Buenaventura
How Can “New City” Dreams Meet Existing Local Needs?
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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

This thesis explores the perspectives and development needs of Afro Colombian communities in Buenaventura, Colombia. These perspectives and needs are used to analyze a megaproject proposed for the city, known as the Economic Activities Complex of Buenaventura (CAEB). I argue that in order for the CAEB project to improve social and economic conditions within the municipality, its structure and implementation will have to look beyond macro economic growth and private sector profits to integrate community based knowledge and create real benefits for the local population. Based on this argument, I offer recommendations for strategic policy, programmatic and project based responses to the challenges for realizing the project’s mission.

Thesis Advisor: J. Phillip Thompson
Associate Professor of Political Economy and Urban Planning
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Section 1: Introduction

Nestled on the north western tip of South America, Colombia’s boarders are uniquely positioned along both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This location, among many other factors, affords Colombia an incredibly diverse range of climate patterns and geographic landscapes. From mountain ranges and deserts to thick rainforests and Caribbean beaches, Colombia’s natural landscapes have produced impressive biodiversity. In fact, with the second highest biodiversity rate, the country is home to 10% of all flora and fauna on earth.\(^1\) Although the concept and discipline of biodiversity is relatively recent, indigenous populations in Colombia and around the world have always maintained a wealth of knowledge and experience with Colombia’s natural richness.\(^2\) There are entire populations of ethnic groups across the country that are still working to capture, save and disseminate that knowledge, while the country faces the global challenges of climate change and increasing capitalist development that is threatening entire ecosystems.

Leveraging the country’s biodiversity and strategic location along the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans has influenced urban and industrial development patterns in Colombia since colonial times. For example, cities like Cartagena, Buenaventura and Tumaco were critical sites for the colonial economy, as they provided port infrastructure and markets for slaves, mining gold and agriculture. In more recent years, this diversity of landscapes and ecosystems has sparked the

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attention of Colombia's political and economic leaders as an opportunity to strengthen the
country's influence and reach within the international trade market. As discussed by Arturo
Escobar, the rise of neoliberal interests in large scale development plans across the world has
meant that an area like Colombia's Pacific region in particular "occupies an important place as a
launching platform for the macro economy of the future." However, leveraging the Pacific
region's geographic and biological assets has required violent and controversial development of
large scale infrastructure, including ports and logistics capacity in strategic cities like
Buenaventura.

**Buenaventura**

Surrounded by the sea, interconnected through many rivers, and closely linked to the
rainforest, biodiversity in Buenaventura is closely linked to water. It is no surprise then, that
Buenaventura is Colombia's largest port city on the Pacific Coast. Today Buenaventura has five
privately operated ports which include Sociedad Portuaria, Muelle 13, COMPAS, TC Buen and
Puerto Aguadulce. Together these ports move 28% of all imports within the country and 2% of
all exports. Over the past decade, as Colombia's national government has become increasingly
interested in improving the country's export capacity and overall competitiveness, especially

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3 Ibid 296

4 DEPARTAMENTO NACIONAL DE PALANEACION. BUENAVENTURA, LA PUERTA DE ENTRADA AL PACÍFICO, COMIENZA A DISEÑAR SU DESARROLLO A 20 AÑOS. HTTPS://WWW.DNP.GOV.CO/PAGINAS/BUENAVENTURA,-LA-PUERTA-DE-ENTRADA AL-PAC%C3%ADFICO,-COMIENZA-A-DISE%C3%B1AR-SU-DESARROLLO-A-20-A%C3%B1OS.ASPX
related to the economic powers of Asia and the recent peace accord, Buenaventura has taken a front seat on the agenda of multiple national efforts.

Though this national attention has led to many commitments from the public sector to develop the city to its true potential, and one such effort is the topic of study for this thesis, it is important to emphasize that Buenaventura is not just the home of Colombia’s second highest performing port infrastructure. Buenaventura has a population of 370,000 people, and similar to the rest of the pacific region, 90% of the population is of African Descent, 6% is indigenous, and the remaining 4% is characterized as Mestizo. Understanding the ethnic and racial make up of Buenaventura is critical because they are intimately related to land use patterns within the municipality. Although the municipality of Buenaventura makes up 29.7% of all of the land in the department of Valle de Cauca, the urban core counts for just 3% of its area. Outside of the urban core, 70% of all of Buenaventura’s land is legally excluded from the private market because of collective titles held by Afro Colombian Community Councils, indigenous reserves and protected areas within natural parks.  

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6 Ibid 32

7 Ibid 27
Despite the fact that Buenaventura’s landscape is predominantly rural, 89.1% of its population lives in the urban core and has been immensely affected by poverty, the lack of basic infrastructure and services as well as a decades long internal armed conflict. According to Colombia’s National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), 89% of Buenaventura’s population is under the age of 55 and yet the unemployment rate remains around 60%, while the urban poverty rate sits at 63.5% and rural poverty sits at 91.6%. Many scholars suggest that the abolition of labor unions and other cuts to critical social services are to blame for some of these conditions. Scholars also argue that these measures were designed to lower costs and boost national profits. In order to do so, massive investments are being planned for infrastructure megaprojects, including one in Buenaventura called the Economic Activities Complex of Buenaventura, which will be referred to as the CAEB project throughout this paper.

**CAEB Project**

Through CONPES 3547, the government established public policy that authorized the creation of the National System of Logistics Platforms. This policy prioritized Buenaventura as a logistic node within the national system, given its location and the capacity of its 5 ports. In

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8 ibid, 35

response to the creation of this new national policy, Colombia’s National Planning Department (DNP) created the New Cities Program (Programa Nuevas Ciudades). The purpose of this program is to provide support to cities like Buenaventura in order to leverage their strategic location in service of increasing production, expanding industries and strengthening logistics capacity. Research conducted through this program highlighted what appeared to be successful precedent cases of large scale logistics complexes in places like Singapore and Barcelona.

Through the New Cities Program, DNP further developed the concept for Buenaventura’s logistics capabilities by creating a framework for what is now called the CAEB. The concepts and desired outcomes addressed through the design of the CAEB project originally began through the visioning and work of Buenaventura’s local institutions, most notably the Chamber of Commerce. The CAEB was originally conceived as a way to foster private investment into Buenaventura, with the goal of improving basic infrastructure and access to high quality jobs for the population. Today the CAEB has morphed into a mega project that is proposed to be developed on 1,867 hectares of land, which translates to 4,615 acres. Below is a map created by DNP to depict the scale of the project, which is represented in orange.
Once completed, the CAEB project is projected to install 150 new businesses, create 60,000 new jobs in 20 years and generate $750 million in new income for the country. The national government estimates that the first phase of this project will require over $300 million USD in both public and private investments. Once implemented, DNP has prioritized three anchor projects for the first phase of development. Those projects include 1) a Logistics Activities Zone (ZAL) where infrastructure to support distribution, supply chain management and light manufacturing will be, 2) a Science and Technology park where research and services will be provided to support the growth of innovative tech businesses and 3) an area for “Human Habitat Development,” where land will be designated to develop ecological housing. It is worth noting that the descriptions and plans for the Human Habitat Development area appear to be the most underdeveloped of the three anchor projects, which is ironic though not surprising, given that it is the only one in which services would be directly provided to poor populations.

**Research Problem**

Given the projected job creation and public and private investments in infrastructure, government actors believe that CAEB project has the potential to bring real gains to Buenaventura’s population and local economy. However, 75% of the land proposed for the project is collectively owned by the Caucana and Gamboa Afro Colombian Community Councils, who see the project as an effort to expropriate land for the benefit of the private sector and big businesses. This perception is deeply influenced by a history of public disinvestment, violence and lack of wealth distribution resulting from the existing large scale infrastructure (i.e ports).
Despite these conflicting views of the project, in 2016, the community councils signed a Memorandum of Understanding with DNP, the National Infrastructure Agency, the Mayor of Buenaventura, the Governor of Valle de Cauca, and Buenaventura’s Chamber of Commerce, to “strengthen the development of national projects with a social, economic and industrial and logistic focus, which the government...plans to advance in Buenaventura,” though the CAEB was not directly mentioned. In 2017, Colombia’s National Infrastructure Agency (ANI) and Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS) signed onto the MOU as well. Legally, the community councils are not allowed to sell their land on the private market, however, they are allowed to lease the land to private actors for development. Therefore, the community councils entered into a dialogue with government actors to negotiate such use for the CAEB project.

10 Memorando de Entendimiento, Agencia Nacional de Infraestructura, 2016
Today the project is structured through a directive committee, an advisory committee and a management team. The directive committee is made up of government experts who are helping to frame and articulate the anchor projects that are being developed through the CAEB. The advisory committee is made up of consultants and planning professionals from the region who act as consultants on the design and implementation of different phases of the project. The CAEB management team, which will be referred to as the CAEB team moving forward, is made up of two professionals who were born and raised in Buenaventura and they are responsible for managing local relationships and pushing the project towards implementation. The project manager on this team has been contracted through DNP and the assistant manager has been contracted through the United Nations International Organization for Migration’s (IOM) Inclusion for Peace (IPA) program. Although the IPA is not a legal signatory on the MOU, their role is mainly guided by their interest in ensuring that the community councils are integrated into the project as equal business partners and that the residents of Buenaventura more broadly, stand to benefit from the development.

Despite the seemingly strong institutional support for this project, negotiations between the CAEB team and the community councils were halted after the local district court declared that the council’s land titles may have been invalidly granted in 2010, due to errors regarding zoning and land use regulations. Tensions are high given this investigation and once again many local stakeholders are in doubt that the CAEB project will truly improve social and economic conditions in the municipality. Government actors, however, do not believe that the court will annul the councils’ therefore they are continuing with planning the project and attempting to engage with the councils. If the project is going to move forward as planned with negotiations
reinstated, the CAEB team will need to mend relationships and consider how the CAEB project can integrate the experiences and knowledge of the councils into the design and implementation of the project. In order to build trust, the team will also have to consider how a project of such grand scale can be structured to avoid reproducing the same inequality that has resulted from previous development in the city.

**Research Questions:**

In order to address the research problem discussed above, this thesis investigation gathered data in an attempt to answer two critical questions:

- What are the Gamboa and Caucana Community Councils’ perspectives regarding their human and economic development needs and the opportunities/challenges presented by the CAEB project?

- How can those perspectives help inform equitable economic development strategies for the CAEB project and Buenaventura more broadly?

This project and these questions are worthy of study because all over the world, black and brown communities are suffering from very similar struggles including poverty, state endorsed violence, public disinvestment and oppression by the private sector and neoliberal governments. However, to my knowledge there are very few capitalist places where an entirely black population collectively owns land and has bargaining power to determine how that land is developed, either with or without the public sector. Given the unique land ownership structure in Colombia, the demographic make up and biodiversity within Buenaventura, the country is in a unique position to serve as an example to the world for how development guided by racial
and ethnic equity can and should look. However, creating and proving this model will require a structure that challenges traditional neoliberal thinking.

**Section 2: Research Methodology**

**Study Context**

Between the weeks of March 26-April 5, 2018 I conducted fieldwork in Bogota and Buenaventura. During the first week I stayed in Bogota and conducted interviews with national government actors from Colombia’s National Department of Planning (DNP), the National Agency for Infrastructure (ANI), the National Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), and a private consultancy that had engaged in the first round of planning for the “associative scheme” to link the Caucana and Gamboa community councils to the CAEB project.

I spent my final week in Buenaventura. While in Buenaventura I interviewed local stakeholders who are residents of Buenaventura that have been engaged in conversations and development efforts in the municipality. The most significant aspect of my time in Buenaventura was spent with the CAEB project management team. It worked out conveniently that they team had already planned to be in Buenaventura for a series of stakeholder meetings. Although much of my time was spent sitting in and observing these stakeholder conversations, and playing no active role in the conversations aside from introducing myself and the purpose of my thesis investigation, I was able to observe a bit of the inner workings of the team. These internal observations were helpful, given that this team will play a major role in implementing the plans for the CAEB.
As mentioned previously, my research questions were specifically aimed at understanding the Caucana and Gamboa’s community councils’ perspectives on their development needs generally and how they believed those needs were related to the CAEB project. The ultimate goal of asking this question was in hopes that those perspectives could help inform how the project’s structure and implementation could create equitable economic development strategies for the municipality.

**Literature Selection**

The research questions and goal of this investigation have been informed by three key assumptions. These assumptions have guided the selection of literature reviewed in Section 3, as well as the framing for the historical analysis in Section 4. The first key assumption is that previous economic development efforts in Buenaventura have had marginalizing effects on the Afro Colombian population, because of the global capitalist framework that has prioritized private sector profit over human life. The second key assumption is that in order for the CAEB project to result in equitable economic development outcomes for the Afro population, the government and management team will need to think outside of the traditional neoliberal framework of development. The third key assumption is that integrating community based knowledge and lived experiences into development processes, is essential for contesting patterns and practices that have historically marginalized communities of color around the world.

Section 3 contextualizes these assumptions and the research question within two key bodies of literature 1) Political Economy of Capitalism and 2) Knowledge and Power. Section 4 will situate
Buenaventura and the Afro Colombian population within these theories and provide historical proof for the assumptions made here.

**Data Collection**

This thesis investigated deployed qualitative methods in order to collect data. Data about the municipality of Buenaventura, the Caucana & Gamboa Community Councils and the CAEB project through:

1) *Stakeholder interviews:* Interviews were conducted in a semi-formal style. An interview protocol was prepared for each engagement and participants were prompted to respond to each question one by one, in order to allow for some standard analysis. However, given the deductive approach to this study the semi-formal structure allowed participants to offer comments and ask questions as they saw fit throughout the interviews.

2) *Document analysis:* Documents shared by national agencies and other partners regarding the history of Buenaventura, Community Councils and the CAEB project were reviewed and analyzed in order to understand the research problem and to compare desired outcomes presented by CAEB project planners, with the experience and desired outcomes of the community council representatives.

**Sampling & Participants**

Stakeholders for interviews were identified through a purposeful sampling method. This method was ideal to begin with because answering the research questions required
interviewing people who are already familiar with the CAEB project, have an understanding of its history and an opinion about how it can be improved. While conducting fieldwork, snowball sampling also led to other important stakeholders. The first set of interviews were identified by leveraging relationships through IOM and MIT CoLab, which has been engaged in work in the Pacific region for many years now.

**Data Analysis Method**

Data gathered from interviews were captured through audio recordings. All audio recordings were later transcribed to aid in the analysis process. After transcriptions were completed, the qualitative data was carefully reviewed in order to explore connections or contradictions between the data and the assumptions and literature. Data from stakeholder interviews were integrated into the review of findings (Section 5) without direct quotes or identifiable information, given that the social and political context of the project are so sensitive.

**Section 3: Literature Review**

As previously mentioned, the literature reviewed in this section contextualizes key assumptions and the research question within two bodies of literature 1) Political Economy of Capitalism and 2) Knowledge and Power. Section 4 will situate Buenaventura and the Afro Colombian population within these theories and provide historical proof for the assumptions made here.

**Political Economy of Capitalism**

The first key assumption informing this thesis is that previous economic development efforts in Buenaventura had marginalizing effects on the Afro Colombian population because of the
perpetual capitalist framework that has prioritized profits for the private sector over human life. Capitalism can be understood as a system of economic organization in which private actors own and control the means of production as well as the distribution and exchange of wealth. In this way, market exchange is the central means of accessing goods and services and wealth accumulation/securing profits is the central goal of all of the above.

In order to understand how the structure of capitalism marginalizes entire populations, it is important to understand how it functions within society. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx suggests that Capitalism has always been a globalizing force. He states, “the need for a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the who surface of the globe...[they] draw all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization...It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adapt to bourgeoisie mode of production.” In Marx’s view, we can understand the bourgeoisie to be the private owners and the most salient point here is that in a quest for never ending accumulation, private owners have expanded their reach and control over populations and lands that are continuously forced into adaptation. The globalizing nature of capitalism is problematic because it has “generated persistent economic inequalities owing to the privileged position that the owners of capital assets have within their societies.”

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In order to understand how capitalism has endured for so long, altering the very face of the earth and creating massive inequality, it is important to understand the role of the state. As Marx describes it, the state’s power and its cooperation with the private sector allows for “the expropriation of the direct producer, the maintenance of absolute private property for the capitalist and his control over production and appropriation.” Taking it a step further in “The Legal Constitution of Capitalism,” David Grewal asserts that Capitalism has endured for so long because it is a socio economic system that is structured through law. Law that is created, implemented and regulated by the state. Although Grewal questions whether there is a foundational “logic” of capitalism itself, David Harvey argues that capitalism is so destructive and produces such inequality because of its ability to “shift investment across spatial boundaries or import workers...so as to circumvent crises of profitability in any particular place.” One of the most critical ways that Capitalism is upheld through law, is the significant protections the state provides for individual rights of property and contract. As Grewal explains, these protections for private property are very difficult to change in nations operating within market economies, because they were ratified into constitutions. This reality significantly limits states’ power and ability to change the resulting inequality.

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Megaprojects as Neoliberal Capitalism

Over the past few decades, the role of the state in upholding Capitalism and inadvertently the inequality that results, has been significantly strengthened with the advent of Neoliberalism. Neoliberalism can be understood as a set of policies and practices that have led to the privatization of public resources and services, the deregulation of markets, the increasing presence of foreign corporations within a states' borders and the reduction of public spending on social services.

Given the scale (4,165 acres) and complexity of the CAEB project, as well as the history of large scale development in Buenaventura, it is important to consider how megaprojects fit into development practice. During a symposium entitled “The New Mega-Projects: Genesis and Impacts” authors Fernando Diaz Orueta and Susan Fainstein briefly discuss the history of large scaled megaprojects, they assert that megaprojects have returned as a critical economic development strategy around the world. The authors argue that a significant shift in states’ goals for megaprojects has been from “removal of slums and blight” to that of “growth and competition.” Writing in 2009, the authors characterize more recent megaproject as more overtly concerned with environmental impact and being more overtly marketed as “beneficial for all social groups.”

I would argue, however, that despite perceived differences in goals and structure, megaprojects of the urban renewal period and those observed today (i.e. stadiums, 

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ports & logistics centers) were both motivated by economic growth goals and have been rooted in extractive practices that result in displacement on behalf of capitalist accumulation goals.

Where Fainstein, Orueta and I agree, is with regards to whether or not more recent megaprojects represent any changes or advances towards social justice. They state that “the strategic action of the state supporting most of these projects...does not mean a break with the [global] neoliberal paradigm.” I agree, and I would take it a step further and offer that the public private partnerships that help to finance and implement more recent development efforts, including those proposed for the CAEB, are still aligned with neoliberal forms of governance. In the case of the CAEB, the state would rely on massive investments and operational capacity from the private sector to ensure provision of infrastructure and job creation. Public private partnerships such as this, in which the private sector is given the responsibility of meeting a public service, does not have the best track record. A recent example of these failures can be found in the case of New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina hit the city. In this case, when private contractors failed to immediately respond to evacuation needs, law enforcement directly blocked citizens and other actors from taking the lead on the effort. Though this example is in the context of an emergency natural disaster, and not all public private partnerships are ineffective, it is important to understand that when government protects the interest of the private sector over the well being of citizens, human life is made more vulnerable.

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18 Ibid 765
Contesting Neoliberal Development

Given what is known about the impacts of Capitalism, the second key assumption that has guided this thesis investigation is that in order for development projects, like the CAEB, to result in equitable outcomes for historically marginalized communities, the government and CAEB team will need to think outside of the narrow scope of economic growth and benefits to the private sector. In order to contest these neoliberal patterns of development, it is important to ask, what could a new model for development look like? What should development be structured to do?

In recent work produced by Amartya Sen, he asserts that the objective of development should be to enhance people’s freedom. In Sen’s perspective, freedom includes but is not limited to the capabilities and economic power that allow people to meet their material needs and live the quality of life they have reason to value. Though Sen has been criticized for offering what seems to be a falsely utopian depiction of development, it is important to understand that his conceptualization of freedom is rooted in development that restores and protects human dignity. During a discussion regarding famine for example, Sen states that “food being exported from famine stricken areas may be a ‘natural’ characteristic of the market, but [markets] respect entitlement rather than need.” Here Sen highlights the importance of “entitlement relationships,” in giving shape to the dignity with which people live. Sen understands entitlement relationships to be a set of social and economic relationships that impact a

person’s ability, or lack there of, to command commodities in the market economy. If a
development project like the CAEB, for example, is rooted in altering the physical environment
in service of economic growth and competitiveness, then one must ask whether or not its
design and implementation has the potential to create and protect residents’ ability to
command commodities in the market it would be helping to foster.

While Sen himself has been characterized by critics as a “pragmatic neoliberal,”22 given that his
work centralizes market interactions, his discussion highlights that the failures of the market
economy to address poverty and inequality, is being deeply rooted in relationships. Though Sen
does not directly state this, his work helps to reinforce that the market structure of the
economy is not naturally occurring and is based on power structures that are inherently
political and social. However, if we accept that given the reach of global capitalism, we must
learn to navigate it, then we must ask how can development practice address gaps in
entitlement and improve the quality of life for the most marginalized groups?

Drawing on the previous ideas of freedoms and entitlement, Sen and Martha Nussbaum have
both theorized about a capabilities approach to development. In Nussbaum’s account of the
approach, she describes capabilities as “substantial freedoms...a set of opportunities to choose
and to act...freedoms or opportunities created by a combination of personal abilities and the
political, social, and economic environment.”23 Though no single approach will be a panacea for
resolving inequality everywhere, this approach is critical for the discussion because it asserts

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that in order for a population to be able to meet their material needs, the state must play a
critical role in both providing access to opportunities to develop internal capabilities (i.e.
through education) as well as external factors that allow those capabilities to translate into the
power to command commodities in the market economy (i.e. access to jobs).

While Sen and Nussbaum’s theories and approaches offer an important lens through which to
understand how market economies produce social, economic and political inequities, the
reality is that the power that neoliberalism offers Capitalism will not disappear overnight.
Although this review has offered a very critical lens of Capitalism, the creation of wealth
(economic growth) is not inherently flawed; as mentioned before, where it gets messy is the
way that it is distributed (social equity). If we hold that to be true, then we must ask, how do
we build the case for integrating concepts of equity into ideas and goals around economic
growth. Can they co exist and can the private sector be convinced of that in order to change the
way it operates?

In a recent report produced by Policy Link and the University of Southern California, the
argument is made that equity is the superior growth model. Similar to Sen and Nussbaum, the
report argues for the importance of developing capabilities among a given population.
However, what it does very differently from Sen and Nussbaum’s approach, is that is asserts
that national growth depends on preparing the population for the modern economy and doing
so requires strategic public investments guided by equity.²⁴

²⁴ Policy Link and the University of Southern California. America’s Tomorrow: Equity is the Superior Growth Model, 2011. 4
The most critical argument for integrating equity measures into development practice and economic growth goals is the recent realization that inequality is not bad just for those at the bottom; it also places everyone's economic future at risk. In order to depict this, the report points to recent research conducted by the International Monetary Fund. The study found that "every 10% decrease in inequality increased the length of a country's growth spell by 50%."25 Although many economists have not coalesced around the particular cause for this strong pattern, what is clear, is that if a nations' goals are centered on economic growth, then it is in its best interest to reduce inequality across the board.

**Knowledge & Power**

The third key assumption that has influenced this thesis investigation is that integrating community based knowledge and lived experiences into development processes, is also essential for contesting patterns and practices that have historically marginalized communities of color around the world.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire takes up the idea of "awakening revolutionary consciousness" as a method for building power among oppressed populations. In discussing the oppressor class, Freire asserts that "...their ultimate objective is to strengthen their domination over the masses and to domesticate them so that they will not be prompted to ask"

25 Ibid 11
inconvenient questions regarding the legitimacy of oppression.”26 Through this lens, one can infer that a critical method through which power is created and maintained, is the control of knowledge. Expanding access to knowledge as well as the legitimacy of different kinds of knowledge, is one way to balance the scales that lead to oppression. There is a deep history of revolutionary consciousness among the Afro populations of Colombia, which has manifested in multiple social and political demonstrations over the years, including those discussed in Section 3. Acknowledging members of Afro Colombian Community Councils as knowledge bearers, can help to better position them to engage in dialogue with key decision makers about how to transform the conditions of life as they see fit.

In *Another Knowledge is possible*, Boaventura de Sousa Santos also takes up the idea of knowledge as power. He explores “the construction and validation of knowledge born in struggle, of ways of knowing developed by social groups as part of their resistance against the systematic injustices and oppressions caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy.”27 While De Sousa Santos’ work has certainly been influenced by Paulo Freire’s, he asserts that his work goes beyond conventional popular education by focusing on the “exchange of different and diversely complete forms of knowledge.”28 De Sousa Santos asserts that knowledge embedded in “professionalized science cannot grasp the possibilities of social justice...and thus,
are incapable of informing emancipation.\textsuperscript{29} Although he is critical of the limitations of scientific knowledge, he also acknowledges that all forms of knowledge are partial and situated within specific contexts, even community based knowledge. Therefore, we can understand that many different forms of knowledge are needed to create real social change.\textsuperscript{30}

With regards to understanding Afro Colombian knowledge and perspectives on development, the work of Arturo Escobar has played a critical role in lifting the voices of Afro Colombian social leaders into international academic discourse. In an excerpt from \textit{Social Movement and Biodiversity in the Colombian Pacific}, Escobar describes the theory of territoriality and its relationship to the Afro Colombian community. He states:

\textit{“the territory is the space where community appropriates the ecosystem through complex interactions with it. The territory-region...is a political construction in defense of the territory and its sustainability... What is at sake with respect to indigenous reservations and black collective territories is not “land” or...territory. It is the concept of territoriality itself as a central element in the political construction of reality based on the cultural experience of the ethnic groups. The struggle for territory is therefore a struggle for autonomy and self determination. ... activists open up space for the configuration of...culturally appropriate developments, which can oppose more


\textsuperscript{30} Ibid 2
ethnocentric and exploitative tendencies. There is the defense of a whole lifestyle project, and not only of resources of biodiversity.”

Through Escobar’s engagement with Afro Colombian social leaders, we can see the importance of autonomy and self determination as key components to a framework for equitable development. The ability to preserve culture, determine lifestyles and modes of production is central to the what Afro Colombian communities have been advocating for. However, as we know, capitalism only affords that power to the materially wealthy and the in case of community councils, collectively owned land is not legally constituted as an asset that can be leveraged in historically predatory financial institutions that development practice relies so heavily on.

Section 4: Historical Analysis

Although Buenaventura has become a national priority given its strategic location and subsequent potential to strengthen Colombia’s power within the international trade market, implementing a project as massive as the CAEB will require more financial resources than the public sector has earmarked as its contribution. While the government is actively seeking to secure private dollars, Colombia’s national planners believe that Buenaventura is not yet as

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32 Mayolo, Angelica. Land Rights for Afro Colombian Communities as an ethno-racial policy. Prepared for the University of California, Los Angeles, 2016. 6
“attractive” as it should be for private investors. Although Buenaventura moves 15 million tons of goods annually, the municipality is still severely underdeveloped. According to DANE, 63.5% of urban dwelling families and 91.6% of rural dwelling families in Buenaventura are living in poverty.33 This rate is nearly double the 33.2% poverty rate for the entire region.34 Unsurprisingly, these instances of poverty are accompanied by and directly related to the lack of critical infrastructure and services in the municipality.

While state and national governments have made commitments to invest in infrastructure build out in Buenaventura through the CAEB project, it is important to step back and consider why a city rich in resources and so critical to the national economy has been so neglected. In order to answer this question, this section will analyze the multi-faceted relationships that have historically connected Afro descendant communities to the city of Buenaventura and Buenaventura to the nation of Colombia. As we will see in this section, the lack of development is the result of multiple complex and interconnected issues that range from slavery and public disinvestments in a city that is 90% black, to the violence of Colombia’s decades long armed civil conflict and the rise of neoliberalism.

**Who is Buenaventura?**

As observed by George Reid Andrews, historical marginalization and neglect by the public sector in Colombia is directly linked to the institution of slavery and Colonialism, which has

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34 Ibid 60
impacted every Latin American country with a relatively large black population. Reid states that “citizens of present day Afro-Latin America struggle to escape the economic heritage of poverty and dependency left by plantation agriculture, they do so over the shadow of the social heritage of racial and class inequality left by slavery.”\textsuperscript{35} Reid’s argument is not just relevant in the Latin American context but also for Afro Descendant communities all across the Americas. As discussed by Michelle Alexander in \textit{The New Jim Crow}, even in seemingly “developed” nations like the United States, the legacy of race based slavery has not disappeared but has in fact been restructured time and time again to maintain social, political and economic marginalization of the nation’s black population.\textsuperscript{36} Given this reality, in order to understand the plight of the communities being neglected in Buenaventura and Colombia’s Pacific region more broadly, one must understand who the population is, their history in the region and their historic relationship to the economy.

Although the first pilot city plan for Buenaventura was created in 1944, the area’s social history goes back much further to when it was inhabited by indigenous ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{37} Today Buenaventura’s population is only 6\% indigenous, however, similar to the rest of the Americas, these indigenous peoples were the first to bear the brunt of colonial violence in the early 1500s. Prior to the Spanish conquest, the indigenous populations of Colombia’s Pacific region was made up of Embera, Eperara, Wounaan, Awa and Tule peoples. Though diverse in identity


\textsuperscript{37} Herrera, Sascha Carolina. \textit{A History of Violence and Exclusion: Afro-Colombians from Slavery to Displacement}. Georgetown University, 2012. 9
and lifestyles, these ethnic groups engaged in forms of material and cultural practices that included agriculture, fishing, hunting and small scale mining. Upon the Spanish conquest, these groups were the first to be exploited for imperial labor purposes. However, the Spanish labor supply was shrinking due to the spread of disease, active resistance by indigenous peoples and other factors. Given that the colonial economy relied heavily on hard labor, as it was mostly based in agriculture, cultivation and mining, the Spanish responded by leveraging the Atlantic slave trade to bolster its’ labor force.

Although Cartagena and other cities on the Caribbean Sea were primary sites for the slave trade in Colombia and other parts of Latin America, a large number of African slaves made their way across Latin America and into the Pacific Coast of Colombia. Given the richness of the natural landscape, the pacific region was ripe for mining and agriculture activities. As Arturo Escobar discussed, “black communities’...presence in the [Pacific] region [dates] back to the 17th century when they established the first gold mines on the Ovejas River. Since then...the rivers have received a large contingent of black people who gave shape to this territory.” The territory and identity of the Pacific region was heavily influenced by the activities that characterized the African population’s contribution to the colonial economy. Although the largest concentrations of labor were found in mining and coastal plantations, African slaves worked in diverse areas

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including mining, cattle ranches, mills, textiles, tobacco, cotton, domestic work and many others. Their labor shaped the character of the landscape and the identity of the region.

**Slavery ends**

In 1851, nearly thirty years after the end of the independence war against Spain, the legal institution of slavery ended in Colombia. Although the effects resulting from the end of a centuries old social and economic system were not immediately realized, the legal end to slavery meant that for the first time there was an entire generation of Afro-Colombians with the legal freedom to determine where and how they lived. This freedom however, was limited given that centuries of exploitation on the part of the Spanish and “criollos” left the newly freed Afro Colombian population with very few resources and political power to build new lives. However, given that there were many African slaves already working in mines and in the agriculture sector, the majority of freed slaves settled on the Pacific Coast, near rivers. This kind of settlement was possible because with the end of slavery,

...large slave owners of the Pacific coast experienced a crisis due to loss of workers, and a subsequently critical situation from a depression of the mine industry...these negative

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40 Herrera, Sascha Carolina. *A History of Violence and Exclusion: Afro-Colombians from Slavery to Displacement.* Georgetown University, 2012. 1

41 Ibid 16

factors finally compelled former mine and slave owners to abandon gold mining and to move to cities such as Cali, Popayan... and Medellin.

With this major shift in the economy, much of the land that was formerly worked by the African slaves became abandoned and available for their free settlement. In this view, land became a critical resource that continues to shape Afro-Colombian identity and culture. As we will see later in this section, the identity and culture that would be so intimately tied to the territory/land in the Pacific Region, would later play a major role in changing the Afro-Colombians’ relationship with the Colombian state.

Although slavery and the colonial economy are the ultimate factors linking the presence of most Afro descendent peoples in Colombia to one another, and this paper discusses them as one, it is important to note that the Afro population in Colombia is not considered to be homogenous. As discussed by Herrera in her master’s thesis,

...particular regional processes and dynamics have produced a wide variety of socio-economic factors that have shaped Afro-descendants in Colombia (PUND 2011; Sanchez and Garcia 2006). According to Colombia’s National Department of Statics (DANE), there are four representative groups of Afro-descendants in the country: Afro-Colombians from the Pacific who mainly are peasants, fishermen, and traditional miners mainly located on collectively owned territories; Raizal communities from the Caribbean Islands of San Andres and Providence; Afro-Colombians from the “polenque” of San Basilio in the Bolivar Department; and Afro-Colombians living in municipalities and Colombian cities.

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44 Ibid 8
Given the rich history of development across the many coasts of Colombia each of the four groups of Afro Colombians that are recognized by the national government have unique social, economic and cultural characteristics. As Herrera points out, the issues and conditions that impact these varied groups are diverse; they range from ethnic and territorial issues to social exclusion and varied access to political and economic opportunities.

**Post-slavery**

In the post-slavery context, Afro Colombian communities of the Pacific region continued traditional practices such as subsistence agriculture, mining, fishing and hunting. Although many of these cultural practices may have their roots in ancestral practices transported from the African continent, global influences on the Colombian economy would introduce new forms of extractive and predatory practices that would once again reshape the lives of Afro-Colombian communities. For example, the massive expansion of sugar cane production and subsequent development of the sugar industry “brought an end to [many] settlements of free black farmers that became consolidated towards the end of the 19th century.” Some scholars believe that this violent capitalist reshaping of the territory was a contributing factor to less precise limits on land ownership among Afro Colombian communities, whose cultural practices responded by adopting more collective uses. Once again, as Afro-Colombians’ relationship with

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the state and the economy shifted, so did the structure of their communities and their social conditions.

Although the violence of colonialism and post-colonial economic shifts had a major influence on the identity and culture of Afro Colombian communities, it is by no means the most defining factor shaping their identity. The significance of land and territory has been heavily shaped by what many scholars describe as an “aquatic space” and subsequent aquatic identity. Afro-Colombian life and social relationships in the Pacific Region are intimately related to the “constant physical and/or symbolic presence of the sea, intricate river networks, streams, waterfalls, mangrove swamps, as well as high levels of precipitation, significant tidal ranges and frequent large-scale inundations.” Still to this day, when referring to the skills and capacities shared by residents of Buenaventura, knowledge of the sea and rivers as well as the ability to harness its’ wealth is a critical piece of their consciousness. Just as the physical features of the Pacific landscape has significantly shaped social relations, modes of production and cultural practices, later in this section we will see how it also shaped Afro Colombian forms of social and political organizing; including structures like the Afro-Colombian community councils.

Development Trends

As previously discussed, global economic shifts such as the sugar cane industry drastically impacted the livelihoods of Afro Colombian communities. With land being stripped away from

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these communities and the prioritization of capitalist endeavors, governments and the
aristocrats of Cali, Popayan, and Medellin had very little incentive to invest in the existing
population of Buenaventura. By violently changing Afro Colombians’ access to and relationship
with the land, the expansion of extractive practices has been some of the most influential
factors contributing to the poverty and lack of development that can be observed in
Buenaventura today. It is worth reiterating that these conditions continue to serve as both a
barrier to the CAEB project as well as the perceived justification for developing it.

Although the CAEB team is working to be intentional about shifting the paradigm of
disinvestment and segregation in Buenaventura’s economy, as mentioned, large scale
economic development strategies are not new to Buenaventura. Since being colonized by
Spanish explorers in the early 1500s, and especially after the Panama Canal opened in 1914,
Buenaventura has been “...first and foremost a port—an aperture through which people, goods,
and wealth could pass—rather than a permanent settlement in its own right.”48 While the
modern growth of infrastructure in Buenaventura is directly linked to the development and
maintenance of its ports, some Buenaventura residents believe that the infrastructure is so
limited because their home is perceived as a “port without a community.” This perception and
the massive inequality across the region was exacerbated by the privatization of the ports’
operations.49

48 Zeideman, Austin. “Submergence: Precarious politic in Colombia’s future port-city.” Antipode Vol. 48, 2016. 2
During the wave of neoliberal government policies that swept across the globe in the 1980s and 1990s, Colombia granted concessions to port societies, who would later contract private companies to manage their facilities and operations. As profits soared in an increasingly globalizing economy, the material effects did not translate into wealth or prosperity for the local population, in fact it only worsened their conditions. When the ports were first established, many Afro Colombians migrated from the rural parts of Buenaventura into the urban core to take advantage of work opportunities. Although the ports have a poor reputation in terms of the availability of employment and the prioritization of imported workers rather than locals, the privatization of the ports and modernization of their technology drastically decreased their contribution as anchor institutions in the city. Between 1990-1996, the number of jobs provided by the ports were reduced from 10,000 to 4,200 and average monthly wages decreased from almost 2 million pesos to just under 600 thousand. Afro Colombian families that were able to secure employment with the ports, were suddenly hit by shifting paradigms about what work should look like, without much regard for their livelihoods. As the ports modernized and privatized, Afro Colombians’ relationship to the local economy and natural landscape changed yet again. As described in Buenaventura: Puerto Sin Comunidad, “neither jobs, neither businesses nor companies united the city with the port [that was] now private and efficient. No product [was] transformed in Buenaventura and no company in the city [was] a

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51 Centro Nacional de Memoria Historica. Buenaventura: Un Puerto Sin Comunidad. 2015. 52
supplier of the port."\textsuperscript{52} These global shifts segregated the local population even more from the local economy and the land that once supported their livelihoods.

**Land Rights**

Although Afro Colombian communities in Buenaventura and the Pacific Region have been marginalized by the various processes that have been discussed thus far, they have not been passive or silent throughout these changes. In fact, the very existence of the Caucana and Gamboa community councils, who hold collective titles for the land where the CAEB is currently proposed, is the result of much resistance and social organizing. This organizing has been focused on re-establishing and preserving Afro Colombians’ ancestral relationship to the land and territory.

Through the National Constituent Assembly of 1991, Colombia’s constitution underwent massive reforms. The Afro Colombian community was prepared to leverage these reforms as an opportunity to secure a more formal legal standing within the republic. Led by a social organization known as the Process of Black Communities (PCN), the Afro Colombian community publically declared that they were more than just racially different from the ruling population of the country, but that given their history and origin (Africa) they were also a distinct ethnic group that required the same legal considerations as the indigenous populations of the nation.\textsuperscript{53} This was a massive turning point in Afro Colombian history because it drastically

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\textsuperscript{52} Ibid 52

\textsuperscript{53} Mayolo, Angelica. *Land Rights for Afro Colombian Communities as an ethno-racial policy. Prepared for the University of California, Los Angeles, 2016.* 1
changed the Afro populations’ relationship to the Colombian government, land and development. Through Law 70 of 1993, rural Afro Colombian communities were granted legal titles

...over territories which these communities have inhabited for many years, in order to achieve the following: 1) guarantying an economic foundation for the development of this racial minority, 2) preserving their cultural identity as [an] ethnic group, and 3) protecting the natural resources of the adjudicated territories.

Despite the perceived liberties associated with the collective land titles granted through Law 70, it is important to understand that social and economic conditions have not improved much for Afro Colombians since it was promulgated. Although there are multiple reasons, one includes the legal restrictions placed on the titles. Given that collective titles are classified as rural, collective, non-transferable, imprescriptible, and not eligible for mortgages, the land that is owned by Afro Colombian councils are structurally excluded from access to major tools that could support its development. For example, these collective lands are not legally considered assets and therefore cannot be leveraged to secure private capital to support its own development. However, unsurprisingly, community councils can grant usufruct rights to private actors to develop the land for them, and this is exactly the case for the CAEB project. In a true predatory manner, although the councils are legally owed prior consultation by any party

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Mayolo, Angelica. Land Rights for Afro Colombian Communities as an ethno-racial policy. Prepared for the University of California, Los Angeles, 2016. 1
interested in developing their land, they are not legally owed any profits that result from such development.\textsuperscript{55}

Even if the collective land titles were more successful at achieving the desired outcomes laid out in Law 70, social and economic conditions for Afro Colombians would not have improved overall because collective titles are only granted to rural dwelling members of an Afro Colombian community council. Given that 89.1\% of Buenaventura’s population lives in what constitutes the urban core of the municipality, this legislation could not have served as an economic development strategy for the entire whole of Buenaventura.\textsuperscript{56}

Another more recent barrier to successful implementation of the cultural preservation and economic development laid out in Law 70, is the social and political conflict that resulted in decades of armed conflict in Colombia. Just as poverty and social inequality have continually characterized conditions in Buenaventura, violence enacted by the ruling upper classes and the Colombian state during this conflict has left a huge mark on the quality of life for its residents’ and the entire country. As described by Hristov, “any social movements that have sought to establish a more egalitarian distribution and control of productive resources have been met with repression through legal, ideological and especially military means.”\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid 22

\textsuperscript{56} Centro Nacional de Memoria Historica. Buenaventura: Un Puerto Sin Comunidad, 2015. 35

\textsuperscript{57} Hristov, Jasmin. Paramilitarism and Neoliberalism. Pluto Press, 2014. 6
Armed Conflict

As mentioned, the social progress earned during the struggles for ethnic recognition and human rights have continuously been at risk and threatened by Colombia’s armed conflict. The violence produced by the conflict between paramilitaries, guerrillas and the Colombian state had a significant impact on Buenaventura. Given its port capacity, Buenaventura became a primary outlet for drug shipments from Colombia to the rest of the world. “Vital for trade, both legal and illegal, waterfront territories in and around Buenaventura are exceedingly valuable and [have] been ferociously fought over by rival militias, who alternate between decimating each other’s ranks and terrorizing the local population.”58 The impact of this violence has been so intense that in 2007, Buenaventura was named Colombia’s deadliest city.59 Aside from the violence and poverty resulting from this conflict, victims all over the country are also suffering from acute rates of displacement. It is estimated that this conflict resulted in over 7 million victims across the entire country and between 2000-2014 over 160,000 of those victims came from Buenaventura, that is more than 40% of the current population.60

Given this level of violence, illegal occupation of rural lands and distortions of local economies by guerilla and paramilitary groups, and public sector neglect, Buenaventura’s infrastructure and services to the population have been significantly placed at risk, totally destroyed or never developed. Although Colombia has signed a peace agreement and the armed conflict has come

to an official end, this conflict has left residual impacts that can not be resolved over night.

With regards to the legacy of this violence and the CAEB, project leaders believe that potential investors are still very concerned about whether Buenaventura is a safe place to operate. It is one of the many challenges to overcome if the government will see the project implemented as its economic development strategy for the municipality.

Plans for the CAEB entered the scene of Buenaventura on the tail of these struggles and predatory relationships. Given the history of public neglect, violence and lack of legal protections to ensure shared profits, this project will need to build in true distributional measures to create the buy-in needed not just from the Community Councils to develop the land, but also from the broader population in Buenaventura. In 2017, local organizers staged a 22-day civic strike across the entire municipality, of which the “central demand...[was] for the national government to declare a ‘state of social, economic and ecological emergency’ in the city in accordance with article 215 of the 1991 Colombian Constitution. This declaration, the Civic Strike Committee argue[d], would commit the government to allocate resources” in order to address critical gaps in services and infrastructure.61 Although the national government did commit to creating an autonomous fund through taxes paid by the port sector and to raise additional funds through international resources, the status of those commitments are still unclear and as Buenaventura’s mayor was recently arrested for embezzling public money, Buenaventura residents are skeptical of government initiatives in the city. This reality presents

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clear challenges to the CAEB project, one that should not be ignored if the project is going to be successful.

**Section 5: Fieldwork Findings**

**Summary of Fieldwork**

Fieldwork for this thesis investigation was conducted in 2018 between the weeks of March 26-April 5 in Bogota and Buenaventura. This section will provide a summary of key learning captured through a series of stakeholder interviews and observations. While in Bogota, interviews were conducted with government actors from Colombia’s National Department of Planning (DNP), the National Agency for Infrastructure (ANI), the National Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), and a handful of third party consultants who have partnered with government over the years to bring the CAEB vision to life. While in Buenaventura, stakeholder interviews were conducted with local residents who have been engaged in some form of conversations and advocacy efforts in the municipality. While in Buenaventura, I was also able to spend time with the CAEB project management team. It worked out conveniently that the team had already planned to be in Buenaventura for a series of stakeholder engagement meetings. Much of my time was spent sitting in and observing their work, while playing no active role in the conversations aside from introducing myself and the purpose of my thesis investigation. Despite these limitations, these internal observations were helpful, given that this team will play a major role in implementing the plans for the CAEB.

Although this section will present learning on a thematic basis, the most critical finding resulting from this field work, is the fact that leadership from the Caucana and Gamboa Afro
Colombian Community Councils declined the request to be interviewed. Given this reality, this investigation cannot provide a direct response to the proposed research questions. The research questions were originally aimed at capturing the Caucana and Gamboa’s perspectives on their development needs in Buenaventura, with hopes that their perspectives could help inform how the CAEB project can create equitable economic strategies for the councils and for the municipality more broadly.

The most significant reason that I was not able to interview any members of the councils, was the fact that their negotiations with the CAEB team have been halted, given that there is a pending court case regarding the validity of their collective land titles. Further details on this issue will be discussed below. However, it is important to note that given the limitations of my access to these stakeholders, the reflections and learnings that will be presented about the councils were captured from secondary sources. These secondary sources include people who are either a government employee, a government consultant and/or a member of the broader Buenaventura community. It is worth noting that only one of the interviews conducted for this investigation was with a person who does not have a direct connection to the CAEB project. Given their various relationships with government actors and the CAEB project, it is quite possible that the perspectives of these secondary sources may be bias and very different from how the councils perceive themselves.

* A note on language

All interviews except for three were conducted 100% in Spanish. The three that were not, were conducted in a mix of English and Spanish. A native Spanish speaker, from Bogota, was hired to
provide translation services during some interviews and a native Spanish speaker from
Buenaventura was hired to transcribe all interview audio files after fieldwork was complete.
These measures were taken to ensure accuracy with regards to capturing the knowledge and
translating it into usable information for the purposes of writing and preparing the
recommendations offered in Section 6.

**Findings from Interviews**

**Perspectives on the Caucana & Gamboa**

As mentioned previously, contact with a representative of the Caucana and Gamboa
community councils was attempted and the interview request was denied. Therefore, the
learning presented here is based on perceptions and opinions held by external stakeholders
who are not council members. Part of the reasoning provided for declining the interview was
the fact that there have been many studies conducted on Buenaventura and the council
representative did not want to engage in another one. Perhaps there is planning and research
fatigue. It is also quite possible that engagement with a researcher with ties to the government
was not desirable given that the councils' negotiations with the CAEB team have been frozen.
Irrespective of reasoning, the declining of the interview is interesting given that some external
stakeholders believe there are problematic internal power dynamics among some of the
councils' leadership. External stakeholders, including government actors, believe that some of
the councils' leadership do not give true voice to its members, have only been protecting their
personal economic interests and therefore have made planning and progress difficult. On the
other hand, there are other external stakeholders who believe that the negative perception of
the councils' leadership is partially influenced by the fact that some government actors have
never experienced such strong, black, grassroots leadership with the power to challenge
government in a meaningful way.

Whether or not the accusations of problematic leadership are true, the reality is that the
community councils are in a unique position of power given that they hold collective titles to
the land desired by the CAEB team. However, as previously mentioned, these negotiations have
been halted given the uncertainty of a legal investigation into the validity of the councils’ titles.
The investigation was prompted by the fact that collective land titles are only legally valid for
rural land and Buenaventura’s previous Territorial Plan (POT) had identified the area where the
Caucana and Gamboa live, as a future urban expansion and industrial zone. While the
administrative court and state council have not made a final decision, the court recently stated
that generally speaking, land remains rural until it is developed, therefore it is difficult to
determine if Colombia’s former Rural Development Institute (INCODER) had the right to grant
the titles to the Gamboa and Caucana councils in the first place.

Despite the uncertainties presented by the courts’ pending decision to either annul or maintain
the councils’ titles, it appears that the CAEB team is still planning around the councils’ eventual
decision to either grant or decline leasing land to private developers through the CAEB project.
Based on perspectives from external stakeholders who have close ties to the councils, council
members are not confident in the CAEB project for a few reasons. It was reported that the
councils believe that even after signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and agreeing
to partner with the government, the definition of “partnership” has been too narrow. The
councils feel as if decisions are being made in Bogota, among government actors without their
input, and those decisions are only shared with them through socialization. The practice of socialization in Colombia was described as being merely about raising awareness and not about consultation or critical feedback. Given these perspectives, the councils feel as if they are not being integrated into the project as true partners. The councils do not want to simply receive an invitation to join a conversation, they want to create the conversation collaboratively. In short, the perspectives of stakeholders close to the councils, highlight the fact that council members do not want to simply react to development decisions or concepts but rather they want to craft concepts in collaboration with the government actors. This perspective is quite similar to that presented in Arturo Escobar’s work, where he suggests that self determination and agency have been key ingredients missing from development practice within Afro Colombian communities.

External accounts of the councils’ perspectives are unsurprisingly quite different from how government actors perceive the engagement process. Many government actors have discussed the signing of the MOU with the community councils, as an agreement to collaboratively advance the construction and formulation of a project for Buenaventura. Some government actors believe that the MOU was supposed to be a resolution to the fact that the councils have historically felt that engagement was inadequate. These same government actors believe that the only way they can understand the councils’ interests and demands, is if the councils return to the negotiating table and attend stakeholder meetings organized by the CAEB team. Despite this view, there are other non governmental stakeholders involved in the CAEB process who believe that the legal challenge to the councils’ titles can be seen as a process of dispossession, through which the land may be expropriated. These same actors believe that any flaws in the zoning that led to the titling in the first place, is the fault of institutions and not the fault of the
councils. Clearly there are opposing perspectives within the CAEB process regarding the Caucana and Gamboa councils, and the fragmentation may very well be impacting its efficiency. Nonetheless, if the administrative court rules against the councils, the CAEB team will no longer need to negotiate with them for use of the land, as it may be reclassified as government owned.

**CAEB History and Work Plan**

Although the national government took the lead on identifying how to strengthen Colombia’s competitiveness within the international trade market and prioritizing Buenaventura as an important piece of that “economic growth” puzzle, the initial vision for what is now the CAEB was led by Buenaventura’s local institutions. The initial visioning for the CAEB began in 2002, when Buenaventura’s district government and Chamber of Commerce began to structure the project. However, given that local institutions lack certain technical and administrative capacity, the national government stepped in to fill gaps in analysis and feasibility. This is a critical piece of learning because some local stakeholders believe that the CAEB is just another manifestation of the national government transplanting a large scale project onto the city, without much engagement with local institutions or stakeholders.

In order to inform the creation of concepts like the CAEB, the former President’s Office for Competitiveness and Strategic Projects, developed a competitiveness plan for Buenaventura, which identified projects and sectors that would be ripe for investment. As reported, there were multiple engagement processes held with Buenaventura residents in order to inform this plan. While there is not enough evidence here to discuss the quality or frequency of those engagement processes, there appears to be a generational and spatial knowledge gap,
regarding the history of the CAEB project and the work that was done to conceptualize it. Many landowners and business owners that are currently operating in the proposed area for the CAEB, know very little about its proposed structure, history and mission. This is shocking given that the project has been in the ideation and feasibility phase for so long. Building on this deep history may prove a useful tool for engaging stakeholders and generating the kind of buy-in necessary to get the project off the ground.

Despite this deep history and in lieu of a court decision, there is still significant work to be done to formalize plans for the CAEB and to develop the necessary buy-in from Buenaventura residents more broadly. Therefore, national and state agencies have identified a work plan for 2018 that includes 1) studying and creating the technical and financial structure for the project, 2) conducting a land management study to clarify land ownership and therefore identify who else should be at the negotiation table, 3) structuring and renewing a zoning plan, and 4) structuring and implementing a strategy for integrating the community councils into the project as business partners.

Once these critical gaps are filled, the national government has prioritized three anchor projects for the first phase of development. Those three projects include 1) a Logistics Activities Zone (ZAL) where infrastructure to support distribution, supply chain management and light manufacturing will be, 2) a Science and Technology park where research and services will be provided to support the growth of innovative tech businesses and 3) an area for “Human Habitat Development,” where land will be designated to develop ecological housing. It is worth noting that the descriptions and plans for the Human Habitat Development area appear to be
the most underdeveloped of the three anchor projects, which is ironic though not surprising, given that it is the only one in which services would be directly provided to poor populations. Colombia’s national planning department identified these three anchor projects in part because of precedent cases in Singapore and Barcelona. However, it is worth noting that the social and political contexts in which the CAEB is attempting to operate are quite different than those in Singapore and Barcelona, which may compromise their usefulness as success cases.

With regards to the fourth item on the CAEB team’s work plan, structuring a strategy for integrating the community councils into the project as business partners has been a critically underdeveloped component of the project. According to a government actor engaged in the process, there has not been enough intentionality around creating a transparent process and model for ensuring that the councils and Buenaventura residents stand to truly benefit from the project. Despite this critical view, this actor believes that the CAEB has the potential to be transformative if the model is developed properly and with true accountability measures. As it stands now, the model for integrating the Caucana and Gamboa councils as business partners, has been tentatively structured as an autonomous patrimony. This concept is kin to a trust fund through which resources will be pooled and invested into the CAEB project, and later into “social” improvements for Buenaventura. The model and concept of the autonomous patrimony is quite ambiguous, even government actors within the CAEB process disagree on its clarity and validity as a model. However, what everyone engaged seems to agree on, is the fact that the model is not perfect and must be analyzed before any implementation is possible.
**Buenaventura Residents**

Although the research questions for this thesis investigation were centrally focused on capturing the perspectives of the Caucana and Gamboa community councils, research findings highlighted the fact that the development of the CAEB can have significant implications for Buenaventura residents more broadly. Research findings also highlighted the fact that despite being 95% of Buenaventura's population, residents outside of the community councils are only considered to be potential beneficiaries of the CAEB and not stakeholders to be included in a robust engagement process.

Despite being excluded from recent processes for the CAEB, many residents have been engaged in social and political advocacy for a long time in Buenaventura. Some residents are deeply aware of the project and have very critical perspectives on what it means for the city. For example, some residents believe that the CAEB project is just another port. They do not have faith in the CAEB because they believe that the city already has enough port infrastructure, which throughout history have not changed their social conditions or quality of life but in fact may have worsened them. Residents are unhappy with the lack of wealth distribution resulting from the profits made through the city's ports but, ironically enough, most residents believe that there are only three operating ports when there are actually five. There is even less trust in the potential benefits of the CAEB project given recent tension between local advocates and government actors, which took a critical turn in 2017 during a city wide strike. During this strike, advocates in Buenaventura demanded that the national and state government declare the city in a state of social and economic emergency, with hopes that it would prompt more public investment to support basic needs and services. These negotiations resulted in an
agreement to create a separate fund for infrastructure and service development in the city, using tax dollars earned from port profits. However, none of the stakeholders interviewed for this investigation were able to offer any updates on the terms of that agreement or the allocation of its funds. These perspectives, offered by residents deeply engaged in trying to shape Buenaventura’s future, speaks to the true disconnect and lack of transparency between large institutions and the permanent population of the city.

Aside from the lack of transparency between institutions and the population, there is also tension between the community councils and other social leaders in Buenaventura. These groups are very different from one another in terms of how they organize themselves to advocate for change and how they engage with the government. Although these differences are expected, given that community councils are legally constituted ethnic groups and their land is directly implicated in the CAEB project, it appears that their central interests in terms of engaging with development are not very different. According to one social leader in Buenaventura, residents at large are not against development. They simply don’t believe that megaprojects can be structured in a way that protects the environment and brings social benefits to the all, if they only prioritize economic growth and big businesses. Similar to the accounts shared regarding the community councils’ interests, residents in Buenaventura believe that they have the capacity and expertise to collaborate with government on development ideas. They believe that they have proven this through their ability to hold critical thematic negotiations during the 2017 strike and they too want the opportunity to determine the future of their home. As stated by a member of the CAEB team, in order for the CAEB to create the desired social and economic outcomes it has laid out, it will be critical for the
government to step outside of the narrow focus of the ethnic communities and open their considerations up to the whole city.

Planning & Participation

In order to support Buenaventura’s development, the municipality’s Territorial Plan (POT) will be updated in 2018 through DNP’s POT Modernos program. This program was created to provide technical and financial support to struggling municipalities, in order to update their POTs. Given Buenaventura’s significance to the country’s growth goals, DNP is providing 100% of the funding needed for the update process, when traditionally the program only covers 30% of the costs associated. The only other city receiving this high priority is Mocoa, which experienced a devastating land slide in 2017. Through the government’s national logistics platform legislation, the CAEB project is being framed as part of what would constitute a new “world class city” in Buenaventura. However, as of today, 80% of Buenaventura’s land is classified as rural. If successful, new zoning regulations will constitute the land proposed for the CAEB, as an expansion of the municipality’s urban core. Some residents of Buenaventura are concerned that plans for expanding the urban core and creating a “new city” will mean that the “old” city which they call home, will be forgotten and left underdeveloped.

Renewing Buenaventura’s POT process and securing the zoning changes to support CAEB development, will be different from all other processes in the country, because it will be the first POT updated through a Prior Consultation (CP) requirement. Prior consultation is a process through which governments and developers are required to consult with ethnic minority groups before implementing a new project or development in their territory. Although the CP was demanded by the community councils and approved by the national Ministry of the Interior,
there is a lot of disagreement about whether or not this was the right decision. Some stakeholders believe that the CP isn’t justified given that legally, the process will only include the community councils. Community councils only make up 5% of the municipal population yet changes to Buenaventura’s POT will have implications for the entire municipality.

Aside from tensions regarding which population the CP serves, government actors are also against the use of the CP for the POT because they believe that it is a costly process that can delay development for several years. Given that there is no precedent for this kind of engagement, the POT Modernos program does not provide resources to support a CP, therefore the perceived high costs will have to be covered some other way. The perception of costs related to the CP are varied. Both government and residents alike believe that the process is so costly because community council leaders have the legal right to define how the consultation happens and some have abused their power in order to extend the process and receive personal economic benefits. Some residents who are not members of the councils believe that these actions have tainted the government’s perceived value of community participation, which has led to further neglect of their needs. However, it is important to note that the culture of government and narratives around the value of capturing and integrating community based knowledge into the planning process is problematic even outside of the CP process.

Despite claims of recognizing the history of oppression Afro Colombian people face, many government actors expressed concern that these populations’ “way of thinking has to change.” They believe that some social advocates try to make demands that are not aligned with
"reality" or with what fits within management plans. These actors see the demands of these communities as political slogans rather than being deeply embedded in a perception of reality that may be different from theirs. In order for the CAEB to successfully engage implicated communities, this pattern of viewing community based advocacy as a problem rather than an asset, should be addressed.

**Economic Development**

Many stakeholders believe that Buenaventura collects the most taxes in the country, given that the ports move about 15 million tons of goods per year and yet most of those resources do not stay in the municipality. Some government actors see the CAEB as an opportunity to capture and invest more money into Buenaventura’s local economy, however, they believe that bringing in private investment and large scale businesses is the way to do it. In fact, the government is already in advanced talks with the Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Singaporean, and German governments regarding potential investments into the project. This view is not uncommon, many government actors around the world are increasingly seeking to leverage the private sector and large corporations to support their growth. Despite this perspective, the CAEB team talks about its efforts to develop the project as a way to create real economic opportunity for the local people of Buenaventura. As mentioned previously, the CAEB project is projected to create 60,000 new jobs over the next 20 years and generate $750 million in new revenues for the country.

Residents and government actors alike believe that one of the biggest barriers for ensuring that the CAEB creates the kind of economic development outcomes projected for the city, is problematic hiring trends. According to several stakeholders, Buenaventura residents are
usually only given minor jobs that don’t require much technical skill, while the high quality jobs usually go to people from outside of the city. One explanation for this trend is the fact that there are critical gaps in the local populations’ skills and abilities to meet the demands of high skilled jobs. In order for the local population to be prepared to occupy high quality, well paying jobs in the future, they will need more than just basic training. According to the CAEB team, in order to benefit from future jobs, the population will need better access to basic education and training in the following areas: industry, foreign trade, finance, construction, engineering, commercial real estate development and many others. Despite this sense of clarity regarding the kinds of training needed, none of the stakeholders interviewed could provide insight into how that training will be provided, if at all. Although Valle de Cauca’s Governor’s office supports some training efforts and investments are being made in Buenaventura to create a national service learning center (SENA), according to some government actors, these efforts are not being directly linked to the technical skills that the CAEB project will demand.

Despite the perceived gaps in Buenaventura residents’ capacities, some stakeholders reported that the population has particular knowledge and skills linked to the natural environment that have not been fully tapped for economic development efforts. For example, during the 1980s and 1990s, locally owned fishing companies were very successful and powerful in Buenaventura and today there are still many people who maintain expert knowledge of the sea and its wealth. It was also reported that there is a huge missed opportunity regarding the populations knowledge and ability to use local wood for manufacturing things like furniture. These skills and capacities are just a couple of examples of opportunities to not only create jobs for
Buenaventura residents, but to also support locally owned businesses and the creation of generational wealth.

With regards to economic development and wealth creation specifically for community councils, it was reported that their access to land has had very limited impact on their social and economic conditions, given some of the legal constraints. Community councils are legally restricted from leveraging their collectively owned land as an asset in order to access capital from financial institutions. Apparently Law 70, which established the creation of community councils and collectively owned territory for Afro Colombian populations, also designated financial support from the national government to aid the councils in developing the land themselves. However, the national government has not followed through on that commitment, therefore, much of the community councils’ land remains undeveloped until a private actor takes interest in it.

In order for any economic development strategy to be effective, the administrative capacity of Buenaventura’s district government must also be improved. Many stakeholders have reported that the city’s local government lacks the capacity and technical skills to support real development efforts. As reported by the national planning department, given the country’s efforts to decentralize, in order for the national government to intervene into the development of the city they must make it through the local administration first. In other instances, stakeholders have reported that the local government has been an enemy of economic development efforts and have sited corruption as a major contributor to the issue. For example, it was reported that the national planning department prepared transportation and
mobility plans for Buenaventura, but the Mayor’s office did not approve of the plans therefore they were never implemented. In a more recent example, Buenaventura’s mayor was arrested for embezzling public funds. According to the Governor’s office, Buenaventura has one of the largest municipal budgets in the pacific region, yet the lack of capacity as well as corruption has prevented those resources from being put to real use for the city.

Section 6: Recommendations

Given what I have learned about the current status of the CAEB project, conditions in Buenaventura, and the mission of the CAEB team, it appears that the critical objectives for this project are to 1) Implement a project that has the potential to increase Colombia’s economic growth by strengthening its ability to participate in the international trade market while also 2) creating equitable economic opportunities and closing social gaps in terms of poverty and access to basic infrastructure and services. As reported by Policy Link, “every 10% decrease in inequality increased the length of a country’s growth spell by 50%,” therefore we can understand that it is in Colombia’s best interest to determine how the CAEB be structured in an equitable manner. The strategies and recommendations offered in this section are geared towards empowering the population of Buenaventura and strengthening the local economy.

The graphic presented below highlights key strategies that serve as different types of responses to some of the challenges and barriers discussed in the findings section (Section 5). The graphic also summarizes direct actions in the form of recommendations.

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**Strategy #1: Program Development for Capacity Building and Economic Development**

**Recommendation #1:** In partnership with local institutions, develop a long term certificate program to create a local pipeline of future workers for the CAEB.

**Description**

Today the unemployment rate sits around 60% in Buenaventura and although many residents find temporary informal work, poverty and lack of resources to meet basic needs remain pressing issues in the municipality. As mentioned in the findings section, given historical patterns, many stakeholders are also concerned that the massive amounts of jobs created through the CAEB project will not benefit the permanent population of Buenaventura. If this pattern is going to change, Buenaventura’s population will need to be properly trained and educated on the particular skills and knowledge needed to secure the high quality jobs of the future.
The design of this certificate program should be specifically informed by the future sectors and skills that will be demanded by the CAEB project. Those include but will not be limited to industry, foreign trade, finance, construction, engineering, and commercial real estate development. This program may have multiple benefits as it can also serve as a mechanism to create institutional memory and security for future workers, given that the CAEB will not be developed for another several years. A particular focus on reaching youth would be worth while here, as they are the future workers of the municipality. It is worth noting that a new program may not be necessary and should not be created if an existing one can be retooled to fit the need and serve the same population.

**Implementation:**
Designing and implementing a program such as this may require the engagement of actors like the Governor’s office, the Mayor’s office, local secondary schools, universities, and other local anchor institutions. Below are a few considerations for next steps

**Short term**
- The CAEB team can connect with the Economic Development Agency in Kingston, Jamaica. They are designing and implementing a very similar logistics project and have already created a high school level training program to support local work force development. This can serve as a case study.
- The CAEB team can partner with local universities and high schools to conduct a survey of students in order to determine demand and to help inform the structure of training/certificate programs

**Long term:**
- Develop a local hiring quota that requires any new development to hire a minimum of 60% of workers from within the municipalities
- If/when the CAEB is developed and operating, an internship program should be developed to create a secondary pipeline for leadership development through local education institutions

**Recommendation #2:** Create a or strengthen an existing small business development program that can provide critical business planning, finance, marketing, product development and incubation services to ensure the integration of locally owned small businesses into the CAEB project.

**Description**

The CAEB is projected to install around 150 new businesses into Buenaventura and designs and feasibility plans for the area include building in infrastructure and services to support these new businesses. Given that the CAEB team and government actors want to localize more of the profits earned within Buenaventura’s economy, a truly equitable strategy would ensure that the businesses installed are predominantly locally owned.

In order to meet the future demand for operating businesses in the CAEB, the local population will need access to adequate business services. Services provided should be geared towards identifying both existing businesses that are ready to be scaled up as well as entrepreneurs that are trying to get start ups off the ground. It is also worth noting that designs and plans for small business space within the CAEB should be informed by business types that are ripe for development in Buenaventura. For example, stakeholder interviews identified manufacturing of goods like furniture as a opportunity that can leverage the natural resources already available
to the population. Of course consideration for sustainable forestry should be made in order to ensure optimal operations and longevity. In short, this strategy is about generational wealth creation. The population of Buenaventura has demanded the right to determine the future of their livelihoods for themselves and business development is one way of doing this.

**Implementation:** Given the cross sector nature of this program actors such as the Governor’s office, the Mayor’s office, the CAEB team, and other may need to be engaged. Below are considerations for next steps

**Short term**
- There are several small businesses already operating in Buenaventura, including some informal operations. If data does not yet exist, the mayor’s office and the CAEB team can partner to identify and survey local entrepreneurs. This data can help to gauge the various scales and stages of growth in order to inform the appropriate design of business services.

**Long term:**
- Designate a portion of infrastructure within the CAEB for local manufacturing companies. This can include shared production/incubation space. There are multiple examples of this in different sectors, though most common in the value-added food sector.
- Designate a portion of the built infrastructure to create a cooperatively owned distribution and processing center for local entrepreneurs working with food and other perishable goods, such as fishermen.

**Recommendation #3:** Implement a Participatory Action Research (PAR) method to empower residents to map the social, political and economic assets that can be leveraged to strengthen the CAEB’s connection with the local economy.
Description

As previously discussed, in order to improve the viability of the CAEB project, the team will need to garner public support. Garnering that support will require a public engagement process that values local stakeholders as knowledge bearers and potential assets while also distributing benefits and wealth across populations. Through a Participatory Action Research method, residents of Buenaventura can take the lead on designing and conducting a research process that can map assets within the local economy that can add value to the economic development efforts within the municipality, including the CAEB project. As discussed by resident stakeholders there are various skillsets, small informal businesses and organizing capacity that has not been leveraged and integrated into formal planning processes. Mapping out these items can help the CAEB team identify opportunities to increase its’ own capacity, given that the team is made up of just two people.

Implementation: Given that a PAR process has never been implemented in Buenaventura, significant collaboration and coordination will be needed to get this program off the ground. Resources and capacity may be needed from universities, including MIT, the national planning department and Buenaventura’s local government. Below are considerations for next steps:

Short term

• The CAEB team can partner with MIT Co Lab to train themselves and local residents on PAR methodologies
• The CAEB team can schedule community engagement meetings with local high school and university students to gauge their interest and capacity for piloting a PAR process. Perhaps compensation for their time can come in the form of academic credit
Long term

- In the long term, Buenaventura would benefit from more permanent social infrastructure to community research infrastructure that is not just linked to the CAEB project. This would include research equipment, meeting space, and access to technical advice.

**Strategy #2: Policy Development for Private Sector Accountability and Public Benefit**

**Recommendation #4:** Create criteria and/or a rating system to ensure that through contracting, bidding and investments processes, private investors and operators of the CAEB meet minimum equity standards.

**Description:**
As discussed in the findings section, Buenaventura residents and the community councils do not have much faith in the CAEB project because many believe that through the project, the government is extending incentives and benefits to the private sector, without much consideration for their own benefit. These concerns are rightfully rooted in historic patterns of development in Buenaventura that have prioritized the private sector over the quality of life of the people. If the CAEB is going to generate public support for the project and meet its equity goals, there must be measures in place to ensure that the private sector is held accountable for equitable and sustainable practices that have the potential to benefit the local economy.

In order to build in private sector accountability, criteria regarding how investments are made, how private actors operate and which private actors are granted opportunities, will need to be included. A few examples of those kinds of criteria include 1) a minimum local hiring quota during contract bidding processes, 2) robust community benefit commitments from private
investors and developers, this can include investments in public amenities such as schools.

3) A rating system to determine the history of a given operator/investors environmentally sustainable practices.

**Implementation:** Given that this recommendation is a policy response to accountability, it will require the engagement of both Buenaventura’s Mayor’s office, the Governor’s office as well as the CAEB team to support negotiations with private actors. Below are considerations for next steps:

**Short term**

- If a local hiring quota will be established, research should be conducted to understand the perceived job demand and projected job creation and projected preparedness of the workforce (through recommended training programs).
- The Governor’s office can begin including these kinds of requirements into negotiations with investors and potential operators in order to gauge interests and potential risks.

**Long term**

- In the long term, the local administration will need to determine a pathway for regulating and enforcing the requirements set through these policies. In order to do so, extensive local capacity should be developed.

**Recommendation #5:** Develop policy to offer temporary tax holidays to investors and operators within the CAEB and substitute foregone taxes for annual payments in lieu of taxes.

**Description:**
In order to ensure that the development of the CAEB project leads to equitable distribution of economic benefits, the municipality and the CAEB team will need to be creative about raising funds to support the programs recommended above. One way of addressing this issue, is to consider the role of investors and operators’ property taxes. In theory, given that the land where the CAEB is currently proposed is “underdeveloped”, any added value, including the construction of infrastructure will significantly increase the value of property in the area. Increased values could result in higher property taxes for investors and operators interested in locating within the CAEB area. Though/ concrete evidence could not be found for Buenaventura, property tax rates can range between .3 and 3.3% throughout Colombia.

Municipal policy can be created to offer a temporary (no more than 5 years) tax holiday to those investors and operators, while simultaneously requiring an annual payment in lieu of forgone taxes (PILT). In theory, these annual payments should be cheaper than projected annual costs of property taxes and therefore can serve as a great bargaining incentive.

Funds from PILTs are traditionally collected from anchor institutions like universities and hospitals and administered through a city’s general fund and allocated in similar ways as other tax revenues. However, assuming that there is no regulation against this in Colombia, Buenaventura could create an autonomous fund using these PILT payments and restrict their use to either the programs recommended above or other programs/services identified as priorities for residents through the PAR process. Despite the perceived progressiveness of this policy, it will still be hindered by the fact that investors and operators may be able to deduct these payments from their income taxes. Setting an effective rate for PILTs payment will be critical in order to ensure adequate placed based investments are made.
Implementation: Given the nature of this recommendation, actors like the Governor’s office, Buenaventura’s mayors office and the CAEB team will need to be engaged in order to design the process and lead the negotiations. Below are a few considerations for next steps.

Short term:

- The Governor’s office can begin to include these terms into the negotiation process with potential investors/operators in order to gauge interest and to sharpen the policy concept.
- If this tool proves to be desirable for both parties, the administration can request an upfront payment of the first 2 years PILTs in order to address immediate programmatic needs.

Long term:

- Given the recent corruption that has plagued Buenaventura’s local administration, the Governor’s office and the CAEB team should consider an alternative pathway or oversight measurement to ensure the funds from PILT payments are not misused. This could include creating an autonomous fund that is managed by a third party, non governmental actor.

**Recommendation #6:** Implement procurement policies to ensure that institutions and future investors/operators use their profits to support locally owned business production.

**Description**

Given that the CAEB team and government actors are interested in how the CAEB can strengthen Buenaventura’s local economy, it would be worthwhile to consider measures to ensure that institutions and future operators of the CAEB leverage their purchasing power to support locally owned businesses. While there is a lack of scaled businesses that can meet institutional purchasing needs at the moment, if development services are implemented soon
and local businesses are scaled over the next 10-20 years (predicted timeline for the CAEB), pairing suppliers or service providers with institutional needs should be feasible. For example, if a local furniture manufacturer is developed and scaled in time, they can potentially win contracts to furnish the various offices, storefronts and other spaces that will be built into the CAEBs physical space.

Given the richness of Buenaventura’s natural environment, including the oceans and rivers, setting procurement policies can also be beneficial for the food sector. The CAEB is projected to install 150 new businesses and hire 60,000 employees. This kind of density will create a vibrant market for everyday goods that should be met through local providers.

Implementation: Implementing procurement policies cannot happen in a standardized blanket manner. It will require tailored strategies for institutions and operators in different sectors. However, the mayor’s office and the local chamber of commerce can play a huge role in identifying and supporting opportunities given their knowledge of the existing institutional landscape. Below are considerations for next steps:

Short term

- The local chamber of commerce can partner with the Mayor’s office to create a database of existing institutions’ purchasing needs as well as existing businesses’ ability to meet those needs. These data can help to inform where some short term low hanging fruit may be, with regards to matching suppliers with purchasers.
- Local government offices and schools can begin to or increase their purchasing from local businesses and suppliers in order to serve as an example, test this idea and identify gaps in the market
Long term

- In the long term, the local administration should be prepared to create policy that can hold institutions accountable to local purchasing requirements, while also leaving flexibility for institutional change.
- If a business development program is created or strengthened, the creation of new businesses should be guided by gaps in supply/service capacity to meet local purchasing demands.

Strategy #3: Project structure for community participation and engagement

Recommendation #7: Begin to build trust with the Caucana and Gamboa community councils by redefining the partnership laid out in the MOU and identifying new ways to provide economic security to council members through the CAEB project.

Context:

Stakeholder interviews, observations and document reviews revealed that government actors and the CAEB teams’ strategy for linking the community councils to the project has relied heavily on signing the MOU, which named the councils as “partners” and identified their land as assets to be contributed to the development of the project. As mentioned in the findings section, this view of “partnership” has been seen as inadequate because it has not positioned the councils as equal influencers and decision makers within the process. Although negotiations are frozen given the legal case regarding the land, many government actors believe that the courts will not annul the councils’ titles. Therefore, the CAEB team should continue planning as if the council’s will still be the most critical part of the negotiation process. However, in order to improve relations with the councils and garner support for the project, the CAEB team will need
to redefine how they approach and define their partnership with the councils, by thinking beyond mere transactions.

Thus far, it appears that engagement with the councils have been defined by efforts to bridge/link the councils to the project, however, these terms imply that the project is already whole and the councils just need to be brought into the loop. Given that the project will not be developed for a while, there is an opportunity to bring the councils in as thought partners on the design and implementation of the project, as contributing members of the advisory committee. In order to do so, trust needs to be built with council members and the CAEB team will need to prove that this project is in their best interests as well.

Despite perceptions of problematic leadership within the councils and the power they hold to influence internal decisions, the Caucana and Gamboa are made up of families who may be threatened with homelessness if their titles are annulled. According to some stakeholders, the CAEB team is only concerned with expropriating land for the sake of development. If that is not true, the CAEB team can begin to build trust with the councils by identifying some measure to secure the councils’ housing and livelihood through the CAEB project, in the event that the titles are annulled. As a reminder, if the titles are annulled the land will return to government ownership and development rights will likely be granted to the project. This show of good faith can go a long way in bridging gaps and conflicts between the three entities.

In the event that the land titles are maintained and negotiations continue with the Caucana and Gamboa, the CAEB team should consider structuring the project in such a way that direct profits are shared with the councils. In order to do this, the councils’ land will need to be valued
at a market rate that does not skew its true value. The team can also build more economic security into the project by ensuring that the councils are allowed to use rents earned from leasing to private developers, for their own economic development. Council members should also be given significant preference during hiring processes for the jobs that will be created through the project.

**Implementation:** In order to mend relationships between the CAEB and the Caucana and Gamboa councils, the CAEB team will need to engage in direct dialogue with the councils. This dialogue should be mediated by a third party actor who is not directly engaged in the project and does not stand to gain any economic benefits from the outcome of the negotiations.

**Short term**
- Given that the councils have frozen discussions with the CAEB team, the team can begin to draft written communication that lay out new terms of their agreement. These communications can be shared with the councils through the councils’ advisors, which the CAEB team already has relationships with.

**Long term**
- The CAEB team can also work with government technical experts to design and identify opportunities to integrate the councils into the physical development of the project. This can include dedicated housing and access to critical infrastructure.

**Recommendation #8:** Integrate social leaders who represent Buenaventura residents that are not part of a community council, into the CAEB process as members of the project’s advisory committee.
**Description**

As mentioned in the findings section, Buenaventura residents who are not members of a community council do not have any role in the project, are only framed as potential beneficiaries and have not yet been included in a community engagement process. Given that these residents are not part of a legally constituted ethnic minority group, they do not have rights under the Prior Consultation process and therefore won’t truly benefit from a robust POT process either. This population reportedly makes up 95% of the municipality, integrating them into the CAEB project will be crucial given that they are the largest constituency. Years of disproportionate environmental burden, public neglect and abandonment are significantly impacting the way Buenaventura residents are viewing this project. If the CAEB is going to generate more public support for the project, the team will need to broaden their scope of who is considered a stakeholder.

Integrating resident leaders into the CAEB project can be beneficial for the project to consider given that many local leaders played an integral role in designing and negotiating demands with the national government during the 2017 city wide strike. While the CAEB team may see this as a threat to their work, this political savviness and ability to engage in dialogue around social and economic conditions should be viewed as a major asset that can help strengthen the ways in which the CAEB project plans for the future of Buenaventura. It was reported that local social leaders have knowledge and experience in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, business, logistics, etc. It as also reported that some social leaders are also professional environmentalists, geographers, sanitary engineers, and architects. The CAEB team would do well to leverage this capacity through the projects advisory committee. Although more
community participation can often create more difficult coordination requirements, the potential benefits of a more diverse and solid advisory team should outweigh coordination difficulties. In fact, local residents can play a significant role in improving coordination, given that they are permanently located in Buenaventura, while the CAEB team is not. Integrating these leaders can increase the projects capacity for implementation significantly.

**Implementation:** Integrating local residents who are social leaders should not be as heavy of a lift as some of the other recommendations offered here. It will require negotiations and intentionality from both the CAEB team and social leaders themselves. Below are considerations for next steps:

**Short term**

- The CAEB team can leverage their personal networks, given that they were both born and raised in the city, to identify local social leaders who may have the capacity and interest in joining the advisory committee.

**Long term**

- In the long term, the CAEB team will need to consider how to integrate social leaders into the CAEB project after implementation happens. Their engagement in local planning should not be tied solely to this project.