

# **The Construction of Citizenship in the Context of Armed Conflict, Anti-drug Policy and Illegality in Putumayo (Colombia)<sup>1</sup>**

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In this paper I will seek to demonstrate how the State plays a central role for small coca growers in a marginalized area such as the department of Putumayo, where armed actors are present and coca is grown. In this environment, the role of the State as a mediator and interlocutor is essential in order to open spaces for legal peasant organization and legitimization.

I will also examine how coca growers contest their criminalization for coca cultivation and their abandonment by the State through a demand for their recognition as Putumayan citizens.

Thirdly, I will analyze the role of NGOs in either strengthening or weakening peasant organization. Seven NGOs recently arrived in the region as subcontractors, first to the Colombian government through the National Program for Alternative Development (PLANTE), and afterwards to USAID, in order to implement crop substitution projects and to strengthen democratic local governance under the guidelines of Plan Colombia. I am interested in evaluating the effects of the NGOs in reconfiguring State mediation with peasant groups demanding their recognition as citizens.

## **Antecedents**

Since the late 19th century, the Amazon region of Colombia has been an area of colonization as a means to alleviate land pressures elsewhere in the country and as a national security buffer zone that helped protect Colombian sovereignty in the south. Non-indigenous settlers known as *colonos* migrated to Putumayo in the late 19th century and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in response to social, political, and economic upheavals in the Colombian interior. It was necessary to expand the economic frontier in order to ease the structural problems of the country. I have pointed out (Ramírez 2001), that as a consequence, this peripheral area has been defined by both the State and its inhabitants as excluded from the central order of things, marginal, “abandoned by the State,” “a forgotten region” to which the “development” of the central region does not extend.

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<sup>1</sup>The fieldwork for this article was carried out in the Department of Putumayo (Colombia) between 1999 and 2004 as part of an ongoing research project funded by the Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History, and by the Colombian Institute for the Advancement of Development Science and Technology-Colciencias. The project focused on the Impact of Plan Colombia on Local Peasant and/or *Cocalero* Organizations and the Construction of Citizenship in the Context of the International War against Drugs and Terrorism.

As a general rule, the State has limited its participation in the Amazon region to establishing basic services for the *colonos* located in or near the urban centers. The rest of the area lacks adequate basic services such as roads, water supply, electricity, health services and education. State intervention through development programs during the 60s and 70s mainly benefited large landowners. During the 70s and 80s, many *colonos* were forced to sell or abandon their plots to satisfy bank debts. *Colonos* experienced the loss of their land as unjust and unpunished, as institutionalized violence (Molano 1988). This resentment helped legitimate the guerrillas, who defended *colono* interests. Thus, this State which has failed to provide basic needs for the *colonos* is perceived as ultimately responsible for the expansion of coca cultivation in these areas. In contrast with Bolivia and Peru, all coca cultivation was declared illegal in Colombia through the Narcotics Law of 1986, criminalizing all coca producers, no matter how small. The conflation of marginality and illegality explains the expansion of coca cultivation and the ability of the FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the country's oldest and largest leftwing guerrilla organization) to regulate coca production, processing, and marketing from the 80s on. It also explains why paramilitary forces were able to come onto the scene in 1998, challenging the guerrillas control of territory and of coca, and increasing the armed conflict in the region.

In addition to marginality, illegality, violent conflict and State abandonment, a dirty war against popular leaders has been waged since the eighties, with the acquiescence and/or cooperation of the Colombian Armed Forces. Its goal has been to prevent any opening of political space to new forces. So we can say that the State has been both actively and passively exclusive<sup>2</sup>, eliminating the possibility of undesired political options and maintaining the long term structural marginality of Amazonia.

The perception of exclusion is definitive in Putumayo. Its inhabitants complain that they are not considered citizens by the central State, and this perception has permeated the cultural and political discourse in the region, constituting a master narrative that has defined the regional counter-hegemonic discourse centered on the demand for "the right to have rights"<sup>3</sup> as campesinos and Colombian citizens. Moreover, they have demanded

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<sup>2</sup> Dryzek (1996:482) differentiates two types of state exclusion: "Active exclusion implies a state that attacks and undermines the conditions for public association in civil society. Passive exclusion implies a state that simply leaves civil society alone."

<sup>3</sup> Hannah Arendt (1949:30) introduced this concept in her article, "The Rights of Man," a reflection on the concept of human rights in light of the thousands of stateless refugees in 1945-1950 postwar Europe, officially categorized at the time as "displaced persons:"

We only became aware of the existence of a right to have rights (and that means to live in a framework where one is judged according to actions and opinions) and a right to belong to some kind of organized community, when there suddenly emerged millions of people who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation... Before this, what we must consider today as a "human right" would rather have been thought a general characteristic of the human condition which no tyrant could take away.

Arendt noted that the existence of rights had been transformed from an a priori condition to a demand. She also emphasized the right of every human being to belong to some political

recognition as Putumayan citizens and as social group acting independently from drug traffickers, guerrillas and paramilitaries.

### **The construction of a Putumayan citizenship**

In 1996, coca growers and harvesters marched in the Western Amazon Region of Colombia (the departments of Putumayo, Guaviare, and Caquetá). The central demand of this *cocalero* social movement was the re-establishment of their relationship with the State through their recognition by the State as citizens of Putumayo.<sup>4</sup> As Tilly (1996) has pointed out, the relationship with the State defines citizenship. This relationship may be weak or strong, depending on the transactions that take place between the State and the people under its jurisdiction.

In identifying themselves first as citizens and second as Putumayans, the *colonos* sought to construct a type of citizenship defined by membership and a sense of affiliation where none had existed before, or at least none that had ever been made explicit or recognized as such. The campesinos were implicitly claiming to belong in the region, contradicting their characterization as rootless migrants in search of easy money. This demand for “membership” was an exercise of “the politics of citizenship.”<sup>5</sup> But above all, they sought to be recognized by the State as a distinct group, with a voice to represent themselves, and the right to collaborate with the State to define the policies that would benefit them as residents of Putumayo. To this end they proposed citizen participation according to the guidelines laid out in the Constitution and they sought to contest the illegality of their situation by means of this citizen participation. As Putumayan citizens, they wished to act within the law, and even more, to bring the law to life. This represented a kind of empowerment for them because they wanted to be recognized and participate as a specific social group, as *cocaleros* and *campesinos* who could defend their rights and be heard. The results of the negotiations that took place during the *cocalero* marches of 1996

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community, because it is within such communities that rights materialize. Citizens themselves must defend their rights, but particularly, the right to not be denied the rights that accrue to community members and above all, the right to citizenship.

<sup>4</sup>Tilly (1996:8) proposes that we “... confine the definition of citizenship to a certain kind of tie: a continuing series of transactions between persons and agents of a given state in which each has enforceable rights and obligations uniquely by virtue of (1) the person’s membership in an exclusive category, the native-born plus the naturalized and (2) the agent’s relation to the state rather than any other authority the agent may enjoy.”

<sup>5</sup>For Hall and Held (1989:176-77), a contemporary ‘politics of citizenship’ must take into account the role which social movements have played in expanding the claims to rights and entitlements to new areas. It must address not only class and inequality, but also membership. They call attention to the complex interplay of identity and identification in modern society and to the differentiated ways in which people now participate in social life. However, they point out that citizenship “...has tended to absorb ‘differences’ into one common universal status – ‘the citizen,’” and therefore recognize that “There is now an irreconcilable tension between the thrust to equality and universality entailed in the very idea of the ‘citizen’, and the variety of particular and specific needs, of diverse sites and practices which constitute the modern political subject.” Young (1995) concurs, and moreover considers the idea of universal citizenship to be repressive, inasmuch as it denies group differences and introduces the concept of “differentiated citizenship,” referring to the incorporation into the political community of differentiated social groups, with representation as such, whose individual rights are defined in relation to their membership in particular groups.

were ambiguous. Although the Narcotics Law that criminalized all coca and consequently all coca growers was not opened to reconsideration, the government did agree to take a different approach with those peasants who had no more than three hectares of coca. This resulted in concrete policy changes with regard to small producers.<sup>6</sup>

But what has happened with this central demand for citizenship in Putumayo under Plan Colombia, implemented beginning in 2000 under the strictures of the U.S. war on drugs?

### **The Implementation of Plan Colombia in Putumayo**

I have argued elsewhere that certain central government policies targeted toward the Amazon region are the outgrowth of the region's marginality, a condition that stems from long-term historical processes (Ramírez 2005). Likewise, the implementation of Plan Colombia in Putumayo conforms to the logic of marginality and exclusion, and to what Boaventura de Sousa Santos (1998:2) defines as social fascism: "A group of social processes through which large population groups are irreversibly maintained outside of or newly excluded from any social contract." Boaventura further indicates that social fascism is pluralist, that it coexists with the democratic State, and that its privileged time and space is not national, but at once global and local. With the implementation of Plan Colombia, we can recognize the characteristics of this "glocalizing"<sup>7</sup> social fascism in Putumayo.

Plan Colombia was first launched in December 1998, "as a policy of investment for social development, the reduction of violence and the construction of peace." (Observatorio para la Paz 2000:167) Pastrana described it as a "Marshall Plan" for the economic and social development of southern Colombia, hoping that the international community would respond to the devastation caused by drug production and trafficking as it had to that of Europe in World War II.

While originally described as Pastrana's national development plan, in fact, Plan Colombia was substantially transformed as a result of U.S. pressure: a year after its initial proposal, President Pastrana presented Plan Colombia as A Plan for Peace, Prosperity, and the Strengthening of the State "...to ensure order, stability, and compliance with the law; to guarantee effective sovereignty over the national territory; to protect the State and the civilian population from the threats of illegal armed groups and

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<sup>6</sup>The interdiction policy, comprising fumigation and prosecution, was then by law directed towards large coca plantations, processing operations, and drug traffickers. Limited voluntary eradication and substitution programs for indigenous peoples and small *campesino* producers were also instituted.

<sup>7</sup>As Latour (1993:122) has signaled, "the words 'global' and 'local' offer points of view on networks that are by nature neither local nor global, but are more or less long and more or less connected.". Thus, when we examine in the field the imbrication of the global with the local, we could say that we are seeing not globalizations but "glocalizations. For Dirlik (2001) "*Glocal* expresses cogently what Latour has in mind by the hybridity or the global and the local" and he continues to emphasize that "what it forces us to think about is a double process at work in shaping the world: the localization of the global and the globalization of the local, neither, as Latour warns us, to be confounded by the product."

criminal organizations; and to break the existing ties between these groups and the drug industry that supports them." (Contraloría General de la República<sup>8</sup>, August 2001).

In 1999, the six-year budget for Plan Colombia was set at US\$7.5 billion. Colombia would provide \$4 billion and the international community, including the United States would provide \$3.5 billion. Of the funds provided by the Colombian State, US\$3.09 billion was to come from the general budget and US\$1.774 billion from new sources dedicated to Plan Colombia: internal debt incurred through the sale of Peace Bonds, loans from the Inter-American Development Bank, and other international credits.

The resources of Plan Colombia were to be expended in the following proportions: 51% for institutional strengthening and social development, 32% to fight drug trafficking, 16% for economic recovery and the Social Support Network, and 1% to support political negotiations.

In a September 2003 evaluation of Plan Colombia, the National Planning Department reported that "by December 2002, US\$5.61 billion had been committed, 75% of the total cost projected at the beginning of the Plan. Of this amount, \$3.981 billion (71%) was provided by Colombia, and the remaining \$1.628 billion (29%) derived from non-reimbursable assistance provided by the international community. Eighty eight percent of this international assistance (US\$1.464 billion) came from the United States, and other countries contributed \$128.6 million, or 2.3% of total commitments.

Although the component of the Plan aimed at curbing drug trafficking was fully funded at US\$2.37 billion, only 45% of funds for the economic recovery component (\$541 million), slated for funding mostly from the regular budget, had been committed. Likewise, only 68% of funds for institutional strengthening and social development, (\$2.695 billion out of \$3.842 billion) had been committed. Overall, only 44% of the nonreimbursable assistance offered by countries other than the United States resulted in firm commitments, owing in part, to European disappointment at being excluded from discussions of the plan's design, fundamental disagreements over counter drug strategy, and lack of interest in a country outside Europe's "sphere of influence." (Transnational Institute, 2001)

### **The U.S. Aid Package**

In July 2000, the Clinton administration moved a special supplemental appropriation of \$1.3 billion through Congress. Known collectively as "Plan Colombia," the bill included \$860 million for Colombia, \$180 million for several of Colombia's neighbors, and \$260 million for the counter-drug efforts of several U.S. agencies.

Of Colombia's share, 60% - \$519.2 million,- went to the armed forces and 14%, or \$123.1 million, went to the national police.<sup>9</sup> The centerpiece of Plan Colombia, which administration documents called the "push into southern Colombia," was the addition of two counter-narcotics battalions to the one created in 1998-1999, to form a new Counter-

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<sup>8</sup> Similar to the US Government Accountability Office.

<sup>9</sup> See Center for International Policy, "The Colombia Aid Package by the Numbers" (Washington: CIP, July 5, 2000) <<http://ciponline.org/colombia/aidcompare.htm>>.

Narcotics Brigade within the Colombian Army. Equipped with 45 helicopters, advanced communications and intelligence-gathering equipment, and light infantry training, arms, and ammunition, the 2,300-strong brigade would ease the way for the massive fumigation of coca crops in Putumayo.<sup>10</sup> The remaining 26 percent of Plan Colombia, \$217.7 million, was allocated to alternative development (8%), for assistance to the displaced population (4%), for human rights protection (6%), for judicial reform (2%), for strengthening the rule of law (5%), and for measures promoting peace (1%).<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that Plan Colombia's economic and social components are also provided through the International Narcotics Control budget at the State Department, underscoring the aid's link to drug control objectives.<sup>12</sup>

Putumayo became the epicenter of Plan Colombia beginning in July 2000. The region contained 54% of the area used for coca cultivation in Colombia (66,022 hectares), 30,000 small producers with from one to five hectares each, and a floating population of 50,000 people who worked in coca production and commercialization (National Association of Campesinos -Putumayo, August 2001). This department where guerrillas had long been present saw the arrival of paramilitaries beginning in 1998, and the two groups began to compete for territory, for the power to regulate the coca market, and for the ability to collect the illegal taxes, or *gramaje*, paid by the local population. All of these circumstances combined to make an ideal scenario in Putumayo for the central mission of Plan Colombia, as described. This was the context within which the policy of aerial fumigation promoted by the United States came to be applied more intensively. State repression was effectively brought to bear through the credible threat to fumigate.

In response, the inhabitants of Putumayo proposed social pacts for the manual eradication of coca. The initiative for these pacts originated in the Municipal Council for Rural Development, or CMDR<sup>13</sup> of Puerto Asís, with the participation of municipal leaders, government officials, the mayor, the departmental governor, and others. The proposal

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<sup>10</sup>Additional assistance went to Colombia's navy to expand the riverine program, while the air force got new OV-10 and AC-47 planes and the police got more helicopters and equipment. In 2003, U.S. trainers began setting up a second counter-narcotics brigade that will operate in the country's remote eastern departments

<sup>11</sup>I am interested in evaluating the use of funds for institutional strengthening and to ameliorate the consequences of militarily conceived and executed anti-drug policies, which are components of the non-military 26% of Plan Colombia funds. At the midpoint of 2003, Plan Colombia completed its first three years of execution

<sup>12</sup>The security focus of the aid package has been maintained until today; in any given year, between 68 and 75% of Colombia's Andean Counterdrug Initiative aid has gone to the military and police. Additional aid provided through Defense Department accounts has increased the security forces' share to between 75 and 80 percent annually. Economic and social aid peaked at \$218 million in the first appropriation in 2000, and has remained level at \$150 million since 2003, in spite of the efforts of some in the U.S. Congress to increase the amount. In November of 2004, \$116 million were approved to be spending by USAID in the so called non-military assistance programs (El País, Cali, November 24, 2004).

<sup>13</sup>These Councils were created through Law 101 of 1993 as "participatory bodies for cooperation among local rural communities, municipal authorities, and representatives of departmental and national government entities either present in the municipality or that promote municipal programs or projects concerning rural development." (National Association of *Campesinos*-ANUC 1998:11). Working through these councils, the mayors were responsible for designing rural development plans in their municipalities, and doing so with the active participation of *campesino* organizations and the rural population.

was delivered to the national government on July 25, 2000 in Puerto Asís, when central government representatives (the national director of PLANTE and 23 other officials) arrived in the region to provide information about the implications of Plan Colombia. In the words of the mayor of Puerto Asís, “We presented them with a document in which it was stated that we wanted a Putumayo without coca, [and saying] no to fumigation and yes to manual eradication”

**The Municipal Council for Rural Development (CMDR, *Consejo Municipal de Desarrollo Rural*): a legal expression of peasant organization and its proposal for manual eradication**

The Municipal Council for Rural Development, or CMDR, played a fundamental role in the emergence of the proposal for negotiating manual eradication as an element of a broader set of social agreements, an alternative to the fumigation promoted by the United States. The National Association of Campesinos-ANUC leadership in Putumayo had promoted the CMDR in Puerto Asís, in keeping with ANUC’s national policy to create and strengthen CMDRs. This policy had been expressed at ANUC’s Tenth National Congress of Campesinos in July 1998, dedicated to the dissemination of ANUC’s position on CMDRs. ANUC provided the following explanation for the political context within which the CMDRs were created, and the importance of promoting them:

By means of the General Law for the Development of Agriculture and Fishing, ANUC and the other *campesino* organizations won the obligatory establishment, in every municipality in the country, of a Municipal Council for Rural Development. This was a response to the lack of political space for coordinated participation of the *campesino* organizations and the rural population in the planning, design, execution and oversight of municipal programs and projects for rural development. (National Association of Campesinos -ANUC 1998: 10).

ANUC did not participate in the organization of the *cocalero* movement, and the leaders of the Civic Movement did not let the Putumayo ANUC representative participate in the negotiations. But for various reasons, ANUC came to fill the leadership vacuum in Puerto Asís after the persecution of *cocalero* movement leaders in 1997 and 1998 and their subsequent disappearance from the social and political scene. First of all, local officials promoted the CMDRs to coordinate their activities and to provide greater security when they ventured into the rural communities known as *veredas*. Secondly, it had become clear to the *cocalero campesinos* that one of their most important goals should be decriminalization. Legal and aboveboard work like that of the CMDRs gave them the political space to continue with their struggle for recognition as legitimate social actors and valid interlocutors in negotiations with the State.

By 1999, the CMDR in Puerto Asís had become the locus of coordination among *campesino* leaders, municipal authorities, and government officials. A leadership body of 36 *campesino* delegates had been established to work in the communities known as

*veredas*, inspectorates, and *corregimientos*<sup>14</sup>, diagnosing and prioritizing the population's needs. At the same time, twelve coordinators worked to establish understandings among the official institutions present in the region. These 48 leaders participated directly as CMDR members, while 148 others worked indirectly, as presidents of Communal Action Committees.

The CMDR enjoyed considerable influence in Puerto Asís, but was condemned by the FARC for what they considered its close collaboration with municipal authorities. FARC also accused ANUC of being totally co-opted by the State, but above all, they accused the leadership of the CMDR of working in the interests of the paramilitaries. This accusation should be contextualized. In July 2000, advancing paramilitaries were continuing to occupy the municipal centers of the *coca* growing zone. Puerto Asís had been taken first, in 1998. Orito, Valle del Guamués (La Hormiga) and San Miguel (La Dorada) had followed. They occupied Puerto Caicedo and Villagarzón in April 2001 and by October of that year they were expected to arrive in Puerto Guzmán at any time. When I visited Puerto Asís in April, I was told that when the paramilitaries entered Puerto Caicedo with lists in hand, they did not carry out massacres. Instead, they called upon people one by one, and according to their evaluation of the individual's closeness to the guerrillas, they either allowed them to stay under certain conditions or ordered them to leave. It was clear at that time that the guerrillas controlled the countryside while the paramilitaries held the municipal centers. The FARC considered the fact that the CMDRs convened in the municipal centers sufficient evidence to associate them with the paramilitaries. On the other hand, this also coincided with FARC's prohibition of any autonomous *campesino* organization that was successful enough to challenge their authority.

In early 2000, the paramilitaries killed one of the *campesino* leaders who had been active throughout the process of CMDR consolidation, and then killed two Communal Action Committee presidents. The territorial division between the guerrilla-controlled countryside and urban centers controlled by the paramilitaries was clear. The civilian population was trapped, unable to move freely between these antagonistic spaces, and the *campesino* movement was thus immobilized. One woman *campesino* leader described the situation: "We can't speak out for the movement now. We don't have the freedom to demand our rights." (Interview in Puerto Asís, April 2001) The ANUC director comments:

Everybody, including the council presidents, began to say, "We won't go back to town, they're slaughtering us. So the CMDR began to suffer a setback, but we continued to insist on the fulfillment of the people's social needs. We continued to pressure the mayor and the institutions, something that nobody else was doing. Everyone was saying, "They don't come to the *veredas* any more, our presidents aren't making any demands." So there was a crisis in the CMDR, but we persisted until July [2000], when the guerrillas killed Uvaldo. The problem is that the paramilitaries had killed the presidents, the guerrillas

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<sup>14</sup> The municipality of Puerto Asís is made up of 148 *veredas* organized into five *corregimientos* and seven inspectorates.



said that we were infiltrated by paramilitaries, the others said that we were guerrilla collaborators, and then the guerrillas called us paramilitary collaborators. So with Uvaldo's death all our work came to an abrupt end. We issued a communiqué saying that as of that moment all CMDR activities were suspended. Our work stopped and now we're trying to regroup. (Interview with ANUC leader in Putumayo, April 2001)

The paramilitary advance continued. On September 24, 2000, one month before the elections to select mayors, governors, municipal councilors, and departmental deputies, and in the context of sharpening clashes between the FARC and the paramilitaries for territorial control, the FARC declared a *paro armado*, an armed strike, in Putumayo. During a *paro armado*, guerrillas occupy the roads and prohibit all traffic into and out of town centers. The principal strike demands were that the State "...take heed of our rejection of Plan Colombia and immediately respond to our non-negotiable demand to rein in the paramilitary groups that have sown terror here in the south" (*Semana* No. 962, October 2000:56). The latter was the primary condition for the lifting of the strike, which in fact lasted until the middle of December 2000. The prolonged *paro armado* negatively affected the civilian population and led to their rejection of the FARC. Unlike in 1996, when the FARC and the population stood together against fumigation, this *paro* did not respond to any popular need or demand. It seemed that the FARC sought only to meet its own military needs at the expense of the population. Popular rejection of the strike was so strong that it was lifted although the government had not met any of FARC's stated demands.

In addition, the leader of ANUC in Puerto Asís was elected as a delegate to the departmental assembly on October 29, largely in recognition of his work in the CMDR. Political representation was a means of promoting the continuity of social movements and organizations, as expressed by the leader of ANUC:

Clandestinely [because FARC had prohibited participation in the elections] we decided to participate on October 29, and we determined that the CMDR would take the risk despite all the problems, because it was already functioning. We presented two lists, and the head of one of them was elected. I got two hundred votes for the assembly out of a little more than 300, so the process is alive. Since that had worked out, we decided that it was time to regroup, not as a CMDR now, but as a campesino organization. We're going to change the name but the leaders will be the same. From the [departmental] assembly the work is better grounded... and we are generating participation from the municipal council and since we have a representative we will promote the process here in Puerto Asís. That's more or less the story of the CMDR. (Interview with ANUC leader, Putumayo, April 2001).

We see a "chameleon" survival strategy here in the changing of organizational names and identities as needed in order to advance the cause of the *campesino* movement. Campesino leaders were disappointed in the FARC's lack of support for them and for the organizational development of their movement. With the dismantling of the CMDRs, and in the light of the campesino leaders' unresponsiveness to their mandates, the guerrillas

proposed the establishment of an Association of Communal Action Committees. The Association would be organized like the CMDRs, but would be under FARC control. The individual Communal Action Committees would be centered around the inspectorates and *corregimientos* of Teteyé, Bocanas del Cuembí, Comandante, Piñuña Blanco, Puerto Vega, Alto Cuembí, Villa Victoria, and La Carmelita, together made up of about 70 *veredas*. FARC also declared its opposition to the manual eradication pacts. Despite the *paro armado* and the confrontation between the FARC and the CMDR leadership, the first Social Agreement for Voluntary Eradication and Alternative Development was signed on December 2, 2000 in the *corregimiento* of Santana (Puerto Asís). After signing this agreement, the mayor of Puerto Asís called together the other newly-elected mayors to propose that they pursue agreements in their respective municipalities in order to head off the imminent threat of fumigation. But FARC forbade such agreements, which gave the mayors pause. In the meantime, U.S. pressure to fumigate was intense. Indiscriminate fumigation between December 22, 2000 and January 12, 2001 affected coca crops as well as commercial and subsistence agriculture in the municipalities of Valle del Guamués (La Hormiga), San Miguel (La Dorada), and Orito.

With the fumigation having begun, the campesinos decided to defend their social pacts for voluntary eradication and a FARC – *campesino* negotiating process followed. In the end the agreements were signed. The terms of these pacts committed them to eradicate their coca crops within one year from the first disbursement of State resources, consisting of two million pesos (about \$870 in mid-2001) for food security in the form of livestock, agricultural inputs, tools, and the like. While these pacts were originally proposed by people in the region, they gained support from within the government, in keeping with the urgency for eradication within the framework of the international war against drugs. The campesinos proposed, as they had at the 1996 negotiations, a two to five year period for the gradual eradication of coca, combined with increased aid for food security, which moreover should be in the form of cash rather than commodities, so that they themselves could decide how to invest it. Above all, they proposed the formation of a revolving fund or some other mechanism to ensure a viable market for their alternative crops. However, the government continued to insist that food security assistance be in the form of goods and not in cash, so as to avoid the potential for its illicit diversion. The government representatives empowered to sign the pacts insisted on the non-negotiability of their terms. In speaking of “pacts,” they also said, it was implicit that they were addressing agreements that had been previously arrived at; and no new negotiations were admissible. In addition, the campesinos were explicitly threatened with fumigation if they did not sign. A campesino leader commented on these unilaterally imposed limitations at the signing ceremony in Puerto Guzmán:

It seems to me that if two people want to negotiate, they should listen to each other. No one side should impose its terms on the other... We can't agree with the government... and we're not trying to trick them. We want the pact to be a serious agreement, and for a serious agreement to work, we need much more time for crop substitution. We've always said that we were for a Putumayo without coca, for a sustainable economy [referring to the 1996 Orito agreement]. Have any of you here, of the 29,000 who were

in Mocoa [as part of the civil strike of 1996], have they given you any of what was promised in the agreement that came out of the strike?

(Voices) No.

I want the government to understand that we respect government institutions, but we don't want to be made to suffer, to be the direct victims of terms imposed by the North Americans. After all, we are the owners of Colombia because we were born here, so we have the right to express ourselves about our problems. (Campesino leader in Puerto Guzmán, June 2001).

We can view this outcome within the framework of social fascism, or contractual fascism, which "...occurs when the power differential between contracting parties in civil law is such that the weaker party, overwhelmed by its lack of alternatives to the contract, accepts the conditions imposed on it by the more powerful party, no matter how onerous or despotic they may be" (Santos De Sousa 2001: 31) In the case being discussed here, the pacts were imposed under conditions dictated by United States anti-drug policies, with no possibility of negotiation, changing the spirit of the manual eradication pacts proposed by the inhabitants of Putumayo.

Thus by June 2001, 31 social pacts for eradication were signed by campesinos representing 800 *veredas* and approximately 25,000 families. Two social pacts were also signed with the indigenous sector: one agreement called *Raíz por Raíz* (Root by Root), that covered 128 *cabildos*<sup>15</sup> representing 12 indigenous peoples and 7,186 families; and one special agreement with the 1,134 families of the Kofán people. These two agreements with indigenous people were signed in July 2001.

The population affected by the pacts lived in nine of the thirteen municipalities that comprise the department of Putumayo: Mocoa, Villagarzón, Puerto Guzmán, Puerto Caicedo, Puerto Asís, Puerto Leguízamo, Orito, Valle del Guamuez, San Miguel. The pacts with campesinos were financed by the Peace Investment Fund-FIP, created to administer Plan Colombia's resources, and beginning in September 2000, PLANTE took responsibility for technical assistance under the leadership of Gonzalo de Francisco, the Presidential Adviser for Citizen Coexistence.

On the other hand, indigenous pacts received funds directly from USAID (the United

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<sup>15</sup> During the colonial period, *cabildos* emerged as a syncretistic local political authority promoted by the Spanish through the appropriation and reshaping of the *cacicazgos* (from *cacique*, chief) in response to their need to control indigenous communities. Cabildos consisted of a governor (the *cacique*), a mayor, and other officials known as *alguaciles* and *mayordomos*, and played an important mediating role between the Indian communities and the Spanish, regulating tribute and corvée labor. This mediation by the *caciques* constituted a means of resistance to the assimilation promoted by the Spanish. Indigenous authorities learned and used Spanish laws in order to defend their lands and their cultural distinctiveness. Today *cabildos* are recognized as the main political organizations representing the indigenous communities.

States Agency for International Development) through Chemonics International, Inc., a development company based in Washington. Both FIP and Chemonics subcontracted Colombian NGOs to implement the pacts: *Vida y Futuro* (Orito and San Miguel), *Fundaempresa* (Puerto Asís and Puerto Leguizamó) *Fundación Restrepo y Barco* (Villa Garzón y Puerto Caicedo) *Codesarrollo* (Valle del Guamuéz) *Fundacomercio* (Mocoa and Puerto Guzmán), and *Cecoin/Corfas* (Puerto Guzmán, Mocoa and Villa Garzón). Chemonics also subcontracted *Fundación ZIO-AI*, an indigenous organization, to implement the agreement with the Kofán people. The *Raíz por Raíz* agreement was signed for a total of 38.09 billion pesos (about 16 million dollars in 2001) and the agreement with the Kofán people was for 1.134 billion pesos (about 492,000 US dollars in 2001).

The signing of the pacts put off fumigation in Putumayo for six months, causing concern on the part of the US government. A news item credited to *El Espectador* of Bogotá appeared in the St. Petersburg (Florida) Times, reporting that “a 1.3 million dollar US plan to aid the drug war in Colombia has run up against a major obstacle in recent weeks as US and Colombian officials report that under enormous pressure to halt the herbicide fumigation of coca crops, President Andrés Pastrana has refused to allow its extension to the southern region that forms the heart of Colombia’s coca production.” In the same article, a government researcher and adviser on CIA matters and Colombian politics stated that “Pastrana’s change of attitude came as a great surprise and alarmed many in Washington (*El Espectador*, June 4, 2001:6A).<sup>16</sup>

### **USAID’s Counterproposal to Manual Eradication**

The manual eradication pacts challenged not only the policy of fumigation itself, but also the overall position of USAID, the principal source of financing for alternative projects as recipients of Plan Colombia funding. Building on lessons learned in Bolivia and Peru, a US GAO<sup>17</sup> report on USAID’S alternative development activities in the Andean Region stated that “effective alternative development demands a strong host government commitment to a comprehensive array of counternarcotics measures and years of sustained U.S. assistance to support them.” In the cases of Peru and Bolivia, this entailed three decades of financial assistance. According to the US GAO, without interdiction and forced eradication, campesinos would not stop growing coca, due to its relative ease of cultivation and its greater profitability in relation to other crops, and they would be even less inclined to seek legal employment. The GAO also reported that “alternative development interdiction and eradication efforts must be carefully coordinated to achieve mutually reinforcing benefits.” (US General Accounting Office Report on Drug Control, February 2002:2). In keeping with these policy guidelines, alternative development programs are implemented only compensatorially, and only after fumigation and forced eradication. As such, they do not occupy a central place, either financially or politically, as a strategy to combat coca cultivation through the promotion of a comprehensive rural development plan.

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<sup>16</sup>At the end of July 2002, the Pastrana administration announced the end of the manual eradication pacts. The distribution of the first year of aid had not been completed, much less the implementation of the medium and long term development agreements.

<sup>17</sup> The Government Accountability Office (then called the General Accounting Office)

USAID became involved in Colombia in 2000, promoting the eradication of heroin poppies and the strengthening of PLANTE. In June 2000, USAID signed a 10 million-dollar contract with Chemonics International Inc. to assist PLANTE in the strengthening of alternative development projects where poppies were being cultivated in Cauca, Huila, Tolima and Nariño. After the approval of the Plan Colombia budget in July 2000, USAID began planning alternative development projects in areas where coca was being grown. These projects were intended to complement Plan Colombia's focus on eradication and interdiction.

The GAO reported that progress in alternative development in Colombia would require improved government control of drug-growing areas in order to monitor compliance with eradication agreements. USAID indicated that the National Alternative Development Program-PLANTE, lacked the necessary oversight capacity for this monitoring function. Moreover, the Agency reported that PLANTE financing for alternative development projects was not assured, and that prospective sites of alternative development projects were characterized by poor soil and inadequate infrastructure.<sup>18</sup> USAID also reported that the Colombian State did not control all areas where productive projects were underway, which limited its ability to carry out sustained interdiction and to effectively coordinate eradication and alternative development activities. USAID's strategy in Putumayo would be governed by these considerations, in the framework of Plan Colombia and specifically addressing one of the Plan's goals: to ensure governability defined as stability, order, and meaningful law enforcement.

In April 2001, USAID channeled 87.5 million dollars of Plan Colombia funds into a five-year contract with Chemonics Inc, to implement, administer, and supervise alternative development activities. In keeping with the "push into southern Colombia" the departments of Putumayo and Caquetá received special attention in this first phase of USAID's work. Some programs were also conducted in the regions of South of Bolivar and Catatumbo in northern Colombia. Eighty million dollars of USAID funds were invested in Putumayo for the Program on Local Initiatives for Alternative Development and Early Eradication (PILDAET). This program was launched in September of 2001 in response to the suspension of aerial spraying for almost eight months and to the need of United States government to evaluate the success of the eradication program quantitatively, through the number of hectares fumigated and/or eradicated.

These early eradication agreements were initially promoted by the departmental governor through the Secretariat of Agriculture. The departmental government initially invested 5 billion pesos (interview with PLANTE official, September 2002), then worth about \$2,168,250, to try to accelerate the process of manual eradication and thus satisfy the United States, at a time when the genuine commitment of the peasants to manual

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<sup>18</sup> By July 2002, PLANTE was operating in 96 municipalities in ten of Colombia's 30 departments, while coca was cultivated in 233 municipalities, in 25 departments. Opium poppies were cultivated in 69 municipalities in six departments. PLANTE also operated in 15 indigenous *resguardos*. Its regional headquarters were located in Florencia, Popayán, Inírida, San José del Guaviare, Neiva, Villavicencio, Pasto, Tibú, Puerto Asís, Ibagué and in San Pablo, Bolívar (PLANTE 2002).

eradication was beginning to be questioned.<sup>19</sup> This was also an effort to avoid massive and indiscriminate fumigation. According to an interview with a local official, the governor and the mayors initiated the program in Orito and Valle del Guamués, where there had been a second wave of fumigation at the beginning of 2002, less than one year after the signing of the pacts in those municipalities.

The Municipal Funds for Alternative Development were established at this time with USAID funds. These resources were available to all those campesinos who had signed previous pacts and to those who had not done so, but "...were engaged in locally based initiatives for immediate eradication." (PLANTE 2001). Although it was supposed that the early eradication initiative should arise from within the community, a participating *vereda* or *corregimiento* had to commit to eradicate 100% of its coca in order to receive project financing. Coca eradication was imposed as a precondition for participation in this program and for access to funding. No time period was specified for eradication; it was to be accomplished immediately. Moreover, in contrast to the agreements signed with PLANTE, customarily with each family, the PILDAET agreements were signed with the whole *vereda*. Thus, individual signers were not accepted, and the eradication was to be carried out in "representative and verifiable areas." (PLANTE 2001) A Verification Committee was constituted for this purpose, comprised of a delegate from the *Defensoría del Pueblo* (Ombudsman's Office), a delegate of the Anti-narcotics Police, a representative of the central government, a community representative, and one from the participating international NGO.

Because USAID considered PLANTE to be weak and inadequate to the task of monitoring eradication as required by the terms of the pacts, and because of the State bureaucracy's corruption and slow application of resources (as measured by the number of hectares eradicated since the social pacts were signed), Chemonics Inc. contracted NGOs that were working in the area: *Fundaempresa* (Puerto Asís and Puerto Leguizamó), *Restrepo Barco* (Puerto Caicedo and Villa Garzón) and *Vida y Futuro* (San Miguel) as well as local NGOs including *Huairasachac* (Orito), *Comfamiliar* (Valle del Guamués), and *Maloca* (Mocoa, Puerto Guzmán), to administer resources and implement projects in the campesino sector. The addition of three local NGOs was an effort to respond in some measure to the objections raised by local professionals when the previous FIP-PLANTE eradication pacts were implemented through foreign NGOs. At that time, these local professionals had complained that they were being overlooked as human resources familiar with the region and particularly qualified to administer local projects.

No USAID resources passed through government bodies such as FIP or PLANTE. U.S. financing of domestic programs could be considered an affront to Colombia's sovereignty and its autonomy from the United States with regard to the management of illegal crops and the execution of anti-drug policies. In order to exercise some supervision of the funds

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<sup>19</sup> Colombian government officials were unable to project that all the coca in the Putumayan areas covered by the agreements would be eradicated voluntarily by the end of July 2002 as had previously been expected. First, not all the agreements had been signed contemporaneously. Second, and more importantly, it took time for PLANTE to deliver the immediate assistance required by the peasants in order to eradicate their coca crops, due to the bureaucratic procedures this assistance entailed. The one year provided for the total eradication of coca was consequently inadequate.

and projects being executed, Municipal Councils for Alternative Development (CMDAs) were established. They were composed of the mayor, the regional coordinator of the National Plan for Alternative Development, or PNDA, one representative for each social pact signed in the municipality, the representative of the departmental government, the representative of the NGO operating the project, a representative of any other NGO that may have been operating pact-based projects, and the municipal *personero*, or public advocate, to provide for accountability. The CMDA had full autonomy to approve projects of up to 200 million pesos (about \$87,000). The approval of the highest officials at PLANTE and at Chemonics was required for projects between 200 and 500 million pesos (about \$217,000). Even though CMDA sessions could not be held without the National Development Plan representative and the representative of the respective mayor, the funding source was external (USAID) and resources were managed by independent NGOs, making oversight by PLANTE difficult at best.

In practice, USAID was able to develop projects autonomously through its contracting NGOs, as evidenced by the complaints of PLANTE officials that they were unable to fulfill their oversight responsibilities prior to the execution of the projects, much less to guarantee compliance with the project requirements as established by the Municipal Fund for Alternative Development. In sum, the procedures adopted to combat corruption and increase efficiency have in practice decreased State legitimacy, bypassed State agencies, further eroded public confidence in the State and effectively reduced the already minimal State presence in the region. Although “strengthening democratic local governance,” is another stated objective of USAID programs<sup>20</sup>, local governments are in fact undermined.

This delegitimation of the State role is even more grave given the activities of illegal armed actors in the region and the degree to which they actually control territory. In this environment, it was difficult to maintain the Oversight Committees that were slated to be formed by the community, as their members were constantly threatened. In addition, project proposals were frequently withdrawn due to breakdowns of public order. Armed conflict and the hegemony exercised by armed actors in different areas have also limited the implementation of a comprehensive alternative development plan. Regarding the Verification Committees, campesinos complained repeatedly that because of the armed conflict, verification could not be conducted everywhere, a situation that legitimized continued indiscriminate fumigations authorized by the National Directorate of Narcotics (DNE). The DNE argued that in the absence of verification, they could not certify that the number of hectares used for coca was diminished and thus fumigation should be continued. In effect, armed conflict legitimizes fumigation, which in turn erodes State credibility, first because alternative development projects have been destroyed by spraying and second because fumigation programs have generated forced displacement of families. This result was anticipated in the first U.S. appropriation for Plan Colombia, which included \$15 million in assistance for families that would be displaced by Plan-

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<sup>20</sup> Other USAID programs implemented in the region are: the strengthening of Democratic Local Governance (DLG), the provision of services to the displaced population (ID), a program in the Administration of Justice through Houses of Justice, (a House of Justice was opened in May of that year in Puerto Asís), and programs in Human Rights and Anti-corruption (USAID 2000).

related operations. However, Colombian law provides for aid to displaced persons only as a result of armed conflict. The criminal” status of fumigation victims makes them ineligible for these programs<sup>21</sup>.

A preliminary and unverified report by PLANTE in Puerto Asís stated that by July 28, 2002, the early eradication program had eliminated coca on 5,117 hectares out of a total of 10,522.5 hectares agreed-upon through the Municipal Council for Alternative Development. By the end of 2003, 14,750 hectares of coca were reported to have been eradicated manually.<sup>22</sup> This achievement has not been accorded its rightful importance in any evaluation of the efficiency of the aerial fumigation policy.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Depoliticization of Citizenship**

As described above, USAID strengthened anti-drug policies in the region and limited access to funds designated by Plan Colombia for alternative development, negating the political rights of campesino *cocaleros* as citizens of Putumayo, rights that had been central to their struggle and that they had begun to exercise, to a limited extent, as a result of the 1996 negotiations.

The implementation of Plan Colombia has precluded any possibility to negotiate or finance a gradual process of eradication in coordination with a comprehensive plan for alternative development, which had been one of the central focuses of negotiations since 1996. As it has been signaled out, world anti-drug policy is unidirectional inasmuch as it is imposed without consultation with local governments or civil society organizations in targeted regions. This reinforces pre-existing constraints on attempts by the marginalized population 1) to make itself visible through demands for citizenship rights, and 2) to their citizenship in civic, political, social, and cultural terms.

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<sup>21</sup>By April 2003, the Consultancy for Human Rights and Forced Displacement (CODHES) reported a total of 39,917 people displaced by fumigations in Colombia. The highest level of displacement was reported in Catatumbo, in the state of Norte de Santander. Catatumbo accounted for one third of the national total. The armed conflict and fumigation are the principal causes of displacement in middle and lower Putumayo. (CODHES 2003).

<sup>22</sup>Chemonics also stated that 12,703 families (both campesinos and indigenous people), had benefited from alternative development projects and that legal crops had been planted on 14,836 hectares. At the end of 2002 Putumayo reported a total of 13,725 hectares of coca, which represented a 70% reduction from 2001 levels. At the end of 2003, Putumayo reported 7,559 hectares of coca (UNODC 2004).

<sup>23</sup>In explaining the overall decline in coca cultivation in Colombia, the UNODC coca survey for 2003 stated that “forced eradication was beyond doubt the key reason for the decline in coca cultivation in 2002 and 2003.” The report also acknowledged that “other factors such as the practice of abandonment of fields and voluntary eradication seemed to have played a role as well” and noted “the decline in establishment of new coca fields since 2000 when intensified spraying activities started.” Although it recognized that “in 2003 the economy of the agricultural sector recovered, and prices and some key farm products increased which seem to have contributed to the reduced incentives for farmers to switch to coca cultivation” (UNODC 2004), the political commitment to fumigation on the part of both governments has made failure impossible to consider, and has precluded serious consideration of very different but more promising options, such as a concerted effort at comprehensive rural development. Thus fumigation continues to be promoted as the primary method of coca reduction.



Moreover, the United States delegitimized the Colombian State for its inefficiency in achieving the goal of zero coca. In response, the government of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez intensified fumigations, allowed the use of higher concentrations of the active herbicidal agent glyphosate, and declared fumigation non-negotiable. The December 2002 closing of the PLANTE office in Puerto Asís exemplified the supplanting of State bodies in the policy formation in the areas of crop eradication and substitution. Uribe clearly prioritized counterinsurgency operations, to break the link between drug trafficking and the guerrillas, as opposed to plans for development. Beginning in January 2003, Chemonics operated with no official oversight. Campesinos were left to interact with private NGOs, effectively exposed to the pressures of global anti-drug policy without the benefit of any intermediation by the State, precisely the intermediation that had long been demanded by campesinos to protect themselves from being branded as criminals, to make themselves visible as an autonomous group with a legitimate role in the elaboration of regional policies, and to serve as a buffer from the demands of armed actors that the civilian population take sides in the war.

Given this series of events, it is indispensable to analyze the relative weight of the different aspects of citizenship<sup>24</sup> in Putumayo and how the campesino movement goes about demanding them. All of the armed actors are present in this space: the police, the armed forces, and those who exercise private justice, the guerrillas and the paramilitaries. Political democracy is threatened, since these armed groups interfere with the citizenry's access to representation. In addition, the function of the central State as a provider of services in the region and its role as an interlocutor with the campesinos is limited. As it has been signaled out, to the extent that the anti-drug policy dictated by the United States is applied unconditionally, and the State allows international NGOs in the region to act autonomously, State hegemony is compromised, sovereignty is eroded, and the State is delegitimized in the eyes of the population. Members of local NGOs and the campesinos in the region to whom the alternative development programs are directed have complained about the lack of official oversight.

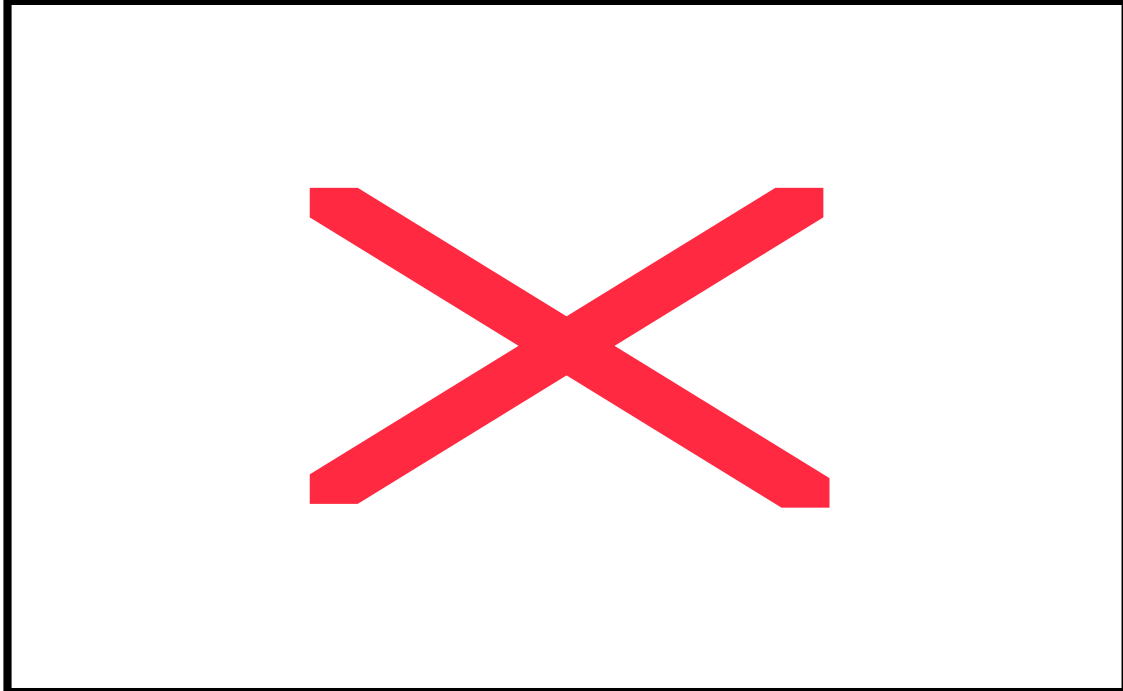
Decisions that determine the campesinos' crop substitution practices, including the number of hectares on which coca is to be eradicated, are made in accordance with global anti-drug strategies. Thus, the international development company Chemonics currently dictates policy without the benefit of public debate. While USAID states that the main objective of the democratic local governance program is "the promotion of a more responsive, participatory, and accountable democracy in Colombia," to encourage "mechanisms of citizen participation in local decision-making in order to assure that resources and projects are directed at solving the priority concerns of the communities"

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<sup>24</sup> Marshall (1965:78-79), proposes a tripartite definition of citizenship in his classic work *Class, Citizenship and Social Development*. He distinguishes civil, social, and political elements as follows: The civil element is composed by the rights necessary for individual freedom- liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought, and faith, the right to own property and conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice... By the political element I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such body... By the social element I mean the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society. The institutions most closely with it are the educational system and the social services.

(USAID 2000b: 1), this goal is thwarted in the case of alternative development programs. Moreover, an undemocratic and authoritarian framework is closing off the spaces for political participation only recently opened by the *campesino cocaleros*. How can campesinos explain the failure of their projects? Who can they hold responsible? Will the campesino movement be depoliticized in the absence of the State?

As illustrated in Figure 1, Plan Colombia has given rise to a multiplicity of campesino associations registered with the Putumayo Chamber of Commerce in order to present alternative productive projects, as required by USAID.



As a one consequence of Plan Colombia, the campesinos in Putumayo prioritized the demand for social rights, understood as access to alternative productive projects and economic well-being, over the demand for civil and political rights. In so doing, however, the campesinos became subject to clientelist control mechanisms<sup>25</sup> and to authoritarian manipulation by the NGOs that manage available resources. The retreat from demands for civil and political rights intensified with the accession of Uribe Vélez to the presidency, inasmuch as the United States Congress and the G.W. Bush administration openly declared on August 2, 2002 the transformation of the war on drugs in Colombia into a counterinsurgency war by lifting previously applied restrictions so that Colombia could use anti-narcotics resources in a unified battle against drug trafficking and the organizations classified as terrorist, including the FARC, the ELN (National Liberation Army, the second-largest leftwing guerrilla organization), and the AUC (Colombian Self-defense Forces, the largest coordinating body of rightwing paramilitaries). This growing militarization and the complete loss of autonomy from the United States with regard to anti-drug policy has cost the Colombian State its sovereignty in this policy area, and the

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<sup>25</sup> Foweraker (981995) quotes Cohen and Arato as indicating how the notion of social rights has implied benefits obtained in the role of clients rather than citizens.

government has effectively lost interest in developing a comprehensive policy for alternative development. As the antiterrorist struggle took priority, coca came to be viewed solely as a source of financing for terrorism and the social and economic problems of small growers were given no further consideration.

In this context, the citizenry can not exercise its political rights and its civil rights were lost, particularly after the advent of President Uribe's Democratic Security policy. Under Democratic Security, campesinos may be labeled "terrorist auxiliaries," erasing their condition as citizens autonomous of these illegal armed groups. Colombian democracy then becomes a "democracy without citizenship," in the words of Pinheiro (1996:17) in describing Brazil, referring to the fact that the political system is based on exclusion. In Putumayo, this negation of meaningful citizenship results from the identification of the campesino *cocaleros* as subjects of the anti-drug policy. Their exercise of citizenship, understood as the right to have rights, is negated. Aerial fumigation of the zone is an assault on the fundamental human rights to a decent quality of life, the enjoyment of a healthful environment, and human health itself. It is also a violation, in the words of the *Defensoría del Pueblo* (2001:9), of "...the obligation of the State to provide special protection to vulnerable or marginalized groups" (C.P. art. 13). The demand for the right to life has become central, and given the non-negotiability of fumigation, the central goal of Putumayo *campesino* organizations has become access to the financing for alternative productive projects that will allow them to survive under admittedly adverse conditions.

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