away they cut down those eleven million. They only left nine,” she concluded.

Besides delaying the signing of a loan project and demanding “enormous lobbying efforts” from those working at the Bank, governmental shifts often also imply the designation of new governmental officials or even different divisions to organize and audit how borrowed money should be spent. As such, among public workers engaged in these kinds of initiatives, governmental shifts also imply searching for ways of securing the assignation of the proposed loan project.

“This project couldn’t be left without mentor,” a high-ranking official at DNP (National Planning Office) stated when explaining to me why the coordination of this initiative was not originally assigned to DNP’s Justice and Security division. “Manuel Salazar was appointed as new director for the division [to which the coordination of the loan project had been assigned]. Manuel and I were very into this project. We even were invited to Harvard to give a talk on this,” he recalled when looking back to his active engagement in the initial phases of the loan project. “The topic began to get its own momentum and to move by itself. The presidential period came to its end but this project was about violence reduction and at Planeación there was an ongoing interest on working
on peace related topics. *Planeación* began to work on these topics through the *Paz es Rentable* (Peace is Profitable) project. Both projects seemed to relate to each other, so Cecilia, at this time director of *Planeación* said: now you get in charge of all this that relates to peace” he explained to me when I asked him about his role in the development of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project.

Governmental trends not only framed the initial phase of the loan project, but they also marked its further development. Late in 1999, the national government put DNP’s Justice and Security division in charge of the loan project to. High-ranking officials who until then had worked on this loan project would explain this shift because of the centrality of the *Plan Colombia* that was launched by the Pastrana administration. For those who had worked on this loan project before it was assigned to the Justice and Security division, the *Plan Colombia* overshadowed all other initiatives involving international agencies and efforts to lessening violence, including the citizen security and peaceful coexistence loan project that became low priority. High-ranking officials working at the Justice and Security division would easily and somewhat eagerly contest such an explanation. For them, the Justice and Security division should had been put in charge of the loan project since the beginning. In fact, according to most of these officials, main obstacles in properly executing the loan project and major problems in its further development were greatly due to the lack of clarity in its initial formulation.

“I do think that the loan project was wrongly formulated from the beginning,” a high-ranking official explained me when recalling how people at the Justice and Security division, including her, had to spend almost an entire year in reformulating the loan project in order to clarify its components. Most officials working at this division would
back-up her statement by pointing out how urgent was to reformulate the loan project and how this had delayed its actual execution.

"The great inconvenience begins with definitions," and official at the Justice and Security division stated when assessing his experiences developing the citizen security and peaceful coexistence loan project. "Nobody really knows what they want. There is a total lack of clarity about the amount of resources and the priorities of the project. There is also great confusion on who should be responsible for these topics. There is confusion about the national or local nature of the topics," he said when explaining the effects of the Colombian Constitution of 1991 on national and local competencies regarding citizen security. "There is an ongoing process, very clear in Bogotá, of appropriation of security-related issues by local authorities. On the other hand, the nation doesn’t even have a well-stipulated point of view on the topic. The Justice and Security division was created ten years ago and it hadn’t a well-stipulated point of view on security or on coexistence. In fact, it hasn’t totally developed it yet. Thus, there were not guidelines," he strongly stated. "What you have here is a process of clarification regarding what is what. What you have is a whole process of figuring out how we put things together," he concluded.

Lack of clarity about which institutions should be put in charge of which activities and differences between the type of initially formulated activities and those that officials at the Justice and Security division identify as most relevant, are often pointed out by these same officials as constituents of uneasy and hectic episodes attached to the development of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project. These episodes depict spending money in itself as a complex procedure. Moreover, through these episodes spending money appear as a critical element when assessing success in
carrying out this initiative. Improving ways of managing crime and violence, as a way of enhancing citizen security and coexistence are often underlined as main goals of those involved in designing and implementing this loan project. However, their performance as governmental officials or as officials of the Bank, along with the success—or lack of it—of the loan-project is most frequently assessed in terms of execution. Execution, in this case, stands for the capability of allocating resources and spending them according to a pace in expenditure previously established in the loan project document.

Spending money is at the core of the development of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project. As both government officials and officials from the Bank would frequently point out, spending money in this case is an artful skill and a quite complex operation. It carries obstacles and risks. It almost invariably faces gaps between the pace dictated by spending procedures and the pace derived from the nature of the initiatives comprised in this loan project and its development. At the same time it serves as preferred indicator of success and failure in developing these kinds of initiatives. As such, the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project stands as at once an initiative aimed at promoting citizen security and peaceful coexistence, and as a task that revolves around spending money.

Highlighting the centrality of spending money in the development of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project helps to bear in mind core but often forgotten aspects of these kinds of initiatives. To begin with this is a loan project and, as such, its design and implementation comprises not only topical elements that in this case pertain to the reduction of violence and the promotion of both citizen security and
peaceful coexistence, but also those elements that are intrinsic to a loan: borrowing, lending, allocating, and spending money, as well as auditing these activities.

As such, the development of the 1085-1088/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project stands as what borrowing Latour's ideas could be named spending money in action. At the same time the design and implementation of this loan project stands as an adventure in which characters are seldom good or bad and situations are never black or white. Characters of this adventure at once have to work through institutional procedures and policies, respond to the urgency of building up their own career, follow their own professional interests, deal with the need to perform, and keep their own commitment to a particular topic. They are characters trapped in stories told by several voices. Their actions are often legitimate but at the same time always questionable. Their stories are ones in which failure and success come together. These are stories with neither heroes nor villains, but rather framed by the effects of omnipotential forces through which characters struggle. These forces often refer to institutional practices, logics, and customs. The following short stories expand on already mentioned intrinsic elements to crafting and developing these kinds of initiatives, particularly in terms of spending money, and exemplify ways in which those who are involved in the development of this kind of loan projects go around the effects of those forces.

**Many Race Horses and Very Few Starting Gates**

Saturday night is an unusual time for conducting a fieldwork interview, but the IDB person with whom I want to talk is staying in Bogotá only for a couple of days. A Colombian economist who for the past few decades had worked with the Bank, he is now part of the Regional Operations Department 2. It is a nice chilly night. We walk a few
blocks to *Il Pomeriggio*, a popular café that seeks a European flavor in the Italian names of its menu and carefully selects its clientele by offering pricey food and beverages. We sit outside at the patio-like spot of the café, in the midst of the usual crowd of public figures and yuppies.

Does the Bank have, let’s say, internal policies of rotation? I mean, can they tell you that you have to go to work at a different division?
Well, there are rotation policies and they are widely hated by the Bank’s employees. They were sanctioned 3 or 4 years ago. It was perhaps 3 years ago, when they made mandatory such rotation. If you have been working for 5 years in a regional operations department you have to go to another regional department or elsewhere. It is mandatory. Those who have been working for 5 years are required to put their names on a public list.

You mean, it is not if you want, but you have to.

Well you can voluntarily put your name up anytime after working for three years in a department. But if you have worked for five years it is not voluntary but mandatory to put your name on that list. I’ll have to face that this coming year.

If I put my name on the list, will I be working on the same topics or could I end up working on totally different topics?

Well, you put up your name and you have to give three optional positions in which you would like to work. Then, a program is supposed to make a matching process, but such matching might not exist. This is due to the fact that the Bank is not that big, the operative part is a small one. For instance, there are very few economists that work on topics similar to the ones on which I work. I think there is one at the Regional Operations Department 3 and maybe another that could be similar at the Regional Operations Department 1. But we don’t have exactly the same professional profile. Then, if I have to put my name on the list and I do so and I say I would like to work at Department 1, chances are that there won’t be a position for me in that department.

Uh, it is a kind of complex internal policy. I mean, a very complex way of selecting people.

Yes it is. People aren’t at all happy with this. This model was copied from the International Monetary Fund. It works pretty well there because their work is more or less uniform, they do almost the same in any country. Then rotating is more like: well you have been working in Africa for so long, so go ahead and learn something about Asia by working there. Ah! That’s interesting. There you have many spots, many positions to go to, uh? However, such is not the case at the Bank. These Banks are about to face a major problem in terms of having to choose between having experts or having generic workers.
Sipping his cappuccino, he would say: “All this is like rotating race horses, but one might end not fitting into any of the starting gates. This is a traumatic experience that people feel resentful about,” he added. Going through such an unpleasant experience, as he would also point out, people are put at the edge of facing public scorn, which will come when you are not picked for any of the positions that you have chosen as desirable for working in the near future.

Due to these policies, those who are working at the IDB headquarters are periodically compelled to look for a new position within the Bank. As such, they are also compelled to permanently improve their resumes. The best way to go about this is to build up a strong career by working on a wide range of topics but most importantly by getting approved as many loan projects as possible. These are not new ways of building up one’s career within the Bank, but common ways of going about improving your resume and getting better scores in the periodical evaluations. The Human Resources department carries out internal evaluations at the IDB. Even if not always taken too seriously, these evaluations serve to improve one’s career or hinder it. To perform well in them, the best bet is to manage to gain approval of as many loan projects as possible, but also to expedite the approval process in order to meet pre-established approval dates. Additionally, being able to both get a loan project approved and to do so in the right time frame also means an economic reward. As such, recently sanctioned rotation policies have added to institutional procedures and dynamics that boost the seeking of getting as many as possible loan projects approved.

Let’s see if I am getting this right: If one works at the headquarters in Washington, the main goal is to generate loan projects and get them approved.
Yes, you are right, to get loan projects approved.

Now, if on the other hand one is working at a country office, then the main goal is to successfully execute that loan project.

Yes, that’s the case. The main goal is the disbursements and the spending of the loan money. I would guess that this might often generate tensions between the people working in Washington and the ones working at country offices.

Totally, of course.

Unlike workers at the headquarters, those working at country offices are not subject to mandatory rotations but not rotating might hinder one’s career. The possibilities of building up one’s career within the Bank when working at a country office, however, depend not so much on the approving of loan projects but on the good development of them. Good development, in these cases, consists of elements such as spending money transparently and according to IDB procedures, spending this same money on time and according to the timetable of the loan project, and being able to show some sort of evaluation of the project’s impact. Thus, if seeking to build up their careers and to score well at periodic evaluations, those working at IDB country offices would stress not so much the quantity of approved loan projects, but their quality.

Rotation polices at the IDB are heartless at the headquarters, but they are not particularly merciful at country offices. As the IDB country agent in charge of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations would tell me: rotation is not mandatory but in terms of one’s career it is desirable. It is a quite complex process. When you decide to change from one country to another you have to go through a sort of contest. Your position becomes vacant while you have to compete for the new position. Usually there are almost twice the candidates for the number of available positions. This is one of those life contests in which, as she would state, “If you are left out, you are left behind”. Rotation policies
generate a very competitive environment, in which seeking to get approved as many loan projects as possible or to expedite the development of projects, are strategies as common as to use personal influences and networks in order to assure a position. On the other hand, she would add, rotation policies, are not totally bad. They help in both refreshing Bank's activities and transferring knowledge. In fact, as she would point out towards the end of our conversation, exporting successful experiences is a very common practice within the Bank.

**There is Always Too Much Tramitología**

Tramitología is a local expression, widely used to refer to either an enormous amount of required proceedings or to that particular art of knowing how to go through those proceedings. Tramitología is to know how to go about getting those signatures, that stamp, and the required forms. It is the art by which you manage the going from one office to the next one and yet the next one in order to get that paper work done. Tramitología is particularly common at public institutions and when dealing with official procedures, but it is also part of daily routines at some private institutions. This is the case with both the procedures and the ways of going through them that those developing the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project would have to face.

"There is always too much Tramitología", a DNP worker at the Justice and Security Division would say when referring her experience as part of the coordinating unit in charge of supervising the development of national components of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project. Bank's proceedings are not only complex but they also take too long to get done, she added before narrating some of her recent experiences of facing IDB procedures and local institutional routines. On June 2003, she
was the one in charge of organizing the above mentioned International Seminar on Security and Coexistence held in Bogotá by the IDB and the DNP. Her duties included a wide range of tasks: from getting the place ready for the meetings, to participating in the selection process of lecturers. She was equally in charge of arranging their lodging and payment.

One of the lecturers was Jacqueline Muniz, who is a high-ranking worker at the National Secretariat of Public Security in Brazil. Dr. Muniz is a recognized scholar due to her extensive work on security, policing, and justice in Brazil, and a public figure due to her work with the national government. Therefore, she was one of the special international guests and panelists at the seminar. As a lecturer in the seminar Jacqueline Muniz was paid by the IDB. Due to IDB policies, her payment, as with any other payment done by the Bank, could only be made in the official currency of the country where the activity to be paid is carried out. In plain words, her payment could only be made in Colombian pesos. Additionally, the payment could only be made by a check written in her name. Such a check could only be deposited at a Colombian Bank. In order to do this, she would need to have a banking account in her name. As neither Colombian nor resident alien in Colombia, Jacqueline Muniz couldn’t get a banking account. Cashing the check would be possible but it would require that either she had a banking account in the country or a special permit, which might take weeks to get. Any attempt to get an exception from the IDB in order to pay her in dollars failed. Getting that special permit from a Colombian Bank was almost impossible since she wouldn’t be in the country for more than four days.
Facing the urgency to solve such a bizarre situation, the DNP worker at the Justice and Security Division had to find a way of getting the general manager of a local bank to make an exception. She had to ask the general manager to expedite the special permit and also to assign someone to take care of Dr. Muniz's payment so she wouldn't have to wait in line for hours. The general manager agreed to expedite the procedures for cashing the check, but due to internal policies the check would be cashed in pesos. Then, an additional arrangement in terms of transportation and security was needed for Dr. Muniz to be able to change those pesos for dollars, so she would be able to change those dollars for reales (the Brazilian currency), which are almost impossible to get in Bogotá.

In the end, Jacqueline Muniz got paid. She spent almost an entire day (out of the four days in which she was expected to attend the seminar and visit official institutions) in getting her payment. She not only lost money by going through all these transactions, but also the purpose of her visit to Colombia was somehow sucked dry by mere Tramitología.

Situations faced by those in charge of undertaking the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and in which Tramitología plays a central role are often transactions in which the IDB is involved. As the DNP worker at the Justice and Security Division who was in charge of coordinating the supervision of the development of national components of that loan project would explain to me, this is because you are working with a multilateral Bank. The IDB, like any other multilateral Bank, has its own norms, which usually sidestep Colombian norms.

This, as he would explain me, has several implications. First, going about procedures at multilateral organizations is a skill that has to be learned and learning is a slow
process. You have to bear in mind norms, documents, appendixes, considerations, manuals, principles and policies. Besides, in such a never-ending bureaucracy, almost every employee has his own way of going about proceedings. The enormous amount of proceedings is not bad itself; it is meant to provide transparency and assure fair competition, as well as to advertise good practices and successful experiences. However, they might constitute a huge expense for borrowing countries. On one hand, they slow the development of loan projects. On the other hand, once the project is finished, borrowing governments don’t have any economic means to keep paying those who were working on these loan projects at governmental institutions. Therefore, they cannot assure that those who have become familiar with all these proceedings will continue working on future loan projects.

A second implication of having different sets of norms—one at multilateral organizations and one at local institutions—is that many times there are contradictions between them. Besides, often terms and times do not match. Such a gap between sets of norms and the need to observe all at once are at the core of episodes of Tramitología of which the story of Jacqueline Muniz is only a simplified version. These episodes usually result from the need to observe a variety of sets of institutional norms as well as practices. In other words, they result from adding institutional procedures while needing to observe all these procedures at once.

Facing these kinds of episodes DNP workers at the Justice and Security Division would describe their experiences when coordinating a victimization survey as working through a Teléfono Roto (literally, broken phone or broken line). This victimization survey was one of the latest activities in developing the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and
the CO0213 loan project. Besides working through procedures established by the IDB, carrying it out also involved procedures at the DNP (National Planning Office) and FONADE (Financing Fund for Development Projects), as well as following the procedures at the DANE (National Statistics Department). In terms of the survey, labor division among these institutions was as follows: The IDB was lending the money—as part of the national components of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project—, the DNP and FONADE were in charge of monitoring the conduct of the initiative and managing economic resources, and the DANE was in charge of collecting and managing the data. Among the many challenges faced in carrying out this initiative, observing time frames is perhaps the most illustrative.

The victimization survey was subject of four different time frames: the one given by the loan, the one derived from institutional procedures, the frame of the survey itself, and a technically defined frame. For the loan time frame, the initiative should have been developed and all disbursements finished no later than December 31st of 2003. According to the institutional time frame, meeting such a deadline might or might not be possible depending on how quickly money would get to institutions and how long the hiring process would take. These processes, however, would require several weeks. In any event, sending the money required previous agreements on institutional responsibilities and the main activities to be carried out. Hiring processes, on the other hand, cannot be started if money hasn’t arrived at the institution. At a different level and within the survey time frame, conducting the survey properly would require training periods, which—if conserved— would make it almost impossible to meet the December 31st deadline. Additionally and from a technical perspective, conducting a victimization survey after the
first week of December would distort data or hinder proper data collection. Thus, the victimization survey should have been conducted either in October and November or sometime during the first semester of 2004.

In 2003, when I first met with DNP workers in charge of the victimization survey to talk about their experiences developing the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project, dovetailing these time frames was out of question. Still, the survey ought to be applied. Should the technical time frame overshadow other time frames? How political costs that high-ranking officials would endure if asking for yet another extension in executing the loan project would be assumed? Should, instead, the institutional time frame be the one guiding this enterprise? How could it be more or less harmonized with the loan time frame? What would all this imply in terms of the survey itself and technical standards in applying it? Could all other time frames yield to the time frame derived from the loan? If so, what would this imply in terms of institutional procedures and technical considerations? In facing these puzzling questions, DNP workers would often frame the urgency of picking one time frame over the others as making a decision between assuming political costs at the personal level and risking loosing all resources for applying the survey, or sacrificing some technical aspects and accepting that the survey would be far from perfect.

“You have to show that you are executing [allocating and spending] the money because this also represents an expense for the country. This is a credit. Thus, there are monthly fees, rates and all that,” a DNP worker explained to me when anticipating decisions regarding the victimization survey. “Those on the top keep telling you to execute, to execute, to execute. There is a point in which one has to...Well, let’s say that
what is going to happen with victimization is that anyways one has to sacrifice some quality in undertaking a project in order to execute it,” she stated before referring to both technical aspects of the survey application and procedures involved in carrying it out.

“The survey has to be applied this year,” a DNP official said when in November 2003 I asked him about time frames for the victimization survey. “What make me made a decision like this one?” he asked himself when I inquired about factors affecting the choosing of one time frame or the other. “One thing is the precarious nature of resources,” he began answering his own question. “There is also the stage at which things are. For instance, my insisting on applying the survey this year at any cost is because this cannot have an extension. In other words all this comes to an end on December 31st. The decision is, then, I apply it at any cost. I don’t feel like wasting a year and eight months of work just because it won’t be perfect. I prefer that to be applied even if it has some mistakes. I know it is going to have some mistakes,” he said before referring institutional obstacles faced during the development of the survey. “To me, the point is money and time,” he stated.

Decision-making faced by DNP workers in charge of the victimization survey and their reflections in developing this initiative allow a glimpse to the ways in which seeking to harmonize disparate institutional procedures and time frames, particularly those pertaining to spending money, collide with seeking to advance on main goals endorsed by the initiative that one is implementing. In other words, decision-making faced by those implementing the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project and their reflections upon such implementation unveil the preeminence of actions and procedures
pertaining to spending money over those actions and procedures more directly attached to improving citizen security and peaceful coexistence.

TAILORING CITIZEN SECURITY AND COEXISTENCE INTO GLOBAL MODELS OF CRIME AND VIOLENCE MANAGEMENT

It is way too hot. It is 4:30 on Friday and the bare windows can hardly prevent the sun from flooding the narrow office. The IDB consultant (for whom I work) and I, have a hard time looking at the shiny screen. We are editing a video about security and coexistence initiatives in Bogotá. This video is part of a case study contracted by the IDB. Together with a written document that describes and assesses the Bogotá experience, it is meant to serve for training municipal workers of other Latin American cities. At 7:30 p.m. the editing is driving everybody crazy, the video is nowhere near done. She has to leave but I stay a couple more hours. A preliminary version has to be in Washington D.C. by Thursday at the latest.

Between December 2003 and April 2004, I worked as research assistant to the consultant hired by the IDB to conduct a case study of Bogotá’s experiences in reducing crime and violence through security and coexistence policies. This case study, together with other cases also considered as successful experiences of crime and violence management, was intended to serve as both informative and training material for authorities and municipal workers elsewhere in Latin America. It consisted of a written document and a short video on security and coexistence initiatives in Bogotá and their impact on recent urban successes in reducing crime and violence. For four months, I helped gathering data, interviewing municipal workers in charge of these initiatives, collecting images, editing the video, and writing up drafts. By April 2004, final versions of the written document
and the video were sent to the IDB headquarters for approval (see Llorente and Rivas 2004b; 2004c).

The creation of these materials was a revealing experience in several respects. To begin with, it was a clear expression of Bogotá becoming a city designated as an exemplary case of violence and crime management. In this regard, it was also an expression of the role of multilateral agencies, particularly—but not exclusively—the IDB, in such a process. Similarly, it was revealing of understandings of crime and violence prevention put forward by the IDB, and of its interests and ways of addressing the Bogotá case. Additionally, this process revealed the role of the IDB among both local public figures and municipal workers. The former were somehow more willing to cooperate after learning that this was an initiative sponsored by the Bank and meant to be used by them for conducting similar loan projects elsewhere. This was particularly the case with the creation of the video. On the other hand, municipal workers were equally willing to cooperate, but were sometimes reluctant to provide information, particularly quantitative data. This was the case with detailed expenditure. In regards to this, getting data suitable for assessing Bogotá’s experiences on preventing and controlling both crime and violence was not always a matter of willingness to cooperate, but often a matter of non-existent data. As such, the process of creating these materials also revealed gaps in both the process of defining security and coexistence interventions in Bogotá and of evaluating them.

On a different level, working on these materials also revealed necessary negotiations between academic assessments of recent achievements on reducing crime and violence in Bogotá, and IDB’s appraisals and purposes when addressing this case. Going through,
such negotiations revealed the challenges and responsibilities of coming to terms with this variety of understandings without diminishing any of them, and yet being able to produce fair, sound, and informative material.

**CAPITALIZING TAILORED MODELS**

During my field research in the Colombian capital, the seminar *Elementos para una Criminología Local: políticas del crimen y la violencia en ámbitos urbanos* (Elements for a Local Criminology: policies for preventing crime and violence at urban settings) was held in Bogotá in May 2003. This seminar was a revealing scenario and put forward Bogotá’s becoming an exemplary case in the reduction of crime and violence and the city leadership on these topics. The seminar brought together scholars and local authorities from Europe, Latin America, and North America. It comprised studies and experiences from cities around the world (Llorente and Rubio 2003). However, the role played by Bogotá—as both host and subject of several presentations—could not go unnoticed or be naively ignored.

To begin with, the seminar included a presentation by Antanas Mockus (at this time Mayor of Bogotá) on leading ideas at the base of governmental initiatives aimed at preventing and reducing violence in the Colombian capital. Also at the seminar, Hugo Acero (Bogotá’s security and coexistence advisor for the past three administrations) made a presentation on effective modalities for providing security and promoting coexistence as ways of preventing and controlling both crime and violence. Besides these talks, people from outside the capital, particularly those coming from other countries, were taken on city tours. These, however, were not mere city tours—even if sightseeing was important— but also trips designed to show visitors public space improvements
recently witnessed in the Colombian capital. Additionally, those who were interested could go on tours devoted to showing these improvements, as well as visiting institutions and learning about both activities and initiatives devoted to improving security in the city. These security tours were carefully coordinated and undertaken by municipal workers, and were mainly oriented towards those coming from other Latin American cities.\textsuperscript{104}

The recent classification of Bogotá as an exemplary case of crime and violence reduction might be a subject of important critiques. On the other hand, the “Bogotá miracle” has become a phenomenon for the city and IDB to capitalize on. Regarding this, it is important to highlight that such a “miracle” derives greatly from the outstanding reductions in homicide rates witnessed by the city in the past ten years. It is not clear, however, to what extent distinctive governmental initiatives in contemporary Bogotá or initiatives supported by the IDB loan project contributed to that reduction.

Nonetheless, both the city and the Bank have sought to capitalize on Bogotá’s achievements in the reduction of violence. The Colombian capital has sought to improve its access to international funding, while municipal authorities and workers who have participated in the design of security and coexistence initiatives have more actively engaged in similar initiatives elsewhere in the country and the region. The Bank, on the other hand, has sought to strengthen its position as development agency in the region by internally developing expertise on crime and violence management and by opening a new credit line devoted to support initiatives aimed at preventing, controlling, and reducing these phenomena. The Bank has begun to design loan projects on security and coexistence elsewhere in the region. These projects are often referred to as second-
generation-loan projects because of the ways in which they build upon the Bank's experiences in previous loan projects.

Second-generation-loan projects on citizen security and coexistence are perhaps one of the clearest IDB modalities for capitalizing on recent experiences of managing crime and violence. Although processes of designing these loan projects involve the replication of strategies and sets of activities previously used elsewhere, this is not a matter of mere copying. Rather, these processes and the capitalization on previous experiences involved in them are complex combinations of a variety of elements. This variety of elements includes more or less generic models of intervention tailored by IDB agents, specific diagnosis of the local situation often performed by scholars and experts who work through the region, and assessments of both previous experiences elsewhere and of the particularities of local dynamics.

The elaboration of a loan project on security and coexistence in Managua (Nicaragua) illustrates such a complex combination. A group of experts were hired to design this loan project. Both IDB workers and recognized Latin American scholars who had previously worked as IDB consultants composed this group. Each member of this group was in charge of developing an area considered in the preliminary loan project document. IDB agents and municipal workers in Managua had previously elaborated this document. Group members were expected to define initiatives and activities on specific areas of work contained in this document. They were expected to do so both by relying on their knowledge of strategies for preventing, controlling, and reducing crime and violence, and by incorporating successful experiences of managing these phenomena. Additionally, in defining initiatives and activities, they have to bear in mind diagnoses of local crime and
violence trends, local institutional agents and governmental dynamics at the local level, and budgetary restrictions of the loan project.

As the assistant to one of the scholars hired by the IDB to develop this loan project, I was a first-hand witness to—and to some extent participant in—the intricate process of defining initiatives within the social prevention component. This process worked against the clock to include a wide range of activities. It comprised looking for hard to find and sometimes partial or even nonexistent evaluations of initiatives similar to the ones included in the preliminary loan document. It required reviewing recent assessments of strategies and models of social prevention; it also demanded meeting workers at local institutions that would develop initiatives, bearing in mind the Bank’s approach to these topics, stretching a too small budget, and dealing with both local politics and institutional dynamics. Above all, this process was a challenging exercise of balancing all the mentioned elements in order to shape initiatives and activities that correspond with a recent diagnosis of gangs in Managua. This diagnosis was commissioned by the IDB as part of the process of designing this loan project, but was conducted after the release of the preliminary loan project document. Therefore, its results weren’t borne in mind when producing the preliminary document. Nonetheless, the diagnosis of gangs was meant to serve as primary source for defining suitable and useful social prevention activities for the IDB loan project on security and coexistence in Managua (Nicaragua).

A final draft of the social prevention component of this loan project was sent to the IDB headquarters on September 2004. The process accompanied the production of this document evidences the capitalization on previous experiences by the IDB and the ways in which such a capitalization also intervenes in the increasing circulation of expertise on
crime and violence prevention. The document was the result of the work of a well-known scholar who had previously worked as an IDB consultant on both evaluating and developing security and coexistence initiatives in Colombia. Importantly, the diagnosis of gangs that served as the main source for the social prevention document was produced by another recognized Colombian scholar, whose work as IDB consultant on these topics goes back to the 1996 conference on Ethics, Violence and Citizen Security mentioned at the beginning of this section.

**Preliminary notes on the effects of replenishing, spending, and tailoring**

The elusive history of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations and the CO0213 loan project depicts intricate processes contingent on initiatives promoted by entrepreneurial scholars and local authorities, multilateral strategies to overcome economic crisis or improve institutional performance, intellectual flows, and both crime and violence regional trends. Hectic stories of the development of the 1085-88/OC-CO operations reveal gaps—and ways to overcome them—in the design of this loan project. They show processes of redefinition of these initiatives both in terms of realities faced by developers and according to their understandings of security and coexistence. They also illustrate institutional dynamics that frame—and either expedite or constrain—such development.

Processes that go beyond the 1085-88/OC-CO operations refer either to tailoring experiences and models or capitalizing on these same experiences and models. Attempts to recount and assess 1085-88/OC-CO operations experiences reveal gaps in the design and the development of this project, as well as important limitations in its evaluation. These attempts, however, also stand as preliminary stages in the crystallization of those elusive memories and hectic experiences. Tailoring those memories and experiences, and
assembling them into more or less intelligible models are the main sources for future initiatives on security and coexistence that replicate—or attempt to replicate—those tailored models in order to prevent, control, and reduce urban crime and violence.

The simultaneous review of processes that accompanied the unfolding of the 108588-88/OC-CO operations and of those that characterize its further circulation show how contingent interventions aimed at preventing, controlling, and reducing crime and violence are recombined and transformed into models of crime and violence management. Examining these processes as a whole reveals how these models and the understandings that are at their base become part of a common language among sponsors, developers, and evaluators of security and coexistence initiatives. This examination also shows how models for crime and violence management are produced, circulated, and naturalized by both the Bank and—to some extent—the agencies that work with it.

Even if the IDB occupies a preeminent position in sponsoring and designing interventions aimed at preventing, controlling, and reducing crime and violence in contemporary Latin America, it is far from being the only multilateral organization engaged in this kind of initiative. Multilateral organizations working on these topics in the region include the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO), Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), and UN-HABITAT, among others. Both previous and contemporaneous, these initiatives relate to the IDB initiatives, but are also products of parallel processes. These experiences, as with the case of the IDB initiative, are also subject to important critiques and questionings. As such, they stand as promising fields for future research on the generation and naturalization of intervention models of urban crime and violence management. In any event, these initiatives—both the ones that
involve the IDB and the ones that involve other multilateral agencies— are clear evidence of the emergence of crime and violence management as fields for multilateral intervention through security and coexistence initiatives.

The emergence of violence and crime as fields for multilateral intervention through security and coexistence initiatives stems, on the one hand, from both internal dynamics within multilateral organizations and processes at the multinational level that affect each of these organizations and on the other hand, from local initiatives on security and coexistence. While in many cases regionally promoted models are inspired by local initiatives, they also produce a generalized language among local authorities, consulting experts, Bank workers, and scholars. Importantly, processes that have led to such a “boom” of both local and extra-local initiatives on security and coexistence also relate to the emergence and ongoing consolidation of a group of experts on those topics. This group might be seen as a multilateral expert elite. Members of this blooming elite, as the current and preceding sections show, smoothly circulate through local scenarios and multilateral settings. They are villains or heroes of little academic battles, and yet genius and mentors of multilateral trends in understanding crime and violence and of ambitious initiatives aimed at managing these phenomena.
INTER-SECTION 4

CITY LANDSCAPES II

GORGEOUS MONSTER

On the cusp of the 20th century, public institutions and private companies joined forces to give Bogotá an outstanding attraction: an ice-skating rink! It was just like the ones that are opened every winter in big cities around the world. As such, the Bogotá ice-skating rink was announced as a seasonal attraction for the 1999 Holidays. Regardless of class, race, sex, age, or any other condition, the ice-skating rink would be for everybody. The new attraction was installed in one of the fanciest spots of the city: El Parque de la 93 (the 93rd street park)\textsuperscript{105}. To make the new attraction even more festive, car traffic was suspended in the surrounding streets. People were invited to walk and enjoy the park and its outskirts. The usual traffic jams became chaotic, cars and buses went crazy searching for possible detours. Those who were attracted by the ice-skating rink would spend hours to get there. Those who weren't interested in the new attraction but had to pass through the zone would also get trapped in a mad sea of people and cars. The once exclusive park was turned into a mixed and crowded space. For residents and frequent visitors of the zone this was a populist and absurd initiative. The noisy crowds, the street sales of food in every corner, the “south culture\textsuperscript{106},” and in particular the newcomers were driving everybody crazy. For the so-called newcomers, this was a half-hearted attempt to give something to the people. There was not enough room for everybody, local people were rude, the “north culture” was annoying, people had to travel

\textsuperscript{105} This Park is named after the street that is at one of its sides. It was recently "recuperated" through improvements such as illumination and trees, as well as through the opening of expensive restaurants, bars, and movie theaters. Since then, the park became a popular high-class spot. It is often frequented by public figures such as well-known politicians, T.V stars, and top models. During the day, it is the place to walk expensive dogs, to have family or business lunch, and to hang out with friends. At nights, it is the place to go for drinks, to have dinner, or to dance in fancy clubs.

\textsuperscript{106} Social segregation in Bogotá is based on where people live. Generally, the north is associated with high and middle-high classes and the south is associated with low and middle-low classes.
across the city, the ice-skating rink was free but food and transportation were too expensive. Beyond these and other complaints about each other, everybody would agree on at least one thing: the ice-skating rink in question was not what everybody had imagined. A few days after the opening, the once white and solid ice-skating rink had become a gray and muddy footprint of a melting ice-skating rink.

The ice-skating rink was a novelty in the city, but the course of its short life was not totally unfamiliar. The history of the Colombian capital exhibits numerous attempts aimed at fostering modern and somewhat cosmopolitan urban life, most of which would be only halfway through. Indeed, unlike the ice-skating rink and its brief history, many of these attempts have significantly impacted city dynamics and Bogotanos’ daily lives. Still, modified dynamics and daily routines would almost invariably alternate with their opposites. The result is a somewhat encouraging and somewhat deceiving shift, a charming but at the same time frightening view: a gorgeous monster. The following pages build upon the image of Bogotá as that gorgeous monster, whose tense and contradictory nature ought to be understood not by dissecting and solving it, but by rendering the ways in which it is constituent of contemporary Bogotá experiences.

"Few years ago Bogotá was not pretty at all. It was so ugly that the only thing that was left for it was to be coquetish. Today it is not just pretty, it is gorgeous."

With these words, Mayor Mockus described Bogotá in the early 21st century. Along with him, many Bogotanos would agree that the once shabby city is now a more pleasant one (Cámara 2003; Pizano 2003; Riveros 2002). Indeed, contemporary Bogotá is different

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107 Mayor Mockus in a presentation held at La Universidad de Los Andes on June 28, 2003 within a training course for members of both the Metropolitan Police of Bogotá and municipal Bogotá (Fieldwork notes 2003).
from the Bogotá of the early 1990s. Changes witnessed by the city, however, are subject to different assessments. On the one hand, and drawing from individuals’ stories and everyday scenes, some scholars and public figures\textsuperscript{108} qualify Bogotá’s recent transformations as just makeup. On the other hand, and based on statistics and ratios, academic and technical evaluations of education, health, transportation, housing, public services and security (Fainboim, Gandour et al. 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; 2000d; 2000e; 2000f; 2000g; Riveros 2002) show significant city improvements in these areas. Increasing public education access, expanding utilities, and important reductions in homicide rates –to mention only some improvements– make it hard to deny that the so-called Bogotá miracle is more than just makeup.\textsuperscript{109}

Indeed, the capital has accomplished important quality of life improvements in the past few years. For instance, by December 2003 and according to data collected by ¿Bogotá Cómo Vamos? (Bogotá, how are we doing?) education access reached a net value of 92.1% and gross value of 98.2%; running water was provided to 100% of legally established neighborhoods; and about 74.9% Bogotanos had access to health services. This promising panorama, however, did not exclude the opposite view. The \textit{Encuesta de Calidad de vida 2003} (survey on quality of life in 2003) reported 13.11% unemployment and about 33.4% underemployment; inequality among Bogotanos was 0.56,\textsuperscript{110} and about 46.2% Bogotanos were living under the poverty line while near 12.3% were under the

\textsuperscript{108} See for instance interviews in local newspapers and magazines such as \textit{El Tiempo} (www.eltiempo.com), \textit{El Espectador} (www.elspectador.com) and magazines such as \textit{Semana} (www.semana.com).


\textsuperscript{110} This number corresponds to the city Gini coefficient. The Gini coefficient is a more or less universal way of measuring inequality. It is a value between 0 and 1. Perfect equality (everybody has the same income) corresponds to 0 and 1 corresponds to perfect inequality (one person has all the income and everybody else has zero income).
extreme poverty or indigence line.\textsuperscript{111} Surveys run in the past few years show positive Bogotanos’ perceptions about their city. For instance, the victimization survey run by Fedesarrollo showed that 42% Bogotanos felt safe in the city. Four years earlier, in 1999, only 19% reported feeling safe in the Colombian capital. Data collected by ¿Bogotá Cómo Vamos? shows an increasingly positive perception about the local government among Bogotanos, as well as important improvements on their commitment to the city. Still, according to this same source aspects such as public utilities and employment, among others, are perceived in a less positive manner.

Contradiction and tension, as shown by statistics, are constituents of contemporary Bogotá experiences. The following city shots render the Colombian capital as that gorgeous monster that derives from and frames those intrinsically tense and contradictory experiences.

SHOT NO. 1

Devices for buildings: Transparent film for glasses: between $105,000 and $430,000 pesos per square meter. CC TV highly recommended for industries, companies, big office buildings, and big banks: between 2 million and 10 million pesos. Camera to see who is at the door: between $800,000 and 1 million pesos. Bars for windows: $60,000 per square meter. Access controls to be installed in doors: around 1 million pesos per door. Intercom device to check who is at the door: around $160,000 pesos. Armored door against robbery: 1 million and 500,000 pesos. If the door is armored against bullets: 2 million and 50,000 pesos. Anti-theft locks with codified keys: between $240,000 and $530,000 pesos. Barbed wire: 360 meters roll per $50,000 pesos.

Private Security and Surveillance: 24 hours watchmen: 1 million and 420,000 pesos. Wood baton: $15,000 pesos. Electric baton: between $50,000 and $150,000 pesos. The latter one is sold at some security shops but local authorities have not authorized its use.

Trained dog: a dog of recommended strains such as German shepherd or Doberman: between $200,000 and 1 million pesos. Training course for the dog starts at $500,000 pesos.

Security devices for cars: Device to track your car in case it gets stolen: $600,000 pesos. Alarm with siren and starter blockage: between $90,000 and $200,000 pesos. System that allows you to talk without opening your window and basic armoring: between 6 million and 10 million pesos.

Personal safety kit: Self-defense course: with the National Police is for free, but private instructors charge monthly fees between $25,000 and $200,000 pesos. Bulletproof vest and bulletproof coat: between $440,000 and $890,000 pesos. Paralyzing spray: between $14,000 and $39,000 pesos. This spray can be acquired at security shops but local authorities have not authorized its use. Tonky keychain that also works as a personal defense weapon: $3,000 and it is only sold at self-defense schools.

Figure 8

This diagram appeared in El Tiempo (biggest Colombian newspaper) in 1996. It presents detailed explanations on some basic and/or recommended security and personal safety devices, some of which are described above.

The value of these devices might be better assessed in terms of the minimum monthly salary in Colombia in 1996, which was $142,125 pesos ($124.55 US dollars).

The average exchange for this same year was $1,036 Colombian pesos for $1 US dollar.

Security and personal safety, their lack as well as devices aimed at securing them, are ubiquitous in most Bogotanos’ daily lives. To be sure, the use of sophisticated artifacts such as the ones shown above is not generalized. Average Bogotanos don’t wear a bulletproof vest or drive and armored car. Still, these kinds of personal safety artifacts are frequently seen in the Colombian capital. Similarly, dogs and private guards are common at upper class public gatherings, private events, office buildings, and universities.
Devices more regularly deployed by Bogotanos when seeking personal safety are far less sophisticated. To divide up one’s cash and to distribute it in different pockets, to avoid wearing expensive jewelry, to press one’s bag against oneself, or to carry your backpack against your chest, are all widespread –sometimes seen as basic– ways of avoiding being mugged or pick-pocketed when walking down the street. Many of those who drive in the city, particularly women, might have installed a security film such as the one shown in the diagram above. However, a more generalized practice to avoid getting a car window broken and being robbed while driving in the city consist of hiding your purse either under the driver seat or between the door and the driver seat. If driving late at night, to hide personal belongings is not as critical as to carry a cell phone on your lap and to avoid stopping at red lights.

Residential buildings throughout the city exhibit various security devices. Infrared and sophisticated alarm systems or pieces of glass and sharp objects stuck on the top of walls that surround the building, are two of many devices meant to keep strangers away from residents. Most buildings are gated and stress controlling people entering. Almost invariably a watchman stands at the entrance and checks where are you going and whom are you visiting. At modest buildings watchmen rarely carry firearms. Above all, they are in charge of announcing visitors and opening the garage gate. Plush buildings, on the other hand, employ armed watchmen. Lavish buildings have different devices for keeping its residents safe, including: several watchmen, a CC TV system, and even a lounge for bodyguards. The use of security devices at residences is common among Bogotanos. Kinds and amount of devices often depends on economic means. Those who don’t have the means resort to less sophisticated devices. Those who can afford it refuge in private
and exclusive condominiums where personal safety is provided through high-tech security devices. In Bogotá as elsewhere in Latin American cities (Caldeira 2000) enclosure, surveillance, and the quest for personal safety by living in a more or less hermetic enclave have become common, particularly among local elites.

**Shot No. 2**

Radio begins playing the national anthem. It is six o’clock in the evening. Many are on their way back home. Others might be meeting at an upscale café or catching up with friends at a fancy pub few blocks from here. The light turns red. A troop of starving kids jumps into the street. Tall enough to reach your car window and if tiptoeing the window of a SUV, they get ready to make some money while the red light lasts. Some start cleaning panoramic and rear windows or dusting front lights; several walk between cars trying to sell candies and flowers or singing a song; others stick their faces against a car window or grab the bottom part of an SUV window begging for a coin. Moving back and forth within the first three lines, a skinny one dances and juggles colorful balls. Radio plays the last chord of the national anthem. The yellow light goes on. The troop of kids jumps onto the sidewalk. The light turns green and traffic roars into the main street.

Those who live in northern Bogotá are familiar with this scene and its variations. In this part of town where upper class residences and gatherings concentrate, traffic lights are frequently turned into momentary scenarios for one of poverty’s most dramatic faces. Along with that troop of starving kids, traffic lights also house street vendors and adult beggars. In the past few years these same traffic lights have increasingly begin housing one of the most dramatic faces of not only poverty, but also war and violence: the desplazados (displaced), as those
who have had to run away from their homes are known in Colombia. Young women with their children, elders with their grandkids, and entire families fight to survive in the capital. Many beg for money or even food, some try to make a living by selling trash bags and handmade objects. Most of them seek some help, solidarity, or, if nothing else, a bit of compassion by holding handwritten placards. “We are an internally displaced family. We lost everything due to violence. We are starving. Please, help us!” says the placard that a woman in her mid-twenties along with her six children holds at a busy traffic light in an exclusive residential area.

Traffic lights are not only points where two streets meet, but crossroads where different and opposite city experiences collide. Such a clash might take place in almost every big city, but the Colombian capital is one of those cities where it happens on daily basis. Additionally, in Bogotá, it exposes ways by which not only poverty and inequality, but also violence, war, and the quest for personal safety shape urban experiences. As crossroads, daily scenes at traffic lights are revealing instants in which segregation and seclusion are unveiled to the point they can be recognized as constituents of routines and lifestyles in contemporary Bogotá. As with traffic lights at exclusive areas, nightlife in northern Bogotá, particularly at elite gatherings, often evokes similarly revealing instances.

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112 Internal displacement is one of the most dramatic expressions of the endemic forms of violence and war that characterize both historical and contemporary Colombian experiences. For an overview of this phenomena and for more detail data on it see among others the web page of the Red de Solidaridad (www.red.gov.co).

113 Even though Bogotá is not the main destination of internally displaced people in Colombia, in the past few years the city has received a significant number of people who had run away from their lands due to acts of violence related to the internal Colombian war. This number is even more significant due to the fact that most internally displaced people that arrive the capital are not willing to come back to their lands. It is also important to highlight that the actual number of internally displaced people is hard to know due to the lack of official census. Nevertheless and according to CODHES—one of the biggest NGOs devoted to this phenomenon—between 1995 and 2002 about 500,000 internally displaced people arrived to the Colombian capital. This is about 25% of the total internally displaced people in the country (approximately 2'800,000 for that same period). See latest statistics and information on this subject at both CODHES (www.Codhes.org.co) and the Secretaría de Hacienda de Bogotá (www.shd.gov.co).
Shortly after ten on a Saturday night: festooning lights, smoky patches, and swanky cars. A unique rhythm blends tunes played at bars and nightclubs. The bliss of walking hand in hand feels all the more heightened. Trendy locals ramble around the most popular places. Businessmen from overseas and tourists melt well into the upscale crowd. The whole view reveals a somewhat cosmopolitan yet slightly blinkered enjoyment. An amazing urban scene if you contemplate it from one of the many terraces that look at the Parque de la 93 (93rd street park). An alien stroll under northern Bogotá’s moon: street kids trying to make you buy a flower and urchins pickpocketing your cell phone, regulars at other night gatherings, are only randomly present at the park, but wander nearby streets. An alluring moment if you walk from the restaurant chosen by locals who crave a diner-style meal or a detailed menu written only in English; to the stylish cafe known for its house cocktails and middle eastern food. A moment that annoys and at the same time shocks when you have to amble in the midst of private watchmen and bodyguards standing outside nightclubs and bars. A beguiling night that you might momentarily rue when seeing private security personnel preventing “undesirables” from hanging out at the otherwise public park. A distressing view: husky uniformed guys at every corner ready to report “anomalies” and to harass street vendors, poor kids, and all those whose appearances seem unsuitable for the upscale northern Bogotá.

Living by the day in a rather hostile city, highly impoverished Bogotanos fight to make a living while the capital keeps pushing them to the edge. On the other hand, wealthy Bogotanos for whom making a living is not as primary a concern as their personal safety, confine their lives to spaces under strong surveillance and shape their routines according to private security services. These two groups collide frequently, but invariably follow divergent
paths strongly shaped by exclusion. This is true not only in terms of the interactions between the two groups, but also in the ways extremely poor and very affluent Bogotanos relate to the revitalized Colombian capital of the early 21st century.

For different and opposite reasons, neither of these two groups are integral to the city as derived from the so-called Bogotá model that has been nationally and internationally praised over the past few years. The adoption of Cultura Ciudadana (culture of civility) and public space as key aspects for city governance requires the existence of basic life conditions\footnote{In absence of such basic conditions, as public servants would state when I interviewed them, promoting Cultural Ciudadana or defending public space is a non-sense. Besides, governmental initiatives aimed to improve the city are not except of affecting groups within the city population. This is the case with initiatives directed towards the defense of public space that in order to generate organized and clean spaces as a way of improving the city and of providing security to its inhabitants had forbidden street vendors and people making a living in the streets. Official initiatives such as the ones concerning public space defense and the debates around them show how the so-called Bogotá’s miracle has not been a smooth process but a process in which some Bogotanos have had to pay a too high “prize.”} that —in spite of official efforts— are far from universal in the Colombian capital. Similarly, as axes for governing the city, these two elements presuppose citizens’ active engagement with the city, its spaces, its diverse inhabitants, and the various public events that have the capital as their main scenario. Such an engagement is not possible for those who —either by force or by preference— confine themselves as a way of securing their own personal safety. As such, the urban scenery and modalities of urban governance that distinguish contemporary Bogotá might be a promising symptom of the city becoming a modern metropolis; but they exclude both extremely poor and very affluent Bogotanos.

Forms of exclusion —of either the poor or rich individuals— are neither desirable nor completely avoidable. They are somewhat inherent to the modern arts of governing that have recently emerged in the Colombian capital and which might be better understood in terms of what Michel Foucault (Foucault 1978; Foucault, Burchell et al. 1991; Foucault
and et.al 1997; Rabinow 1989) conceptualizes as modern governmentality. Following Foucault’s insights, modern governmentality refers mainly to the government of populations and individuals as agents within that population. A population’s welfare and the capability of individuals to both contribute to that welfare and take advantage of it, are at the center of the modern arts of government. In such a context, some individuals might diverge from established models of behavior and some governmental initiatives might either favor or affect specific individuals, but as long as the population’s welfare is guaranteed those divergences and those either favored or affected individuals are no matters of governmental concern.

If the extremes of the social spectrum show us a cold and heartless city, growing numbers of Bogotanos between these two extremes incarnate an opposite façade: a joyful and frenetic metropolis. They are the ones both able and willing to engage in newly fashioned ways of exercising citizenship through Cultural Ciudadana and public space. They are the ones both able and willing to be citizens of that Bogotá that has served as a continental model for urban governance and recognized worldwide as an exemplary case of urban life improvement. The simultaneous existence of these facades serves not only to characterize the particular mood of the Colombian capital, but also to re-assent what a recent evaluation (Llorente and Rivas 2004) of its achievements on citizen security states: One of the secrets of municipal Bogotá in both improving security and exercising governmental authority in the city rests on the design and implementation of public policies that assemble either a vast majority of the city population or a significant number of its inhabitants.
SHOT NO. 3

Friday night after a long week: "stop here," I ask the driver. Grabbing my rucksack and hunching I walk my way to the exit of the van that covers the Toberin route.\textsuperscript{115} Shortly after eight I get off at the 84\textsuperscript{th} street. A deafening explosion shakes the van and all those on the sidewalk. I fall down onto my knees. A sharp wave hits my ears and stomach. I begin walking. Home is just half a block north. A troop of bodyguards, military police, and watchman begin running towards the south. I walk towards the north, sidestepping the yelling and armed crowd. I dial my cell phone. Traffic stops. Phone calls wont go through. Something bad has happened. They keep running towards the south, shouting to everybody. Something really bad has just happened. I speed through a troop of machine guns and walkie-talkies.

Friday February 7, 2003, shortly after eight at night, an elite Bogotá social and sports club, \textit{El Nogal}, is blown-up by the FARC.\textsuperscript{116} A car bomb with nearly 330 pounds of explosives is detonated inside the club. The explosion travels across the building destroying several of its floors. A devastating blast kills at least 32 people, wounding at least 160, and spreading fear and terror.\textsuperscript{117} For Bogotanos, particularly for local elites, the message was clear: neither the capital, nor its elites were safe. Blowing up \textit{El Nogal} was a strong statement to confirm what the FARC has been announcing since a few years ago: the war that long ago has been fought in the countryside might now begin to be fought in the city. For local and national elites the bomb at \textit{El Nogal} was also unequivocal: this was a relentless war and it was not over yet.

\textsuperscript{115} This route goes from downtown Bogotá to the far north of the city. It is mostly covered by mini-vans that although designed for twelve passengers are frequently packed with nearly 20 people.
\textsuperscript{116} This is Colombia's largest guerrilla group.
\textsuperscript{117} For detailed information see local newspapers such as \textit{El Tiempo} (www.eltiempo.com), \textit{El Espectador} (www.elespectador.com) and magazines such as \textit{Semana} (www.semana.com).
Unlike any other Sunday morning when main streets in Bogotá are closed for cars and Bogotanos can enjoy the *ciclovía*\(^{118}\), today several of those streets have become the scenario of a mass demonstration against violence and terrorism. Following the detonation of a car bomb at *El Nogal*, City Hall called Bogotanos to actively participate in this *jornada de resistencia civil* (day of civilian opposition). The *jornada* starts with an outdoor Mass at the *Parque Simón Bolívar*.\(^{119}\) From there, hundreds begin walking towards the remains of *El Nogal* in northern Bogotá. Residents of the exclusive neighborhoods that were shocked by the bomb last Friday and who did not attend Mass wait out in the street. We sit in a sidewalk and wait for the walking crowd to arrive. Everybody is here: friends, relatives, entire families, kids, elders, teenagers, and even dogs. Everybody! Live music has been playing all morning: songs that talk about hope, the strength of our hearts, the everlasting memories of those who are gone, and our desire for a better future.

It is a sunny Sunday. Mayor Mockus along with the walking crowd will arrive soon. Hundreds of flowers are handed out among those of us who are waiting in the street. Now that newcomers from the *Parque Simón Bolívar* have arrived, we share our flowers with them. People listen to Mayor Mockus who invites everybody to repeat: *La vida es sagrada, cada victima es hermana* (life is sacred, every victim is a brother) and *La vida es sagrada, las armas son del Estado* (life is sacred, weapons belong to the State). The crowd follows Mayor Mockus but has a hard time repeating the mottoes that he has put forward. People seem more enthusiastic about singing a Diego Torres song that talks about painting our faces with the color of hope. The entire crowd waves flowers and Colombian flags while singing. Many

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118 The *ciclovía* was first introduced in the Colombian capital in the early 1980s. Today it is an institutionalized practice in the Bogotá. Every Sunday and on Holidays car traffic is restricted in several main streets for Bogotanos to use these streets for biking, skating, and walking.

119 The *Parque Simón Bolívar* is the largest park within the city and it is located in center-west part of the Colombian capital.
start crying. The recently scattered pockets of upper class Bogotanos have now become a mixed crowd. Policemen look for suspects among those who are not from this neighborhood and ask for their identification documents.

A sea of people, flowers, and Colombian flags begins walking towards El Nogal. Walkers wave banners against terrorism, violence, and the FARC: Peña de Muerte a los Terroristas de las FARC (death penalty for terrorists from FARC), Cuándo acabaremos con los asesinos de niños (When would we get rid of those who murder kids), Las FARC es el cancer de Colombia (The FARC is the cancer of Colombia). Hundreds flood entire blocks in northern Bogotá. Mayor Mockus tries once again to encourage people to yell La vida es sagrada, cada víctima es hermana; la vida es sagrada, las armas son del Estado. After repeating these mottoes a couple of times, the crowd can more easily follow them. Still, people seem more enthusiastic about yelling less elaborated mottoes such as: Uribe, amigo, Colombia está contigo; alcalde, amigo, Colombia está contigo (Uribe [the Colombian president], my friend, Colombia stands with you; mayor, my friend, Colombia stands with you). In this blocks-long and sorrowful march, as in any demonstration held in the capital, one of the most common mottoes is the circumstantial version of the legendary Salvador Allende’s motto: Colombia, unida jamás sera vencida (Colombia united will never be defeated).

The march reaches the yellow and black plastic bands that isolate what is left of El Nogal from the rest of the city. We start singing the national anthem. After the last strophe, a deep silence spreads over the crowd. Silently, we leave thousands of flowers at sidewalks and walls. Silently, we look at what is left of the once impressive and now devastated social club. Silently, we began walking back home. The once luxurious building is now a blown-out structure. As with brave soldiers in the battlefield, the carcass of El Nogal has been covered
by a Colombian flag. The image, once again, reminds Bogotanos that their country is at war, a merciless and relentless war; a war that is not over yet.

Even though Bogotá has not been the epicenter of a war that since the past few years took Colombian cities as their main site, the city's achievements in security and urban management have been often challenged by terrorist attacks. Car bombs at crowded corners and exclusive social clubs, bike bombs in working-class neighborhoods, grenades thrown into crowded pubs, explosives and missiles thrown at public buildings and during official events: these are some examples of the terrorist attacks witnessed by the Colombian capital in the past few years. These shocking reminders of the untamed Colombian internal conflict

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120 The following are some of the terrorist attacks perpetrated in Bogotá in the past few years: A bike bomb (a bicycle with explosives) explodes at a working-class neighborhood in Bogotá killing several policemen and a girl (January 25, 2002). During the inauguration of President Álvaro Uribe the FARC carried out errant mortar attacks on a military facility and the Presidential Palace—with heads of state and high-level representatives from many nations in attendance—resulting in the deaths of 21 residents of a poor Bogotá neighborhood near the Palace (August 7th, 2002). A Tasmilenio bus is set on fire by a bomb and two more bombs that have been left at Trasmilano buses are deactivated (January 6, 2003). A car bomb at the exclusive social club El Nogal exploded killing more than 35 people and injured more than 150 (February 7th, 2003). A car bomb at Sanandresito (a quite active commercial spot in the city) explodes killing about 10 people and injured about 20 (October 8th, 2003). A missile is shot against the headquarters of the Federación Nacional de Ganaderos (Fedegán) (October 15th, 2003). A car bomb explodes at El Restrepo in southern Bogotá badly injuring at least 10 people (October 22, 2003). Saturday night and two grenades are thrown at a crowded pub at one of the most exclusive areas of the city. A woman is killed and dozens are badly injured (November 14, 2003). For details on these and similar acts of terrorism see local newspapers and journalistic magazines such as El Tiempo, El Espectador, Revista Semana and Revista Cambio.
have also awakened the still vivid memories of the narco-terrorism era of the late 1980s and early 1990s. As in those years, the already tight security measures that frame Bogotanos’ daily lives have become tighter.

For those who frequent up-scale malls, security routines are part of familiar activities such as getting an ice cream or going to the movies. You turn the engine and open the front of the car, the trunk and all doors. A guy inspects the front of the car and underneath it. A sniffing dog jumps into the car, sniffs the back seats, sniffs the trunk. A guy inspects both the glovebox and cushions. Variations of this same routine are all over the city.

Written announcements explaining security measures hanging at the entrance of popular malls, mandatory inspections upon entering any building, the widespread use of sniffing dogs to inspect
vehicles and people entering fancy malls and private universities, are just some of the security practices that frame everyday life in the Colombian capital.

The bright and modern Bogotá -that cheerful and promising city- cannot remain isolated from disturbing faces of such an endemic war. Flashing blue lights coming from police motorcycles escorting speeding armored cars making their way through stuck cars, members of the military police standing in front of specific buildings, bodyguards standing at the entrance of restaurants, universities and other both public and private buildings are common scenes in contemporary Bogotá.

Security and personal safety warnings circulate by email, billboards, and memos at public and private institutions. Advice and warnings are also part of daily and informal conversations. They even appear at local newspapers. Even if these warnings might not prevent people from going out –in fact nightclubs, bars and pubs as well as massive events are usually crowded– they have become constituents of a particularly tense way of experiencing the city. Through this tension, the city appears as a place where the worst-case scenario is not only possible, but also likely.
SHOT NO. 4

SHIT! Where is it!? I have already looked into my bag: notebook, mints, calendar, hairpin, pencil, cell phone, photocopies, green highlighter, chopstick, book, cigarettes, black-ink pen, gum, umbrella, out of ink pen, lighter, keys. Where the FUCK is my wallet? Ten before seven on a Tuesday morning: shiver runs down my spine. My face flushes as I once again go through my bag. SHIT! I got pickpocketed.

“What were you thinking? I bet you were standing inside the Trasmilenio all distracted, the same way you walk, paying any attention to that bag of yours,” an office-mate said, mimicking my way of walking while carrying an imaginary bag. His was a somewhat rude reply to my telling him that I had just been pickpocketed on my way to the University. However, it was also a generalized reaction. “It happens,” a policeman said while giving me a half-page form to fill out my report. Having convinced me to fill out a form of “lost” ID and personal belongings, rather than one for stolen ID and personal belongings that would start an overly complicated procedure, he added: “When commuting by Trasmilenio, people don’t feel they need to be watchful, but a crowded bus and distracted passengers are meant for delinquents to take advantage.” I left the police station feeling like an idiot. I made a mental list of ID duplicates for which I would need to apply, as well as ATM and credit cards that I would have to request to replace the ones that I had already cancelled.

Trasmilenio, perhaps the most salient icon of Bogotá’s recent transformation, has indeed changed the way Bogotanos travel around the city. In the early days, it was more an alien experience than a mass means of transport. At the stations, Bogotanos—who in
normal circumstances would simultaneously insist on going – would wait in line for the bus to come. After people had exited the bus, those at the station would enter in orderly fashion. Many would adopt a rigid posture and would not talk while inside the bus. If necessary they would whisper briefly. The more adventurous would use a regular tone in their conversation, which would be awkwardly overheard by the rest of the passengers. Those early days are long gone. Today, Bogotanos waiting for the bus stand in a randomly organized crowd. Exiting or entering a bus often requires pushing and squeezing. Verbal quarrels are frequent between those wanting to get off and the ones insisting on getting in. Bogotá’s Trasmilenio resembles metros and subways elsewhere in big cities. Crowded, rushing, and hectic, it is also the stage for pickpocketing and robbery, two common modalities of crime in Bogotá and in urban mass transport systems elsewhere.

Trasmilenio is not only the fastest way to travel across the Colombian capital, but also the vehicle that reveals profound gaps between realities and urban experiences in contemporary Bogotá. Crossing the city from one extreme to the other, the fast running transportation system strips such contrasting realities. From exclusive neighborhoods and renovated plazas to devastated spots and deteriorated areas, Trasmilenio speeds across the city while revealing both its most outstanding achievements and visceral dramas.

It is 6:45 a.m. and I am standing inside of a Trasmilenio bus going from north to south. I will be right on time for my meeting downtown. The bus goes so fast that I can barely read the numbers of the streets. I am almost there. I might even have time for a coffee before the meeting. What happens? A woman next to me grabs my arm, trying to see through the closed window. It might be a bomb or another act of terrorism, replies the guy sitting next to the
window. Who knows, these days nobody knows. Maybe it is just a car accident. Yes it may be, in the morning everybody is in a hurry. Could it be a demonstration? It is too early for demonstrations. The next station may be busy. The interior of the bus, a few minutes ago so silent, becomes a deliberating crowd.

The body of a street-teenager is lying on the fast traffic lane, a few meters in front of the stopped bus. The dirty and shabbily dressed body has more bones than flesh. Starving and maybe frozen to death, or totally doped up as are many other kids and teenagers who live in the streets of Bogotá, he found death in those same streets. Many die because of hunger, others because of drugs, some others are victims of common fights among criminal organizations, and many more are killed either in car accidents or as part of the sadly famous and so-called “social cleansing” campaigns. The body is too cold to be sleeping. After a quick inquest, policemen remove it from the fast traffic lane.

The bus starts running again. The interior of the bus feels painfully silent. It is 7:05 a.m. I might be late for my meeting.
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