Tejiendo una red de resiliencia / Weaving a web of resilience:
Internal displacement, social networks and urban integration in Cartagena, Colombia

by

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ABSTRACT

There are over 28.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world today
because of conflict, human rights violations and situations of generalized violence.
Colombia's protracted internal armed conflict, which has lasted for over six decades, has
resulted in the largest population of IDPs – up to 5.4 million as of 2012 – in the world.
The vast majority migrates from rural areas to cities, settling on the urban periphery in
historically poor neighborhoods. Taking Cartagena, Colombia as a revelatory case of IDP
urban settlement, this thesis addresses these questions: In the face of ongoing violence,
the disruption of spatial and social communities, and the dissolution of trust between
individuals, organizations and the Colombian state, how do IDPs reconstitute social
networks as part of integration into host cities? How are those social networks challenged
and/or bolstered by the status and experience of displacement?

Upon arrival in host cities, IDPs must satisfy basic survival needs (shelter, food, income),
deal with trauma, and navigate shifting personal and collective identities in the aftermath
of displacement. The individual and family-level strategies that IDPs develop to respond
to these challenges ultimately require joining existing or forming new social networks for
information sharing, economic support and emotional connection. Despite obstacles to
community organizing (including direct threats and violence), these social networks
sometimes morph into broader political coalitions, which serve as the base for social
movements that make claims on the state. By learning from IDP settlement strategies,
policymakers could develop more effective and durable solutions to address internal
displacement and lay the groundwork for a more just and sustainable peace. I
recommend: focusing on long-term IDP urban integration rather than on return to
communities of origin, providing support to complement the foundation laid by IDP civil
society organizations, and reframing policy away from short-term, household-level aid to
target and support the social networks that form the basis of IDP resilience.

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Tejiendo una red de resiliencia / Weaving a web of resilience:
Desplazamiento forzado, redes sociales e integración urbana en Cartagena, Colombia

por

Jody Pollock

Entregado al Department of Urban Studies and Planning el 23 de mayo de 23 de 2013 in en cumplimiento parcial de los requisitos del Degree of Master in City Planning

RESUMEN

Actualmente, más de 28.8 millones de personas alrededor del mundo se encuentran en situación de desplazamiento forzado debido a conflictos internos, violaciones de los derechos humanos y situaciones de violencia generalizada. El conflicto armado de Colombia, que ha durado más de seis décadas, ha creado la población más grande de desplazados internos – hasta 5.4 millones en 2012 – en el mundo. La gran mayoría de los desplazados migran de zonas rurales a zonas urbanas, estableciéndose en las periferias de las ciudades en los barrios históricamente marginalizados. Usando a Cartagena, Colombia como un caso de estudio de la integración urbana de las poblaciones desplazadas, esta tesis responde a las siguientes dos preguntas: Dada la violencia persistente, el trastorno de las comunidades tanto espaciales como sociales, y la pérdida de la confianza entre individuos, organizaciones y el Estado Colombiano, ¿cómo se reconstituyen las redes sociales de los desplazados en el proceso de integración con las ciudades receptoras? ¿Cómo se retan y/o refuerzan esas redes sociales dado el estatus y la experiencia del desplazamiento forzado?

Al llegar a las ciudades receptoras, los desplazados deben satisfacer sus necesidades básicas (vivienda, alimentación, ingresos), responder al trauma, y navegar los cambios de identidades tanto personales como colectivas. Las estrategias de supervivencia a nivel individual y familiar eventualmente requieren anexarse a una red social ya existente o formar una nueva para acceder a información, generar ingresos, y encontrar apoyo emocional. A pesar de los grandes obstáculos a la organización comunitaria (incluyendo a las amenazas directas y la violencia), las redes sociales de desplazados a veces llegan a convertirse en amplias coaliciones políticas, que sirven como base para movimientos sociales que reclaman al Estado. Mediante el aprendizaje de estrategias de integración urbana, los políticos pueden desarrollar soluciones duraderas al desplazamiento forzado. Recomendamos un nuevo enfoque en la integración de largo plazo de los desplazados en lugar del retorno a las comunidades de origen, el apoyo a las organizaciones de la sociedad civil, y una nueva política pública que apoye a las redes sociales de desplazados en lugar de sólo proveer ayuda humanitaria de corto plazo a nivel familar o individual.

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Prologue

The first time Isabel was displaced, she and her family were threatened at gunpoint after being accused of working with guerrilla groups. The paramilitaries came at midnight, guns in hand. They said they only spared her life because she held her ten-month-old son in her arms. They gave her a few hours to leave. So Isabel and her family ran, abandoning everything.

The second time they were displaced, Isabel was pregnant. A group of armed actors (whose affiliation was unclear) accused her husband of being an informant for the Colombian army, the *Fuerzas Armadas*. The only options were to run again or to die.

Isabel and her family are neither guerrillas nor paramilitaries nor members of the *Fuerzas Armadas*. But as a result of these groups (and her family's false associations with them), Isabel is now an internally displaced person (IDP), the victim of forced displacement within the borders of her own country. She is among the millions of IDPs in Colombia as a result of the internal armed conflict that has been waged there for the past six decades. Colombia is now the country with the largest population of IDPs in the world.

After being forced to flee their rural village, leaving behind home, land and community, Isabel and her family settled in the coastal city of Cartagena. They shared a cramped makeshift house on the periphery of the city, moving into a historically poor and marginalized neighborhood. Isabel scraped together the money to feed her children by begging door-to-door. "I've lost so many things," she says. "I left behind my animals, my harvests went to seed – I can't get any of that back. I left behind my mother and my father, and my son died. I will never forget what it's been like to raise my children in so much suffering."

With time, Isabel got to know her new neighbors in Cartagena, many of whom were also IDPs, and she started to attend the meetings of various community organizations. She began earning a small income by joining an agricultural collective. She became a *lidereza* [a woman community leader] with LIMPAL, a women's rights organization that works with victims of the armed conflict. She later joined a civil society group that monitors the implementation of a national law.

"My life has changed a lot," says Isabel. "I don't know how I've become involved in so many organizations because I didn't think I was a woman capable of that. I was shy. I was scared. I didn't speak. I slept in the meetings."

How did Isabel – who arrived to an unknown city with few contacts, no belongings, the trauma of multiple displacements, and the burden of not just her own survival but that of her family's – make this transformation?

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[1] The use of the Spanish word "*tejer*" [to weave] is intentional: It reflects both the Colombian artisan skill of weaving, a common livelihoods strategy for many IDP women, as well as an oft-used way to describe how IDPs "weave together" social networks. The dual use of this word is reflected throughout this thesis.

"What changed?" Isabel asks. "Everything changed. I don't spend my days crying. I participate and I speak. The trust that the women in these groups gave me allowed me to lose my fear. *Me despertaron* [They woke me up]."

As IDPs in Colombia struggle with the direct and indirect trauma of violence, the loss of livelihoods and property, and the disruption of social networks upon which they previously relied, they are also confronted with the unfamiliar spatial, economic, social and political environments in host cities. But, as this thesis will show, rather than waiting for government (or divine) intervention, IDPs like Isabel develop response strategies to urban settlement, complementing or fortifying those strategies through social networks and collective action. IDPs are not just victims of the cruel logics of armed conflict they are also – like most migrants to urban areas, but in distinctive ways – the agents of their own survival, resilience and ultimately, change.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Internal displacement in global context

"Flight [from violence] can mean survival but, very often, flight is also the first step on a fast and slippery slope towards separation, impoverishment, destitution, exploitation and disease."

– Hugo Slim, *Killing Civilians*

Around the world today, over 28.8 million people have been forcibly displaced by conflict and violence within the borders of their own countries. Though internal displacement is not a new phenomenon, the current scale of the problem is unparalleled. Worldwide, there has been a steady increase in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs)[2] over the past 15 years. In 2012 alone, more than 6.5 million people were newly displaced, twice as many as in 2011 (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2013).

The causes of internal displacement are manifold. Millions have been forced to migrate because of natural disaster, severe food insecurity, or large-scale development projects. That said, for the purposes of this paper, the emphasis will be on conflict-induced displacement, defined as a form of displacement perpetrated by armed conflict, human rights violations or situations of generalized violence. Election-related violence in Cote d'Ivoire, ethnic strife in the Balkans, political conflict between opposing forces in Afghanistan and violent disputes over natural resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo are all examples of situations that have resulted in conflict-induced displacement.

The period of forced displacement may have a clear beginning but not such a clear end: the majority of the world's IDPs live in a state of protracted or severely protracted displacement, in which entire generations grow up in temporary or not-so-temporary sites of reception (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2012). As one international advocate for IDP rights recently said, paraphrasing Hobbes: "Whatever the cause, displacement is always nasty, always brutish, but all too rarely is it short."[3]

When IDPs move from rural areas to cities, they settle (often indefinitely) in the urban periphery, living as *invasores* ["invaders"] or slumdwellers alongside the historic urban poor and economic migrants. Facing similar structural violence,[4] lack of economic and political opportunity, and spatial constraints due to limited urban land markets, what makes the IDP experience unique from that of their similarly impoverished new

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[2] As defined by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, IDPs are "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violation of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internally recognized State border" (UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) 1998, p. 1).
[3] Said on the occasion of the 2005 adoption of the series of guidelines on post-conflict property restitution called the United Nations Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons, more commonly known as the "Pinheiro Principles." As quoted in Smit 2012, p. 206.
[4] "Structural violence" is a sociological term that has been in use since the late 1960s to describe systematically and institutionally exerted and maintained oppression and social inequality (Farmer 2004).

neighbors? How are their response strategies to urban integration shaped or defined by their experiences of forced displacement? Knowing the answers to these questions can guide policymakers and planners to more effectively address internal displacement in the midst of an ongoing internal armed conflict in Colombia.

Towards a sociology of forced migration

The migration-displacement nexus

According to migration experts Khalid Koser and Susan Martin (2011), scholars and policymakers have traditionally categorized migrants (both voluntary and forced) according to three main characteristics:

1. Place of origin (e.g. though they may flee the same conflict, "refugees" are those who cross international borders while "IDPs" remain within the same country)
2. Causes of movement (e.g. "refugees" are those who flee a "well founded fear of persecution," and not those who migrate across borders for economic reasons)
3. Time or phase of migration (e.g. emergency movement or settlement in a refugee camp versus protracted settlement)

Theorizing migration in this way and categorizing by geography, cause and time has both raised the visibility of migrants who were previously ignored by the international system (e.g. IDPs and human trafficking victims) and also allowed for targeted humanitarian and policy responses depending on the nature and scope of migration. But, as Koser and Martin argue, this approach is severely limited as the lines between voluntary or forced migration, economic or political migration, conflict-induced or development-induced migration and so on are increasingly blurred. These categories are not neatly mutually exclusive. The points of overlap are what Koser and Martin (2011) call the "migration-displacement nexus."

For example, many of the root causes of economic migration – inequality, global trade liberalization, human rights abuses – are also the root causes of conflict and, consequently, forced migration (Castles 2003; Bakewell 2011; Koser and Martin 2011). Castles (2003) argues for the need to theorize forced migration (understood broadly to include the situations of refugees, both conflict- and development-induced IDPs and human trafficking victims) as inherently linked to economic migration.[5] Even within the category of forced migration, the causes of displacement, while often separated for ease of analysis, often go hand-in-hand.[6]

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[5] In Colombia, economic migration and forced displacement can become difficult to extricate because of the centrality of wealth inequality and conflict over land, which will be explored in Chapter 2 (Albuja and Ceballos 2010).

[6] For example, in Colombia large agro-industrial development projects can be just as much reason for displacement as the armed conflict itself. There is a growing trend of development-induced displacement in Cartagena for the sake of building luxury hotels and high-rises. Very often those displaced by development are also conflict-induced IDPs.

That said, there are some distinctions that can be drawn between migration and displacement when they are considered as conditions of *being*. Bakewell (2011) offers the following three distinguishing features:

1. Unlike migration, "the condition of displacement does not become fixed with the end of movement; it remains an ongoing condition which is concerned with a separation from 'home,' the place of origin from which people were compelled to move…It is about not being where one wants to be, and is often described in terms of exile, being cut off from one's roots" (p. 22).

2. Unlike migration, displacement can be "reversed." It can come to an end when "people regain their sense of home and become emplaced" either by returning to communities of origin or by establishing a new "home" elsewhere (p. 23). Displacement, unlike migration, is a subjective experience framed by one's sense of past, present and future. This perception can be maintained and reproduced through generations as a sense of "lack of home" even if the younger generations have not migrated themselves.[7] The question about when and how displacement comes to an end, if ever, is still very much up for debate, while migration comes to a clear end at the moment of settlement.

3. Migration and displacement are experienced differently: migration, as an objective state of movement, does not necessarily have a bearing on day-to-day life, whereas displacement fundamentally shapes the self-perception of "being out of place." As Bakewell summarizes: "To a large extent, I am only displaced as long as I feel myself to be displaced. If I make a new home, my condition of displacement ends; however, my condition as a migrant remains" (p. 23)

To add a key fourth dimension, under international standards, internal displacement confers certain responsibilities upon the state, while migration has no such clear liabilities for public authorities. In 1998, the United Nations published the "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement," which have since served as a baseline for most international and national policies on internal displacement. Unlike cross-border refugees, IDPs ultimately remain the responsibility of the state. As such, most of the international protections for refugees do not apply for IDPs. This difference reflects the supremacy of national sovereignty within international law. However, in practice, many states confronted with internal displacement are often unable or unwilling to bear this duty—and, in some cases, have triggered the displacement, as in the current crisis in Syria. That said, there is a general consensus that states are responsible at the very least for emergency humanitarian aid in the immediate aftermath of forced displacement.

Given these four distinctions, particularly the unique role of the state in forced migration, this thesis seeks to understand the underlying mechanisms of how IDPs

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[7] In fact, many of the children of IDPs in Cartagena who were born and raised in the city still self-identify as "displaced" though they have never experienced displacement personally, per se.

integrate into urban areas. To begin, the following section introduces how internal armed conflict transforms social relations, which in turn distorts the processes of IDP integration.

War as a social condition

Aside from the humanitarian concern for the lives of the millions of IDPs across the globe, the study of conflict-induced displacement can also help us understand broader social, economic and political struggles. There have been recent calls for developing a sociology of forced migration – or a "sociology of 'exile, displacement and belonging'" – grounded within the political economies of specific places (Castles 2003). As Giles and Hyndman (2004) write, "studies of the ways in which people's lives are uprooted and homes are forfeited in return for safety provide grounded insights into the otherwise abstract concepts of ethnicity, identity, state building and citizenship" (p. 6). In other words, a sociology of *displacement* is ultimately a sociology of *place*.

How we define "displacement" depends largely on how we understand what "place" means. "Place" is distinct from "space" in that it is constituted not just of location but of materiality and meaning, as well. It is not the physicality of space alone that creates place—it is physicality in conversation with the malleable and inevitably contested *meaning* of this space. As Gieryn (2000) writes, "place stands in a recursive relation to other social and cultural entities: places are made through human practices and institutions even as they help make those practices and institutions. Place mediates social life; it is something more than just another independent variable" (p. 467).

Place is social, so displacement can be understood as the deprivation and transformation of both physical space as well as social space. The impact of displacement has less to do with the actual movement in space and more to do with how this movement reconfigures individuals and groups in ways that "deprive them of the social, material or symbolic resources once readily available and necessary for realizing common strategies of social reproduction" (Lubkemann 2008, p. 193). Displacement represents the spatial manifestation of violence and its transformative power over social relations.

In her 1968 book *Imperialism,* political theorist Hannah Arendt examines the European displacement that took place as a result of WWII through three primary lenses. Though Arendt focuses primarily on the situation of cross-border refugees, her insight continues to be meaningful in the context of internal displacement.[8] The three levels of analysis are as follows:

1. *Meaning:* Displacement is not just the loss of residence but also the loss of frame of reference for personal and collective identity. Displacement, therefore, means the transformation of "the whole social texture in which one was born and where one has organized a particular space in the world" (p. 276, cited in Pécaut 2000).

2. *Social connection:* Expulsion and displacement is often rooted in belonging to

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[8] Since Arendt's writing in the 1960s, there has been a broader recognition of the human costs of all types of displacement, including development-induced and natural-disaster-induced displacement, as well.

certain social groups, rather than in political opposition per se. In other words, forced migration is often directly the result of social (rather than explicitly political) connections.

3. *Rights*: Displacement is dispossession of property *and* dispossession of rights and institutional relationships. Political and civil rights are threatened if not completely revoked by the unclear status of citizenship resulting from displacement. The greatest misfortune of refugees, writes Arendt, is "having ceased to belong to a community," thus depriving them of meaningful and productive state-citizen relations (p. 280, cited in Pécaut 2000). Though the situation of IDPs – who remain within the same borders of their home state and thereby ostensibly retain some degree of citizenship – is distinct from that of refugees, the disruption of political systems of patronage and power through internal armed conflict is just as much a disruption of traditional understandings of citizenship. In other words, the citizenship of IDPs is often just as unclear as the citizenship of cross-border refugees.

The question really is how do people adapt to forced displacement as the spatial manifestation of violence? How do they find new meaning, form social connections and claim their rights, if at all?

Across many cultures, contexts and conflicts, it has been shown that "recovery is often best supported by people's ability to mitigate their predicament with social support, land, employment, new relationships and a positive sense of the future" (Slim 2008, p. 109). Both individual and community survival in the face of violence rest heavily on reciprocity, trust and social networks that form the basic "glue" of any society (Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2006). There is plenty of literature that identifies social bonding and social capital[9] as key indicators of capacity for positive adaptations to situations of chronic violence (Colletta and Cullen 2000; Moser and Clark 2001; Taylor 2010; Davis 2012).

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[9] "Social capital" can be commonly (if rather ambiguously) defined as "the form of capital [that] arises from relationships between individuals, families, groups, or communities that provide access to valuable benefits and/or resources" (Schneider 2006). To complicate this picture a bit, Michael Woolcock (1998) plots horizontal social capital (strong familial ties and weak ties/linkages among individuals and local groups) along with vertical social capital (formal state/market institutions and their organizational capacity and interactions with individuals and groups). This is not social capital in the traditional sense as defined by Schneider, but rather a broader view of how relationships between individuals, families, groups, communities *and* hierarchical structures of power provide access to benefits and/or resources. Importantly, social capital is neither normatively *good* nor *bad:* it can be a tool for social cohesion or a tool for social exclusion, a source of mutual aid and dependence or a source of division (Colletta and Cullen 2000).

All in all, "social capital" is a complicated term that has generated vigorous debate among economists, social scientists and policymakers since its popularization in the 1990s. Social capital can also be understood as what Woolcock (2010) calls an "essentially contested concept" that is less useful for its definitional clarity than for its "capacity to draw attention to salient features of the social and political world (in this case, the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively) that are of significance in their own right and play a role in valued aspects of everyday life" (p. 470). In other words, perhaps the exact definition or operationalization of "social capital" matters less than its ability to focus attention and engage cross-disciplinary dialogue on the importance and power of social relationships.

However, there are few studies of the *processes* through which IDPs maintain, form and renegotiate social relations during settlement into receptor cities.

Anthropologist Stephen Lubkemann's study of forced displacement in Mozambique (2008) is unique in its examination of the complex reconfiguration of everyday social existence in the face of war. He calls this "war as a social condition": sustained conflict, violence and trauma become the defining characteristics of social interactions. "For the inhabitants of such places," he writes, "war has not been an 'event' that suspends 'normal' social processes, but has instead become *the* normal – in the sense of 'expected' – context for the unfolding of social life" (p. 1).

War as a social condition is particularly marked in situations of internal conflict. Unlike inter-state conflict, which often mobilizes nation-state unity and social cohesiveness in response to the other state (the enemy), violent conflict *within* a state blurs the bounds of who exactly is the "other" and the "enemy" (Colletta and Cullen 2000; Slim 2008). As in Colombia, the distinction between "combatant" and "civilian" becomes increasingly difficult to make – or even meaningless – as civilians are recruited or forced to join the fighting ranks of armed actors or to provide food, shelter, transport and alibi. In some cases, whether by choice or not, women and girls become romantically or sexually involved with armed actors, further blurring boundaries and allegiances. Any non-aligned collective action is rendered dangerous simply for its potential to be interpreted as aligned with one of many armed actors. Being labeled as a member or sympathizer of one group or another carries serious consequences if targeted for attack by an opposing force: threats, destruction or theft of property, kidnapping and disappearances, sexual violence, assassination (Meertens 2001; Slim 2008).

The conflict in Colombia has been carried out for the past 60 years as a generalized siege primarily directed against civilian populations. Unlike the internal conflicts of some Latin American countries, which have seen campaigns directed towards ethnic cleansing or silencing political opposition, violence in Colombia is more indiscriminate. It is "a decentralized, deinstitutionalized strategy for destroying the social fabric and taking over community control" (Meertens 2001, p. 136). In other words, social connections are intentionally and strategically targeted.

The result can be understood as "collective trauma": traumatic experiences as a result of violent conflict become so deeply ingrained into the social texture of a community or even nation that they "supply its prevailing mood and temper, dominate its imagery and its sense of self, [and] govern the way its members relate to one another" (Erikson 1995, p. 190). When conflict has so deeply penetrated every corner of the social structure, and when no clear enemy can be identified because *anyone* could be one, violence erodes and transforms social networks, solidarity and trust between neighbors, friends and family. Internal conflict divides and conquers by "undermining interpersonal and communal trust, destroying the norms and values that underlie cooperation and collective action for the common good, and increasing the likelihood of communal strife" (Colletta and Cullen 2000, p. 2-3). No social bonds are safe social bonds when anything can be judged as grounds for offensive or defensive violent attack. Social connection can thus become a liability.

This dynamic has been called the "asset/liability paradox," in which violence has the unique ability to transform livelihoods (encompassing all forms of capital—human,

financial, physical, natural and social) into life-threatening liabilities. The ownership (whether real or perceived) of assets that are either valued (e.g. money, land, weapons) or seen as threatening (e.g. identity, power, education) can make these assets and their owners targets of attack (Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2006). For example, being the owner of a farm (a form of physical capital) is easily considered an asset in some contexts. However, in the context of the territorial struggles in the countryside of Colombia, being the owner of a farm might actually put you at great risk for theft, assault or forced displacement. The farm thus becomes a liability rather than an asset. Similarly, cultivating a social relationship with a local police officer or politician (a form of social capital) could be an asset in some situations and a liability in others, depending on the perspective from which this relationship is judged. It is the context and the interpretation of these forms of capital that often matter more than the actual capital itself.

Once we recognize that internal conflict and violence undermine and/or transform social relationships and communities, we recognize the need for interventions that not only address economic and political infrastructure but social infrastructure, as well (Moser and McIlwane 2001). Understanding the dynamics of how IDPs rebuild or redefine personal and collective identities, social connections and their relationships to the state is key for designing appropriate and effective responses to internal displacement, which remains a responsibility of the Colombian state.

Urban integration and resilience in displacement

In 2009, the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee endorsed "The Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons," a non-binding set of human rights-based principles to guide long-term integration policies for IDPs. These proposed solutions are comprised of two parts: 1) restoring rights lost – including property rights, access to housing, education, health and livelihoods, as well as political participation, and 2) remedial justice to address past violations, including access to the legal system and victim reparations "in order to restore people's dignity and put them in a situation where they can recover their self-sufficiency" (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2012, p. 28). Within this framework, there are three main options for settlement: *return* to place of origin, *settlement elsewhere* in another part of the country and *local integration* into host sites where IDPs have taken refuge. However, in many parts of the world, ongoing political and violent conflict in places of origin makes *return* infeasible without a massive mobilization of security and protection for returning IDPs, and *settlement elsewhere* is rarely considered. *Local integration*, as a result, is the most common choice.

The vast majority of the world's IDPs settle in cities, generally moving into poor and marginalized neighborhoods along the urban periphery. While cities are attractive for their (real or perceived) relative safety, access to public services and employment opportunities, IDPs are also exposed to a number of risks there, including widespread discrimination and ongoing urban violence – often related to the conflict from which they fled (Carrillo 2009; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2012).

For the purposes of this paper, I have chosen to focus on the period of settlement and integration into urban areas after the event of displacement. This is not to assume

that there is a clear or marked division between the displacement event itself and its aftermath, just as there is no such clear difference between periods of conflict and what is known euphemistically as post-conflict. Because of the institutionalization of crime, corruption and violence, as well as high rates of weapon possession, ongoing poverty and lack of economic and livelihoods opportunities, "peace-time" or "post-conflict" periods may be just as violent as "war" or "conflict" (Lubkemann 2008; Slim 2008). The experience of displacement similarly cannot be captured accurately in a unilinear timeline or sequence of independent events. It is a continuum and a multidimensional process of loss *and* reconstruction (Meertens 2001).

I have chosen to emphasize the experience of integration rather than the experience of initial displacement. For too long, Colombia has been associated primarily with the hemispheric "War on Drugs," with the armed internal conflict, with high-profile kidnappings and murders, and more recently, with drug-related violence in Mexico. In her study of human rights and the armed conflict in Colombia, anthropologist Winifred Tate summarizes: "Violence becomes *the* problem of Colombia, the central issue that plagues the body politic, for which other conditions – weak state, repressive state, excessive wealth, poverty, inequality – are offered as explanations."

But, Tate continues, "the focus [on violence] is distorting, blurring the contours of everyday life, the ebb and flow of sleeping, waking, eating, working, playing that occupies the vast majority of the nation's citizens" (2007, p. 22). Everyday life continues: even as terrible atrocities are committed, children still go to school, fishmongers still sell the daily catch at the market, couples still get married. Ignoring everyday social existence offers an incomplete analysis of violence, "casting 'undoing' as the full drama rather than the first act" in a much longer transformation (Lubkemann 2008, p. 23).

In fact, we can understand violent conflict not as an "undoing," but rather a "remaking." Violence is not just destructive chaos; it can shake up old systems of patronage, power, inclusion and exclusion, and create space for the formation of new identities, solidarities, networks and institutions. Violent conflict can be a site of significant social transformation, shifting the trajectory and formulation of social relations than rather suspending or simply annihilating them (Tilly 1974; Duffield 2001; Nordstrom 2004). We have to look at violence not as an *end*, but as the beginning of new challenges and new possibilities, new forms of empowerment and disempowerment, and new shifts in identity that take place for different actors in different ways (Lubkemann 2008). It is through ethnographies that are concerned not only with what happened in the past, what atrocities were committed, but also with how individuals, groups and communities cope with it in the present, that we can gain a deeper understanding of violence in its entirety.

As Das et al. (2001) write:

> …at the level of the ordinary, the everyday social realities, states of rebuilding and accommodation are as complex as the networks of individual lives of victims, perpetrators, victim-perpetrators, internal resisters, and critics and witnesses. There usually is no clear-cut victory, no definitive crossing over to safety and renewal. But if that sounds too bleak a conclusion, think of it the other way around: there usually is no complete defeat, no ultimate breakdown and dissolution. Even following the most

horrendous ethnocides – the Holocaust, the mass murder of Tutsis – social life continues. And that is the source both of possibilities and of very deep perplexities (p. 24).

The study of settlement after the event of forced displacement is ultimately a study of resilience. It is about the human capacity for survival and trust in the face of so much suffering. It is important to make the distinction here that IDPs are not simply victims in their displacement (Grabska and Mehta 2008). To ignore the human agency of the displaced is to silence them and to render them helpless (Malkki 1996), when in fact they are very often the authors of their own survival. As feminist anthropologist Donny Meertens, a scholar of displacement in Colombia, writes, IDPs are not passive victims but rather "active shapers of their future" (2001, p. 133).

Though there is a growing body of literature on what some have called "survival strategies" or "response strategies" of IDPs (Vincent and Sorensen 2001; Díaz-Granados and Sañudo 2003; Taylor 2010; Bryson 2011; Castagna and Jeyte 2011), it is still in its early stages. Within this literature, more attention must be paid to collective agency, or the active role that social networks – and not just individual choices – play in determining outcomes. In his theory of an "actor-oriented" sociology of development, Norman Long (2001) defines human agency not only as the individual actor and his or her capacity to "process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion" but also as embodied within *networks of social relations* between those individuals (p. 16).

To date, little research has been done on the long-term social impact of internal displacement and urban settlement, partly because such large-scale, prolonged displacement is a relatively recent phenomenon (Vincent and Sorensen 2001; Lubkemann 2008; Ferris and Halff 2011a). It is also complicated by the "invisibility" of IDPs who integrate into cities alongside other poor and marginalized urban communities (Pavanello and Montemurro 2010; Davies and Jacobsen 2011). Unlike large resettlement schemes or refugee camps, the kind of household by household integration into urban areas that has become more and more common for IDPs around the world means sorting out *who is who* and *who deserves what from whom* has become increasingly difficult. The historic poor live alongside economic migrants who live alongside IDPs. They attend the same schools, join some of the same organizations, engage in similar livelihoods coping mechanisms – the lines aren't always so clear or marked.

In a review of three case studies of urban IDP populations in Khartoum, Sudan, Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire and Santa Marta, Colombia, Davies and Jacobsen (2011) found that IDPs and their non-IDP neighbors had similar demographic characteristics and experienced the same stresses related to urban poverty (in terms of housing conditions, levels of education and employment) and lack of adequate infrastructure and access to public services like schools and transportation. But despite these similarities, urban IDPs were poorer and more insecure. The depletion of their physical assets (e.g. land, livestock, personal documents) as well as social assets (e.g. support networks) in displacement, as well as the experience of trauma, put IDPs at greater disadvantage than their equally poor but non-IDP neighbors. Urban IDPs also often face the additional obstacles of language barriers, lack of knowledge of the urban setting and lack of urban livelihoods skills.

Adding to their invisibility, many IDPs never formally register with the public authorities (and therefore never receive the special attention or assistance due to them) for fear of retribution or for lack of knowledge about the process. To register requires both a certain level of self-identification as a victim of forced displacement as well as an understanding of the responsibility of the state to those victims. The coexistence (and sometimes overlap) of economic rural-to-urban migration and conflict-induced displacement further complicates the registration process (Albuja and Ceballos 2010). Ultimately, "IDP" is a political designation and not an inherent category of identity. This thesis will consider how personal and collective identities are shaped by the unique experience of displacement as distinct from that of the historic urban poor and of economic migrants.

The policy implications of forced displacement

What happens when the emergency period immediately after displacement is politically determined over and the process of rebuilding IDPs' lives and livelihoods, for which most states do not claim official responsibility, begins? Given the invisibility of IDPs in urban areas, are the kinds of "durable solutions" to internal displacement recommended by the United Nations truly achievable?

Generally speaking, most national public policies around the world have placed too much weight on immediate and short-term assistance and paid comparatively little attention to long-term sustainable local integration into sites of reception (Ferris 2008b). Only recently have some states taken the initiative to draft and pass national legislation and/or policy on internal displacement beyond emergency humanitarian aid. Colombia is seen as an exemplar for its 2011 *Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras,* or the Victims' and Land Restitution Law (often referred to simply as the Victims' Law). On June 10, 2011, in response to mounting international pressure and a series of court orders issued by the Constitutional Court of Colombia that found the lack of an adequate national government response to protracted internal displacement to be an "unconstitutional state of affairs," President Juan Manuel Santos signed the Victims' Law. It is the largest victims' rights and reparations law in Colombia's history, with sweeping provisions for land restitution, compensation and a wide range of guarantees of services like preferential housing subsidies for victims of the conflict. Though it is too soon to tell how effective it will be when finally implemented, the Victims' Law[10] has already been lauded for being one of the most far-reaching attempts at transitional justice[11] in the world (Summers 2012; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2012; United Nations Human Rights Council 2012).

That said, the hard part is translating national law (however promising it may be) into local practice. In the context of rapid urbanization and competition over limited

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[10] The Victims' Law and its potential implications for IDPs are discussed in more detail in Appendix B.
[11] Transitional justice is commonly understood as "institutional initiatives for dealing with past atrocities in societies emerging from authoritarian regimes or armed conflict." These initiatives often include legal and institutional mechanisms like truth commissions, criminal prosecutions for past wrongs, reparations programs and governance reforms (García-Godos and O. Lid 2010, p. 487).

resources, IDPs often face a backlash not only from host communities but also from the public institutions charged with protecting their rights. So, being clear about who IDPs are and how they cope with urban settlement can help municipal and national authorities design context-sensitive, targeted programs that benefit not only IDPs but their non-IDP neighbors who share the same scarcity of resources, as well (Davies and Jacobsen 2011). What can we learn from studying the ways in which IDPs integrate into cities over time, reshaping personal and collective identities, forming new social networks and eventually making claims on the state as both "victims" and "rights-holders"?

Research Question

In the face of ongoing violence, the disruption of spatial and social communities, and the dissolution of trust between individuals, organizations and the Colombian state, how do internally displaced persons (IDPs) reconstitute social networks upon integration into host cities? How are those social networks challenged and/or bolstered by the status and experience of displacement?

I use the latter question to examine more closely the parallels and contrasts between IDPs and other migrants, especially voluntary economic migrants. And I conclude this thesis by re-examining policy – the specific approach of the state, as distinct from its obligations in principle – through the lens of networks. By law and custom alike, public policy generally centers on individuals or families, not networks.

Methodology

Post-conflict and conflict situations present a particular challenge to researchers and policymakers because of the great necessity for good data but the great dearth of its availability. Quantitative measurements of forced displacement are often way off mark given the difficulties of conducting reliable and comprehensive surveys in the face of the constantly changing dynamics of internal conflict. This is particularly true when quantitative data relies upon self-reporting of displacement status with official entities, which many IDPs avoid for a lack of trust in those entities and for fear of retribution or discovery by former persecutors.[12] Quantitative research can also only provide a snapshot of certain indicators without mapping out the processes of change over time. As a result, qualitative research (which includes case studies, interviews, focus groups and other ethnographic methods) can contribute greatly to a more accurate, current and complete picture of the situation as lived by the victims and agents of the conflict (Woolcock 2001; Castles 2003; Lubkemann 2008; Davis 2012).

Given the sensitive and potentially dangerous nature of the research as well as the limited time frame of my fieldwork, I partnered with a local organization to more effectively gain access to IDPs I wished to interview without putting them or myself at

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[12] This is visible in the lack of even the most basic agreed-upon information regarding the number of IDPs in Colombia today (4.9 million according to the Colombian government versus 5.4 million according to CODHES, a leading Colombian human rights NGO). Some of the reasons for this disparity will be discussed in Chapter 2.

risk. From June 2012 to August 2012 I worked as a program associate with the Colombian office of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF, or LIMPAL by its Spanish acronym) in Cartagena and Bogotá. WILPF, the oldest women's pacifist organization in the world, has chapters in 38 countries, each of which is responsible for its own locally-defined mission within the broader global mission of gender equity, peace and disarmament. LIMPAL focuses on women's human rights in Colombia, with a particular emphasis on the rights of victims of the internal armed conflict. LIMPAL has been working in Colombia for the past 12 years and is recognized as a leading civil society organization on issues of women's rights. LIMPAL coordinates and collaborates with many other similar organizations and has consultative status with the United Nations.

Throughout the course of this thesis, I pay particular attention to issues of gender and power dynamics. A gender analysis is not just about women. Gender refers to socially-constructed and socially-maintained relations between men and women (including behaviors, expectations, norms and institutions), all of which are contingent upon the particular historical and cultural contexts within which they reside. A gender analysis of forced displacement allows us to understand the unique experiences and risks faced not only by women and girls, but also by men and boys. The gendered dynamics of IDP economic coping strategies, social network formation, connection to armed groups, and access to institutional and political support surface throughout the course of this thesis. For an in-depth review of the gendered implications and experiences of forced displacement in Colombia, see Appendix A.

Through LIMPAL, I spent June and July in Cartagena working with a group of ten *liderezas* [women community leaders] from various neighborhoods from Cartagena and from the two neighboring cities of San Jacinto and San Juan de Nepomuceno. The *liderezas* are all IDP women between the ages of 23 and 60. They are responsible for disseminating the trainings and workshops of LIMPAL throughout their communities to create a broader impact and to mobilize greater support for women's rights initiatives. They also invite members of their neighborhoods (mostly other IDPs) to come to events, meetings and public marches.

During my two months on the Caribbean coast, we ran several human rights and capacity building workshops in both Cartagena and San Jacinto, including two that I personally designed and facilitated on "Integrated Security Tactics for Human Rights Defenders" and on "Social Networks." At any given LIMPAL meeting or workshop, there were between 10 and 50 IDP women, men and children. In all, I attended and/or facilitated seven LIMPAL workshops and meetings, all of which served as important sites for ethnographic fieldnotes as well as interview recruitment.

Through my contacts at LIMPAL, I met several key players in various IDP and women's rights civil society organizations in Cartagena, including the Comité de Seguimiento de Auto 092, APRODIC, Mesa DESC, FUNSAREP, Red de Empoderamiento de Mujeres de Cartagena y Bolívar, among others.[13] In addition to seven LIMPAL workshops and meetings, I attended two Comité meetings, one APRODIC meeting, one two-day Mesa DESC conference, and one citywide meeting

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[13] Descriptions of these organizations are provided in the Glossary.

with the Mayor of Cartagena. I also participated in a public march organized by many of these organizations to raise awareness about violence against women in Cartagena. On each of these occasions, I introduced myself and my work before asking permission to take handwritten notes and photos, from which I produced extensive fieldnotes and memos for my research.

The contacts I acquired through LIMPAL and these other organizations provided informational interviews that led me to other IDP sources through a "snowball" technique. For example, I met Tatiana, an IDP woman who provides many of the stories in the chapters to come, at a meeting of the Comité, to which Eva, a LIMPAL *lidereza*, invited me. Tatiana went on to introduce me to seven other IDPs, all of whom I interviewed for this thesis.

In all, I interviewed 13 IDP women, 5 IDP men, 5 non-IDP women, and 4 non-IDP men. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes to an hour and a half, and participants were given the option of skipping questions or choosing to end the interview at any point. Interview topics included a brief recounting of the event of displacement, the process of finding housing, employment and social connections, the process of engaging with community organizations and the relationship to the government.

In conflict and post-conflict situations, security concerns for both the researcher and the interviewees are paramount. During the interviews, I asked permission to take notes and record with an audio recorder, later to be transcribed and translated for my thesis. In all occasions, the interviewees agreed, particularly given the condition that they would be given a pseudonym to protect their identities (and sometimes even the identities of the organizations to which they belong). As will be detailed in later chapters, the safety of IDPs – and particularly that of IDP community organizers or activists – is often at risk because of threats or violence from armed actors.

Some interviews took place in pairs or groups for the comfort and convenience of the interviewees, while the rest were one-on-one interviews. On three occasions I conducted interviews in private homes on the invitation of the interviewees. Otherwise, interviews were conducted in the office of one of the aforementioned organizations or in a public space. In each case, the interviewee was asked where she or he would feel safest and could access the easiest given transportation and time considerations.

In August 2012, I moved from the LIMPAL office in Cartagena to the office in capital city Bogotá, where I worked on development and public relations materials for LIMPAL. Though I continued having exploratory conversations with IDP experts and civil society organizations in Bogotá, I chose to focus exclusively on the experience of IDPs in Cartagena for the sake of case study clarity.

In March 2013, I returned to Cartagena for a week to present my preliminary research findings to the *liderezas* of LIMPAL and to solicit feedback from my sources. As a whole, they reported that they found the presentation to be true to their real-life experiences. It was also on this return trip that Tatiana took me to the *Unidad para la Atención y la Reparación Integral a las Víctimas* [Unit for the Attention and Integral Reparations for Victims] in Cartagena, the official government entity responsible for IDP services.

Limitations

In all, I conducted two months of on-the-ground fieldwork in Cartagena, followed by a month of additional exploratory work from Bogotá. Given the difficulty of generating trust with IDPs (as will be detailed in the following chapters), this amount of time is insufficient for developing the deeper relationships that would have allowed me to gain even greater insight into the complexities of IDP social networks. Though my affiliation with LIMPAL surely opened many doors, it also lent me a specific identity and association that may have prevented me from being exposed to other perspectives or opinions.

Safety concerns also prevented me from spending more time in the IDP neighborhoods on the edges of the city. I was always accompanied by a LIMPAL staff member or one of my IDP sources, which may have limited my mobility and ability to explore on my own. I spent time in these neighborhoods during daylight hours, so I had to rely upon the accounts of my sources to describe nighttime activities.

Another limitation of my research is the skewed gender and age distribution of my sources. The overwhelming majority of my interviewees were women between the ages of 20 and 65, so I cannot as accurately speak to the experiences of children, teenagers, or elderly people, though I did my best to unearth these dynamics in some of my exploratory conversations. There is a rich research opportunity yet to be explored in the dynamics of age (particularly adolescence) and in the specific experiences of men in displacement.

A note on translations

Though I am fluent in Spanish and all interviews were conducted in Spanish, it was important for me to hire a Colombian woman to transcribe all of my recorded interviews, particularly given the use of local slang and references. As a lawyer who has worked with LIMPAL in the past and who is well-versed in IDP rights, she was also able to offer insight as she transcribed, including helpful explanatory footnotes in the transcription documents.

All of the translations in this thesis are my own, and I did my best to capture the feeling of each statement rather than offer literal word-for-word translations. Many of the original quotes are left in Spanish (followed by a rough English translation) so as to preserve their meaning and nuance as much as possible.

Plan of the Thesis

Chapter 2 reviews the dynamics of the internal armed conflict in Colombia, paying particular attention to the tactical use of forced displacement as a tool of war. It also provides a brief overview of the historical and current-day context of Cartagena, Colombia. Chapter 3 focuses on the individual and family response strategies of IDPs upon arrival in Cartagena. It touches upon processes of securing housing, developing new sources of income generation, and navigating changing family dynamics and disrupted identities. Chapter 4 explores how those response strategies necessitate the formation of new (or reception into existing) social networks as sites of information and economic and

emotional support. Chapter 5 details the process of coalescing social networks into organizations and movements in the face of several obstacles, including the presence of armed actors in Cartagena. It also considers why IDPs choose to engage in such high-risk activism given the threats to their lives, their families and their newly-formed social networks. Chapter 6 reviews the current international, national and local policy frameworks that address internal displacement in Colombia. The chapter also looks at how IDP organizations and movements make claims on the state despite frustration with and a lack of trust in formal government institutions. Finally, Chapter 7 summarizes my findings, their implications, and my recommendations for policymakers and planners interested in addressing the long-term urban integration of IDPs.

Chapter 2
Forced Displacement in Historical Context: Cartagena, Colombia

"Space, like truth, is a very early casualty of war."

– Hugo Slim, *Killing Civilians*

Sources: ESRI, DeLomme, NAVTEQ

Colombia is a country of 46 million on the northern tip of the South American continent with major coastlines on both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. In addition to being the longest uninterrupted democracy in Latin America, Colombia is widely considered an economic success story in the region. In 2011, Colombia's GDP grew at a rate of 5.9%, making it the fourth largest GDP in Latin America (DANE 2012b). It is second only to Brazil in greatest biodiversity in the world, and as such, it is a major exporter of agricultural goods like flowers, coffee, and most infamously, cocaine, a drug derived from the coca leaf. Mining is also one of the largest and fastest growing industries, making use of Colombia's ample natural resources like oil, biofuels, emeralds and coal. Unfortunately, that growth is not shared by all: Latin America is the region with the most unequal distribution of wealth in the world, and Colombia is the worst offender within the region (Rodríguez 2012).

Land, predictably, is a precious asset in Colombia for its abundance of fertile soil, natural resources and access to key ground and sea transportation routes. It is also at the

heart of the long-running internal armed conflict responsible for the concentration of wealth into the hands of few, thousands of deaths, and the vast flows of internal displacement that form the basis for this thesis.

A brief history of the conflict

Though it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide an in-depth summary of Colombian history,[14] it is worth briefly reviewing the origins and character of the current conflict. Colombia has a long history of violent partisan politics, leading to chronic instability, frequent outbursts of violence and war, and ongoing confrontations. From 1940 to 1957, long-standing hostilities between Liberal and Conservative political parties accelerated into a period of political violence known simply as *La Violence* [The Violence], during which as many as 200,000 were killed. The conflict was ushered to a temporary solution through the bipartisan power-sharing deal known as the *Frente Nacional* [the National Front], signed into being in 1957. The terms of the agreement included a presidency that rotated between the two parties and the equal distribution of all government positions.

Unfortunately, the National Front proved to be an inadequate and partial solution, provoking new forms of anti-government protest from those left out of the two-party system. Widespread discontent, popular student protest and failed land reform policies from the 1960s through the 1970s led to the emergence of armed guerrilla groups with roots in Marxist peasant agitation, the most famous of which today is Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). Though Colombia is widely considered to be the longest-surviving democracy in Latin America, it can also boast the longest-surviving guerrilla movement in the region.

Up until the 1980s, the homicide rates averaged around 30 per 100,000 citizens, the highest in the region but still comparable with other violent countries at that time, including Brazil, Mexico and Nicaragua. But the drug boom of the 1980s introduced new economic and political incentives into the equation. As guerrilla groups began targeting landowners through extortion and kidnappings, landowners began contracting private militias, known as paramilitaries, to protect their property. Very often these paramilitary groups were formed in collusion with drug dealers and the Colombian army. The result was an uptick in violent conflict between these armed actors, and the death toll began to mount. By 1989, the homicide rate had climbed to 86 per 100,000, and six years later it was up to 95 per 100,000. The late 1990s and early 2000s continued to see high rates of assault, kidnapping and assassination (Skidmore, Smith, and Green 2010; Vidal-López 2012). Currently, according to the Ministry of Defense, which divides the country into "red," "yellow" or "green" zones according to their level of conflict-related danger, over half the total population lives in conflict-affected zones[15] (United Nations Human Rights Council 2012).

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[14] For a full account of Colombian history, see (Palacios 2006).
[15] Of the total population of around 46 million, 2 million live in "red" zones and 22 million live in "yellow" zones.

Contemporary Colombian history is marked by "chronic armed conflict paired with chronic peace negotiations" (Vidal-López 2012, p. 5). Even periods of relative peace are continually punctured by violence. In 1989, the guerrilla group M-19 officially demobilized after signing an accord with President Belisario Betancur's administration. The constitutional reform of 1991 successfully demobilized four other guerrilla groups, incorporating them as political parties. Even so, it is generally recognized that such lulls in the conflict merely allowed armed actors a chance to re-group and reinforce their ranks in the meantime. In 2002, peace talks with FARC came to a rocky end after three years of failed negotiations. Under the Justice and Peace Law of 2005, the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), the main paramilitary group, officially declared a ceasefire and began the process of demobilization – though it is still often criticized as an incomplete or false transition[16] (Skidmore, Smith, and Green 2010; Vidal-López 2012).

In October 2012, for the first time in ten years, President Juan Manuel Santos's government and FARC began renewed peace talks, which continued through May 2013 (as of publication). It remains to be seen how successful the most recent round of talks will be.

The battle over land

The diversity of armed actors and victims (heterogeneous in demographics, organization, outlook and interest but sharing at least one form of human rights violation) makes the Colombian conflict extremely complex (García-Godos and O. Lid 2010). Though the Colombian conflict is often simplistically portrayed as a drug war, what's at the heart of the struggle is contestation over land. In the past sixty years, guerrilla groups, paramilitaries and state military forces have all been implicated in territorial struggles, an obvious result of which has been mass internal displacement. Since the 1980s, the rate of growth in the concentration of rural landownership in Colombia has been among the fastest in the world (Palacios 2012).

Several government-led, large-scale land and agrarian reform projects have been attempted since the 1930s, but to little effect. From the 1950s to the 1970s, stalemates between rival political parties prevented the implementation of any one of a number of reforms (Skidmore, Smith, and Green 2010). Starting in the 1980s, in Colombia and throughout Latin America, policy reforms based on land expropriation and redistribution gave way to the neoliberal agenda of strengthening private property rights and private markets for land (Friedemann-Sánchez 2012). Perversely, these policies led to drug cartels in Colombia investing heavily in land in the 1980s and 1990s, amounting to what has been called "counter-agrarian reform." Narco-traffickers bought up more than 2.5 million acres of land – or about one-twelfth of Colombia's productive farmland – between 1983 and 1985 alone (Theidon 2009). According to one estimate, another 6 million hectares were purchased by drug cartels between 1985 and 1995 as a way of laundering money and buying into an elite, *nouveau riche* class of landowners (Tate 2007).

But drug cartels are not the only actors responsible for the concentration of land into the hands of a few and the consequential dispossession of many. Land has been

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[16] For a full account of the sustained presence of the "successor groups" formed mainly from demobilized paramilitaries, see (Human Rights Watch 2010).

purchased or forcibly seized for a variety of economic, military and political purposes. The accumulation and concentration of land by legal (e.g. international agribusiness and mining companies) and illicit actors (e.g. drug traffickers, paramilitaries, etc.) is often both cause and effect of the conflict. The forcible displacement of rural peasants and farmers has become an economic strategy for the accumulation of land.

Estimates of the scale of land abandoned or forcibly appropriated vary. Official estimates, which only include land lost and declared by IDPs, count around 3 million hectares total. However, other civil society surveys indicate much higher numbers. One estimate is that between 1998 and 2008, about 5.5 million hectares – almost 11 percent of all agricultural land in Colombia – were stripped or abandoned (Andreu-Guzmán 2012). The UN Human Rights Council's most recent report on Colombia (2012) offers an estimate of 6.5 million hectares (though even this more generous number this does not include dispossession of collectively-owned land).

Though Colombia has a long tradition of protecting individual property rights, formal law often clashes with the parallel tradition of informal, non-titled transfer of land rights, particularly in the rural areas most prone to conflict and forced displacement. Most public policies ignore the informality of land transfer and ownership, which, predictably, makes such land claims difficult to prove within the formal court system. The policy emphasis on individual private property also comes into conflict with collective land rights, made possible by Law 70 of 1993 for certain ethnic groups, including indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians. There have been several documented incidents of mass displacement of these communities from their collective land as well as the conversion of these lands into large multi-national agro-industrial projects that claim individual rights to this property (Alviar García 2012).

The trends in failed property rights reform and policy, accumulation of land by legal and illegal private actors, and the forced dispossession and displacement of peasants continue to form the backbone of the conflict today. Land reform remained the most central and the most contentious issue for all parties to the recent round of peace talks between President Juan Manuel Santos's government and FARC (Tomaselli 2013). The main points on the peace agenda revolved around rural economic development (including addressing the pervasive farming of illegal drug crops) and land redistribution. Other considerations included the political participation of demobilized guerrillas, negotiations over victims' rights, and an eventual across-the-board end to the conflict (Neuman 2012b).

Internal displacement in Colombia

The struggle over land is not just a story about guerrillas, paramilitaries, drug cartels and the Colombian military. It is also a story about massive internal migration and forced displacement. Between 4.9 and 5.5 million people (between 10.5 and 11.7% of the total national population) have been internally displaced,[17] almost all of whom have been

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[17] The disparity in estimates is a result of differing statistical methodology. The Colombian government places the estimate closer to 4.9 million (as of December 2012), cumulative since 1997. It only includes those registered in the national IDP registry, which by some counts is under-registered by a quarter of the full IDP population. The official government statistic also does not count intra-urban displacement,

forced from rural lands into the urban periphery. This is the largest population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world, ousting Sudan from the top spot in 2011 (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2013). On average, this represents a rate of sustained displacement of around 300,000 people per year, or roughly 800 daily for the past 15 years (Vidal-López 2012). In 2011 alone, over 259,000 were displaced, a clear indication that the conflict continues apace (CODHES 2012).

To be clear, forced displacement is not a casual by-product of internal conflict; it is an instrumental tactic of violence that intentionally intimidates and wages war against civilian populations. Armed actors, both paramilitaries and guerrillas, *use* displacement to strengthen and expand their territorial control over strategic areas while amassing valuable assets (e.g. land and natural resources) and weakening the opposition (Jackson 2003; Ibáñez and Vélez 2008; Slim 2008; Braun 2009). The Colombian military has also used displacement as a tactical strategy of "draining the water to catch the fish," forcibly emptying regions it considers to be social bases of guerilla groups (Andreu-Guzmán 2012). Business interests are also implicated: confessions of former paramilitary leaders (required under the Justice and Peace Law of 2005) revealed that the systematic displacement and illegal appropriation of lands often went hand-in-hand with land-intensive development projects like industrial agricultural and mining (Vidal-López 2012). As Slim (2008) explains, "The typical purpose of war is create 'new facts on the ground' – facts of demography, ownership and power. Forced displacement…does this very efficiently" (p. 76).

Though there are documented cases of mass displacements of entire communities (particularly Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities), the vast majority (93%) of displacement occurs *gota a gota* [drop by drop], forcing individual families to flee their homes one by one. Most displacement is the result of direct threats or violence against individuals or families (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011b).

Colombia has experienced consistent urbanization since *La Violencia* in the 1950s. Back then, around 75% of Colombia's national population lived in rural areas while only 25% lived in cities. Today, this trend is reversed at 75% urban and 25% rural, and the past decade has seen an intensification of rural-urban migration, whether conflict-related or not (Albuja and Ceballos 2010; Taylor 2010). Internal displacement takes place on the backdrop of this urbanization. As in the rest of the world, IDPs in Colombia migrate from rural areas to urban ones, driven by the perceived greater access to public services and infrastructure, opportunities for employment, pre-existing familial or personal connections and sometimes even distance from place of origin (made attractive by distance from areas considered dangerous or insecure) (Carrillo 2009).

IDPs settle primarily on the urban periphery, often in informal settlements or other poor neighborhoods already suffering from lack of economic opportunity, tight

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displacement caused by new paramilitary groups or displacement due to crop fumigation. The larger estimate, calculated by the independent NGO Consultoria para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES), places the estimate at 5.5 million (as of December 2011), cumulative since 1985. It takes into account a wider array of sources and reports than the official government statistic (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2013).

land markets and unstable living conditions. The influx of thousands of IDPs has serious implications for land management and overcrowding, an increasing burden on municipal authorities and service provision, and the integration of a large, low-skilled labor force into strained local economies (Carrillo 2009). The population pressure increases the physical density and verticality of these urban settlements and creates greater competition for already limited resources (Vidal López, Atehortúa Arredondo, and Salcedo 2011).

In terms of municipal engagement with IDPs, there is a disconnect between the national framework for IDP assistance and translating that to on-the-ground service provision. Colombia is one of the only countries in the world that has attempted to address internal displacement through a comprehensive national policy and legal agenda,[18] and a relatively progressive one at that (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2012). However, the 1991 Constitution, written in the midst of ongoing internal violence, established a policy of what some have called "incomplete decentralization" (Ibáñez and Velásquez 2008). Policies and programs are designed at the national level but rely on local implementation (often without the necessary accompanying human or financial resources). Coordination mechanisms, assignment of responsibilities and accountability, and flexibility of policy adaptation to the local context are all murky within the current IDP aid system (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011a). As a result, local public resources are strained as municipal authorities are tasked with absorbing and providing services to thousands of new IDP residents without much outside support. Due to a lack of political will and incentives, as well as serious budget shortfalls, municipal authorities are often unable or unwilling to address IDP needs and rights despite the central government and legal mandate to do so (Ferris and Halff 2011b).

Even if city officials were willing and able, the task is complicated by the *gota a gota* [drop by drop] settlement of most IDP households in marginalized neighborhoods, making IDPs hard to distinguish from their non-IDP neighbors. Some of that "invisibility" is by choice and some is because of a lack of familiarity with the national aid system. A 2010 survey ordered by the Constitutional Court of Colombia found that over 23% of the IDP population is not officially registered in the national aid system either because they did not declare their displacement or because their application was rejected. Of those not registered, 45% said they did not register because they did not know how and 30% said they did not register because of fear of discovery and retribution by those they wished to flee in the first place (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011b).

Translating national policy into action is not a simple feat, but that act of translation can be accomplished by a variety of actors – not just the state, but social movements and civil society, as well. In addition to significant judicial activism (Rodríguez-Garavito 2011), Colombia has a long tradition of popular movements, social organizations and active non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Bogotá was initially the home base for most major social movements, but in recent years, a number of local organizations have cropped up in medium and large towns and cities (Delgado and Laegreid 2001). IDPs have followed suit in the past two decades, and as of 2010, there

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[18] See Chapter 6 for a longer description and analysis of the current legal and policy framework on internal displacement in Colombia.

were an estimated 2,000 IDP civil society organizations across the country. This is a level of organization unparalleled by any other country in the world with similar refugee or IDP situations (Taylor 2010). This thesis will explore not only how IDPs adjust to new social environments in cities but also how they begin to form social movements that make demands on the state, often taking law as the focal point of their claims.

Cartagena de Indias: Invisible displacement
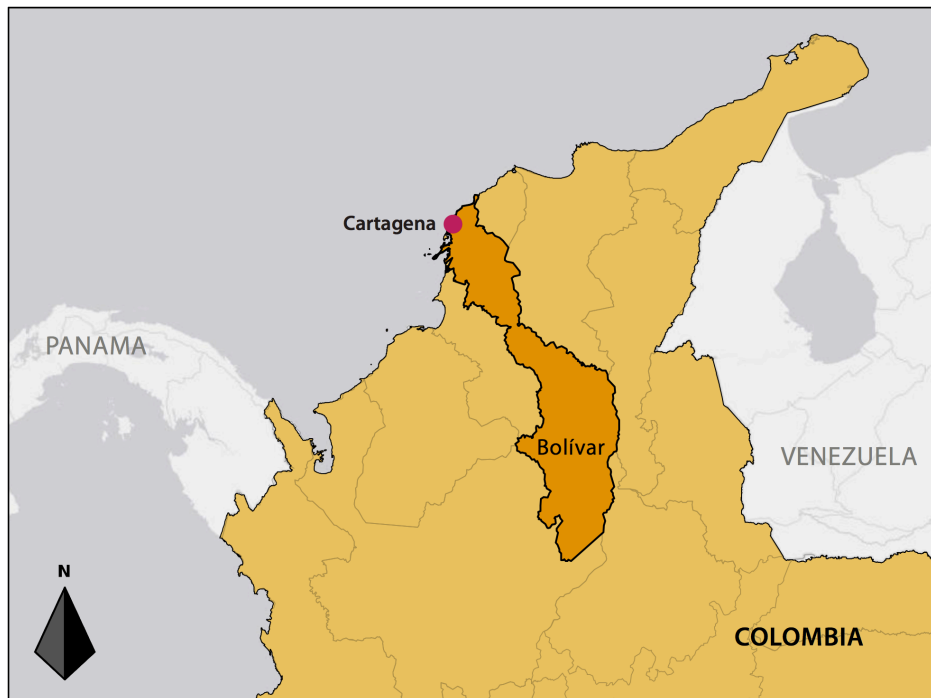
Sources: ESRI, DeLomme, NAVTEQ

       Cartagena (by its full name Cartagena de Indias), a coastal city of over 967,000 residents,[19] is the fifth largest urban center in Colombia. It is the capital of the *departamento* [department] of Bolívar and one of the most important industrial ports on the Caribbean coast. Cartagena is a center of tourism for both international and Colombian vacationers, and in 1984, the old colonial center was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

       It is often said that Cartagena is actually two cities – one a tourist center and the other, the "*ciudad popular*" (the working class city), lacking in seaside realty and tourist attractions. The latter is home to marginalized populations that do not square well with the glossy photos used to promote the former (Toro 2010). As one IDP woman explains, "When all those presidents came to Cartagena for the Summit of the Americas,[20] they didn't walk through the poor neighborhoods. They just saw one side of the city."

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[19] According to the 2012 projections based on the most recent national census in 2005 (DANE 2012a).
[20] She is referring to the Organization of American States (OAS) Summit of the Americas, which took place in Cartagena in April 2012. Presidents and other high-ranking officials from across North and South

Cartagena, like most capital cities of the 32 Colombian departments, is one of the main receptor sites for IDPs around the country. The most recent estimates place the displaced population at 82,000 since 1985, which would make it over 8 percent of the total city population. During that same period, another 10,000 have been displaced *from* Cartagena as a result of the ongoing violence in the urban periphery (Alcaldía Mayor de Cartagena de Indias 2013).[21] Over 8,700 new IDPs arrived in Cartagena between 2009 and 2011 alone (CODHES 2012).

The economic and strategic value of land and natural resources in Bolívar, as well as the presence of guerrilla groups like Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) – which, it is important to note, was not included in the 2012-2013 round of peace talks – has resulted in significant displacement throughout the region. Furthermore, between 2010 and 2011, Bolívar also had the third highest number of narco and paramilitary actions among all Colombian departments (LIMPAL 2011). The southern part of the Bolívar department is known for its production of illegal goods and represents a strategic corridor to the sea (through the port of Cartagena) for the transportation and trade of arms and drugs. It is also the site of 40% of national gold production. From 1996 to 2000, Bolívar experienced a period of extreme violence marked by several massacres.[22] This rural conflict has been identified as one of the main sources of displacement to Cartagena, though it is often difficult to name which armed actors are to blame in specific circumstances.[23] Guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, and state military forces have all been implicated (Prada and Mieles 2007; Guerrero Acevedo, Altahona, and Piñeros 2009; Defensoría del Pueblo 2011).

According to a 2007 survey of IDPs, the three most popular reasons for choosing to migrate to Cartagena were presence of family member or friend in the city (61%), perception of security in the city (17%) and closeness to site of original displacement (9%) (Prada and Mieles 2007). Upon arrival to Cartagena, most IDPs settle in the urban periphery in the *ciudad popular*. The neighborhoods with the largest IDP populations are some of the poorest in the city (Tapia Góngora 2006). Around 75% of the displaced population in Cartagena lives under the national line of extreme poverty (compared to 62% of the total city population) (ICRC-WFP 2007).

High levels of poverty, unemployment and informality, as well as a lack of political clout (as many recently-arrived or undeclared IDPs are not locally registered

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America come together every few years through OAS to discuss a variety of multilateral issues like democratization, economic development and trade relationships.

[21] However, these government estimates may be skewed considering 55% of the displaced population in Cartagena has not officially declared their status with the government agency responsible for the national IDP registry, according to 2007 survey of 1,200 residents of Cartagena (ICRC-WFP 2007).

[22] Perhaps most famous is the 2000 El Salado massacre in which, over the course of two days, 400 paramilitaries terrorized a small village in Bolívar, killing over 100 people and dumping their bodies into mass graves.

[23] Very often IDP families have no clear idea *who* or *which group* was the main perpetrator of their displacement. At least 45% of households interviewed in a 2007 survey in Cartagena said they could not identify their aggressor. Of those that could, 28% identified paramilitaries, 24% guerrilla groups, 2% the Colombian military and 1% common crime (Prada and Mieles 2007). The blame is clearly to be shared across multiple armed actors.

voters), mean that there is little political pressure to address the specific needs of the IDP community in Cartagena. Furthermore, because of the desire to brand the city as a tourist destination, there is little motivation among city leaders to publicize the severity of the situation. Increasingly there have also been reports of IDPs being forcibly displaced yet again within city bounds to make way for new development projects.[24] The end result is the "invisibility" of IDPs in Cartagena (Tapia Góngora 2006; Defensoría del Pueblo 2011).

However, in the past few years in Cartagena, as in the rest of country, there are newly burgeoning IDP social movements demanding attention, leading marches, and negotiating with the city government. How do these movements emerge given the vulnerability and relative invisibility of IDPs in Cartagena? The next few chapters will seek to answer this question.

Summary

Throughout the course of Colombian history there have been cycles of conflict and attempted peace. As Colombia enters the most recent round of peace talks, it is important to recognize what lies at the root of the conflict – land – and to recognize who benefits and who suffers from accumulation and dispossession. This chapter has provided a brief overview of the internal armed conflict in Colombia to set the backdrop for understanding internal displacement. Cartagena, a city on the Caribbean coast, will serve as the case study site for the remainder of this thesis. Chapter 3 will address IDP response strategies to urban settlement after forced displacement. The units of the individual or the family cannot be divorced from the political economy within which they reside, so the historical trends reviewed in this chapter are important to keep in mind at all scales of survival, adaptation and change.

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[24] This is a clear example of how conflict-induced displacement and development-induced displacement are not easily extricable.

Chapter 3
IDPs Respond to Urban Settlement

Maria and her husband used to own a farm in El Carmen del Bolívar in the central region of the department of Bolívar, but twenty years ago, her entire village was displaced by ongoing violence between guerrillas and paramilitaries.[25] Maria and her children escaped by walking two hours to the nearest small city, Playón. Many of the men stayed behind and several were killed or severely beaten, including her own husband, brother and several cousins.

After a year or so in Playón, the family moved to Cartagena in 1992. Maria's aunt, the only person she knew in the city, offered them a small plot of vacant land adjacent to her house, where Maria improvised shelter by filling in a swampy area with trash and laying pallets on the ground to keep her eight children above the flood-prone ground. Thirteen people lived in that one makeshift house together, including some nieces and nephews. Maria, who had only ever been a farmer, began doing whatever she could to earn a small income, picking up one-time jobs or selling fish in the city's central market. They often went to bed hungry. Even so, it never occurred to them to return to their community of origin. This life in Cartagena, though by no means easy or comfortable, was better than certain death back in the countryside.

Though this may be their first time visiting (let alone living in) a big city and though their skillsets are largely unsuited to urban labor markets, around 80% of IDPs in Colombia prefer local integration to return to place of origin (Carrillo 2009). The most recent data on IDPs in Cartagena, compiled from a 2006 University of Cartagena survey, reflects similar trends: 73% would prefer to settle in Cartagena for the long term, 14% would prefer settlement elsewhere in an unspecified location, and only 8% said they would prefer return to place of origin (Tapia Góngora 2006).

George, an IDP who fled a rural region on the Pacific coast after his life was threatened, explains his decision to settle in Cartagena in the following way: "Remembering is too hard. What has been lost has been lost. The only thing you can get back is your life. I wouldn't return there for any money in the world." For George, it is best to leave the trauma behind, to create emotional and physical distance from his past. Perhaps more importantly, George says that to return would be to invite certain death because of the continued presence of armed actors. Everything was burned down when he fled – the houses, the stores, the land – and he lost everything. The persistent insecurity and violence in rural areas means that for most Colombian IDPs, "urban integration constitutes not only the dominant strategy for spontaneous economic and social reconstruction, but also the most realistic one" (Meertens 2003, p. 3).

When IDPs arrive in cities, they face two main struggles: the first is the immediate day-to-day survival of their families (including securing shelter, food and water), and the second is the struggle for social recognition, both on a micro level at the

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[25] Maria's story is particularly interesting for the circumstances of her displacement, which will be explored more in Chapter 4.

neighborhood scale and on a macro institutional level in their relationship to the state (Jiménez Ocampo, Abello Llanos, and Palacio Sañudo 2003). This chapter will focus on the former, while the latter will be explored in depth in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Though it is impossible to fully separate these two interrelated processes, I have chosen to make the distinction here to give adequate space to exploring the survival and response strategies of individuals and families.

No individual or family exists in isolation in the city, and yet, when they arrive, they often arrive alone, *gota a gota* [drop by drop]. Many of the challenges of settling in the city are shared between IDPs and economic migrants – securing shelter, finding employment, and navigating public services – but the unique experience of displacement has profound implications for these otherwise familiar processes of urban integration.

In one of the only case studies of urban settlement that differentiates between IDPs, the historic poor and economic migrants, Jacobsen and Howe (2008) compare the experiences of these three groups all living in the same neighborhoods of Santa Marta, a city on the Caribbean coast of Colombia. Their survey found that despite similar reported levels of unemployment and poverty, IDPs fare worse than non-IDPs (including both historic poor and economic migrants) on almost all indicators of wellbeing, including levels of education, contracted work, housing material, size of household, and a range of other household difficulties, including number of disabled people in household. Between IDPs and economic migrants, IDPs were more likely to have abandoned assets upon migration and also anticipated more problems if they were to return to communities of origin. George's story, for example, illustrates the extent to which IDPs arrive with few, if any, assets intact, unlike economic migrants who may retain possession not only of material belongings but also of the social connections that are so key to survival in a new place.

With few to no contacts in the host city prior to arrival, IDPs must find or improvise housing, buy food (often for the first times in their lives as former agriculturalists), confront serious shifts in personal and collective identities, and face emotional and psychological distress as a result of displacement. These survival and response strategies eventually require an engagement with the process of either reception into or formation of social networks, which will be explored in future chapters.

The transition to the city

"I've lost everything and I can never get it back, but life goes on as it must."
- Ana, an IDP woman in Cartagena

Colombia, one of the most biodiverse countries in the world, is marked by ecological and geographical diversity, as well as ethnic and socio-cultural diversity.[26] The

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[26] As a public official at the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF), the national agency responsible for family welfare, explained to me: "Colombia is very diverse: there are rivers, there are seas, there are jungles, there are mountains, there are plains. The particulars are different in each region, each population, each neighborhood, each community, each street, each sidewalk…The different climates, the different temperaments, the different ways of thinking – that has a big influence."

move from one place to another implies not only changes in physical space and climate, but also in accent, diet, custom and social norms (Braun 2009).

In terms of climate alone, it is not an easy transition from a rural area in the Montes de María mountain range in the south of Bolívar into a low-lying coastal city with tropical heat like Cartagena – with average temperatures in the high 80s and 90s ˚F with 90% humidity throughout the year. Arriving for the first time in an unfamiliar city, several children in tow, having walked for hours (if not days), with no money for food or water, the heat and the mosquitos can be brutal.

Compounding that arduous and abrupt transition, displacement is not just about the loss of physical property, but also the loss or rupture of traditional livelihoods, of culture, and of life projects (Meertens 2001). For *campesinos* [farmers or peasants] who are used to eating their own harvests, butchering their own livestock, and pulling yucca straight from the ground, life in the city can be overwhelming and confusing. Hunger is often a completely new phenomenon for people used to working and producing food from their land (Bello 2001). Supermarkets are a novelty, prices of food[27] and water[28] can be shocking in comparison to self-sustenance, and there is very little (if any) arable land available for farming. One IDP woman says the only things she used to have to buy were salt and soap because most everything else she and her family needed came from the earth or from her own hands. This sort of self-reliance is impossible in the city, which represents a fundamental shift in lifestyle, household expenditures and even identity.

Diana had arrived in Cartagena just one month before I met her, fleeing the countryside where her husband had been murdered and she and her children had been violently threatened. Diana chose to move to Cartagena to look for work, knowing no one and never having been to the city before. She is thus both IDP *and* economic migrant, though, as Bakewell (2011) predicts, she defines herself more by the subjective experience of feeling "out of place" than by the fact of her migration. As Diana explains, it has been a drastic shift to leave everything behind, to move from a life where you have your own home, your own land, where you have enough to feed and clothe your children, where you are not wanting for anything, to city where you know no one, you own nothing and you cannot support yourself the only way you know how.

The emotional devastation and shock of displacement is exacerbated by the loss of assets and income that push most IDPs into poverty, if not extreme poverty (Carrillo 2009). Around the country, IDPs are more than twice as likely[29] to live below the Colombian national poverty line compared to the general population, and more than four

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[27] In a 2007 study, IDP households around the country identified food as one of the biggest (if not the biggest) household expenditures. In Cartagena, IDP households reported they spent around 54% of their household expenditures on food, which was the equivalent of monthly expenditures at around $175.52 USD on average (ICRC-WFP 2007)

[28] As one IDP woman commented to me, "Why should I pay for contaminated water here in the city when I used to drink it pure for free back in the countryside?"

[29] In 2010, around 96% of displaced families (both those registered with the government and those not registered) reported an income below the poverty line, while around 45% of the general population reported income below the poverty line (Human Rights Watch 2012).

times as likely[30] to live below the extreme poverty line (Human Rights Watch 2012). As of the most recent countrywide statistics available in 2012, only 11 percent of IDPs reported access to adequate housing and fewer than 5 percent reported access to opportunities for income generation (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2012).

Diana's story exemplifies the struggles that all IDPs must undergo upon arrival and integration into a city: securing housing, scraping out an income, managing changing family dynamics and renegotiating personal and collective identity.

Playing "hopscotch": Residential instability and securing housing

The process of displacement tends to take place in two steps: an initial move to a small or mid-size town near rural place of origin, followed by a second move to a larger city (Carrillo 2009). Over 8% of displaced families report being forcibly displaced two times or more (CODHES 2012). More recently, there have been increasing reports of intra-urban displacement, or families relocating more than once within the same city. Many IDP families in Cartagena report such multiple moves as a result of ongoing threats[31] and the perceived or actual presence of urban gangs or neo-paramilitary groups known as *bandas criminales* (*bacrim* for short). Some families move to avoid the recruitment of their children into prostitution or armed groups, others because of threats to their lives based on their actual or perceived loyalties to one group or another.[32]

This "hopscotch" effect not only extends the process of displacement but also delays the formation of social safety nets in sites of reception for a longer period of time. The longer people have lived in a place, the more "rooted" they become. This place attachment facilitates "a sense of security and well-being, defines group boundaries and stabilizes memories against the passage of time" (Gieryn 2000, p. 481). Multiple moves, whether by choice or by force, prevent the formation of place attachment and residential stability, which have been linked to stronger social networks, higher levels of political participation, access to higher quality resources and economic livelihoods, and lower levels of crime and violence (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974; Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997; Jha, Rao, and Woolcock 2007; Sampson 2008; Vidal López, Atehortúa Arredondo, and Salcedo 2011). IDP instability and insecurity can thus reinforce itself in a vicious cycle.

When it comes to finding shelter, there is a dedicated agency in Cartagena, Corvivienda, that is responsible for guaranteeing housing[33] for IDPs within the district,

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[30] In 2010, almost 79% of the IDP families registered with the government reported incomes below the extreme poverty line, compared to only 17% of the general population. Among female-headed IDP families, the rate was even higher at 86% (Human Rights Watch 2012).

[31] Humberto, director of APRODIC (the same community organization for which Gloria works), tells me about one IDP woman in Cartagena whose husband was disappeared and whose daughter and daughter-in-law were threatened. When she declared the disappearance to the relevant government authorities, she was threatened and forced to move for a second time. Her husband was finally found in a mass grave in another department to the east of Bolívar, and the woman was subsequently threatened and displaced yet again.

[32] Fears of recruitment and injury because of the presence of armed actors in Cartagena will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 5.

[33] I will go into more detail about the state-based aid process in Chapter 6.

but the processes through which it allocates financial support and housing units can take years, explains Gloria, co-founder of APRODIC, a human rights organization in Cartagena. As another community organizer explains, "waiting for help from the government would be fatal." Some IDPs are completely unaware of the aid available to them.

While waiting for as long as multiple years for housing subsidies or homes from Corvivienda, IDPs have three main options: live with relatives or friends, secure land and improvise their own shelter (legally titled or not), or rent from local residents.

When IDPs have relatives or friends living in their chosen sites of reception, they often stay with them for short periods of time. However, moving into already cramped living spaces with multiple family members is not a viable option in the long-run, particularly when, as in Maria's case, there can be up to 13 people living in one house.

When IDPs leave this initial temporary shelter, they have little choice but to rent or to become *invasores* [literally, invaders], occupying vacant land illegally. Access to the formal land and property markets in cities requires far more purchasing power than most IDPs can muster, not to mention financial and credit history and documentation. As a result, only a small percentage of IDPs own[34] their own houses, most of which are of poor quality, built of temporary materials[35] that do not meet minimum living condition standards, and often lack access to public services like water or sewers.[36]

Furthermore, some state policies designed to provide housing aid to IDPs can inadvertently stand in the way of long-term integration. For example, for those IDPs that do manage to build or buy their own houses (legally or not), when their claims in Corvivienda are finally processed, state agencies sometimes revoke an offer of aid if they see that the claimants already have a "home," inadequate as it may be.

In a well-known pattern of slum-led urbanization in many developing country cities, as more and more IDPs and other migrants move into city over time, the amount of available land quickly depletes and as a result, many resort to living in high-risk areas, which are vulnerable to flooding, rockslides, unstable foundations, and other dangers.[37] The growing demand for housing in turn raises property prices even in "undesirable" neighborhoods, making the prospect of becoming a homeowner even more remote (Bello 2001; Meertens 2001; Albuja and Ceballos 2010; Vidal López, Atehortúa Arredondo, and Salcedo 2011).

If they choose instead to rent, as most IDPs do, the lack of income and the consequent reliance on temporary and intermittent municipal rental subsidies increases

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[34] In a 2007 study, only 2% of IDPs in Cartagena owned their homes with legal titles (ICRC-WFP 2007).

[35] In a 2005 study, over 50% of IDP households in Bogotá and Cartagena were made of inappropriate materials, such as cloth, cardboard or scraps of wood, compared to 16% of non-IDP households in the same areas (Human Rights Watch 2005). Two years later, another survey found that over 67% of IDP households reported below minimum standards for flooring materials (compared to 51% of non-IDP households) and almost 79% reported below minimum standards for wall materials (compared to 67% of non-IDP households) (ICRC-WFP 2007).

[36] In Cartagena in 2005, only 1% of IDP households were connected to a sewer system (Human Rights Watch 2005). Two years later, another survey found that in waste collection was also much worse for IDP residents of Cartagena than non-IDP residents (ICRC-WFP 2007).

[37] In Cartagena in 2007, 80% of IDP households reported being at risk of flooding and 32% reported risk of subsidence (ICRC-WFP 2007).

the risk of eviction. As a result, the state-based aid programs that are designed to help IDPs actually make them "unreliable and undesirable tenants and exposes them to conflict and successive evictions, leaving them even more precarious than before" (Vidal López, Atehortúa Arredondo, and Salcedo 2011, p. 20). Furthermore, since most IDPs rent from homeowners (legally titled or not) who depend upon the additional income from leasing extra rooms, these kinds of evictions create ongoing tensions between IDPs and host communities. "Sometimes we can't sleep at night, knowing we may not have the money to pay and that they might kick us out," says one IDP man.

For many, the loss of the home is one of the greatest and most enduring impacts of forced displacement and conflict (Walker 2009). Gloria explains that the loss of "home" and the inability to obtain a new one in the city has great symbolic value for IDPs – IDP women in particular – who feel unsafe and insecure and who wish to protect their families. Not having a roof to call their own increases a sense of uncertainty and helplessness. The lack of ownership and private space limits independence and autonomy, which have already been diminished by the loss of control in armed conflict and forced displacement (Bello 2001). This is what Hugo Slim (2008) has called the "spatial suffering" of war: the frustrating, humiliating and disempowering lack of control over one's own mobility (or immobility) and "the costly and subjugating experience of being forced to reconfigure…movements in line with the political and military domination of their space" (p. 84). The inability to plan for an unclear future because of an unclear present is one of the most enduring and most challenging impacts of forced displacement (Meertens 2001).

There is also a wider spatial dimension to the struggle for shelter. IDPs, most of whom are used to the relatively open expanses of the countryside must adjust to cramped households and dense urban neighborhoods. IDP households tend to be larger, younger and more crowded[38] than their non-IDP neighbors (Human Rights Watch 2005; ICRC-WFP 2007). Overcrowding, the lack of privacy and shrinking personal space can be an uncomfortable novelty. Eduardo, a community organizer who works with IDP communities, explains that families often live in makeshift houses without doors, multiple members usually share bedrooms and beds, and bathrooms are often improvised in what outdoor space is available.[39]

The lack of privacy can be particularly traumatic for women and girls, some of whom choose to bathe with their clothes on to avoid prying eyes. Female bodily processes – menstruation, gestation, lactation, etc. – become "burdensome, uncomfortable, and dangerous" in situations like this, putting women and girls at increased risk for abuse (Cockburn 2001, p. 21). Because of this, many young girls never get the chance to learn

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[38] In a 2005 study undertaken in Bogotá and Cartagena, the average IDP household had 4.6 members (compared to 3.6 in non-IDP households). Around 40% of the occupants of IDP households were under 12 years old (compared to 28% in non-IDP households). Over 60% of IDP households lived in homes without at least one room used exclusively as a bedroom (compared to 60% of non-IDP households that did have a bedroom) (Human Rights Watch 2005).
[39] In Cartagena in 2005, 85% of IDP households did not have private indoor bathrooms (Human Rights Watch 2005).

about their own bodies, which may partially explain the high rate of teenage pregnancy[40] among IDP women, says Eduardo.[41]

Many IDPs say that their top priority and their biggest hope for the future is to own a house of their own, built of higher quality materials and located in safer neighborhoods. That said, a house is necessary to begin life anew, but it is not enough. Without economic opportunity, sustained security, access to education and medical care, and, eventually, social integration into supportive communities, a house is still not a "home" (Ballard 2012).

Livelihoods: Securing employment or engaging in *rebusque*

Manuel was forced to move to Cartagena in 1996 because paramilitary groups were threatening to kill him for his organizing activities as the former director of a rural farming collective. He remembers the transition to city life as painful and frustrating: "It's like being an animal kicked out onto the street. We don't have the customs they have here; we don't know how to navigate the city. In the beginning it was terrible being without work, unable to feed our children." Over 15 years after arriving in Cartagena, Manuel still considers himself a temporary resident of the city, but he also knows it will be a long time before he can return to the life of a farmer. Manuel says that he, like most other IDPs, have had to adapt by living by *rebusque* [hustling or doing whatever you can to earn money] but it has been difficult without knowing anyone and without knowing the neighborhoods. "The *migajas* [crumbs or scraps] they give you for your work don't add up to anything," he says.

Because most IDPs settle in historically poor neighborhoods with high unemployment and few economic opportunities, competition for what formal and informal work *is* available is intense. With few easily transferable skills, lower levels of education and literacy, fewer established job networks, and the added disadvantage of the stigma of their status, IDPs can rarely compete effectively against either the historic poor or the economic migrants living in Cartagena (Carrillo 2009; Vidal López, Atehortúa Arredondo, and Salcedo 2011).

Broadly speaking, IDP women have an easier time leveraging informal networks for daily survival and finding new ways to earn an income (Moser 2001). Women are generally better suited than men to compete in urban labor markets because their labor experience (whether home-based or not) prior to displacement is usually more relevant with respect to certain low-skilled occupations like domestic service or food preparation (Calderón, Gáfaro, and Ibáñez 2011). As one IDP woman explains, IDP women are often more willing to accept work that pays poorly and that may be uncomfortable or

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[40] One 2011 study found that 35% of IDP women between 15 and 19 had been pregnant at least once, compared to the national average of 20%. IDP women are also far more likely to experience physical, psychological and sexual abuse than non-IDP women (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011a).
[41] Lack of personal space and shared bedrooms also force many young people to have sexual experiences outside of the home. IDP youth generally cannot afford to pay for a room in a sex motel (a common option for young people in Colombia who mostly continue to live at home until marriage), says Eduardo, so they often find a semi-public space, often outdoors, which can expose youth to multiple health and personal safety risks.

degrading: "As women, we have to submit to the lowest and the most deplorable jobs in all of humanity just to feed our children."

IDP men, by contrast, generally have a harder time entering the labor market because their job skills (primarily as agriculturalists) are ill-adapted to urban conditions. As a result, they often experience a loss of status as breadwinners and undergo a rupture in their sense of masculinity, which can have serious impacts on family dynamics (Meertens 2001). This has been shown to lead to increased domestic violence,[42] alcohol and drug abuse, and abandonment (Moser 2001; Human Rights Watch 2005; Carrillo 2009; Calderón, Gáfaro, and Ibáñez 2011).

Most IDPs end up working in the informal economy,[43] selling cell phone minutes on street corners, vending *frituras* [fried foods], offering massages to beach tourists, etc. Most of the IDP women I met were officially unemployed but supported themselves with small informal ventures, like weaving traditional Colombian handbags or selling homemade *pasteles de arroz* [rice tamales]. Many women take on jobs in domestic service,[44] cleaning high-class apartments or hotels in the colonial and beach resort areas of Cartagena. One of Maria's daughters collects empty soda glass bottles, washes them and re-uses them to package and sell her own homemade juices. For every meeting with LIMPAL, one woman prepares the snacks and meals in exchange for a small sum offered by the organization. Among the community leaders, they take turns at each meeting, sharing in the opportunity to make a few extra *pesos*.

However, the services that IDPs can provide based on previously acquired skillsets (food production, for example) have to compete with an overload of similar businesses with limited public trading spaces and an impoverished clientele. Some IDPs choose to travel to other neighborhoods to avoid confrontations with shopkeepers and other vendors, but this increases travel costs, which can be significant in terms of both time and money (Vidal López, Atehortúa Arredondo, and Salcedo 2011).

Many municipal programs to develop skills or provide seed grants for IDPs are flawed in their design, relying upon assumed entrepreneurial predispositions and activities. These programs are expensive and often ineffective because they do not take into account the significant number of small-scale entrepreneurs already operating, formally or informally, in the neighborhoods where most IDPs live (Ferris 2008b). As one IDP man laments, "You grow up in the countryside and you know how to work the

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[42] The intergenerational transmission of violence through child abuse becomes increasingly common in situations of displacement (Calderón, Gáfaro, and Ibáñez 2011). Though it is far less common, IDP women have also been known to commit acts of domestic violence. One woman I spoke with admitted to having abused her children after the initial period of displacement. She said her own parents used to hit her as a child, which she took to be a method of disciplining her own children. However, after participating in several human rights workshops and becoming an IDP and women's rights activist, she realized one day that she was perpetuating the cycle of violence that she was working so hard to end. She decided to stop hitting her children and to actively intervene when she saw her neighbors, all of whom are IDPs, engaging in domestic abuse.

[43] Defined as all economic activities and enterprises that are not regulated by the state, and workers without social protections provided through their employment arrangement.

[44] One recent estimate found that 40% of all IDP women in the country are actively working, of which 20% works in domestic service, which tends to have low benefits and longer hours than other employment options (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011a).

land, but in the city, what do you do? Make a little business here when there are so many other little businesses? How can I compete with that, whatever *pendejadita* [stupid little trinkets] I can sell?"

As a result, IDP wages are low, their hours are often longer than legally allowable, and there are no labor protections for accident insurance, sick leave, pregnancy or child rearing (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011a). In 2011, only 11% of all IDPs across Colombia with employment earned the monthly minimum wage set by the national government, and overall, almost 60% (68% among IDP women) received less than half that amount (Human Rights Watch 2012). Many IDPs report discrimination (based on race, regional accent, IDP status, etc.) and even physical and sexual abuse at the hands of their employers. One social worker in Cartagena told me about an IDP woman who was beaten and emotionally abused by her employer. She kept this abuse secret for fear of losing her job, which was her only source of income to feed her children.

Unfortunately, IDPs often have little choice but to accept harsh working conditions because of the oversupply of cheap labor. This creates a precarious situation for IDPs who are teetering on the edge of starvation, homelessness and serious medical issues[45] as a result of their displacement.

The "poverty violence trap"

Shouldering the burden of household income, many IDP women resort to begging or prostitution, which is particularly common in Cartagena, a city known for sex tourism, says Liliana, the coordinator of *Mesa de Mujeres por los Derechos Económicos Sociales y Culturales* (Mesa DESC), a human rights advocacy umbrella organization. "Displacement forces them to come to the city, where they have to take on a different life, and the only thing available to them is the street," she explains. IDP girls are particularly vulnerable to recruitment into prostitution, some as young as 14 or 15.

Meanwhile, IDP men, particularly young men, are often targeted and recruited into either armed groups or urban gangs, which—like gangs around the world—provide these struggling young men with an income, a recognized social identity and a sense of security (Cockburn 2004). For example, one 19-year-old IDP *sicario* [hired killer] was known to have killed 20 people in one year for just about $25 USD a head. For him, that criminal livelihood option was more lucrative than unemployment or living by *rebusque*.

"We came to the city where we thought we'd be safer, but no," says Maria's daughter Eva. "Now they're recruiting here in all the *barrios*. There's just as much violence, there's *limpieza social*,[46] and young men are recruited with money and the promise of 'security.' But it's a false security."

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[45] It only takes one health emergency to push a family from barely surviving into destitution. When Isabel (who we met in the Introduction) arrived in Cartagena in 1992, her ten-month-old son at the time was very ill, and she had no choice but to beg on the streets to feed him. Her son was eventually hospitalized and then passed away. "With your own labor, with your street vending, with your micro-business, you can feed yourself, but when someone in your family gets sick and they go to the hospital, that can be fatal for the whole family," Isabel says.
[46] Translated literally as "social cleansing," this is the practice by which armed actors, usually paramilitary groups, carry out extrajudicial killings of "undesirables," including the homeless, sympathizers of other armed groups, labor activists, prostitutes, etc.

This is not to say that some women aren't also recruited into armed groups,[47] but the vast majority of armed actors in Colombia are men (Schwitalla and Dietrich 2007). Anthropologist Kimberly Theidon's work on demobilized ex-combatants (2009) addresses what she points to as a lack of attention paid to the cultural and political economy of "militarized masculinity"[48] so pervasive in Colombia. Soldiering, whether in the state military or in another armed group, is tied to social and economic mobility, as well as ideals of citizenship. Lacking other viable employment options, a man's "bodily capital—and the high premium placed on physical force and prowess with a weapon—may be all they have to trade on the labor market" (p. 23).

Theidon found that a majority of those men who joined armed groups did so either via an acquaintance or because they lived in a zone already controlled by an armed group. This finding demonstrates the importance of social ties and the fact that "these young people grew up in contexts in which alternatives to war were almost invisible" (p. 17).[49] This harkens back to Lubkemann's theory of war as a social condition. Youth, inequality and poverty have all been found to be key factors that facilitate recruitment into armed groups in Colombia (Holmes, Gutiérrez de Piñeres, and Curtin 2008).

Davis (2012) calls this the "poverty violence trap": in contexts in which employment is limited and poverty is rising, impressionable youth "are more willing to participate in violent activities where some income generation is possible" (p. 17). As violence increases, legitimate businesses move elsewhere, further limiting legal employment options – in a self-reinforcing cycle.

For the IDPs who have settled in cities precisely to avoid the armed conflict from which they fled, the presence of gangs and ongoing urban violence is disillusioning, to say the least. Cities, which perhaps once represented a relative refuge from the violence that used to be concentrated in rural areas, no longer represent a secure escape from the influence of armed groups or urban gangs. As Pécaut (2000) wrote over a decade ago, "There are no spaces free of the intervention of the informal or illegal networks of power in Colombia" (p. 102). The impact of armed actors in urban areas will be examined in greater depth in Chapter 5.

Managing changing family dynamics

Many IDPs experience familial fragmentation – because of death, abandonment, dispersion or recruitment into armed groups – and/or reconfiguration – because of new romantic partners, new children, etc. (Bello 2001). Single motherhood becomes increasingly common, as do non-traditional forms of child-rearing, wherein members of extended family networks share homes and responsibilities.

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[47] For example, it is estimated that of the 31,000 paramilitary members that demobilized in 2005 after official negotiations under the Justice and Peace Law, only 6% are female. Of the additional 10,000 thought to have demobilized voluntarily, 14% are female. A quarter of all demobilized children are girls.
[48] Defined as "that fusion of certain practices and images of maleness with the use of weapons, the exercise of violence, and the performance of an aggressive and frequently misogynist masculinity" (p. 5).
[49] As Eduardo, a community organizer who works with IDP communities in Cartagena and Barranquilla, explained to me: "Men are being trained to be violent. They're made for the army, the police, the guerrilla, and the paramilitary. But it's not just us. We also have a violent state that solves everything through violence."

The struggles of economic coping can cause other ruptures in family dynamics as traditional gender roles at home and in the public sphere begin to shift, as mentioned in the section above (Meertens 2012). Sometimes, the new arrangement in household earnings can entail a shift in child-rearing responsibilities, with men learning to cook and care for children at home while women earn what they can outside of the home.[50] "It's a drastic change in roles," says Carmen, a social worker in Cartagena, "particularly when you consider that the *machista*[51] culture continues to teach that the man is the provider and the woman is the one who stays at home…These *mitos culturales* [cultural myths] hit up against the reality of living in displacement. It creates some serious cultural shocks for families."

Each IDP household handles these changing family dynamics differently. Some men can't stand the pressure and abandon their families, while others continue to expect the women to clean, cook and care for their children, even after she has spent the whole day working in someone else's home to earn an income, says Carmen.

Other families rely on older children to assist in childcare and income generation (Bello 2001). Only 38 days after giving birth, Maria had to leave her infant child in the care of her other young children to go find work so that they wouldn't die of hunger. Widespread unemployment and underemployment of adult IDPs often means that their children are less likely to finish schooling[52] because of the need for extra income sources (Human Rights Watch 2005).

For young people, growing up in a situation of displacement can be particularly difficult during the period of "discovering themselves," says Carolina, Maria's daughter. The urban context "doesn't offer you anything but drugs, but alcohol, but things that degrade you as a human being," she says, which she thinks is very distinct from adolescence in the countryside where young men prove their adulthood by beginning to cultivate their own plots of land under the guidance of their fathers. But in the city, says Carolina, "a young man isn't going to say 'I want to plant with you,' but instead 'I want to go do drugs with my friends, I want to go mess around.' The context you grow up in has a big impact on a cultural level." Young people who have spent the majority of their lives in cities are less likely to maintain the farming practices of their parents or the cultural

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[50] One IDP woman I met says she felt like she was abandoning her own family to generate an income: "It was killing me, working for a family that wasn't mine, giving them my work, and coming home to find my own son asleep, only to leave again in the morning without knowing how he woke up or if he has a stomachache."

[51] *Machismo* is, roughly defined, a belief in the supremacy of men.

[52] Though I will not delve very deeply into education, it is worth noting that IDPs of all ages experience interrupted schooling whether as a result of displacement itself or as a result of the conditions and necessities of urban integration (Slim 2008). Even though public education is free in Colombia, the expenses associated with school – including matriculation fees (even when as little as $4 USD a year), travel costs, costs of mandatory uniforms, books and others supplies – can be prohibitive for families with multiple children and few income sources. Furthermore, many children experience discrimination based on their IDP status, race or regional distinctions (Human Rights Watch 2005). Carolina says her mother Maria had a hard time enrolling her many children in school because of this. For those who do enter school, IDP youth in Cartagena have a particularly high drop-out rate, especially in secondary education (ICRC-WFP 2007).

ties to their rural places of origin (Smit 2012). This can strain parent-child relationships and create intergenerational tensions in the family (Bello 2001).

Dealing with trauma and navigating identity

It is a Sunday afternoon, and Eduardo, a community organizer who works with IDPs along the Caribbean coast, is leading a workshop in a donated room in a local church in Líbano, a primarily IDP neighborhood in Cartagena. He has gathered a group of 22 IDPs (four men, eight adult women and eight teenage girls) together to participate in a theater-based exercise sponsored by LIMPAL and La Casa Úrsula, a national program for women's rights established after the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000.[53] In the workshop, Eduardo asks the participants to act out a series of scenarios based on their experiences of displacement and settling in the city. One scene involves domestic abuse between a husband and a wife. In another, a teen mother leaves her young children at home alone so she can engage in prostitution. In yet another, a government official refuses to meet with an IDP woman, blaming the city's rising crime on "*invasores*" [invaders] like her.

Afterwards, as the participants have a chance to react to what they have just seen, Eduardo explains that in displacement "people were uprooted not just from their property but their culture, their identities."

"Their freedom," chimes in one of the participants.

"Their families," adds another.

"Their work," says a third.

"Displacement has changed the whole *ambiente* [feeling or environment] of our country," concludes Eduardo.

The emotional devastation of displacement can have multiple, and often overlapping, manifestations: anxiety, depression, aggression, nostalgia, fear, despair, and post-traumatic stress, to name a few (Cockburn 2001; ICRC-WFP 2007; Carrillo 2009). "I've been through so much," says Diana. "When I don't have even a small piece of *panela* [cane sugar] to give to my children, when I know that they don't have clothes or shoes, those are my biggest concerns. The saddest part was my son's birthday last week. My son asked for his father, who used to give him his birthday cake, and I didn't know what to say except to cry and tell him he wasn't going to have anything for his birthday."

Even though 67% of IDP households report mental health problems after displacement, requests for appropriate care are low, and provision is even lower (ICRC-WFP 2007).[54] The emotional and psychosocial trauma has been shown to impair the capacities to learn, become self-reliant and build new life projects (Carrillo 2009).

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[53] UNSCR 1325 is an oft-cited rallying call among women's rights organizations and peace activists across Colombia. The influence of international law and norms will be examined in greater depth in Chapter 6, but for now, it is worth noting that the theater workshop led by Eduardo is an example of how an international discourse has been concretized into on-the-ground action.

[54] Of those who self-identified as having psychosocial problems, only 24% sought professional help. Reasons given for the low demand for psychosocial aid include priority given to subsistence activities, embarrassment to admit to problems, and low level of knowledge of services available or their importance. Of those who did actively seek help, only 15% received it. This can be attributed to the fact that there are

Most of my sources said they experienced culture shock and a loss of personal meaning when they were forced to make the transition from farming to other forms of economic activity. Carolina, who was five years old when they arrived in Cartagena, says the change was traumatic for the whole family: "Forced displacement breaks *proyectos de vida* [life projects] – we had to leave our land, we had to suffer *el despojo* [the dispossession] of leaving our homes, leaving our culture, leaving our way of life. The only thing my parents knew how to do was *cultivar* [farm], and we had to abandon everything, our documents, our belongings, to save our lives." In the city, Maria's family experienced hunger for the first time, and they had to confront new pressures[55] and dangers, like the prevalence of drug addiction, which Carolina says was unknown to them before moving to Cartagena. "In that moment we were powerless having to face a city like that," she explains. "We had to face those *leones rugientes* [roaring lions] but without the tools to do so. We didn't have the tools to live in a city that was much more global, much bigger and very different from what we knew and how we lived."

As Slim (2008) writes, the loss of personal identity, stability, certainty, routine and order in the midst of armed conflict can become the loss of *self*. Both as individuals and as social beings, people have lost the markers that used to define who they were and who they are. This is what Pécaut (2000) refers to as the experience of "blowing apart of all personal points of reference" (p. 102). Family identities, professional identities, religious identities may all have been challenged or inexorably altered by war. Dignity and self-esteem suffer greatly, and many lose "the anchor of their sense of self [that] gave them the confidence with which to take their place in the world" (Slim 2008, p. 110).

Carmen tells me about one young IDP woman named Violet, who worked in domestic service when they met a few years ago at one of Carmen's human rights workshops. At the time, Violet's employers paid her in leftover grains of rice and 2,000 *pesos* (the equivalent of about $1.12 USD) for a full day of cleaning. With those 2,000 *pesos* Violet only had enough to buy three eggs for her two children and to cover her transportation to and from her job. Carmen was dismayed at this story, and she began to work one-on-one with Violet to help her understand that she deserved more than that: "I reminded her of the *africanos* [the Africans] that came here. We cannot speak of them as slaves because they were kings in their lands in Africa. I asked Violet what she used to have back home. She said, 'I had my house, I had chickens, I had pigs.' I told her, 'Then you are not a person who has to settle for leftover rice and 2,000 *pesos*. You have to tell

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few services available and there are few standard assistance protocols in place across the country (ICRC-WFP 2007).

[55] One of these pressures may seem innocuous but can have quite a big impact: Integrating into city life requires a new style of consumerism because everything comes with a price tag. Beyond paying for services and food for the first time, IDPs also must face the shift to the culture of conspicuous consumption. One IDP woman said that back on her farm the only thing she cared about was her harvest and the health of her animals, whereas in the city, many IDPs begin to acclimate to the "culture of going into debt to buy pretty things to have a pretty house." Carmen, a social worker in Cartagena, similarly explains that, particularly for women who have never been inside a store before, the pervasive consumer culture in urban areas can be an emotional trigger. Carmen says that some IDP women think, "I've wasted my life caring for child after child after child and now I want, I want, I want." It is this visible clash of rural and urban lifestyles that makes them "*replantear su vida*" [rethink their lives].

your employer that you are here in the city because of displacement but that you still have your dignity and that your work is worth something.'" Carmen says that Violet has since graduated from the University of Cartagena with a degree in accounting.

Carmen encourages IDP men and women to hold onto the past even as they navigate the unexpected present and uncertain future: "They can't forget who they were and who they continue to be. It is from who they were that they need to demand their rights, that they can't settle for a makeshift house, for low wages, for an ID card that says they are *displaced*."

Here, it is interesting to note that Carmen makes the distinction between being *displaced* and being in a *situation of displacement*. She thinks that those who have been forcibly displaced should not let that single event come to define their entire identities and strip them of who they were or who they can be. "A woman is not *displaced*," explains Carmen. "She is intelligent, she is hardworking, she is a fighter, she is a *campesina* [peasant], but she is not *displaced*. She is a woman in a situation of displacement." Though I have chosen not to use this distinction throughout the course of this thesis, it is an important reminder of the power of language and naming.

Categories and labels – e.g. "IDP" versus "refugee" versus "economic migrant" – assigned by states and humanitarian agencies often obscure the complexity of overlapping identities in order to clarify the level of attention, protection and assistance that an individual or household receives based on the distinct prescribed rights of each group. These categories are ultimately artificial and administrative, but they can become inscribed into an individual's or group's identity, often as the basis for discrimination and/or empowerment (Koser and Martin 2011). Identity formation in displacement is a process of self-definition that is mediated by host communities, mediated by other IDPs, and mediated by the state, as the next several chapters will show. It is a constant negotiation of the personal and the collective.

Summary

"Bit by bit, you have to adapt, you have to live, because otherwise, you would be dead."
– Manuel, an IDP man in Cartagena

Carmen and Violet's story is ultimately about the power of friendship, about having someone to lift you up and show you an alternative when you think you are only worth 2,000 *pesos* and a few grains of rice. Without Carmen's support, Violet may have been able to feed her children for the time being, and she may have survived, but just barely. Like other IDPs in this chapter, Violet has faced overwhelming loss and confronts a radically new and challenging environment in the city.

In the end, coping alone is simply not enough. As resilient as individuals or families may be on their own, they are constrained in scale and scope unless their response and survival strategies are interrelated to and bolstered by broader social networks. As Davis (2012) writes, the translation from individual to community resilience, from single agent or family survival to multi-stakeholder collaboration, is

"perhaps the most important process to understand of all" for policymakers who wish to address urban communities living in violent contexts (p. 66).

What is it about the particular survival and response strategies of individuals and families that necessitate the formation of social networks? In other words, what needs are satisfied by social connections that cannot be satisfied by individuals and families alone? These questions will be addressed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4
(Re)Building Social Networks

It takes an hour by bus from the colonial tourist center of Cartagena to get to Tatiana's neighborhood on the edge of the city. This is not the Cartagena of beaches and Spanish architecture, of tourists and neatly manicured palm trees. This is the Cartagena of flooded mud roads, of makeshift houses with tin roofs, of no running water, of intermittent electricity. This is the "other" Cartagena, the *ciudad popular*.

Tatiana, a 53-year-old IDP woman, lives with four of her eight children in a one-bedroom house. The walls are made of wooden planks nailed together, and the windows have no glass, but Tatiana feels lucky because she has cement floors. She knows many people whose floors are just the earth beneath them.

Tatiana was displaced in 2000 from the department of Sucre, south of Bolívar, fleeing threats after she was raped by a paramilitary. Before her displacement, Tatiana was a small business owner and she often volunteered with the elderly. She says she was something of a community leader in her prior life, but Tatiana felt lost when she first arrived in Cartagena. That began to change when, in order to generate an income, she began working with an agricultural collective through a *cabildo indígena* [a council or community organization of indigenous peoples]. The *cabildo* often sent Tatiana as a representative to other community meetings, and with time, she became a go-to person for information.

Many of the people I met during my time in Cartagena were through Tatiana, who has become a recognized figure among IDPs. She is something of a social entrepreneur,[56] someone who goes out of her way to help others access aid, organize and learn about their rights. She estimates that she has personally brought over a thousand IDPs to the *Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas* (UARIV), the local government office responsible for IDP assistance. As we walk through the UARIV office one Monday morning, Tatiana greets every single person – she's a minor celebrity here.

Tatiana says that because of her own experiences, she thinks of it as her duty to help other IDPs get the help they need. "I was raped by a paramilitary, and behind me, there are many other women who have been raped too, but they can't talk about it. I have had the courage to speak out and denounce it. There are women who don't know what their rights are, who don't know where they can go to demand them. As *liderezas* [women leaders] we have to bring this message to the neighborhoods," she says. "People here now know me as a leader. Whatever concern they may have, whatever information

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[56] For those familiar with the work of journalist Malcolm Gladwell, Tatiana is a "Lois Weisberg" type – she seems to know everyone and everyone seems to know her. The takeaway from Gladwell's 1999 *The New Yorker* article nominally about Lois Weisberg, but really about the power of social networks is: "Poverty is not deprivation. It is isolation" (Gladwell 1999, p. 62). In this way, Tatiana, a social entrepreneur who forges connections across otherwise unrelated or unknown groups or individuals, is playing an essential role in the economic and social survival of IDPs in Cartagena. This can also be analyzed as an example of "popularity" or "centrality" in a social network: Tatiana is effectively the person that serves as a connector between multiple actors or nodes in a network (Kadushin 2012).

they need, they come to me, and I tell them what to do and where to go."

Tatiana's story exemplifies many of the common characteristics of reception into and formation of new IDP social networks in Cartagena. When Tatiana first arrived in the city she was primarily concerned with her individual family's survival (as described in Chapter 3), but she found that she could more effectively satisfy her need for income generation through a group (the *cabildo*). Building economic ties eventually led to her involvement in other social networks, and with time, Tatiana began recruiting others to join, as well.

Obviously, not all IDPs experience this same trajectory, but Tatiana's experience is a useful frame for this chapter, which will look at the development of, barriers to and functions of IDP social network formation in Cartagena.

Social networks are can be understood as sets of voluntary direct and indirect relationships, communication and exchanges. These horizontal (though not necessarily equal) links are built on reciprocal trust. Social networks are adaptive: they evolve and transform over time to meet changing mutual interests or goals. Because of this flexibility, social networks can achieve results that otherwise would not be possible among individuals, more formal closed organizational systems, or abstracted market relations (Castagna and Jeyte 2011; Davis 2012; Kadushin 2012).

This chapter will examine the breakdown of social networks prior to displacement, the process of joining or establishing social networks in Cartagena and the multiple functions that social networks serve in the lives of IDPs.

Corrosion of social networks prior to displacement

Even before the act of flight, "geographical displacement has already been preceded by an emotional one: the withdrawal from social belonging" (Meertens 2001, p. 137). In places of origin, death, abandonment and the climate of fear fostered by sustained violence have already eaten away at social cohesion and formal and informal support networks long before the displacement event itself.[57] "Many of my friends and my *compañeros* [colleagues] at work and in our agricultural collective have been killed unjustly in a war that is not ours. The loss of so many friends, so many colleagues, so many relatives is incredibly hard," says Manuel. Entire villages are ripped apart by social fragmentation through death or migration, sometimes leaving behind ghost towns of thousands of empty homes.

What social networks do remain in communities of origin suffer from the corrosive impact of generalized warfare. The imposition of multiple and rotating regimes of power and domination, changing hands between armed groups over time, is an

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[57] This is in fact one of the biggest critiques about the dominant policy discourse on "right to return" in most international and national internal displacement policies around the world, which tend to emphasize return to place of origin over sustainable integration or resettlement. What is a "return" to "home" when it has been ravaged by war, when livelihoods have been destroyed, when social communities are no longer cohesive? As Ballard (2012) writes of post-conflict property restitution, which has been critiqued for its idealization of return, "the very concept of "home" is altered by war…. Because the ideal of home is as much about the memory of customs, traditions or beliefs as it is about place, it may be impossible to return 'home'" (p. 491).

invasion not just of physical space but of social order, as well. It is also important to note that when new actors enter the scene, the pre-existing social orders do not get erased; rather, new and old orders superimpose upon each other, overlapping and creating deeply contested social identities.

For example, many rural families are forced to pay bribes, house troops, and provision armed groups with food and water. Maria and her family lived in a big house on what Carolina, Maria's daughter, calls a "strategic corner" in the town of El Carmen de Bolívar. Unfortunately, the asset of a well-located piece of land became a liability for Maria's family. Because the whole town was visible from their house, armed groups would often commandeer Maria's home. "They camped out there, they stored their arms there, they left all of their things there," says Carolina. "They would stay for days or weeks, and my mother felt the brunt of it." Against her will, Maria was forced to cook, serve and do laundry for the members of whichever armed group was currently occupying her land and her home.

This, in turn, made Maria and her family a target for opposing groups who saw her involvement, whether by choice or not, as a sign of affiliation or support. "As soon as other groups found out, they called my mother an *infiltrada* [spy] and they accused her of being on the other side," says Carmen. One morning, some strangers arrived in the area asking for Maria by name, but luckily, says Carmen, without knowing her face. They called Maria a *guerrilla*, and they said they had come to the house to kill her. By good fortune Maria had just stepped out to wash dishes in a nearby stream, and she was warned in time to escape.

The successive conquest and re-conquest of rural territory, accompanied by the changing of hands of power over a civilian population, requires "continual adaptation to new requirements of loyalty and, simultaneously, fear of vengeance for alleged old loyalties to former occupiers" (Meertens 2001, p. 137). The result is the *ley de silencia* [law of silence]: keep quiet or risk accusation and retaliation (Pécaut 2000). Such silence has a dampening effect on the potential for collective action, whether social, economic or political, because it prevents the formation of relationships based on stable and reciprocal trust.

Isabel, another IDP woman living in Cartagena, was initially displaced after one of her neighbors deliberately and falsely accused her of cooking for and colluding with guerrillas. The paramilitaries arrived at midnight, guns in hand, forcing Isabel and her family to flee with little notice. Her neighbor had been jealous of Isabel's relatively more bountiful harvests and livestock, which was apparently reason enough to find a way to force Isabel out by associating her with the "enemy."

Isabel says the experience has made her guarded and suspicious: "You never know whom you can trust because sometimes even your friends betray you and take advantage of you. Back home, I thought I wasn't messing with anyone, I thought nothing could happen to me, I thought that they could never betray me like that. But then jealousy is awakened, and they threaten you."

Maria and Isabel were both displaced because of their social identities, ones that they had not chosen but that had been forced upon them by the cruel machinations of internal armed conflict. Most of the time, armed groups in Colombia do not engage directly with each other but rather do so through civilians (Vidal-López 2012). The

distinction between "combatant" and "civilian" begins to lose meaning in a context in which identities and associations are forged on the basis of force, rumor and strategic advantage (Slim 2008). Social connection, real or perceived, can become a risk and a liability. As a result, some begin to avoid social connection altogether, creating a generalized withdrawal from social life prior to displacement. One IDP woman described the rupturing of social identity as the feeling of being completely adrift or "like a ship without a harbor" (Meertens 2001, p. 141).

This makes it that much more difficult for IDPs to re-establish themselves upon arrival in host cities because they lack a prior social network to both help cushion the trauma of displacement and navigate the new urban environment in which they find themselves (Moser 2001; Frederico et al. 2007; Braun 2009). The individualization of the experience of displacement – the sense that "I am alone" and that it is unsafe to reach out to friends, neighbors, and sometimes even family members – undermines the possibility of constructing or reconstructing social networks in the site of reception even before IDPs arrive there. As Gloria of APRODIC explains, the fear that IDPs develop in their places of origin follows them to the city. They become dejected and politically demobilized, often too afraid to demand their rights and organize themselves, she says.

(Re)establishing social networks and social capital in the site of reception

To briefly reintroduce the concept, social capital can be understood as the capital generated by "social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness" (Putnam 2007, p. 137). Social capital is analytically divided upon several axes (some of which were mentioned in Chapter 1), but for the purposes of this chapter, the most useful typology will be to distinguish between "bridging" and "bonding" social capital. Bridging social capital is generated through links across social cleavages (e.g. ties between people who are not alike), while bonding social capital is generated through in-group links (e.g. ties between people who are alike) (Patulny and Haase Svendsen 2007; Putnam 2007). As IDPs move into the urban periphery, they can form two main types of social capital: bridging (between IDPs and other residents of Cartagena) and bonding (amongst IDPs). However, there are significant barriers to both kinds of social networks, which will be reviewed in more detail below.

Bridging: Building links with the historic poor in Cartagena

Host communities don't exactly welcome IDPs with open arms. Whatever charitable good will or solidarity is expressed towards IDPs upon first arrival is usually short-lived because of contestation over space and identity, as well as discrimination based on race, ethnicity or displacement status. IDPs are often blamed for increasing crime rates, treated with fear, and persecuted and stigmatized for their cultural, regional or ethnic differences (Vidal López, Atehortúa Arredondo, and Salcedo 2011; Zea 2011). Reception into host communities is often hostile or defensive, as a result.

Manuel says it was difficult to find work when he first arrived to Cartagena 15 years ago because of the stigma associated with displacement. "Many times you have to

deny you are displaced just to be able to survive here in the city," he says. In other words, it is not just the actual displacement that matters but also the *perception* of displacement and of displaced persons.

For existing residents, IDPs represent economic competition, as mentioned in Chapter 3, as well as increased spatial density and overcrowding of homes and neighborhoods. As a result, urban host communities sometimes passively or actively resist the integration of IDPs into their settlements and neighborhoods (Morvaridi 2008). In this way, some of the individual or family survival strategies employed by IDPs (e.g. micro-businesses, squatting on vacant land, engaging in prostitution, etc.) may actually directly interfere with the possibility of fostering bridging social capital.

A key difference between IDPs and economic migrants, who may experience some of the same resistance on the basis of the competition over limited resources and jobs, lies in the special treatment that IDPs are afforded by state policy. Competition over public services and government aid can prevent the formation of social networks between IDPs and host communities, who resent IDPs for pulling attention away from the needs of the historic poor of Cartagena. For example, Carmen says that some non-IDP women complain about waiting on long lines at public health clinics only to watch an IDP enter the room, skip the line and head right in to an appointment time reserved for IDPs. Schools are also a point of contention because new IDP students crowd classrooms.

As the urban population grows and public services cannot keep apace for lack of human and financial capital, the public system cannot handle the extra burden. Because IDPs are given preferential treatment in accordance with national policies (which will be addressed in Chapter 6), the historic poor feel like they lose out on account of the *invasores* [invaders] occupying their neighborhoods. The influx of a new group of people competing for the same limited housing supply, job market and public services creates tensions that are only aggravated by government programs that seem to sacrifice the needs and priorities of native residents in favor of IDPs (Ibáñez and Velásquez 2008).

The perception that IDPs already get more help than they deserve leads to hostilities and fewer social safety nets cast in their direction on the part of the host population (Vidal López, Atehortúa Arredondo, and Salcedo 2011). Ironically, then, the very state-based public assistance that is intended to help IDPs inadvertently exacerbates frictions rather than facilitates sustainable integration. This is also true of inconsistent housing subsidies, which can lead to the "hopscotch" effect that delays social connections and prevents residential stability, as explained in the previous chapter.

Another obstacle to the formation of productive IDP-host relationships is the misconception that all displaced people are violent. "They call us *guerrilleros* or paramilitaries or part of some armed group," says Carolina. "They don't understand that we are *campesinos* [peasants], that we farm, that we have nothing to do with that illogical war that has been forced upon us." The association with violence takes a toll on the whole family: in addition to limiting employment options, it also means that IDP children are often refused entry into or discriminated against in the public school system.

This fear is contagious, explains Eva, Carolina's sister. "Even if one person offers you help, someone else comes along and says, 'Why are you helping her? She'll put a bomb in your house,'" she says.

The discrimination against IDPs extends beyond their immediate new neighbors. "We've been rejected and we've been discriminated against, not just by the communities around us but also by the very institutions that should be protecting us and supporting us," says Katy, a member of the *Comité de Seguimiento de Auto 092*, an IDP women's advocacy group. Natalia, the president of the Comité, adds that the police often blame the violence in Cartagena on IDPs.[58]

Carmen says that through community organizations like FUNSAREP, which bring IDPs and non-IDPs together, host communities have begun to realize the need to redirect their anger and frustration away from IDPs themselves and towards the local government for failing to meet the needs of all of the city's residents. Carmen (and several of my other sources) sees this as a slow-moving sea change in the attitudes of the host communities, which will be explored more in Chapter 5.

That said, the competition over limited resources will only heighten as more and more IDPs move into Cartagena. The struggle to mobilize coalitions of IDPs and non-IDPs together to make collective claims on the state is put at risk by the constant influx of newly-arrived and vulnerable populations in the urban periphery.

Centripetal bonding: Social cohesion among IDPs

Some would argue there is more hope for bonding social capital among IDPs who have suffered similar fates. Trauma and displacement can oddly enough become the basis for community when otherwise unconnected persons "develop a form of fellowship on the strength of that common tie" (Erikson 1995, p. 186).

However, this "gathering of the wounded" has both "centripetal and centrifugal tendencies": it can bring together or it can cast apart (p. 186). In the case of Colombia, the shared experience of migratory displacement is not enough alone to build a sufficient basis for social cohesion among IDPs, especially when those who have been displaced because of paramilitaries, those displaced by guerrillas and those displaced by the state military wind up as "neighbors" in host cities. Former social connections – whether real or perceived, chosen or applied by force – can prevent the formation of new ones in the reception city.

Even the most mundane acts of daily life can become sites of confrontation or fear. One community organizer told me about an IDP woman who was waiting in line to pick up a package when she turned around and saw the man who had killed both her husband and her brother waiting in line right behind her. She fainted and that same man, her enemy *and* her neighbor, caught her as she fell. Despite the fact that IDPs have migrated explicitly to avoid such tensions, suspicion and uncertainty about who can be trusted and who is the "enemy" persist even in their new settlements.

Although some IDPs may reassemble into a form of cooperation with people they know or on the basis of common place of origin, "the possibility of forming more extensive forms of social solidarity is undermined by the omnipresence of mistrust, distrust that is at the heart of a process of psychological individualization accompanied by

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[58] Chapter 6 will explore how the public discourse around displacement perpetuates these negative stereotypes, though some of my sources say that the general conditions have improved in the past few years because of increased awareness and IDP activism in the city.

the powerlessness of individuals to assume responsibility for their own lives" (Pécaut 2000, p. 101). Even those who come from the "same place" negotiate and understand their displacement differently (Malkki 1996). It is not enough to rely on common experience to create social networks, nor is it enough to rely on shared location. "Community" is not built based on physical proximity alone, and "neighborhoods" are not simply collections of houses and streets. Rather, they are constructed and renegotiated through an "ongoing practical and discursive production/imagining of a people"— a task made that much more difficult when even the imagining of an individual or a family has already been contested by armed conflict, not to mention a collective "people" (Gieryn 2000, p. 472).

The formation of social networks

Given these significant constraints on both bridging and bonding social capital, how exactly do IDPs form social networks? How do they engage in the "imagining of a people" in their site of reception?

Though it is by no means revolutionary or even particularly unique, it is worth understanding the baseline process of social network formation for IDPs. This process shares many of the same characteristics or features of social network formation for any urban population: As new people arrive to a city, they first seek basic survival (shelter, food, livelihoods). As those needs are in the process of being met, new residents begin to bump into each other on the street or other public spaces, in places of work, in the marketplace, in church. The physical proximity to neighbors and strangers in the city can represent a drastic change for IDPs, most of whom migrate from low-density rural areas (Bello 2001). They begin acquaintance relationships based on visual familiarity (e.g. "Oh, I've seen you around before"), based on propinquity (e.g. "You're my new neighbor"), based on private interests (e.g. "You have something I want"), or based on mutual interests (e.g. "We can share this information" or "We believe in the same things").

Charles Kadushin's (2012) review of research on social networks finds that the two major determinants of social network formation are *propinquity* ("being in the same place at the same time") and *homophily* (common norms, values or attributes). These features often create feedback loops with each other to reinforce social networks: "If people flock together, it appears there are four processes involved: (1) the same kinds of people come together; (2) people influence one another and in the process become alike; (3) people can end up in the same place; (4) and once they are in the same place, the very place influences them to become alike" (p. 20).

Acquaintanceships sometimes develop into deeper friendships, romantic relationships, work relationships, or other tightly bonded networks like affinity or religious groups. Some social networks are codified or formalized into closed organizational structures while others remain more flexible and fluid.

"We are all social beings by nature,"[59] says Raquel, a member of the *Red de Mujeres de Cartagena y Bolívar* [Women's Network of Cartagena and Bolívar]. "You can arrive to

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[59] As Kadushin (2012) affirms, "Humans, from birth, desire to interact with others in order to feel secure and satisfy their needs" (p. 88).

a neighborhood alone, without knowing anyone, but with time between the inhabitants in a community, they get to know each other and they identify needs and take actions together. That's the logic of a neighborhood, of a city: people arrive and they get to know each other and wave to their neighbors."

All of this probably sounds like a familiar story, but what makes it interesting is that for IDPs, the formation of *any* social network seems to fly in the face of so many barriers to social connection: fear and lack of trust, emotional trauma, ongoing competition for limited resources, the *ley de silencia* [the law of silence].

Not all social networks are formed organically or spontaneously through the sort of neighbor-to-neighbor engagement that Raquel describes. Many are facilitated through established community organizations, local or international NGOs or changes in the legal regime. For example, it was only with the passage of the Constitutional Court of Colombia ordinance Auto 092 in 2008 that the civil society organization *Comité de Seguimiento de Auto 092* [Committee of Follow-up to the Auto 092] was formed to monitor the implementation of the ordinance. This group would never have come together were it not for the exogenous role played by Auto 092. Similarly, it was through a state-sponsored project that provided the funding and the land for 100 self-constructed houses for IDPs that the community organization *Asociación Mis Esfuerzos* (to which several of my sources belong) was first formed.

This is not a new phenomenon: from youth groups formed by NGOs to satisfy donor requirements[60] to participatory governing bodies established by state agencies to comply with the law, social networks are often created intentionally to supply the "community," constituency or stakeholder group to which a certain program or policy is responding. We can think of this as the "top" reaching down to the "bottom" to build it up.

The spontaneous mutual aid relationships previously described by Raquel often reinforce these intentionally-constructed social networks. Carolina explains the process in the following way: "First we began to build links with our friends, with our relatives, and then our neighbors. When we managed to build an organization [*Asociación Mis Esfuerzos*] that actually got heard in the community, people began to see the positive impact our work was having, and our reputation began to travel by word of mouth. More and more people came to us wanting to join and to work with us." In this way, what could have been seen as an "artificial" social network/organization (because of the exogenous role of the local government in its formation) becomes legitimized by a wider public and embedded more soundly within the community.

A note on the diversity of social networks

Given this broad-based sketch of social network formation, it is worth considering some of the nuances and underlying dynamics. Not every IDP forms or joins

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[60] For a particularly telling example of this, see Ann Swidler and Susan Cotts Watkins's study of donor-funded AIDS programs in Malawi. Participants in these programs began speaking and behaving in the "language" of international donors, presenting and organizing themselves in such a way so as to benefit from the resources being funneled into Malawi. This re-formation of social networks made them *legible* to outsiders by conforming to their standards and expectations of what a "local community" looks like (Swidler and Watkins 2009).

social networks in the same way (if at all), and not all social networks are created equally. I also want to make the clear distinction that a social network is not inherently *good* or *positive* – gangs and armed groups are also social networks, for example.

There appears to be a generational divide in participation in community life. Ana, a 65-year-old woman, fled central Bolívar with four young grandchildren after her son and son-in-law were killed under unclear circumstances. Ana escaped barefoot and left everything behind, including her identification papers, which became a significant obstacle when she began looking for work in the city. Unfortunately, the lack of employment opportunities in Cartagena is particularly acute for IDPs over the age of 50 (Human Rights Watch 2005). Because government aid has been inadequate and inconsistent for Ana,[61] and because of the difficulty of securing formal employment, Ana saved up to buy an old sewing machine to sew from home to earn a small income. "I've had to work hard to survive," she says.

Ana says the struggle to find work tired her out, and she disengaged from broader social networks, preferring instead to focus on her own family's survival rather than on forming new friendships or social bonds outside of the family unit. "I am tired and old already, and what you lose you can never get back," she says. Ana spends her day at home, and though she greets her neighbors as they pass by, she does not spend time with them unless she needs to ask a small favor. When asked if she feels a sense of belonging or community, Ana simply says no.

The majority of the IDPs I met who were actively engaged in community associations were in their mid-50s or younger, perhaps reflecting a level of energy or hope to begin life anew that older IDPs may not demonstrate. Unfortunately, my data cannot provide a fuller account of the generational differences in social network formation, and this would be an interesting field for future research.

The multipurpose functions of social networks

Social networks of poor and disadvantaged groups (like IDPs) serve multiple functions, including limiting risk, enhancing economic opportunity and retaining – or redefining – identity (Woolcock 2010). Both instrumental and emotional functions of IDP social networks are reviewed in more depth below.

Instrumental functions of social networks

Sharing information, access and economic support

When Diana first arrived in Cartagena a month before I met her, she says she was on her own, without friends, without family, and without support. One day, Yolanda, another IDP woman, found Diana crying and took it upon herself to invite Diana and her children to come live with her in their small rented home. "I arrived to a strange place where I don't know anyone, and if it weren't for Yolanda, I wouldn't be able to ask for aid because I don't know anything and I don't know the city," says Diana. On the day I met them, Yolanda was on her way to take Diana to declare her displacement status at the

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[61] Problems with state-provided aid will be examined in greater depth in Chapter 6.

UARIV, the local government office of orientation and attention for IDPs.

Making an official declaration and entering the national IDP registry is the first step in the process to access state-provided aid, but it is a first step often not taken.[62] To be able to take advantage of government aid programs, you first need to know about them. The lack of legal and rights literacy among IDPs can be a significant barrier to access: almost a third of IDPs in Cartagena said they did not know what humanitarian aid was provided by the state (Prada and Mieles 2007).

For those that do know about aid and how to access it, there are other obstacles, like the difficulty of navigating complex bureaucratic procedures and the costs of travel and time spent at the UARIV and other government offices. In Cartagena it takes on average 113 calendar days from the moment of displacement to filing a declaration and to finally hearing the status of the declaration (ICRC-WFP 2007). With long wait times at local assistance offices (some report having to queue up at 4 AM), the risk of being identified by enemies, and the possibility of rejection from the national registry, many IDPs choose to avoid the process entirely (Albuja and Ceballos 2010; Zea 2011).

This results in a serious underestimation of the IDP population in the official count (which is based upon registration numbers), as well as increased risks for unregistered IDPs. When research has been done to compare registered and unregistered IDPs, the evidence suggests that unregistered IDPs are by far the most vulnerable and isolated segment of the urban population. Unregistered IDPs fare worse than registered IDPs in terms of access to healthcare, education, and food security. Their anonymity and invisibility, whether chosen or not, puts them at even greater risk, and little to no effort has been made by local authorities to address their particular needs and vulnerabilities (Ibáñez and Velásquez 2008; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011b).

Of those IDP households in Cartagena that did know about state-based aid programs, 40% said they learned about such programs through family members or friends and 13% said they did so with the help of a community organization that works with IDPs (Prada and Mieles 2007). The information sharing made possible through social networks makes arrival and reception into the city much more manageable for IDPs. One IDP man says that IDPs who frequent the same places begin to develop information sharing networks and friendships through these interactions. "If you ask me things you don't know, and I ask you something I don't know, we share that information. If one displaced person gets some information, all of the displaced people get it over time," he explains.

Notably, only 4.5% of registered IDPs said they counted on local and national government agencies as important sources of information about state-based aid (Prada and Mieles 2007). Eva says that because the government has not proactively provided information to IDPs about their rights as victims, they have had to learn by their own means. "The necessity of bringing home food to our families means that we *have* to know

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[62] As mentioned in Chapter 2, a national survey taken in 2010 found almost a quarter of the national IDP population is not officially registered either because they did not declare their displacement or because their application was rejected. Of those who are not registered, 45% said they did not register because they did not know how and 30% said they did not register because of fear of discovery and retribution by those they wished to flee in the first place (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011b).

the decrees, the laws, the articles. We do the work the state should be doing, which is teaching ourselves about our rights, about where to demand them and how to ensure they are fulfilled. *We* have to teach the *state*, and we bring that to our communities, too," says Eva.

Community organizations in Cartagena play a significant role in information sharing, orientation and accompaniment during the arrival and reception stages of displacement (Prada and Mieles 2007). Those who are more experienced and knowledgeable about the aid systems reach out to newly displaced people arriving in the city. When anything is learned, it is taught to someone else. Information does not stagnate in social networks; it is transferred both through word of mouth and through more formal mediums like workshops and meetings.

Economic support through social ties

Like Tatiana, several of my sources joined or formed social networks or organizations for the purpose of enhancing their economic survival strategies. To apply sociologist Mark Granovetter's concept of "the strength of weak ties" (1973), social ties create access to economic opportunity that can mean the difference between starvation and survival.

Many of the IDP women I met are members of artisan collectives that make and sell traditional Colombian handicrafts like woven bags, beaded necklaces and jewelry made from *caña flecha* (the black and white tropical palm leaf for which Colombian hats are famous). Gangs are another example of a social network formed or joined on the basis of economic gain. Other IDPs, like Tatiana and Manuel, joined agricultural collectives, some of which have received government subsidies for *proyectos productivos* [productive projects]. Some community organizations also offer job skills training, and others (like LIMPAL) have a built-in opportunity for members to earn a small income by catering or hosting events.[63]

One IDP member of an agricultural collective explains: "We got tired of waiting and pleading for government aid, so we decided to organize ourselves to do work together. What we know how to do is *sembrar* [to plant], what we know is the countryside. We're suffering here in the city, and we don't have anyone else to rely on, so we have to make it work together."

Emotional and expressive functions of social networks: Rewriting personal and collective narratives

As I speak with Diana, she breaks down in tears and Yolanda encourages her to continue, patting her back and offering a voice when Diana feels without one. Yolanda is the only person with whom Diana has spent time since arriving in Cartagena. This friendship is one of the only reasons Diana has survived for the past month. "The support

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[63] Another incentive is that most workshops or meetings hosted by these organizations advertise free *refrigerios* [snacks] or meals, and many will offer to cover the transportation costs of the participants to and from the meeting. Whether or not participants are actually interested in the content of the meeting, the availability of free food is a big draw. Sometimes this offering creates deeper buy-in, and participants who used to come for the extras begin attending regularly for the content, instead.

Yolanda has given me makes me feel calmer and gives me the strength to face what's happening in my life. It makes me feel safer here," she says.

The emotional connectivity built through social networks – also known as "social support" – helps many IDPs articulate a sense of hope and an ability to move forward. Some studies have shown that social support ameliorates long-term effects of mental health disorders like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Kadushin 2012).

As Manuel explains, he cannot simply dwell in the tragedy or suffering he has experienced. "In the midst of this violence, you have to keep your life going, you have to keep building friendships," he says. "In spite of the things you live through, you have to try to keep smiling." Even the small interactions with neighbors – playing cards, sharing a modest meal, laughing about sandals getting stuck in the mud on a dirt road – recreate a semblance of a "normal" life.

On a broader level, social networks create the space for re-defining the life projects and personal identities that have been interrupted or contested by armed conflict. Above all else, civilians in the midst of war or armed conflict experience a loss of power: a loss of power *to do*, power *to be*, power *over* events, environments or other people, and power *with* other people in social groups. As Slim (2008) writes:

> It is difficult *to do* things when you have no land and no resources. It is difficult *to be* respected, assertive or protective when you have lost rank or confidence and are being attacked by militarily superior threats like armed groups, or being told to clutch a ration card by humanitarian workers and wait in line for food deliveries. It can be difficult to have power *over* people or *with* other people when the politics around you have changed and you are caught in the middle of two more powerful and extreme groups at war with one another (p. 110, emphasis added).

This analysis is important for recognizing both the individual losses of power (*to do*, *to be, over*) and the collective losses of power (*with)* for civilians in armed conflict. Reestablishing the ability to collaborate with others for mutual gain (whether emotional, political, economic, or security-driven) reaffirms all of these powers that have been diminished by conflict and displacement. Aside from reinforcing the obvious power *with* others, social networks that translate into community policing groups, IDP advocacy organizations, or agricultural collectives offer members *something to do* and *someone to be*, as well as the power *over* their environment.

Social networks are ultimately about re-establishing a sense of self and a sense of belonging. In order for IDPs to set down roots and to integrate fully into an urban environment, Bello (2001) explains that two main processes are necessary:

1. The emergence of a dynamic of *hacer*, or "doing," that gives IDPs the feeling of being capable, independent and useful to form a new basis for individual identity.
2. Self-recognition as a *victim* without falling into *victimization*. This implies demanding rights of the state (self-recognition as a citizen) as well as making use of all family, community and institutional resources available (self-recognition as a member of a group). This is about recognizing agency to shape the future without forgetting about the tragedies of the past.

For Liliana, coordinator of Mesa DESC, social networks can satisfy a need for personal meaning when violence has fundamentally altered who you think you are and who think you can be. "Sometimes you can't see the magnitude of what your words can mean to someone. You can't see it, but other people can see it. Sometimes you can't see the transformation that you've started with your actions, with your passing by, with your conversations, with your *being* with other people. That creates a deep personal satisfaction for me," says Liliana. "It's about looking for that feeling that you have something to give, that you have the expressive or affectionate ability that allows you to *encontrarte con los demás* [be with others]. In working with the community, in being part of a movement or of a family, you find yourself."

Ximena is from an older generation of IDPs: when she was eight, she fled the department of Sucre in the 1950s during *La Violencia*. Thirty-seven of her relatives have been killed during her lifetime. After her son was killed in 1997 because of his community work with youth, Ximena founded an organization in his name to help families who have lost relatives to urban violence. Ximena also works with FUNSAREP and Grupo Espejo, an organization that uses theater and art to teach people about non-violence. On top of all of this, she is the president of the local *Junta de Acción Comunal* [Community Action Board], an independent community development and decision-making body.[64] Needless to say, Ximena is known widely across Cartagena as a community leader.

"I didn't come to this earth just to eat and to dance. I have a *compromiso* [commitment]," says Ximena. "Whether God exists or not, I have always learned that there is something that moves this world, and that moves me. I find God in that plant, in those birds that sing. So I will try to be a better person, and I will help my children be better people, and I will treat others with solidarity and with respect so that when they meet me they say, 'I didn't think it was possible. This woman whose mother was killed, whose brothers were killed, whose two sons were killed, how can this woman speak to me of hope? How can this woman speak to me of faith? How can this woman speak to me of *compromiso*? How can this woman tell me about solidarity and about respecting nature and life?' This is a totally different way to build the things that give meaning to our life."

Beyond rewriting a personal narrative, Ximena says that becoming a part of a community is also about rewriting a communal narrative. It's about redefining a people and a nation. "We have the capacity to transform and to build, which is what these organizations that unite us are doing," says Ximena. "We are working on everything that has to do with the *deconstrucción* [de-construction] of imaginaries, because the violence has become a way of *being*, and we as thinkers, as professionals, as people, need to find a way to transform that which has done us harm. We need to turn it into a new *construcción de vida* [life project], a new social fabric, and a new language to say and do things… These families and organizations are working to find the serious and concrete tools that we can use to work on this transformation. Because if we don't educate ourselves and try to make this change, we'll always end up saying, 'Well, it's because Colombia is violent.' But

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[64] For more information on the unique community governing bodies known as *Juntas de Acción Comunal*, see (United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services 2001).

Colombia is so much more than that."

Summary

Before the event of displacement, social networks in communities of origin are torn apart or reconfigured because of death, fragmentation of family life, violence and the dissolution of trust in friends, neighbors and the institutions ostensibly responsible for protecting life. Upon urban settlement IDPs must grapple with hostile host communities competing for limited economic, spatial and political resources, as well as the everyday violence and fear of living in a new environment. The lack of residential stability and social cohesion among IDPs also stands in the way of developing deeper bonds of solidarity or trust.

This chapter has explained how and why social networks form even in the face of such obstacles. Some networks form organically because of propinquity and homophily, while others are built as a response to exogenous factors like laws or government projects. Not all social networks are equal: they range from artisan collectives to urban gangs to childcare support groups. Some are more flexible or fluid, while others begin to take on more structure and formality.

The common link between all social networks is the importance of the functions that they play for individuals and groups of IDPs. As one IDP woman explains, social networks are a necessity of both immediate survival and long-term urban integration: "*El mismo proyecto de vida nos exige eso* [Our life projects demand that we form social networks]." IDP social networks serve instrumental (e.g. access to information and economic support) as well as emotional functions (e.g. providing a sense of self) in the process of integrating into the city.

The next two chapters will look at how IDP social networks coalesce into organizations, coalitions and broader social movements that make demands on the state. Chapter 5 will outline how IDP social movements operate given the physical, economic and security constraints placed upon them within the context of Cartagena. Chapter 6 will focus on the interactions between these movements and the state.

Chapter 5
Building Social Movements Against the Odds

I meet up with Isabel one steamy 98-degree afternoon to pay a visit with Liliana, a well-known community leader in Cartagena as the coordinator of Mesa DESC and as an active *madre comunitaria* [Community Mother].[65] Though Liliana only lives a few blocks away, it is too hot and Isabel's knees are too tired to make the walk, so we catch a bumpy ride on a *bicitaxi* [a pedicab]. We sit in white plastic chairs on Liliana's open patio, sipping sweet black coffee. The patio is well shaded by the tall trees surrounding us on all sides, but the heat is oppressive and not even a fresh *guanabana* fruit knocked out of a patio tree can keep us from sweating. While we talk, Liliana's two dogs paw at the hard shells of the 12 turtles that amble freely in the yard. The dogs never seem to manage to produce the results they want – to tip the turtles, to startle them, whatever it may be – but that doesn't stop them from trying.

Liliana shows me her library of books about Cartagena, social movements, women's rights and various UN and other NGO publications. We spend 30 minutes clicking through photos on her computer of past events with *madres comunitarias,* Mesa DESC and the *Cumbre de los Pueblos* [Summit of the People], a community-organized response to the Organization of American States Summit of the Americas, which took place in Cartagena in April 2012.[66] Many of the faces in the photos keep cropping up in other photos and other events. It seems there is generous overlap in membership in different organizations. In fact, most of the IDPs I met who were actively engaged in some sort of community work were involved in more than one group or association. It makes for a tangled and interconnected web of members and leaders across multiple groups and identities.

While not an IDP herself, Liliana works closely with many IDP women in both Mesa DESC and *madres comunitarias.* As she leans back in her plastic chair, she explains, "*En este camino se ha ido tropezando pero se ha ido enredando con una cantidad de mujeres* [Along this path, we have stumbled, but we have gathered up many women along the way]."

"You always say we are *tejiendo* [weaving together]," says Isabel.

Weaving together loose social networks into coalitions and organizations ensures that the key functions of information sharing, friendship and community engagement can build towards something bigger: a social movement, a political change, a chance to rewrite the narrative of war as a social condition, even a hope for peace.

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[65] *Madres comunitarias* are employed by the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar [Colombian Family Welfare Institute, known as ICBF] to run child-care programs known as *hogares comunitarios* [community nurseries] out of their own homes. The *madres comunitarias* have long struggled for better working conditions, better pay and more social protections from the ICBF (Vegas and Santibáñez 2010).
[66] The 2012 Summit of the Americas was infamously overshadowed by a scandal involving U.S. Secret Service Agents who brought prostitutes into their hotel. This controversy, which was covered more heavily in the media than the actual content of the Summit, highlighted the pervasiveness of Cartagena's sex tourism industry. As mentioned at several points throughout this thesis, many IDP women resort to prostitution as an economic coping strategy, which is most likely bolstered by Cartagena's reputation as a sex tourist destination.

To achieve those broader goals, the kinds of social networks described in Chapter 4 have to coalesce into organizations[67] and social movements against the odds in order to make claims on the state. The first two sections of this chapter charts the ways in which IDPs and non-IDPs overcome barriers to form coalitions in a city wracked by insecurity. The third section looks closely at the influence of armed actors on these social movements and organizations. The final section seeks to answer the question: Given the violence they have already suffered, why do IDPs engage in high-risk social movements?

Building coalitions

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the past two decades have seen an upsurge in organized civil society groups protesting the armed conflict and promoting an agenda of peace. Beginning most visibly in the 1990s, peace rallies, public marches and even the formation of "peace communities" have become increasingly common in Colombia's department capitals and other cities (Rice 2011).

What is it that mobilizes people to create organizations, form coalitions or join movements for collective action?[68] As Fireman and Gamson (1979) summarize, some of the primary factors behind social movement mobilization include "interest in individual goods, interest in collective goods, and solidarity with others interested in collective goods" (p. 14). In other words, collective action groups can satisfy personal and communal needs while also providing the basis for emotional connection.

Sociologists and political theorists have long established a link between the informal, grassroots mobilizing structures provided by social networks and the emergence of social movements. More flexible associational networks develop into more enduring formal movement structures in order to sustain collective action (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996). The following section will look at the dynamics of how IDP social networks crystallize into coalitions amongst IDPs and between IDPs and non-IDPs.

Bonding IDP social networks

The *Comité de Seguimiento de Auto 092* (hereafter referred to as the Comité) meets in a small room packed with the ubiquitous plastic chairs that every Cartagena community organization seems to use because they are cheap, stackable and lightweight. The three filing cabinets in the room are crammed so tight with papers that the drawers don't move and the rest of their would-be contents spill out onto the floor in high piles of disorganized pamphlets, reports and posters. Everyone is sweating from the midday heat. The light overhead is off and a broken fan hums loudly, blowing weak streams of warm air without ever managing to cool the room.

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[67] As defined by Kadushin (2012), an organization is simply a "social structure designed to get things done through the cooperation of individuals." Organizations require social networks to address the four challenges they face: 1) motivating people to do what the organization wants them to do; 2) deciding what should be done; 3) accomplishing what needs to be done; and 4) acquiring resources needed to get things done (p. 90).

[68] For a more complex and in-depth look at social movement mobilization, actors and trajectories on a theoretical, comparative level, see (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001).

The Comité has been offered this shared space in the building of Corvivienda, the local government office responsible for housing and community development projects in Cartagena. They are not officially affiliated – the Comité is an independent organization of IDP community leaders – but the offering of an office once a week is a big gesture, particularly when a lack of meeting spaces is an obstacle to community work (as will be detailed in a later section of this chapter).

The Comité came together in 2008 after the passage of Auto 092, a compliance ordinance designed specifically to protect the rights of IDP women under the 2004 Constitutional Court of Colombia ruling Sentencia T-025.[69] Auto 092 required the government of Colombia to create and implement thirteen specific, tailored and gender differential[70] programs to guarantee the rights of IDP women. These programs were to be piloted in Cartagena,[71] and the Comité was voluntarily formed as a civil society group to monitor the progress of the Auto.

"Why did we get together?" asks Natalia, president of the Comité. "Because of the need to work on Auto 092 and because we saw how the state was supposed to protect women's rights but how we were and still are totally unprotected."

The Comité is comprised of 16 women who each stand as a representative for another community organization from a specific neighborhood in Cartagena. Eva is a member of the Comité as a representative for *Asociación Mis Esfuerzos* from Revivir San José de los Campanos. "We made this group up from many organizations," says Eva. "In those organizations we were only working in our own communities with our own women. We would meet and talk and sometimes others would come give presentations to us, but the idea of forming this group [the Comité] was born when Auto 092 was passed and the Court realized that our rights as women were and continue to be violated. That's when we said, 'We have to get together, create a group and *hacerle seguimiento* [do the follow-up work] to see what happens with this program.'"

The proliferation of IDP organizations and NGOs working with IDPs in Cartagena is reflective of national trends, as mentioned in Chapter 2. The Comité is a good model of how many smaller IDP social networks coalesce into a broader IDP coalition, of which there are several in Cartagena. The *liderezas* of LIMPAL are another example: each one works with their home community organization but they all come together through LIMPAL.

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[69] Sentencia T-025 blamed the Colombia government for an "unconstitutional state of affairs" in its failure to adequately address the impacts of internal displacement. It established the dominant normative framework for providing state-based aid to IDPs by requiring that national and local authorities adjust their budget priorities to reflect IDP needs and by allowing the participation of IDP groups in monitoring government progress in correcting the "unconstitutional state of affairs" (Zea 2011).

[70] "Differential" treatment based on gender requires that men and women be treated differently in accordance with their specific needs. An example of this is that women would be offered the option of working with a female social worker in recognition of the sensitive nature of the sexual violence they may have experienced.

[71] The results of the implementation (or lack thereof) in Cartagena will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6.

Bridging the divide between IDPs and non-IDPs

Shared experiences of structural violence

War as a social condition is not limited to those who suffer the fate of displacement – it is a generalized condition of both direct and indirect physical, emotional, economic, political and spatial violence that affects all members of a society. It was the mutual recognition of living in a violent system that allowed IDPs and non-IDPs to begin bridging the two communities together, explains Natalia. This sentiment refers back to Erickson's idea of the "gathering of the wounded": though the suffering of IDPs and non-IDPs may not be identical, they are both bound up in the same structures of violence, prolonged poverty and failed or nonexistent government interventions.

"They [non-IDPs] didn't live the same violence we lived," says Natalia, "but they are also living a kind of violence here in Cartagena and a kind of abandonment. We're not just concerned with the problem of displacement here in Cartagena but with a whole series of problems like extreme poverty and historic poverty. They first saw us as *invasores* [invaders] who came here to take away their places, and they felt envy or rage because the state was giving us attention, and they've been here for years without anything like that. There was a *choque* [clash], and we only saw the differences between us. But we've gotten to the point where *las personas vayan acogiendo* [people start joining together]. It hasn't been easy, but now you begin to see it."

Building a common "*memoria histórica* [historical memory]" within coalitions of IDPs and non-IDPs is an important way to recognize the violence of displacement alongside the everyday violence in Cartagena, says Liliana. "There is an empathy between women who have been displaced and other women who have lived other kinds of 'displacement' and violence, whether it's domestic, gender-based, or economic," she says. "That diversity has made us recognize that though everyone has their own problems, we can still *juntar* [join together] and tell our stories so that we feel less of that pain, less of that anguish, less of that anxiety. Every day you feel like you have less of a burden, less of that weight that hurts you."

Bringing people together builds capacity for action when it would otherwise easy for an individual to succumb to passivity, depression and inaction. The dialogue between IDPs and non-IDPs creates the conditions for personal growth, says Liliana. "It motivates them to *no quedarse ahí* [not just stay there], and to say 'I am capable of doing this'," she says. "There are women who came here not knowing how to read, but then they were motivated to study. There were women who came here without taking care of their personal appearance, but today you see them with their makeup and with the little they have. It is in those small revolutions that you see big transformations."

Working towards common goals

Eva says that a big part of coalition-building has been the growing participation of IDPs in organizations or political structures, like the *Junta de Acción Comunal*, that used to be exclusively occupied by the historic poor. "We're now sharing that work, because their pain is our pain, and ours is theirs," says Eva. "That feeling is sharing."

Katy, another member of the Comité, adds that participating in community organizations that are not limited to IDPs and collaborating on joint projects has allowed for the creation of "*alianzas* [alliances]" and "*redes* [networks]."

Another IDP women in the Comité chimes in: "The idea is that in unity there is strength. One single organization is not *el pueblo* [the people]. So we have to draw on all of these organizations to build *un pueblo* together."

This sentiment reflects urban sociologist Georg Simmel's recognition that "poor communities needed to generate social ties extending beyond their primordial groups if long-term developmental outcomes were to be achieved" (Woolcock 1998, p. 168). This is the power of bridging social capital: IDPs or any other marginalized community working alone will never be able to accomplish as much as they can by working with others.

Carmen's organization FUNSAREP made the deliberate decision of mixing IDP and non-IDP women in workshops and projects. "They are all women, and as women, we bring them together. One woman will say, 'I come from this municipality and I come here through displacement and I have this or that problem,' and all of a sudden another woman will say, 'Look, I'm from Cartagena and I have the same problem.' In that way, *se unifican* [they unite]. They give each other their phone numbers, and they become friends. That's what we want – we don't want to re-victimize these women in displacement, and we don't want to widen the *brecha de desigualdad* [inequality gap] between *mujeres receptoras* [host women] and women in displacement even more."

The transition from outright rejection (which was described in Chapter 4) to building coalitions between IDPs and non-IDPs has strengthened overall capacity of what Liliana sees as a growing social movement working for women's and victim's rights. "I've seen a change and an acceptance," says Liliana. "That's what allows them to keep fighting."

For an example of a social movement that has been successfully bridging IDPs and non-IDPs in past few years through a common political goal, see Appendix C on the burgeoning women's rights movement in Cartagena.

Building *afectividad* [kinship]

But building a *red* [network] of women is about more than just defining a common goal built around demanding rights, says Liliana. "It is the *afectividad* [kinship or affection] that fills you that allows these networks to endure," she explains.[72] "Even when there is no money to meet, we find a way. Each person brings some *pedacito* [small thing] and we share."

As Liliana sees it, building coalitions and communities of IDPs and non-IDPs together is about creating safe spaces for storytelling, mutual support, recognition, and friendship. There are so many stories to be told, and so few safe spaces for people to share, to stand up and speak. "You hear their stories and your throat closes up as if you

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[72] Kadushin (2012) cites research by sociologist George Homans that describes the power of sentiment in the formation and reinforcement or dissolution of social networks: "Interaction with others leads to feelings, sentiments, or evaluations about these others, and these sentiments, positive or negative, in turn have consequences for future interaction. Obviously, if sentiments are positive, a person engages in more activities (interactions) with the other; if the sentiments are negative interactions are reduced" (p. 88).

want to cry," Liliana says. "But then you see them go through this process and you see how they can stand up and speak – *that* is significant." The "process" of building networks can be something as small as sharing a *cafecito* [a small cup of coffee] in the home of a stranger.

"I feel like I'm part of a family," adds Isabel.

"That *afecto* [fondness] goes beyond what you can accomplish with a law," says Liliana. "At the end of the day, that is what lasts. The *afecto* you build with the person in front of you, that feeling that you are never alone. That when you go to someone's house and there's no chair, you say 'Okay, we'll sit on the floor.' That when you want to make a *sancocho* [stew], each one contributes what they can to the pot."

Liliana thinks personal relationships that are built on a need to pool what resources are available are ultimately more dynamic and longer lasting. Friendships between members of a group create accountability, trust and familiarity, things that are sorely lacking in a society ravaged by violence. That *afectividad* also creates the conditions for a "pay-it-forward" chain of change. "They say, 'I want to be there because I feel good, because I have learned, and because I can teach what I have learned to other women.' The key is that they don't just learn, but that they help other women – in their neighborhoods, on their blocks, wherever they may be – make that transformation too," says Liliana.

The nuts and bolts of IDP community organizing in Cartagena

With lofty goals and few resources, how do these organizations actually operationalize their efforts? In other words, *how do they do what they do*?

The Comité meeting described earlier in this chapter provides a snapshot into the difficulties of organizing: space is limited, the heat is often unbearable, resources are stretched thin, and very little of this work is remunerated. For the most part, time spent organizing is time *not* spent with the family or earning an income. Addressing these logistical concerns and keeping participants motivated is an ongoing struggle. What follows are several critical challenges for IDP organizations and social movements, as well as descriptions of some of their response strategies.

Balancing the *triple jornada*:
Home care, economic activity and community work

"I used to do home visits, and I would see the reality," says Carmen. "This woman would show up all pretty to a meeting, but when I would go to her house, I would see the stove hadn't been turned on for two or three days, and the children were crying. *Ella sacaba pecho* [She would try to be brave] to come a meeting, but I would say to her, 'You can't work on an empty stomach, let alone think, because you will say: I don't believe things can change, because you're talking to me here in this meeting, but I'm thinking about the five hungry children I left at home and how when I go home they're going to ask me for food, and what am I going to tell them?'"

In many parts of Latin America, it is often said that women are faced with a *triple jornada* (triple workday) because, particularly in displacement, they are tasked with the

three burdens of providing financial support, caring for the family and (re)building community life. Balancing these three prongs of the *triple jornada* takes its toll. Liliana, the coordinator of Mesa DESC, explains that being part of a social network (and in particular, being a leader) can eat up a lot of time and energy that would otherwise be spent earning income or taking care of the household. In addition to her work in the "*mundo del hogar* [the world of the household]," Liliana has taken on the "*mundo del trabajo comunitario y trabajo social* [the world of community and social work]." In Liliana's case, none of this work is remunerated.[73]

The time and monetary costs of attending meetings can be particularly prohibitive for women who have to arrange for childcare or pay the extra transport fare to bring their children with them. Furthermore, with the exception of a handful of paid staff members at a select few organizations, time spent in community meetings represents an economic opportunity cost for participants because less time is available for whatever income-generating projects IDPs may rely upon to feed their families. Eva says that she has seen a "*desmotivación* [discouragement or lack of motivation]" among some women who began working with the various IDP or women's rights organizations but who have since dropped out. Some older women simply get tired out, and some younger ones are held back by their husbands or partners, who say they aren't spending enough time at home, explains Eva.

Back in the Comité meeting, Natalia explains the frustration of putting in a lot of time without seeing an obvious economic benefit. "We've been working here since the early hours of the morning without eating breakfast, without eating lunch. And here we are working, without the support of anyone else," says Natalia. "A lot of times *trabajamos con las uñas* [we work with the bare necessities], without the minimum that we need to this work, without transportation, without food, without income."

Given that the only reason many of the women in the Comité can spend so much time in meetings and workshops and marches is that they are officially unemployed, the "volunteer" nature of this work can be wearisome, to say the least. For some, it even feels like an affront: Tatiana explains that as community leaders who are educating the public about their rights, they are carrying out the responsibility of the government but without proper compensation. "As *liderezas* [women community leaders] we don't earn a salary. The state doesn't even recognize us. We don't earn even one *peso*!" says Tatiana. "But here we are, with or without hunger, with or without money, looking after the needs of the displaced population."

Creative responses to the *triple jornada*

Liliana says one solution to the *triple jornada* problem is to fuse these three seemingly separate spheres – income, family, community – together as much as possible. "You can't separate what you do from your family," says Liliana. "That is key. Even before I got married I was doing this community work, and when we got together, my partner got involved too. There are men who take away your dreams, who tell you that

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[73] Liliana's personal reason for continuing her work in the community is the sense of satisfaction she gets out of her labor. "Everything I do is voluntary. None of it provides me a salary," she says, "which means it's been an *entrega* [an effort or a devotion] but an *entrega* that has been meaningful for me too."

you can't go, that you can't leave the house. But my strategy has always been to talk about it with him, to share these processes. He shares in my work, my tears, my helplessness at times."

Many participants choose to bring their children along with them to meetings or workshops. At one LIMPAL workshop, for example, a fifth of the 30 participants were under the age of seven, most of them infants. The babies made a racket, and the acoustics of the room were so bad that it was difficult to follow the presentation or complete the workshop group activities. At one point, the workshop facilitator had to pause the process so one young mother could take her crying baby out of the room. But these disruptions, like the delays due to transportation (described below), are normalized within IDP organizations.

Childcare is an issue not just for parents, but also for older siblings who are expected to watch their younger brothers and sisters while their parents are away. In one extreme situation, Eduardo, a community organizer, says he knew one 7-year-old girl who was responsible for caring for her 3-year-old sibling. Eduardo, who often runs workshops with IDP youth, came up with the simple solution of creating a special *jardín* [nursery] for the toddlers. Creating a safe space within the workshop for these tag-along siblings both provided much-needed childcare and freed up their older siblings for productive engagement with their peers.

Being able to reach out to friends for support is often just as important as relying on romantic partners, children or other family members. Building the bonds of *afectividad* that Liliana mentions ultimately creates a deeper commitment to the organization or group that cannot be as easily shaken. Community work becomes not just about investing in some abstract concept of the general good but investing in *friends, neighbors* and *collaborators*.

"Sometimes when you find an emptiness or you wish things were easier or faster, then we fall in the trap of wanting to give up. It is in those same situations that everyone else comes around to push you, to encourage you, to say 'How are you going to leave us alone?' They help you regain your strength and continue going through this process," says Liliana.

"It's *work*, this community work, but it's important work," says Carolina. Though it takes a lot of time and energy, she ultimately finds it fulfilling. Maria says that there are times when Carolina arrives home at 8:30 PM only to find four or five IDPs waiting for her help. "They come, they tell her their stories and she says, 'Look, I'll leave you a photocopy of my ID so you can call me, so you can find me,' and she helps them. Sometimes it's midnight and Carolina is still working!" says Maria.

Carolina laughs and explains, "I like working. I like hearing people call out 'Carolina!' I feel *conocida* [known]. It's like my 'family' has grown, and now I have a much bigger family."

In addition to Carolina's sense of personal fulfillment and pride for being *conocida* [known] as a *lidereza*, she continues doing this work because she knows she is not alone in it. "This non-profit work, this community work requires a lot of your time, a lot of your energy – so you have to enjoy what you do. You have to feel for the community. You have to feel the pain and the needs of the people that live in the community," says Carolina. "When you become a leader, when you become a facilitator, you feel what

happens in the community and what happens to the people. We know that this is not work that you do alone. This is work that you do with a team. All of us put in one grain of sand, and we are building towards progress. We have seen results and we have seen a response from the state, but this is only because we've done this as a team."

Finding safe meeting spaces

In Chapter 3, we met Eduardo, who was leading a theater-based workshop with IDPs in a church room in the Líbano neighborhood. The decision to hold the workshop in the church was a last-minute choice; it was originally supposed to be held in a different neighborhood, Revivir de San José de los Campanos, but the night before, four men were shot there. The circumstances around the shootings were still unclear, and the *liderezas* of LIMPAL who were co-hosting the event were shaken.

"We don't feel safe anywhere," says Eva.

"We can't even walk on the street or talk to someone openly," says a LIMPAL staff member.

"We have to talk behind closed doors," says another LIMPAL *lidereza*.

The decision was made to move the workshop to Líbano, even if it meant that many of the original intended participants would now not be able to attend. It was a sacrifice that Eduardo was flexible enough to make because security comes first and foremost, particularly when his workshops touch on sensitive or personal matters.

"Getting to peace is difficult, but it's not impossible," says Eduardo. "There just aren't spaces for people to congregate, converse and work together safely."

Finding those safe spaces is a challenge not just for one-time events like Eduardo's workshop but also for established organizations like LIMPAL, too. Right before I began my fieldwork in Cartagena, LIMPAL had moved out of their old office because their laptops had been stolen there, both a financial loss and a scare in terms in protecting the private information of their IDP participants. Since vacating that space, LIMPAL's staff members began working from home and carting their materials back and forth as necessary. It was a temporary solution that needed a quick fix because LIMPAL's office had been a meeting space for the *liderezas*, a need that could no longer be met in the private homes of staff members.

It was difficult for LIMPAL to find a new office that was both safe and not too expensive since the real estate market in downtown Cartagena (by most accounts the safest part of the city) is tight and prices are high. It took LIMPAL a few months to find a new space, which they were just moving into at the end of my fieldwork in late July. It is a small, stuffy office on the side of a main throughway. It has no windows, and the rent is more than LIMPAL had been hoping to pay, but at least it is safe and close enough to the outerlying IDP neighborhoods for the *liderezas* to come to meetings.

These trade-offs are common among community groups or organizations looking for safe, affordable and comfortable spaces. As mentioned earlier, the Comité meets once weekly in the Corvivienda building, sharing a small, hot office space with several other organizations. It is not *theirs*, but it is better than nothing.

Some groups strike up deals to co-sponsor events or meetings to gain access to private spaces. For example, because one LIMPAL staff member also worked part-time

at a local technical university, LIMPAL was allowed to schedule meetings there.

"It's complicated when we need to find a space where we can bring people together to talk," says Humberto of APRODIC. "We have to find the institutional spaces that can act as a sort of protection, both for the people who work for our organization and for the people of the *barrio*. For example, we use a strategy of linking up with schools or with other community organizations in the neighborhood, but we still have to be very careful."

Others make deals with local churches, which are generally respected as safe spaces in neighborhoods. However, churches often place limitations on the activities or discussions they will allow under their roofs. Eduardo has had trouble in the past when hosting workshops with young people about safe sex, AIDS or sexual violence. In these cases, the church said no and despite the blaring sun and the lack of privacy, Eduardo had no choice but to take the participants out on the street, one of the only public meeting spaces available.

The challenge of urban mobility

In Eduardo's workshop, we wait about two hours for all of the participants to arrive, even though the 9AM start time was clearly and repeatedly communicated to everyone well in advance. As one LIMPAL staff member explains, "*siempre llegan tarde* [they always arrive late]" because of transportation. The delay in the workshop is expected. Those participants who actually did arrive on time because they live close to the Líbano church don't seem surprised or bothered by the wait.

Physically bringing IDP men and women together from all over Cartagena is a logistical challenge, particularly when they may not have the 1,500 *pesos* [$0.83 USD] to pay for a bus or a *mototaxi* [motorcycle taxi] upfront. How can someone like Violet, the IDP woman we met briefly in Chapter 3, afford to attend community meetings when the cost of a public bus, little as it is, would mean not being able to feed her children every day?

Cartagena is a low-density city and some neighborhoods can be as far as an hour apart by bus, so transport costs have to be considered both in terms of time and money. Some neighborhoods (often the ones where IDPs are most likely to live) are so dangerous that buses and taxis won't drive into them or will restrict their operating hours to avoid nighttime travel. Certain holiday seasons make public transport almost impossible because the city practically shuts down with celebrations and parades. The entire month of November, for example, is written off as a no-go for community organizing work because Cartagena is overtaken by Independence Day festivities and the annual crowning of Miss Colombia.

All in all, a bus trip to a meeting is not as simple as it may sound. For example, it takes two bus trips to arrive at a meeting in the center of Cartagena departing from Pasacaballos, a poor and IDP-heavy neighborhood that is physically close but lacks easy access to transportation to the center. Back and forth, "that's 10,000 *pesos* [about $5.50 USD]," says Carmen. "Where is a woman going to get 10,000 *pesos* just to come to a workshop?"

Pooling resources

In the face of these logistical barriers to organizing, Carmen says there is a bright spot in seeing how the participants give what little they can to share with the group. "Sometimes a woman will say to me, 'Today, don't give me money because I can pay for my transport,' and sometimes they'll bring a big watermelon to a meeting to share. They say to me, 'You always give to us, so today I'm bringing in these cookies.'"

The women of the Comité similarly pool their few resources to help one another. "We all help each other when we don't have money for transportation," says Natalia. "One of us will give something. Even if she's just a little better off, *le colabora a la otra* [she'll help the other]."

These small collaborations are certainly important, but there is a question of scale. Eva thinks logistical constraints, which can perhaps be overcome within the closed loop of a given organization, are actually preventing the formation of broader networks and coalitions. She gives the example of wanting to take a LIMPAL workshop to train community leaders in some of the most dangerous neighborhoods of Cartagena, those that are least serviced by the state or NGOs. But Eva says it is just logistically impossible because of insecurity, lack of funds for transport and no money to pay for refreshments or lunch. In other words, the information, access and support to be gained from linking into a broad-based social movement are limited by the safety and financial barriers to bringing people together in the city.

There is one big omission in this list of challenges to IDP organizations, to which the entire next section of this chapter will be dedicated: the presence of armed actors in Cartagena.

Living in fear: The presence of armed actors in Cartagena[74]

The battle over space

Humberto, co-founder of APRODIC, counts at least eight armed groups operating in Cartagena, three of which (Los Paisas, Los Urabeños and Los Rastrojos) he says control half of all municipalities in Bolívar. After the 2005 national demobilization of paramilitaries under the Justice and Peace Law, 400 of the 700 demobilized paramilitaries from the nearby Montes de María moved to Cartagena, where they set up in "strategic neighborhoods," says Humberto. Many of those neighborhoods are also heavily populated with IDPs, as is visualized in the map below, which was originally compiled from information reported to the *Defensoría del Pueblo* in Cartagena in 2011.

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[74] For a longer study on the presence of armed actors in Cartagena, see (Defensoría del Pueblo 2011) or (Corporación Humanas 2011).

The presence of illegal armed actors and threats reported in Cartagena in 2011
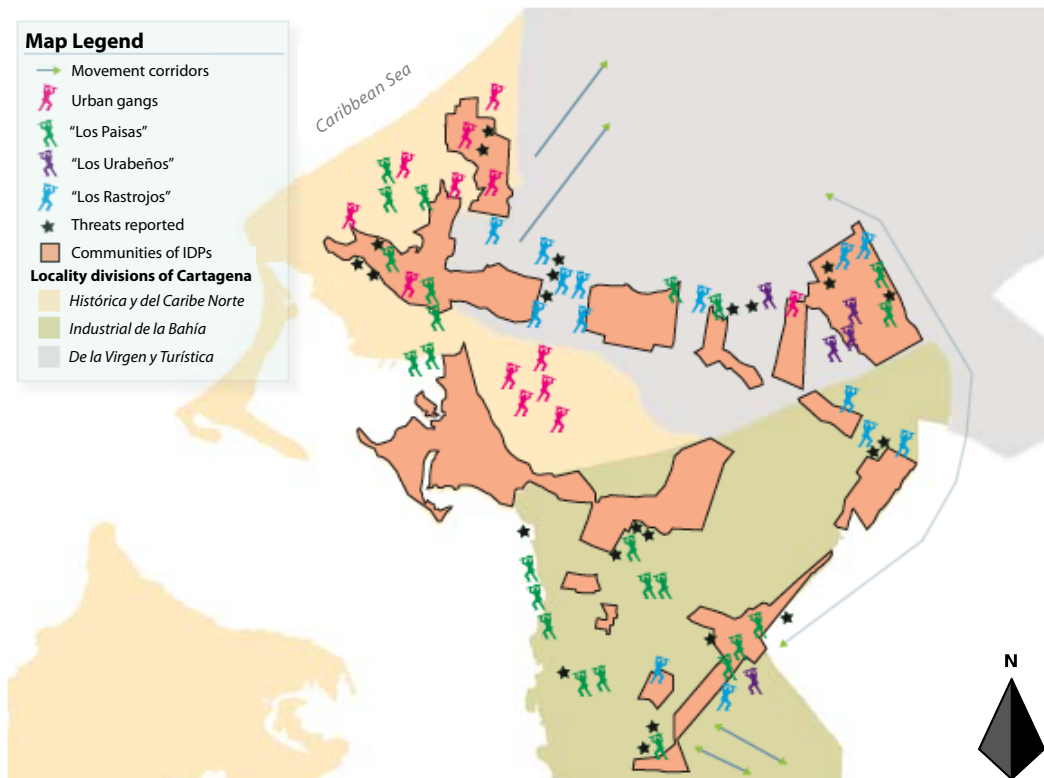
Map adapted and translated from Defensoría del Pueblo 2011, p. 38.

The demobilized paramilitaries began offering "security" services, requiring that local businesses (including private buses) pay a daily fee or risk attack. They have established an elaborate system of blackmail and control. Paying the *vacunas* [bribes][75] eats up the hard-earned money upon which so many IDPs and the historic poor depend.

To solidify their power, armed groups began drawing up lists of community leaders, demanding that those named leave or be killed. They also began limiting mobility, declaring "curfews"[76] during which no one would be allowed out on the street, thereby preventing any non-sanctioned collective action. Ultimately, this tactic is about claiming and marking territory, says Humberto.

There is a pervasive and persistent sense of fear, particularly among women living in the city. "There is no security," says Liliana. "There are all kinds of genocide and death

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[75] The literal translation of *vacuna* is vaccination, as if this bribe were a preventative measure against the "disease" of attack or threat by armed actors.

[76] "There's a town in Sucre where the paramilitaries set a curfew at 7 PM, so from 7 PM to 6 AM no one can go out," says Humberto. "About two weeks ago they killed a 15-year-old boy because he was going to an appointment in the next town. He was biking on the road but it wasn't yet 6 AM, and they killed him right there, a *pelado* [young boy] of 15. That's the same kind of situation we're living here with the paramilitaries controlling Cartagena."

and femicide and violence against women. There are so many of these situations that sometimes you are scared of just going out. You don't feel safe. It prevents us from being independent, from having *autonomía del espacio* [autonomy of space], on the street, in the parks, in the movie theater."

It is interesting to note that Liliana describes feeling fearful in both public and private spaces. In public policies designed to address fear and safety in urban spaces, the consistent separation of the public and private spheres as if there were no overlap or no public responsibility for the latter has stifled effective responses to violence, particularly gender-based violence (Sweet and Escalante 2010).

The functioning of social networks and community organizations is limited and interrupted by the constant concern for safety. "If I don't trust the people who live next door to me because they could be associated to the *fuerzas y armas* [forces and weapons], then it's that much harder to build organizations in those areas," Humberto says. "Sometimes we get discouraged if we host a meeting and only five people show up, but you know it's because of *something*." Humberto says the appearance of *pasquines* [posters] or pamphlets that list community leaders or other enemies of the paramilitaries in a community can cause widespread terror, so much so that only five people at a time can meet in one place. It's not that people aren't interested in Humberto's meeting, but that they can't attend for fear of retribution.

The battle over identity

David was displaced from a rural area outside of Cartagena after his father-in-law, who was running for public office, was threatened by armed men who gave him 24 hours to vacate his property. David's family first escaped to Bogotá, where they spent six years, moving various times within the capital city to find work and avoid trouble, before they decided it was safe enough to return to Cartagena in 2012. In both Bogotá and Cartagena, David joined IDP organizations as a way of gaining access to important information-sharing networks and to express his solidarity with others in a similar situation.

But even within these organizations, David says it is difficult to navigate old and new loyalties that may or may not be public knowledge. He has to tread carefully so as not to stir up conflicting sympathies since some IDPs in these organizations are former or current guerrillas or paramilitaries, while other members of the same organizations have been displaced by those very groups. This is a clear example of the concept of "multiplexity," or having stacked and multiple overlapping identities or social associations (Kadushin 2012).

"You have to be prudent to not create conflicts in the organizations between people's different feelings of belonging," David explains. "But we also cannot deny that there are many armed groups in the city. We cannot cover that up. The war in Colombia is not over. They want us to think the war is over,[77] but it's not."

Even in IDP community solidarity networks, the armed conflict continues as a persistent undertone to all social interactions. Just as in places of origin, the rotating

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[77] David is referring to the Colombian government, which did not officially acknowledge the internal armed conflict until the passage of the Victims' Law in 2011.

domination of space between multiple armed groups and the continual contestation over territory puts IDPs (as well as native residents of Cartagena) not only in the crossfire of a seemingly never-ending gunfight but also in the crossfire of a battle over identity.

Young people, primarily young men, are "recruited" to join armed actors and gangs through force: they are told that if they do not join, they will be killed. Other young men join because of a lack of economic opportunity, as mentioned in Chapter 3, and because of the desire to affiliate with a social group that can provide support and a sense of belonging. Without educational opportunities and with nothing else to do, some young men get caught up in what Humberto calls "schools of *sicariato,*" where they are trained to become *sicarios*, hired assassins.

IDP families with teenage children often fear the voluntary or forced recruitment of their sons and daughters into gangs or prostitution, particularly because the association with either activity can put the entire family at risk, says Carmen. Similarly, young girls who become romantically involved with members of armed groups enter not just into a relationship but also into all the trappings of that group's label. Some families even elect to uproot themselves again within a city in order to avoid this.

Teenagers are not the only ones at risk. Knowing or assuming that IDP families receive state-based aid payments, some armed actors strike up relationships with older IDP women, many of whom arrive as or become single mothers in displacement. "These are women whose husbands were killed, whose sons were killed," says Carmen, and now they are taking up with men who may have some affiliation with the very groups that perpetrated the crimes against their families. Carmen explains that many women see these relationships as a form of "protection" in the city, though she says it is a false protection that could actually put them at more risk.

Sometimes women who maintain relationships with armed actors are used as informants. They attend meetings of community groups or organizations as if they were members and then share whatever information they gather with their lovers, boyfriends or husbands. The risk of one social identity (built on a relationship with an armed actor) precluding and ultimately unraveling another (built on a relationship with a community group or organization) is ever-present. This is another clear example of how IDPs must navigate multiplexity in their social relationships.

Liliana says there are also known cases in which the men of the household (both romantic partners and sons) disappear mysteriously to "work" (presumably for an armed group) for long stretches of time. Neighbors, friends, and sometimes even family members may not know their whereabouts or alliances. In their absence, many of the women left behind become more active players in community organizations. However, when their sons and husbands return from what was most likely paramilitary or guerrilla action after some time, the home dynamic shifts. Some women have to tone down their involvement in organizations while others drop out completely for fear of the negative affiliation that has been imposed upon them by their family members. Others may become informants.

Suddenly, says Liliana, the home of that family is no longer a safe space for gathering, and friends and neighbors can no longer talk as openly as they once did there. The space has been tainted, but so has the reputation of the family in question. Trust is

dynamic and often has less to do with an individual than with what that individual represents, whether willingly or not.

Infiltrating community organizations and fomenting distrust

The threat of infiltration or betrayal from within makes some IDP activists wary of their fellow group members. When interpersonal trust is already so tenuous, the inability to trust even the members of one's own organization can be paralyzing. Conversations never feel fully private, and words must be carefully couched and guarded at all times.

This suspicion is intentionally fomented to prevent any collective action that might threaten the dominance of the armed actors. Carolina says that because community organizations gather people together and empower them to demand their rights or to change their lifestyles, these social organizations represent a cap on the power of armed actors. "As people build capacity, and many of them stop doing drugs or being delinquents or prostitutes, then we [as an organization] become a threat to the armed actors," Carolina explains. "As consumption goes down, spending on drugs in the neighborhood goes down, and their profits aren't as big because people are starting to see the world from a different perspective. They think maybe before buying drugs, before getting involved in crime, I will join this organization that is working in the community." Unfortunately, the more power wielded by a community organization in helping people get off of the streets, the more of a threat they appear to be to the armed actors or drug traffickers who profit from others' misfortune.

As organizations grow in size and impact, newer members are increasingly less well known to the core of the group. "That's where we feel the fear that our information is being filtered or that those armed groups are there, listening to all of the things we are doing," explains Carolina. "At the moment of adding more people, the bonds of trust in community work get weaker. Many of the women who work with the organization have received threats in pamphlets or email, and we don't know if those threats are coming from the people we work with or from the state that we're challenging. That's where building trust to keep adding more and more people hits a wall."

Back on Liliana's patio, both Liliana and Isabel say that they always have to know who they are talking to and who might be listening. Most people who are invited to meetings have to have some sort of reference, association with a known organization or mutual friend in order to be trusted. "*Nunca se sabe dónde está el enemigo* [You never know where the enemy is]," says Liliana. Had we not been sitting in a relatively isolated garden area on Liliana's patio, far from prying ears and eyes, we could not speak as openly as we are now, she explains.

Sometimes armed actors intentionally make organizations believe they have been infiltrated, whether or not it is true. Eva says that *Asociación Mis Esfuerzos* received one pamphlet that threatened: "We know where you meet, with whom, and what you talk about. We have someone embedded in your group." This is a clear attempt to generate distrust within the group to break down basic bonds between the members. As Carolina explains, "When they tell us there's a spy among us, that makes creating trust even within our own group very difficult to build. How can we move ahead if we're constantly

worrying there's a spy among us? How can we create safe spaces and feel comfortable when any one of us could be the one spying? They know that kind of message breaks us up. It could be true or it could be a lie, but we don't know."

This constant uneasiness means that community work gets stalled, put on pause or even undone, and community groups can never let their guard down, not even when among friends or family. Trust is hard to come by when "rumors constantly circulate, there is the daily possibility of the intrusion of one or another threatening group, and the sensation of being spied upon by the agents of any or all of the armed organizations is unremitting" (Pécaut 2000, p. 103).

Direct threats to community organizations

2012 marked the highest registered number of threats[78] against human rights defenders since 2002: 357 individual human rights defenders (of which 69 were assassinated) and 120 human rights organizations reported threats against them.[79] In addition to threats against physical integrity or life, illegal surveillance of phone calls, emails and personal correspondence of human rights defenders has been widely reported (Human Rights Watch 2012; United Nations Human Rights Council 2012).

IDP activists and community leaders are systematically targeted for attack, not only when their activities interfere with the relatively small-scale daily dealings of neighborhood drug traffickers, but also when their work is explicitly or implicitly connected to the large-scale questions of land and property restitution or political rights (Vidal-López 2012). Community groups represent a challenge to the economic and political power of armed actors, so armed actors threaten community leaders to keep them quiet to prevent IDPs from accessing aid or demanding their rights from the government. In Cartagena, most threats reported to the *Defensoría del Pueblo* have a relationship to the community organizing work of those who have been threatened (LIMPAL 2011).

In this way, the information sharing function of social networks is both an asset and a liability because educating others on rights is reason enough to warrant being threatened by an armed group. "That's part of being a *lidereza*," says Eva. "That's our risk to take because *liderezas* never keep information to ourselves. We share it so that the whole world will know, so that it's not a secret."

Between 2005 and 2011, 50 IDP leaders were assassinated because of their association with movements to recover land lost during displacement (CODHES 2012; Vidal-López 2012). As Natalia understands it, "we are the pebble in the shoe of the [land] projects that are happening in Cartagena and outside of the city. We are being threatened because we are fighting for our right to land and we are fighting to prevent the

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[78] These figures include threats, assassinations, attempted assassinations, disappearances and arbitrary detentions.

[79] Only two-thirds of those threatened could identify their attackers, among which were paramilitaries (41%), the Colombian army (13%) and guerrillas (9%). This information was collected from the 2012 report of the Sistema de Información sobre Agresiones a Defensoras y Defensores (SIADDHH) and compiled by *Semana,* a Colombian newspaper (Arango 2013).

megaprojects[80] that are destroying our culture, above all the culture of the *afrodescendientes* [Afro-Colombians] and indigenous peoples. So what do we do? We judge, we investigate, we denounce, and for that, *nos ganamos las amenazas* [we win threats]."

Tatiana says that being known as a *lidereza* is both a source of pride for her as someone who only made it to third grade and a source of danger as someone who has assumed a position of relative power within her community. Tatiana has been directly threatened twice as a result of her activism. The first threat arrived as a *panfleto* [a pamphlet or flyer] warning Tatiana to stop being a human rights defender or risk violent action. Tatiana went to the *Fiscalia* [the Attorney General's office] to file an official complaint. Soon after, she received the second threat directly to her cell phone.

As a measure of protection, Tatiana was provided with a daily police patrol to provide surveillance for her home, and every day four or five officers pass by to check in on her. Two policemen stop by while I am visiting Tatiana's home and they pull up two plastic chairs to join our conversation. One of them is engaged to one of Tatiana's daughters, and they flirt in the corner. The officers stay for twenty minutes and then take their leave: all is clear, for today at least.

The security provided by the patrol is not unmitigated. This form of protection has ironically placed Tatiana in a precarious situation, generating suspicion and rumors within her neighborhood about why the police linger by her home and what her involvement with them might be. The association with the police provides Tatiana some protection, some emotional support and even political access to a certain degree, but it also places her at risk. In other words, this security measure can also have the perverse effect of heightening Tatiana's insecurity.

This social connection is an asset and a liability not just for Tatiana, but also for her family, friends and colleagues, as well. Her daughter's impending marriage to a policeman may also bring further complications. Social identity is "contagious" in this sense—perception or assumption of association is often as meaningful as real association itself.

State collusion with armed actors

Humberto explains that in over two thirds of the 45 municipalities in the department of Bolívar there have been reports of the continued presence of paramilitary groups, many of whom maintain control over the municipal administrations. Some scholars argue that the 1991 Constitution, which led to the decentralization of power from the central government to subnational and local governments, created the conditions for the takeover of municipal governments. Across the country, the number of municipalities either partially or completely under the control of violent actors rose from 173 in 1985 to 622 (more than half of all municipalities) in 1995 (Rice 2011).

"The groups that caused displacement in the first place are still in power," Humberto says. "They control the governments that are supposed to apply the law. The

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[80] Natalia is referring to agroindustrial megaprojects that agglomerate vast amounts of land, much of which has been vacated because of displacement. More information on these projects is available in (Alviar García 2012).

concern is that when someone goes to submit a land restitution claim, the next day that person will be threatened."

Tatiana even wonders aloud if it was the very institutions to which she appealed for help after her first threat that gave away her cell phone number to the people who threatened her the second time.

"When I arrived in Cartagena I thought it was one of the most peaceful cities," says Manuel. "But I realized that the *paramilitarismo* [paramilitarism in politics] has shifted to cities and is in all of the neighborhoods in Cartagena. They continue massacring people; they continue killing young people, community leaders, union leaders; they continue attacking organizations of displaced people, especially those that want to reclaim our lands. We've been re-victimized by ongoing threats, threats that we've denounced to the *Fiscalia*, to the security forces of the state, but we've never gotten concrete responses."

The government response to threats against community leaders and human rights defenders has been lackluster (some say because of collusion with those issuing the threats). This makes many IDPs feel unsupported, unprotected, and frustrated with the continued lack of help from public agencies, explains Katy. "We struggle and struggle and struggle, and when we finally achieve even something small, then comes the threat: 'These women are putting their nose where it doesn't belong. We'll send them a *papelito* [little paper] so that they stay quiet.' And that's when we are afraid and some women want to stay at home. It's hard for us to take on that role, that great responsibility of wanting to *salir adelante* [make progress] for our families and our community. We want to make our lives better, but it's not easy because the institutions *no se prestan* [don't care], the government *no se presta*, nobody does. It's total chaos, and we are losing trust and credibility in the state institutions. Imagine, from that point, we can't do anything!"

Manuel blames the silence on the well-documented complicity of government actors with paramilitary groups (reaching all the way up to former President Álvaro Uribe). This, not surprisingly, makes many IDPs very hesitant to hope for a real chance for peace or reconciliation. Chapter 6 will go into greater depth about trust in the state and concerns over collusion with armed actors, but it is worth noting here that IDPs feel unprotected by the state because of these misaligned interests (or perceptions thereof).

Even though the Colombian government invested $100 million USD in 2012 in protecting human rights defenders through the *Unidad Nacional de Protección* [National Unit of Protection], many IDPs continue to feel the response has been inadequate, particularly given evidence of state collusion with armed actors (Arango 2013). For example, the women of the Comité, which has been threatened on multiple occasions, feel they have not been protected appropriately. "The only thing we get from the government, from the state, is a radio telephone that doesn't even work. That's been the only form of protection they've offered us, so we have to take our own measures of self-protection," explains Natalia, president of the Comité.

Community responses to violence and insecurity

Across Colombia, the prevalence of violent urban social networks (e.g. demobilized paramilitaries, *bacrim*, urban gangs, etc.), paired with frustration over failed

or inadequate state responses, has led to the formation of some proactive citizen-organized security networks (Davis 2012). Some Cartagena neighborhoods organize *brigadas cívicas* [civic brigades] to patrol the streets, a sort of community policing but without engagement from the official police force. Citizens volunteer to guard the neighborhood at night to prevent robbery and violence. However, some of the *brigadas* wind up in the control of paramilitaries, says Humberto, and they are converted from a source of security to a source of danger. In these situations, those who refuse to submit to the will of the *brigadas* are threatened or killed.

There are several other survival mechanisms that IDP organizations and community leaders use to handle threats. As mentioned earlier, Tatiana has pursued public complaint through the official state channels. Many of my sources reported filing complaints with various state and local government agencies, though they rarely saw the same level of protection that Tatiana is receiving from her police patrol.

Others choose to shrink away from IDP networks, dropping out of community organizations and shutting themselves and their families up at home. As Carmen says, "There are times when we lower our profile as much as possible." There are benefits to being a recognized community organization in terms of reaching a wider IDP population and gaining political voice, but it also can place the leaders and members at risk, for which they must compensate by quieting down in response to threats. This can create a sort of rollercoaster of public action. The bigger a social movement gets, the more it must be concerned about security, particularly if the threats may be coming from within.

In contrast to that approach, some choose to heighten the visibility of the movement even more. In 2011 after a threat against a group of IDP women, those threatened (including Tatiana) decided to organize a public march into the center of Cartagena to the historic Torre del Reloj at the gates of the old walled city. Marches and public demonstrations in protest of violence and threats against IDP groups are increasingly common in Cartagena.

In a LIMPAL workshop that I ran in July 2012, I asked 30 IDP women to participate in an activity to identify the risks and threats they had faced as human rights defenders, as well as their personal and collective strategies for addressing such threats. Some of the security strategies they identified in this workshop that have not mentioned above include forging alliances with local and international NGOs, launching public awareness campaigns and calling on neighbors to get involved in preventing or responding to threats.

Why do IDPs engage in high-risk activism?

Given that IDPs have fled highly insecure and risky situations in their places of origin, a paradox arises in the fact that so many seek out highly insecure and risky situations in their sites of reception through activism and community organizing. Why would someone escaping violence put her- or himself directly in the line of fire again?

Considering alternatives to engagement

Some IDPs see the risk of *not* engaging in social movements as greater than the risk of doing so. As Loveman (1998) points out, the motivation to join a high-risk social movement is often driven by the lack of other viable options. When lifestyles and values are threatened by war as a social condition, joining a social movement (no matter how high-risk) to restore what has been lost may even be seen as a move for self-preservation.

Because of threats and fear, the Comité has experienced some "*bajones* [slumps]" during which the members stayed at home for extra security, says Eva. But eventually, the Comité ramped their activities again because they knew if they didn't, nobody else would either. "We are doing political advocacy," says Eva. "We can't stay in our houses. Because that's when we give our enemies points, the ones who want to take us out of the game with fear."

"We are terrified, but we cannot show that fear," says Ximena. "We are terrified, but not paralyzed. We cannot paralyze ourselves because that would be even worse." In other words, for Ximena, Eva, and many other community leaders, *not* engaging actually represents a bigger threat to their lives, families and futures.

Learning to trust again

Afectividad [kinship] and emotional bonding are key to building the solidarity networks that allow IDPs to continue their participation in social movements even in the face of direct threats. As Tate (2007) writes, "the emotional rewards of activism are central precisely because the material benefits of human rights activism in Colombia are few and the dramatic drawbacks – threats and harassment, even death – loom so large" (p. 148).

Face-to-face interactions between friends and colleagues serve as a form of insulation for activists and build the trust that counteracts disincentives to participation (Loveman 1998). For members of these groups, there is a stake in both individual gains and/or losses through collective action but also in *collective* gains and/or losses, creating ongoing solidarity that becomes an important basis for mobilization despite risks (Fireman and Gamson 1979).

The everyday violence that IDPs experience in Cartagena neighborhoods can be a barrier to participation, but Humberto says this barrier can be lowered, if not overcome entirely, by establishing real relationships between participants. "You have to communicate and build up trust slowly so that people invest in the organization," says Humberto. "You have to create the climate of trust in the *barrio* [neighborhood] so that when there is danger, you warn each other and you learn the strategies for how to meet." This process can be discouraging because of slow progress, he explains, but it is essential to sustaining a movement that would otherwise scare people away entirely.

Das et al. (2001) argue that trust can only be re-established when understandings of what is "normal" shift: "No glib appeal to 'our common humanity' can restore the confidence to inhabit each other's lives again. Instead, it is by first formulating their notions of 'normality' as a changing norm, much as the experience of a disease changes our expectations of health, that communities can respond to the destruction of trust in their everyday lives" (p 23). This shifting normality reflects the same concept underlying

war as a social condition. IDPs learn to operate within the new "normal" of the city, the new "normal" of threats against their lives and organizations, and the new "normal" of their shifting identities as individuals and members of a group.

Within this new normal, IDPs find ways to build trust even in a society deeply embattled by extreme and everyday violence. This speaks directly to the necessity of rethinking conflict and post-conflict situations not as vacuums or as entirely destructive to the social fabric of a place but rather as creating the conditions for a *re-weaving* of that social fabric. Conflict upsets and transforms, making way for reconfigurations of social connection. It is, in fact, the very tangible and ever-present threat of violence that "might explain how hard the survivors had to work to generate new contexts in which enough trust could be created to carry on, once again, the work of everyday life" (Das et al. 2001, p. 18)

Framing identity through participation in social movements

IDPs are willing to suffer a certain amount of risk for the sake of a social movement or organization because of how their involvement in those activities has come to define a new life project for them in the city. The personal meaning and identity that has been forged through this process would be violated were the individual to pull back because of threats. In other words, their commitment to the movement relies on how it fundamentally factors into their sense of self (Tate 2007).

Carmen says that building trust is a process that emerges from individual self-recognition and self-respect. She believes that one of the most important and most often overlooked impacts of the armed conflict has been the violation of the human body, particularly the bodies of women.[81] Based on this principle, Carmen works with IDP women to help them rebuild self-confidence and to relearn how to carry themselves physically in their own bodies. "We begin to work from the territory that is hers," Carmen explains. "Nobody should invade the territory that is her body. She begins to discover that territory, to understand how her territory has been violated, that she is the only one who can defend it and that the state should guarantee her rights. She begins to trust *herself* and from there she can begin to trust others, and others, and others. That's what can build a society, a society that *trusts*, a society that is *trustworthy*, a society that is also happy and can aspire to a better life."

Scaling up from the individual, as Carmen describes it, follows a certain logic of change. As one person joins a social movement, she or he then recruits friends and family through tight-knit kinship networks, and both personal and collective identity become embedded in the social movement through the experience of ongoing participation. Individuals subsume their personal level of risk to what they understand to be a movement greater than themselves. The individual motivations for participation are complemented by and embedded into personal and institutional social networks operating at multiple scales – body, neighborhood, city, state, even globe (Loveman 1998).

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[81] Some feminist scholars have called for a re-scaling of social and policy analysis down to the scale of the individual body, paying particular attention to the gender dynamics of the brutalization of body in times of conflict (Cockburn 2004).

Summary

This chapter has examined how some IDP social networks form the basis for coalitions between IDPs and non-IDPs (both bridging and bonding) despite the many obstacles to community organizing, including the *triple jornada*, the lack of safe spaces and the problems of urban mobility and resource mobilization. This chapter also took a close look at the impact of armed actors on IDP social networks and organizations, generating fear, distrust, and violence in public and private spaces.

Given these limitations and threats, this chapter also explored a few reasons for why IDPs continue to engage in high-risk activism, including the lack of alternatives to engagement, the emotional bonds that tie IDPs to each other, and the power of personal identification with a movement.

The next chapter will offer a brief review of the main international, national and local policies on internal displacement in Colombia before delving into how IDP networks, organizations and movements engage with the state.

Chapter 6
IDPs Engaging with the State

How do IDP social movements interact with and make claims on the state, going beyond passive resistance or violent confrontation? This chapter will delve into the ways in which IDPs have engaged with the municipal authorities in Cartagena as recipients of aid, as citizens and as change-makers.

The first section of this chapter lays out the current international and national legal and policy frameworks that address internal displacement in Colombia. The second section looks at the dissolution of trust in the Colombian state, which is only exacerbated by poorly designed and poorly administered IDP assistance programs. The third section describes social networks as the loci of rights-based claims. The fourth section looks at building vertical social capital between IDP organizations and the government as a future-looking project of combining political engagement with community transformation.

The legal and policy framework for internal displacement

Internal displacement was first addressed by the Colombian government in 1995, when it set up the first emergency aid system for IDPs.[82] This policy was further institutionalized by the passage of Law 387 in 1997, which established a statewide system for the prevention of displacement and the protection of those already displaced. The national IDP registry system was set up three years later in 2000 (Taylor 2010).

However, the early progress made on a national policy level was not fast enough to address the growing crisis of displacement at the turn of the millennium. In 2004, under *Sentencia T-025* the Constitutional Court of Colombia found the lack of an adequate government response to displacement to be an "unconstitutional state of affairs" so pervasive it could be only be ascribed to "a widespread, structural failure of the government's response" (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011b, p. 47). In a series of follow-up court orders (the most recent in 2010), the Constitutional Court continued to apply pressure to the executive and legislative branches of the national government to recognize, investigate and attempt to remedy the situation. In June 2011, President Juan Manuel Santos signed *Ley 1448*, known as the Victims' Law, the largest victims' rights and reparations law in Colombia's history, with sweeping provisions for land restitution, compensation and a wide range of guarantees of services like preferential housing subsidies for victims of the conflict.

This section will briefly summarize the various international and national legal and policy frameworks that address internal displacement in Colombia.

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[82] Note that internal displacement has been documented in Colombia since *La Violencia* in the 1950s, but the Colombian government did not begin to officially respond until the mid-1990s.

International law and policy

Though the Colombian government has only begun to officially address internal displacement through law and policy in the past few decades, the international precedent for the protection of civilians in armed conflict had been set since the end of World War II. The 1991 Constitution of Colombia affirms the incorporation of all international treaties signed and ratified by Colombia directly into the national legal framework in at least five constitutional Articles.[83] The Constitutional Court of Colombia ruled in 1995 that international law prevails *over* national law. Thus, the following human rights treaties are all considered part of the national legal framework in Colombia (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011a).

Article 3 in the Geneva Conventions of 1949[84]

Under the Geneva Conventions, civilians (those who do not take direct part in hostilities) may not be subject to attack in either international armed conflict or internal armed conflict. According to Article 3, which specifically addresses internal armed conflict, those taking no active part in hostilities cannot be subject to violence, taking of hostages, outrages upon personal dignity, or extrajudicial executions. The Geneva Conventions achieved universal ratification among UN signatories in 2006 (United Nations 2007).

Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions

This additional protocol, which passed in 1977 to address the victims of non-international armed conflict, reinforces Article 3 and additionally prohibits collective punishments, acts of terrorism, slavery, pillage, forced displacement and threats to commit any of these prohibited acts. Colombia ratified Additional Protocol II in 1994 (Andreu-Guzmán 2012).

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

In 1998, the United Nations Economic and Social Council passed the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, an overview of the rights of IDPs in accordance with existing standards of international law. The Guiding Principles place primary responsibility upon

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[83] These Articles are as follows, quoted in the original Spanish (LIMPAL 2011):
Artículo 9: Las relaciones exteriores del Estado se fundamentan en la soberanía nacional, en el respeto por la autodeterminación de los pueblos y en el reconocimiento de los principios del Derecho Internacional aceptados por Colombia.
Artículo 93: Los tratados y convenios internacionales ratificados por el Congreso, que reconocen los derechos humanos y que prohíben su limitación en los estados de excepción, prevalecen en el orden interno. Los derechos y deberes consagrados en esta Carta, se interpretarán de conformidad con los tratados internacionales sobre derechos humanos ratificados por Colombia.
Artículo 94: La enunciación de los derechos y garantías contenidos en la Constitución y en los convenios internacionales vigentes, no debe entenderse como negación de otros que, siendo inherentes a la persona humana, no figuren expresamente en ellos.
Artículo 214, numeral II: No podrán suspenderse los derechos humanos ni las libertades fundamentales. En todo caso se respetarán las reglas del derecho internacional humanitario.
Artículo 53: Los convenios internacionales del trabajo debidamente ratificados hacen parte de la legislación interna.
[84] For the full text of the Geneva Conventions, including both Article 3 and Additional Protocol II, visit www.icrc.org

national governments (not local governments) for designing and implementing appropriate policies to address internal displacement. Though the Guiding Principles are not open for ratification because they are non-binding, the Constitutional Court of Colombia has made repeated reference to the Principles in their rulings and decisions, as well as in statutory law, case law and administrative law (Human Rights Watch 2005; Ferris 2008b; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011a).

The Pinheiro Principles

In 2005, a sub-commission of the United Nations Human Rights Council endorsed a series of guidelines on post-conflict property restitution called the United Nations Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons, more commonly known as the "Pinheiro Principles." Borrowing heavily from the experience of property restitution in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the early 1990s war in former Yugoslavia, the Pinheiro Principles propose a legal, administrative and enforcement framework for the design and implementation of property restitution processes in the wake of conflict. The Pinheiro Principles are guidance or best practices, not binding law (Mohan 2011; Ballard 2012). The Victims' Law in Colombia, which will be discussed below, draws heavily on the Pinheiro Principles.

Other treaties and agreements

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ratified in Colombia in 1969) and the American Convention on Human Rights (ratified in Colombia in 1973) both include protections for freedom of movement and freedom to choose one's residence (Human Rights Watch 2005). Many IDP organizations in Cartagena, including LIMPAL, APRODIC and Mesa DESC, also make heavy reference to UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which was adopted unanimously in 2000. UNSCR 1325 address the role of women in peace, security, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration in situations of conflict. The implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Colombia has been spotty and inconsistent.[85]

National law and policy

In addition to the international treaties mentioned above, Colombia's national legal and policy framework has expanded significantly since 1995. After the "unconstitutional state of affairs" declared in 2004, over 100 national policies to address internal displacement were passed (Taylor 2010). The following is a sampling of the key policies on the books.

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[85] In a *veeduría* [a legal tool that allows civil society organizations to monitor and produce independent reports on government agencies] completed in 2011, LIMPAL found that public officials in Cartagena had very little knowledge of UNSCR 1325. Among those who knew of the resolution, there was little attempt to implement it, little support for the participation of women in peace processes, and a lack of the guarantee of access to justice, all of which are important components of UNSCR 1325. LIMPAL found that women are often re-victimized when they seek help for gender-based violence. Another major obstacle to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 is the short office terms of public officials and the lack of continuity for support and implementation (LIMPAL 2011).

1991 Constitution of Colombia
In addition to direct incorporation of international human rights and humanitarian law, the 1991 Constitution established several institutions for the protection of human rights. The *Fiscalía* (Attorney General) and *Procuraduría* (Inspector General) were given separate judicial functions and the latter was made responsible for investigating official state misconduct. The *Defensoría del Pueblo* (Ombudsman) was charged with assisting victims of human rights abuses (Tate 2007).

The Constitution also played a major role in the fiscal and political decentralization of Colombia's government system, which has created significant challenges for local authorities that have been assigned new administrative tasks and functions without the necessary funds to carry them out. The impact of this "incomplete decentralization" on IDP assistance will be examined below (Ferris 2008b; Ibáñez and Velásquez 2008).

Law 387 of 1997
In 1997, the Congress of Colombia enacted Law 387 to create a state system to address internal displacement. This law officially acknowledged the state's responsibility to protect the constitutional rights of IDPs. Law 387 created 18 government agencies at different levels under the National System for the Integral Attention to the Displaced Population (SNAIPD by its Spanish acronym), as well as a National Plan for Attention to the Displaced Population. SNAIPD and the National Plan are now coordinated by a government agency called *Prosperidad para Todos* under the Office of the President (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011a; Vidal-López 2012).

Sentencia T-025 of 2004
This ruling declared the "unconstitutional state of affairs" that created a mechanism for the Constitutional Court of Colombia to produce a series of orders (including Auto 092) for the government to enforce the protection of all IDPs. Sentencia T-025 also created a permanent monitoring system, including public hearings with IDP and other civil society organizations (Vidal-López 2012).

Justice and Peace Law (Law 975 of 2005)
In 2005, Congress passed the Justice and Peace Law to demobilize paramilitary groups under the law. Perpetrators of crimes were responsible for providing reparations to victims and were offered reduced penalties in exchange for their cooperation. However, the legal process for reporting, prosecuting and securing damages or restitution for each crime was complex, and institutional support structures were weak. The Constitutional Court has since issued several mandates to strengthen these processes, which were further bolstered with the passage of the Victims' Law (Summers 2012).

Auto 092 of 2008
As a follow-up to Sentencia T-025, the Constitutional Court of Colombia recognized 18 specific ways in which displacement disproportionately affects women, including increased risks of sexual violence, loss of property and labor exploitation. In Auto 092, the Court ordered the adoption of thirteen differential programs to address these risks through protection, assistance and rights restitution. Unfortunately, these rights were

broadly defined, and the government response has been limited (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011a; LIMPAL 2011; Meertens 2012).

The women of the Comité de Seguimiento del Auto 092 say that only three of the 13 proposed programs have been implemented in Cartagena, and of those that do exist, the results are less than spectacular. The three programs in Cartagena include a high school program for IDP women whose education was interrupted, an income generation project to help under- or unemployed IDP women and a security program for women community leaders to facilitate their political participation. But these programs are underfunded and underdeveloped, says Eva, a member of the Comité. Only 152 women, by Eva's count, have benefitted from the programs so far, and of those 40 who participated in the high school program, only 20 or 30 actually graduated. "*Se compromete, pero incumple* [The government makes commitments but doesn't implement them]," Eva explains.

Victims' and Land Restitution Law (Law 1448 of 2011)
The most recent IDP law to be passed is the Victims' Law, which sets out to "seek truth, justice and integral reparations for victims, with a 'guarantee of no repetition,'" essentially promising to prevent future violence and displacement. In theory, the Victim's Law creates a robust institutional structure to manage, administer and adjudicate claims of victim's rights, but it has been criticized for simply shuffling assignments of authority and responsibility between an already overly complex network of actors that may or not be accountable to each other or to the public. Some observers expect the Victims' Law to be a paper law—once passed, filed away and never implemented on the ground. The impact of the Victims' Law is yet to be fully realized. Most reports on early implementation have indicated little to no systematic progress in IDP assistance (Summers 2012). However, it is too soon to tell. For an extended look at the Victims' Law, see Appendix B.

Municipal implementation of national policy
IDP assistance policy and programs are designed at the national level with little to no consultation of the local authorities that are assigned to execute these programs. The resulting lack of coordination and assignment of responsibility and authority is problematic for developing efficient and accountable programs of IDP assistance.

The roots of this problem run deep. The "incomplete" decentralization under the 1991 Constitution was based on a delegation of administrative tasks and functions previously carried out by the national government without consideration of local capacity or political will. This system has created a complex web of city agencies. Municipal authorities are responsible for running local UARIV offices, which house IDP registration, emergency aid and other assistance programs. The *Defensoría, Procuraduría* and *Fiscalía* also have municipal offices responsible for handling IDP claims regarding human rights abuses and other government misconduct. These offices coordinate with other city agencies, like Corvivienda. These institutions are often overburdened, and IDPs have to wait hours in line to submit claims that sometimes take years to process.

While city governments are responsible for carrying out IDP assistance programs, financial prioritization and allocation still remains at the national level. This leaves

municipal institutions with too many assignments, too few public monies to carry them out and practically no room or discretion to rearrange their own local investment priorities.[86] As more and more IDPs arrive to cities every day, the same limited revenue and government capacity has to stretch to assist more and more people with mixed results (Ibáñez and Velásquez 2008; Carrillo 2009).

The loss of trust in the Colombian state

The capacity for trust in government institutions and in the state as a broader concept is just as important as the capacity for hope when it comes to building new life projects in situations of ongoing conflict and violence (Davis 2012).

In Colombia, loss of confidence in government and citizenship may begin long prior to the actual act of forced migration. According to Erikson (1995), the experience of trauma signifies "not only a loss of confidence in the self, but a loss of confidence in the surrounding tissue of family and community, in the structures of human government, in the larger logics by which humankind lives" (p. 198). The trauma of sustained violence paired with the (real or perceived) absence of rule of law and government presence in both rural places of origin and urban settlements make formal institutions seem distant, removed, abstract even. Perceptions of state absence are exacerbated for IDPs living in peripheral neighborhoods with the least access to public services and the least proximity to the buildings of the municipal government, almost all of which are concentrated in the colonial center of Cartagena (Pécaut 2000; Holmes, Gutiérrez de Piñeres, and Curtin 2008). When government institutions *are* present they are often associated with the military, not necessarily an institution that inspires great confidence or trust in populations that have been violently victimized for so long (Pécaut 2000). Or, the state is only visible as a self-serving strategy, like around election time.[87]

Furthermore, "wheeling and dealing" negotiation with protagonists of violence tarnish public institutions because of close ties with the enemy (which, as mentioned

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[86] Local authorities can draw on three main source of income to finance their public services: intergovernmental transfers, self-generated revenues and borrowing. Central government transfers are distributed annually among all of the municipalities in Colombia in accordance with their category, which is determined by population size and un-earmarked current income. Because population size is updated infrequently with the national census (the most recent was in 2005) and often based on projections rather than hard numbers, there is a gap between the "official" population and the real population. This gap is particularly pressing when the real population is inflated day after day with the arrival of more and more IDPs, many of whom are never counted by official estimates because they do not formally register with the government (Ferris 2008b; Carrillo 2009).

[87] "When the politicians need us, then you see trucks of all different colors, of fancy brands, luxury trucks with four doors and big sound systems," says Ximena. "They come to the *barrios* [neighborhoods] making all sorts of noise…In election time when they are running, you see the politicians every day there, even eating on the floor with you, eating on a staircase with you, but when they get power, what a mess to set up a meeting with them! What a mess to get attended by them!" As president of her local *Junta de Acción Comunal*, Ximena has been to the Mayor's office five times to set up a meeting to no avail. She says it took ten years just to get the main road paved in her neighborhood. "Is that the way the state guarantees the rights of their citizens? They treat us like fourth-class or fifth-class citizens. It's embarrassing to talk about it, to say that our public functionaries are Colombians, are our compatriots, are our brothers and sisters in politics."

earlier, is even more complicated when the "enemy" can mean different things to different people). Corruption and collusion[88] with armed actors has been reported in all branches of government, including Congress, the judiciary and the executive branch (Pécaut 2000; Alviar García 2012; Summers 2012).

A high level of "*amarre burocrático* [bureaucratic incest]" in public agencies complicates the assistance process and makes IDPs wary of government actors, explains Carmen. "You go to file a *denuncia* [complaint] in the labor office, and the women who hired me to work in her home is the sister-in-law of the doctor of who knows who in that labor office. So, there are deals and debts: each person owes a favor to another so they *agarran todo, atan todo* [they hold up everything, they tie everything up]. It's difficult to get your complaints heard," she says. The collusion between public administrators and the subjects of *denuncias* frustrates even the most diligent efforts to present claims.

One government official from the *Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* (ICBF), the national agency responsible for family welfare, told me that laws like the Victims' Law are more likely political bargaining chips than real policy change. The vested interests in sustaining armed conflict and the ongoing dispossession of fertile land for highly profitable agroindustrial projects are just too entrenched. "War is a big business," he explains, and corruption is an obvious consequence, from his point of view.

So, why should IDPs trust the system when it is so clearly corrupt, when the scales are already tipped against their favor? In this context, rights and citizenship may become abstracted because IDPs feel they do not possess the means to exercise them or to demand justice from a system that is seen as inherently unjust (Pécaut 2000). When the government has failed to protect against (and has sometimes even directly perpetrated) violence, and when displacement is not just dispossession of material belongings and land but of rights as well, the degree to which trust (and hope) can be built is severely compromised.

What follows are a few of the major obstacles to building trust between IDPs and the state:

1. Resistance to IDP assistance

Back in Eduardo's workshop in the church room in Líbano, the IDP participants act out scenes from their own experiences dealing with public agencies in Cartagena. In one scene, two women from an IDP organization go to the mayor's office to set up a meeting to share a project proposal for IDP aid. The secretary says the mayor is too busy and offers them a meeting in two months time. They return in two months, but the

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[88] "There are many senators who have taken advantage of these circumstances to take our land – the land that was taken away because it was illegally purchased with drug trafficking money, that land is now in the hands of senators, families of senators. Those are the people who exploit the land, and in the meantime, the *campesino,* the displaced people, the indigenous, the Afro-Colombians, we are *brazos caídos* [crestfallen] in the cities, lamenting the loss of our land," says Manuel. Later in the same conversation, Manuel adds: "We see that there is no justice. We have seen the alliance between the paramilitaries and the state. Whenever the paramilitaries were going to carry out a massacre, the state cleared the area of the army so that they had all the space to do whatever they wanted."

mayor barely pays attention during the meeting, talking on his phone distractedly and calling them *invasores* [invaders] responsible for increased crime in the city. After the meeting, the mayor hands the proposal to the secretary, who promptly throws it in the trash.

"Is this real life?" asks Eduardo when the scene is over.

"Yes!" cry the workshop participants in unison. Isabel adds that when she went to go see the Mayor, he told her IDPs are to blame for the problems and delinquency in Cartagena. Another woman nods in agreement, saying that the municipal authorities often blame poverty and violence on IDPs.

Because of concerns over limited budgets and administrative capacity, some municipal authorities are either subtly or blatantly anti-IDP (Ferris 2008b; Zea 2011).[89] In a LIMPAL workshop, an IDP woman explains that many people feel re-victimized when they seek aid. "They are told, 'But you're from that little town where not even donkeys would go,'" she says. The lack of sensitivity and training of public functionaries is a recurring theme in almost all of my conversations with IDPs. Public officials often make slight of the claims presented, blame the victim, or make them feel uncomfortable.

Katy, a member of the Comité, says that the use of language against IDP organizations from on high has been a significant obstacle and a determinant of broader public opinion against IDPs. "These institutions have come hard against us – the police, the senators who were candidates for mayor, the Mayor himself has said on occasions that we are delinquents and that we are violent."

In the past there have been rocky relationships between the state and IDP and victims' rights organizations, which have largely been excluded from peace negotiations and transitional justice processes (García-Godos and O. Lid 2010). Not being invited to the table and sometimes being treated as "enemies of the state" has created a situation of mutual mistrust or even hostility.

Because of this, Ximena expresses a deep cynicism towards those she calls "the macabre elite": "The problem of displacement becomes even graver because this is a country of discrimination and injustice, a country in which power is in the hands of a few, in which families with certain last names think they are the *dueños* [owners] of Cartagena, the *dueños* of all of Bolívar," Ximena says. "This macabre elite, you see them calmly with their white ties stand up at podiums to give speeches and all the while in the background they are sending people out to kill. Sometimes they even say that *we* are their enemies – those of us that work in the *Juntas de Acción Communal*, in the neighborhood associations, in the civil society organizations. The State has *la gran cara* [a bold face] to say that we are enemies of the state, that we are attacking the state, because really, when we claim our rights we become human rights defenders. That is not attacking the state. Because the

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[89] It is worth quoting Jean-Noel Wetterwald, former representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Colombia, at length here to display the aggressiveness with which some municipal officials have resisted providing IDP assistance: "Their speeches "highlight the risks of offering housing alternatives to the [displaced] population because this could generate a mass population influx, or they identify the displaced with safety problems in the municipalities, or make offensive statements such as 'we should assist the displaced with torn plastic tarps so that when it rains they go back, and we should give them rocks for pillows,' as the mayor of one of the largest cities in the country said over a year ago" (Ferris 2008b, p. 57).

state is all of us. *We* are the state, the people, the sovereign of this country, and we elect the government to defend our interests, but we see that that apparently matters less than the defense of those who take away our right to life, our right to health, our right to a home, our rights that we all have as Colombians."

2. Complexity of the aid process

Tatiana waited a long time before declaring her status as an IDP with the UARIV because she did not understand the process. It was only through her association with a *cabildo indígena* that she learned how to declare. Finally, in 2008, eight years after she arrived in Cartagena, Tatiana got her first aid payments.

Since few IDPs know the *ruta de atención* [the pathway the access aid] when they arrive in Cartagena, they often embark on complicated goose-chases between the various institutions. Ana, the older IDP woman we met briefly in Chapter 4, made four attempts to declare with several different offices. "First I went to the *Personería* where they took my declaration, but they didn't give me anything, anything, anything. Six years ago I went back. I had to declare with a lawyer, then again in the *Personería*, and then again in the UARIV because I still didn't show up in the registry," she says. She was finally accepted into the system, but the aid she has received has hardly been enough to get by.[90]

Humanitarian aid payments rarely arrive on time, forcing IDPs to scramble to fill the gaps. Even after Tatiana finally got into the IDP registry, she found that the aid payments, which should come monthly, are intermittent. "You wait 20 days and nothing comes, you wait another 15 days and nothing comes, and a whole year goes by and nothing comes," Tatiana says.

In addition to the time costs of accessing government aid, transportation and childcare costs make trips to multiple public agencies a very expensive endeavor, especially when IDPs only come away with half-fulfilled promises of aid (Human Rights Watch 2012). Sometimes there are additional financial costs, as well: there is an entire industry built around taking advantage of IDPs with government checks. Eva says she knows at least three or four IDPs who have had to pay bribes to public officials for their claims to be processed. Similarly, a lawyer who works with LIMPAL told me about aid chasers[91] who charge 30 to 40 percent of aid received to help IDPs with their paperwork. "There's a whole business in it," says Eduardo. "They bleed them from all sides."

When depending on government aid is precarious and sometimes even costly, the

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[90] After declaration, Ana received 200,000 *pesos* (around $110 USD) a month for food for three months. Two years later, she was also offered some additional income generation subsidies, and for two years she was given a lump sum of 915,000 *pesos* (around $507 USD) as *ayuda humanitaria* [humanitarian assistance]. But since that last installment, Ana says, "after that, they have given me nothing, nothing, nothing."

[91] "In Cartagena there are all of these professional lawyers who have built a block together so that when people arrive in a situation of displacement and they don't know where to find anything, then the lawyers appear," explains Carmen. She says that even though IDPs can (and often do) declare or file claims on their own without the help of a lawyer, aid is often mysteriously only made available once a lawyer steps in. "They [the IDPs] do all of the required procedures to get their money, but it doesn't come. But as soon as one of these lawyers comes, the money gets released immediately. So you can suspect there is some sort of alliance between the lawyers and these institutions," Carmen says. She has no official proof of this supposed kickback scheme, but her suspicions are not hers alone.

lack of reliability in even the most basic services does not bode well for building trust between IDPs and public agencies. "What they give me is 500,000 *pesos* [around $277 USD] every three or four months, which fills a certain space, but it's not enough to survive, so you work and fill in those spaces," explains George, an older IDP man. "We don't trust the government because they're not offering us the help we need, which we need because this *descomposición* [breakdown] happened because the government didn't offer us security as is mandated by the Constitution. They didn't defend their population, they didn't build security in time when everything started to fall apart. Now they're trying to pick up when they can, they're trying to fill that space, but it's very slow."

The majority of my respondents expressed disappointment and disillusionment with the local offices responsible for IDP aid, and often connected that frustration with a lack of trust in the national government. "Can you imagine, I was number 312 in line and I got to the UARIV at 8AM in the morning," says David. "I left at 3:30PM. A whole day waiting in line…The national government is not offering any help. The only 'help' they offer is *la prórroga* [postponement] and making you wait."

3. Keeping up with changing legal norms

The complexity of the aid process is not only a barrier to IDPs seeking help but also to the proper and effective administration of the law by public officials. The lack of coordination between the multiple entities responsible for the wide variety of public services and assistance programs is only exacerbated by the sheer volume and complexity of overlapping international, national and municipal policies (CODHES 2012). Even for those who think they have a solid grip on the *rutas de atención* [pathways to access aid], it is frustrating and time consuming to keep up with long, complex and ever-changing policies and laws (Taylor 2010).

"It's difficult because of the quantity of laws and rights," says one Comité member. "It limits our capacity to teach people what their rights are and where to claim them because each day there is a new law, and the next month there's another law that overrules the first one, and so on. When you've worked so hard to learn one decree or law, and then it gets overruled by another, we have to start all over again. So we go to a *capacitación* [training session] and when we're finally starting to get it, boom! There's a new law!"

One law professor I spoke with tells me, "The constant creation of new norms in the country is one of the biggest challenges to empowering IDPs to know their rights and the mechanisms of protection." As a result, IDP *liderezas* have to spend more time learning the new laws than diffusing them among their peers, she explains.

Often even public functionaries whose job it is to know the rules can't keep up, creating frustrating situations for IDPs seeking aid. In Maria's case, her declaration was stalled because of confusion about the terms that define someone as a "victim" of the conflict and therefore deserving of public aid. Specifically, there were concerns about how long ago Maria had been displaced. The public administrator at UARIV dealing with Maria's case was operating under the false assumption that only those who had been in

Cartagena for less than a year were eligible for aid.[92] So, when Maria, who had already been in Cartagena for 10 years, went to declare, she was told, "'Ma'am, you are not displaced. You are not displaced, and we will not accept you,'" recounts Carolina. "That limited our access to justice. It was very hard to get clear and concise information." In addition to discrimination, a big obstacle to aid is lack of knowledge of the law among public administrators.

In a LIMPAL meeting during which the members reviewed a *veeduría*[93] of Cartagena public officials, the conclusion was that the knowledge of laws protecting the rights of female victims of the armed conflict was weak and sometimes entirely absent. This *veeduría* interviewed functionaries at a wide range of public entities, including the *Comisaria de Familia* [Family Commissioner], the city police department and several *Casas de Justicia* [Houses of Justice].[94] As one LIMPAL staff member sums up, turning to the IDP community leaders in the room: "You all have more *conocimiento* [knowledge] than the public functionaries!"[95]

4. Prioritizing needs-based aid over rights

One of the most significant constraints on the effectiveness of state-provided IDP assistance is its myopic time scale, which places heavy emphasis on immediate and short-term emergency assistance without supporting long-term sustainable local integration (Ferris 2008b). The lack of long-term vision is clear in the typical IDP assistance cycle: IDPs declare their status, register, receive a basic package of emergency goods (essential household items, hygiene kits, basic food supplies, etc.), and are offered a few months of rent subsidies and small financial incentives. Aid can be extended on a provisional basis according to the vulnerability of the household, but usually not for longer than six months. While there have been significant improvements in terms of IDP access to some public social services like health and education (both of which are free and universal in Colombia), housing and socioeconomic stabilization are severely lagging behind (ICRC-WFP 2007; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011a).

The end of the assistance period not only means a rather sudden drop-off in aid but also can result in even greater vulnerability than before. When state-provided subsidies or seed grants run out, and no attempts have been made to establish long-term

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[92] Under the Victims' Law (now the prevailing law regarding IDP assistance) a "victim" is defined as any person who has suffered grave violations of human rights or international humanitarian law as a result of the conflict since 1985 (Summers 2012). This wording was specifically chosen to avoid the confusion that Maria experienced during her declaration.

[93] A legal tool that allows civil society organizations to monitor and produce independent reports on government agencies. For more information on the legal basis for *veedurías* in Colombia, as well as the results of this specific *veeduría*, see (LIMPAL 2011).

[94] *Casas de Justicia* are one-stop-shop service centers that include representatives from the *Fiscalía*, the *Defensoría* and *Personería*, among other agencies.

[95] This can make for uncomfortable situations when IDPs demand the rights guaranteed by law but unknown to front-line service providers. One IDP woman told me about a visit to a health clinic when she discovered that her own knowledge of the policies regarding preferential treatment for IDPs was superior to that of the public functionaries there. "They said to me, 'What are you, a lawyer? How do you know so much?'" she recalls.

support structures, IDPs often find themselves evicted, back on the street and without income, as described in Chapter 3. Short-term, needs-based assistance can thus paradoxically lead to longer-term displacement if it creates the sorts of destabilizing situations that defeat local integration.

It is not an option to continue providing housing subsidies or entrepreneurial seed grants *ad infinitum*, but the lack of a transition program from assistance period to sustainable integration is problematic. For example, Manuel thinks that paternalistic emergency aid programs prevent the scripting of new life projects for IDPs. "This humanitarian aid has converted the *campesino* [peasant] who has come here displaced into a *limosnero* [beggar]," he says. "But the idea is that we go back to producing, that they give us back our land, that they give us reparations and that the state guarantees that these things will never happen again."

Humberto of APRODIC says that public policies are designed in such a way that they encourage *asistencialismo* [paternalism or handouts] rather than a clear focus on rights. "Communities get used to being given everything, and that also demobilizes them," he says. Without framing IDP assistance around the Constitutional and human rights that have been violated, the government (whether intentionally or not) suppresses collective action around making rights-based claims. Emphasizing needs-based solutions (e.g. emergency food supplies, housing subsidies, etc.) objectifies the needs of IDPs, rather than recognizing and awarding them "agency to determine what they are entitled to as they struggle for rights" (Grabska and Mehta 2008, p. 12).

More recently, the passage of Auto 092 in 2008 and the Victims' Law in 2011 could represent a shift in thinking about IDPs in relation to the state, at least in the official language. Both of these policies begin to address the wider implications of justice for victims of the conflict that go farther than narrowly defined humanitarian and needs-based aid to also address rights to truth, justice and reparations (Meertens 2012). Both of these policies have given fuel to the fire of social movements in Cartagena and around Colombia because of the specific way in which they are framed around rights rather than needs.

Social networks as loci of rights

As LIMPAL sets up for a workshop with IDP women from Cartagena and San Jacinto, a neighboring town, one staff member introduces the day's activity by reminding everyone in the room: "*Somos sujetas activas, no sólo víctimas* [We are active subjects, not just victims]."

The language she has chosen to frame the workshop from the outset is reflective of the broader discourses of active citizenship that are pervasive within IDP organizations. In addition to emotional support, information sharing, and economic opportunity, social networks also play the important role of creating a space for the diffusion of rights discourses and a collective re-visioning of the state.

Social capital has more recently been acknowledged not just as a tool for individuals to gain resources from social connections but also as a "mechanism for resolving otherwise pervasive collective action problems" such as resource management, community governance and climate change on a broader scale (Woolcock 2010). In other

words, social networks are not valuable just for the individual members but also as a collective unit that can act together towards a common end.

Learning rights and collective action

When Carolina's family first arrived in Cartagena, they didn't know how to name what had happened to them. They didn't understand their own situation as part of a much wider context of armed conflict and displacement. Ideas like "human rights violation" didn't factor into their initial understanding of what was going on. "When we arrived to Cartagena we didn't have the political tools or the participation tools," says Carolina. "We now have the empowerment to access many things, but back then we didn't know the laws, we didn't know the agencies, we didn't know the government, we didn't know anything, not even how to declare! We didn't know that we had suffered a violation of our rights. We knew that *nos despojaron* [they dispossessed us] and that we had to go and save our lives, but back then, we didn't know that what had happened was a violation of our rights and that the state had to safeguard those rights."

How does anyone take on rights-based language in the first place? Carolina's story charts the transformation many IDPs undergo when they begin to understand themselves as right holders and victims with agency. It requires a dramatic shift in one's understanding of self-worth and personal identity, as well as one's place in a wider community, a global one even (Merry 2006; Tate 2007).

Back on the patio in the shade with Isabel, Liliana describes the personal transformation that takes place as IDPs acquire the language of rights through their interactions with social networks and organizations in Cartagena. Women who used to stay at home in their rural villages, who used to have very little interaction with the government "are now knocking on doors in the Mayor's office, participating in a sit-in, making pronouncements, and going to offices to say 'I have my rights,'" she says.

Isabel interrupts to say, "I used to be one of those women."

"Isabel was a woman who cried easily, who was isolated, who didn't have a position, who remained silent," explains Liliana. "But with the passing of time, as you take on positions and do some deeper critical reflection, and with *formación* [education], you see new spaces opening up to be able to demand 'No more!' That's when you can see those processes of change…These are the women who have felt the violence through their bodies, and these are the women who have to take the decision in their lives to say, 'Okay, this happened to me, but I can go on. I can be a woman who will serve her community with what I learn.' She learns to understand her *problemática* [predicament] but not get trapped in feeling sorry for herself or resorting to begging. She has to make the decision about who she wants to be and take that power to generate a transformation."

In other words, in order for an individual to begin taking actions to make change in her own life and in the lives of others, she must first recognize her own agency, which is not limited just to victimhood. This can be achieved through interaction with social networks that provide the spaces for the critical reflection and the kind of *formación* that Liliana says is so important. Then, that learning has to be passed on to others in the community. Just as information does not stagnate in social networks, neither does

transformation.

"The ideal is to empower other women and other people so that they too build that knowledge, and they begin to understand the *rutas* [routes of attention to government aid], so that they are the ones who *velen por sus propios derechos* [guard their own rights]," Carolina says. "This is a chain, a chain where each person can be given the opportunity and the capacity. It's not all me – it's not that I am the leader, the facilitator, everyone knows me. No, it's that each person has the capacity to do it themselves."

Individuals are empowered through these interactions, and through the "chain" of change, they help empower others, as well. Setting the stage for deeper political engagement may be considered an achievement in and of itself, especially for women or other marginalized groups who have never actively participated in political processes before (Vidal López, Atehortúa Arredondo, and Salcedo 2011).

Carolina explains the process by which social organizations empower their members: "We begin by training, by teaching about the distinct laws, the distinct *autos* [ordinances], the rights of women and men. Then from there we start teaching about the themes of *exigencia* [demanding rights], of *plantones* [sit-ins], of how to write up a document, a petition, a *tutela* [a writ]. Then we teach where to go and which are the entities that can attend which *rutas de acceso* [routes of access]. We become facilitators, so that they can have a full knowledge of their rights and so that they can arrive to those public entities to demand their rights or ask for information. They are no longer vulnerable – they have gained the tools to safeguard their own rights."

As Carmen sees it, the taking on of rights-based discourses emerges as a result of social interaction, whether initially political or not. The kinds of networks and organizations described in Chapter 4 and 5 set up the conditions for IDPs to realize their rights and to recognize the role the state has played in either the violation or protection thereof. "When IDPs see the need to group together, to communicate between each other, to invite new people and each one brings another and another person, that's when they recognize the need to know their rights," Carmen explains. "That's when they recognize that what has happened to them has been a grave violation of their human rights. This is why I keep saying these are not *displaced women* but women living in a situation of displacement and armed conflict that the state has caused alongside the armed groups. They begin to see themselves as women, women with *rights*, and they begin to feel that they can build an organization."

This process of recognizing common grievances and common paths to create change is what many social movement scholars call the "framing process." In order to mobilize a social movement "at a minimum, people need to feel both aggrieved about some aspect of their lives and optimistic that, acting collectively, they can redress the problem" (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996, p. 5).

Rao and Walton (2004) add that collective action improves the "capacity to aspire" for marginalized groups through "collectively envisioning their future, and their capacity to shape this future, through influencing other groups, the government, and other factors in their physical and social environment" (p. 25). It is not just about common *grievances,* but common *hopes*, as well.

Once united in social networks and organizations, the power of collective action allows for claim-making of wider scale, scope and impact than individual capacity would

allow. This can take a variety of forms, including high visibility actions like marches, protests and public awareness campaigns, as well as more coordinated behind-the-scenes actions like negotiations with public officials. "All of this work of resistance that we've done – mobilizations, *formación* [education], *sensibilización* [sensitizing public officials], lobbying, participating in the writing of public policy, going to the District Council, to the Commissioners, to the Mayors, to the *Fiscalía* – it's all so we can access our rights due to us," says Luisa, the coordinator of one of the main IDP umbrella organizations in Cartagena.[96]

Building vertical social capital and state-society synergy

All of this talk of rights only matters if there is institutional support for recognizing and fulfilling them. As Merry (2006) writes, "seeing oneself as injured by a human rights violation requires entering into a new terrain of opposition and risk. Rights offer a new vision of the self as entitled to protection by the state, but this promise must be made good" (p. 217). Rights consciousness requires a feedback mechanism that reinforces both the rights holders and the rights bearers.

In situations in which the state fails to deliver on these claims, frustration or a retreat from active citizenship or claim-making is not uncommon (Merry 2006). "It's fine for us to talk about rights, but we also have to talk about how that knowledge of rights is affecting me or benefitting me," says Carmen. "That benefit can also become *una contra para mí* [a count against me]. What do I do with all these rights in my hands if I'm still in the same situation as before?"

Citizens only hold rights in so much as the state bears those rights. "It has to be clear that our position is that *el pueblo es el que marcha diciendo, pero el Estado es el garante de los derechos* [the public marches but the state is the one to guarantee our rights]," says Carmen.

In other words, the vertical connections between citizen and state or community and state – what Woolcock (1998) calls social capital "synergies"[97] – are essential to the capacity for realizing rights. Understanding the dynamics of these linkages is a way to recognize both limitations and opportunities in civil society-government relationships. As Woolcock (2001) writes: "A social capital perspective recognizes that exclusion from economic and political institutions is created and maintained by powerful vested interests, but that marginalized groups themselves possess unique social resources that can be used as a basis for overcoming that exclusion, and as a mechanism for helping forge access to these institutions" (p. 16).

Re-establishing trust to overcome the *ley de silencia*

> "As we lament what's happening, we have to lament the silence with which we treat
> what's happening. Words are the last tool we have to create change!"

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[96] This source requested that I keep both her name and the name of her organization anonymous because they had received threats recently.

[97] Woolcock develops this idea based on Peter Evans' concept of "embeddedness" (Evans 1996).

Given the multiple reasons for loss of trust in the state, why would any IDP organization wish to engage by creating these vertical linkages? Why not simply give up on the state entirely? As one ICBF government official explains, "trust between the public and the government emerges and *se teje* [is woven] as a product of necessity."

"Look, *no tenemos a quién más pedirle* [we don't have anyone else to ask]," explains Luisa. "Lamentably, this is what we have. We have to comply with the constitutional norms, which is to demand our rights of those who have the duty to protect them. We, as the displaced population, as the victims of the armed conflict, have to demand that of the state, because the state is responsible for the restitution of our rights that have been lost." Even when there is little trust in public institutions, there is little choice but to continue working with what state there is. You either walk away or you continue pushing and struggling to reshape the state for the better, says Luisa.

Back in the hot room in the Corvivienda building, the Comité meeting turns to a discussion of the role of the state in their work.

"It's not that we're enemies of the government or of the state," says one woman.

"Why do we keep insisting and insisting? Because we can't *quitarle esa obligatoriedad* [take away the obligation] of the state to recognize our rights," says another woman. "That's an obligation of the state, so what do we do? We insist and insist and work to pass laws."

"The most important thing," says the first woman, "is that we are united and organized and can continue organizing even more."

"We have to open up that space," says a third.

Eduardo explains it as a duty of citizens to continually push government actors and institutions to be better. He offers the example of why it is important to report sexual and domestic violence even if the police and other public authorities don't respond adequately. "We have to keep calling and denouncing and insisting because that is the only way they'll get used to the community speaking up," Eduardo says.

Building careful alliances

Within the broader human rights community in Colombia, there are some concerns about co-optation of victim engagement or IDP organizations for the benefit of public relations and image improvement campaigns for the Colombian government. Those who express these doubts see connections between the state and IDP movements as superficial or opportunistic (Tate 2007).

In a meeting with APRODIC, one IDP man tells me that community leaders who become beholden to government officials in exchange for personal favors can no longer effectively demand their rights or their community's rights from the state. One time at a sit-in at a government office, he saw a public official pull aside one IDP leader and tell him not to speak because he had paid for his children to go to college. "The government comes and gives you whatever small job, whatever *vaina* [small meaningless thing] and there, now you are no longer working for your community but instead for private businesses or the government."

Humberto, responding to this anecdote, says, "It's the lack of knowledge that people have rights, that they see this as some sort of *prebenda* [perk] and they feel obligated to that public official for it."

"They think it's a gift," adds Gloria.

"And then they feel *comprados* [bought], obligated, and then *no exigen porque si exijo me quitan la ayuda* [they don't make demands because they fear their perks will be taken away]," says Humberto.

Along these same lines, Carmen expresses concern about politicians who promise to deliver programs or resources to community organizations in exchange for thousands of votes, which she says can result in a loss of autonomy and authority to make demands. Selling votes in this way effectively weakens the organization's and the individual citizen's ability to make claims on the state. "The Mayor has to deliver, the City Councilor has to deliver, because that is their obligation, whether I voted for him or not," she says. "We have to build alliances with the government, but if those alliances take away your identity or your autonomy, then *no armemos y recojamos y vámonos* [we don't build those alliances, we pick up and we leave]!"

Political connections like this can grant community leaders access, influence or economic resources, but there's a liability to this asset. Such vertical capital can also limit IDP mobility and voice if those political connections are understood as "gifts" rather than as rights. Vertical linkages are important, but so are the manners in which they are forged, negotiated and maintained.

Recognizing these risks, IDP organizations take the tactic of identifying those distinct state actors or institutions that could be potential and true partners, forging careful alliances. "Through these alliances we've been able to build up trust with certain state functionaries and certain entities," says Carolina.

This requires a more nuanced understanding of the "state" not as a homogenous entity but as a network of agents within which there may be opportunity for differentiated trust. Perhaps rebuilding trust in the government is too much to ask; but rebuilding trust in specific parts of the government is a legitimate possibility. As political sociologist Peter Evans (1996) writes, even for oppressed or excluded groups, "the state may often be the enemy, but only in exceptional circumstances is it monolithically the enemy. Even in relatively authoritarian regimes, alliances with 'reformists' within the state can offer resources to popular organizations that are unavailable anywhere else" (p. 205).

Forging careful alliances requires a learning process with a steep curve. "We're always going to find *filtrados* [leaks]," says Carolina. "We've developed so many proposals and plans and projects [with state agents] that have been *desviados* [thrown off course]. I can't tell you exactly who the *filtrado* or the corrupt person was, but we've learned through this work to identify the entities that we don't want to work with because we now don't trust them. We have that very clear: If I don't trust this or that entity, this or that organization, this or that institution, then we don't work with them."

But, says Eva, "we have to run that risk. We want a change. If we don't know the politics, we won't see that change!"

Carolina says that negative experiences can't turn civil society organizations away from the state entirely. The bad still doesn't outweigh the good. "Building alliances with

the government can make them commit to really satisfy our expectations. We also can't treat the state like an enemy. Through these alliances we have achieved positive outcomes in many ways," she says.

For example, Taylor (2010) found that IDP community and organization leaders in Bogotá who had connections to public officials had a much easier time getting access to government services or aid programs. There is also evidence for mutually-reinforcing horizontal and vertical social capital. In Mexico City and Medellín, two cities that have long struggled with urban violence, Davis (2012) found that community organizations that developed vertical bonds with local government authorities were also able to strengthen the horizontal cooperation among community members because of increased access to resources. In other words, strong connections to the state can help build stronger connections to each other, enhancing bonding and bridging social capital as well as vertical linking capital.

These vertical linkages also play the important role of boosting morale and creating the space for envisioning a different and better future. As one ICBF government official explains, building a relationship between the public and the state "*te hace renacer la esperanza, te hace renacer la fe con respeto a que las cosas si se puedan dar* [revives hope and faith in the idea that things can change]."

Redefining citizenship: Activating *la palabra muerta* [the dead word]

In her comprehensive study of human rights defenders in Colombia, Tate (2007) describes the re-envisioning of "citizenship" and "state-building" through human rights discourses in the following way:

> Human rights claims are made against the state; the state is party to the multilateral treaties that enshrine rights, and it is the state as an institution that promises specific protections to its citizens. In the making of human rights claims, activists thus articulate their vision of the ideal state and the kinds of relationships that should exist between state and citizen. Nongovernmental activists work to create a public imaginary of a state invoking the Weberian ideal of a state monopoly on violence. Though relatively powerless, these activists use human rights claims as a means to force state representatives to claim responsibility for abuses and thus enact an accountable state (p. 5).

Drawing on ethnographic studies of marginalized groups in violent societies and their interaction with political processes, Das et al. (2001) write that "engagement in collective action then moves resentment from the arena of private conversations towards the making of a counter public sphere within which notions of citizenship may be renegotiated with the state" (p 10). It is a way of broadening the conversation beyond personal anger or tragedy into a project of large-scale change.

The constant pressure to push the government to perform at a higher level is one way in which IDP organizations help re-envision and reshape the state, says Carmen. "It's a way to wake up the state through these organizations that have been created. There are some empowered organizations with lots of knowledge that know how to navigate the political context, that know the laws, that know how things happen in Colombia and in the city," she says.

On another level, this idea of citizenship is not just about interacting with formal law or public officials. It incorporates a wider range of actions, activities and attitudes about how to engage both with the state and with communities. The LIMPAL *veeduría* (2011) states: "Political will at this moment has just been proposals and words, but despite these challenges, IDP women exercise their citizenship through *la formación* [education], *la convocatoria* [convening], mobilization of communities, the work of *incidencia política* [political monitoring], peace initiatives, coordination of their actions and participation in networks" (p. 11).

In other words, "citizenship" can be conceived of as far more than going to the polls on election day or paying taxes. Citizenship is not only participation or interaction with the state (as per more traditional understandings) but also participation or interaction with communities and social networks. Rebuilding trust in public institutions in societies in which the state has been discredited on a number of levels can take years and requires the construction of mutually-reinforcing norms not only codified into law but also in cultural change (Stromseth 2008).

Rights as "footprints"

Though many laws in Colombia are "paper laws," they have far more chance of implementing social reforms than if no policy at all is on the books. Law can set the tone for the diffusion of change and the translation of "politics" into daily life, explains Carmen. "You don't just 'do politics' when you're in political office. You do politics through *incidencia* [follow-through] in the neighborhoods, through your way of acting, through your demanding, through your presence, through your manner of *being*. That is also doing politics," she says.

Law can be a site of control or a site of resistance, but above all it can be a "site of engagement" for a wide range of social actors with different political projects, even in societies that have developed a mistrust of state institutions, as in Colombia (García-Godos and O. Lid 2010). Progressive laws (whether well-implemented or not) can send a "a signal about national priorities and the meaning of citizenship" while also "furnish[ing] incentives for the mobilization of social movements" (Htun and Weldon 2012, p. 551). Laws like Auto 092 and the Victims' Law create new categories and definitions of "victimhood" and associated rights that provide a "normative strength and legitimacy" to IDP movements that make reference to those legal and policy frameworks (García-Godos and O. Lid 2010).

In other words, law can still be a galvanizing and legitimizing force even if it is ineffective in practice. It can create a rallying point or a common discourse and language or a point of pressure to continually engage the state. "There's a *something*, a something that can be a tool for people in situations of displacement," says Liliana. "Lamentably, there hasn't been the political will to carry out these programs, but even with those *vacíos* [holes], it has still created the spaces for political stakes, for organizing people in councils, for involving IDPs so that they can seek solutions to their problems."

The symbolic meaning of a right can both anchor and transform legal consciousness through the power of storytelling in communities. Rather than seeing rights as "precedent" in the traditional legal sense, Perelman and White (2010) propose the idea of rights as "footprints," or shared remembered facts or values. Through the

collective understanding, mobilization and re-telling of what rights are and what they mean in the day-to-day lives of community members, these rights are "decentralized and democratized, making meanings outside of the institutional normative system of legislation, regulations and adjudications. The primary focus of the rights as footprints is on meaning-making by and for communities themselves" (p. 136). Rights as "footprints" still require the formal legal system, but rather than placing the entire burden upon the state to interpret and administer such rights, Perelman and White see great power in how rights are filtered through community social networks and are "repeatedly retold through shared but shifting frames [that] generate multiple pathways toward justice" (p 139).

Seeing rights as flexible and dynamic in this way retains their potential to be "disruptive, creative and locally responsive" (p. 142). Thus, the unique power of collective action can expand opportunity structures and "pry open institutional barriers through which new demands can pour" (Tarrow 1996, p. 58).

Many past attempts at policy reform in conflict or post-conflict contexts have failed because of too much emphasis on formal institutions and a lack of attention paid to the perceptions and interpretations of ordinary citizens and the importance of a societal and cultural commitment to change (Stromseth 2008). Changing the culture of war as a social condition is a constant process of struggle and engagement with the state as well as with one's own family, neighbors and communities. As one LIMPAL staff member says, "Peace processes don't need to be in the atmosphere way up there. They can be at home, in school, in your communities."

Summary

"The process of displacement unites us," says Carolina. "It makes us build these organizations and these alliances because we are the people who have suffered and who are demanding our rights that have been violated. These alliances and unities create equality between us and allow us to take a stance in front of an unjust state that hasn't implemented the laws that address our needs. It's not an easy task. It's been an arduous process of *exigencia* [demanding], of empowerment, and of continuing to educate and empower others who still don't know their rights so they can join us to build a better tomorrow. Maybe we won't know a different country within our lifetimes, a country full of peace and equality, but we are building that country for our children and for our grandchildren."

In societies recovering from or still embroiled in ongoing violence, hope for the future relies upon the ability to challenge the status quo to envision a better world. As Das et al. (2001) write:

> The recovery of the everyday, resuming the task of living (and not only surviving), asks for a renewed capacity to address the future. How does one shape a future in which the collective experience of violence and terror can find recognition in the narratives of larger entities such as the nation and the state? At the level of interpersonal relations, how does one contain and seal off the violence that might poison the life of future generations? How these goals are secured is complicated, for it asks for the simultaneous engagement of political and judicial institutions, as well as families and local communities (p. 4).

This chapter reviewed the international, national and local policies that deal with internal displacement in Colombia before reflecting upon the inadequacies of the implementation of such policies. Facing frustration and a lack of trust in the state, IDP social networks, organizations and movements make the choice to continue engaging with formal structures of power and policy. They do so by establishing careful alliances and vertical linkages as well as diffusing the law through "rights as footprints" in their communities.

The final chapter will consider how policymakers in Colombia can learn from the survival and social network strategies of IDPs to design and implement better policies for long-term and sustainable urban settlement.

Chapter 7
Durable solutions?
Addressing internal displacement
and urban settlement in Colombia

It remains to be seen how the current peace negotiations between President Santos's administration and FARC will or will not represent a move towards laying down arms and creating a peaceful future in Colombia. But in the meantime, for the millions of IDPs who have begun their lives anew in cities and for the thousands who continue to be displaced each year, waiting is not an option.

The previous chapters have provided detailed descriptions of IDP resilience strategies and the formation of social networks, organizations and broader movements that satisfy both individual and collective needs in urban settlement. This concluding chapter will reflect upon potential directions for policy change and other public responses to internal displacement. As we have seen thus far, the state sometimes not only behaves in ways that are oblivious to the lived realities of IDPs but also in ways that inadvertently exacerbate tensions because of poorly designed and poorly implemented policies. It is ultimately the Colombian state's responsibility to protect those forcibly displaced by the armed conflict. By working in collaboration with IDPs and by learning from their resilience strategies, Colombia has a far greater chance of laying the foundation for a more just and sustainable peace.

Redefining "durable solutions"

According to the UN Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (2009), a "durable solution" is realized "when former IDPs no longer have specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and such persons can enjoy their human rights without discrimination resulting from their displacement" (p. 10). It is defined by the following characteristics:

a. Long-term safety, security and freedom of movement
b. An adequate standard of living, including at a minimum access to adequate food, water, housing, health care and basic education
c. Access to employment and livelihoods
d. Access to effective mechanisms that restore their housing, land and property or provide them with compensation
e. Access to and replacement of personal and other documentation
f. Voluntary reunification with family members separated during displacement
g. Participation in public affairs at all levels on an equal basis with the resident population
h. Effective remedies for displacement-related violations, including access to justice, reparations and information about the causes of violations.

The most glaring hole in this definition of a durable solution is its failure to account for the importance of social networks. It imagines a solution on a person-by-

person, IDP-by-IDP basis rather than a solution for groups or entire communities of people surviving and even thriving together.

As we have seen throughout this thesis, even if IDPs secure housing, even if they find employment, even if their stolen property is restituted, even if they actively participate in politics, none of this is worth much without supporting the communities within which they live. A truly durable solution for IDPs would see them not just as individual victims but also as agentic members of social networks, organizations, and movements, all of which contribute greatly to urban integration. The "assistance and protection needs" that the UN identifies are very often satisfied not just by the state but by these social networks, as well. Therefore, "durable solutions" will emerge from the productive interaction of both state and civil society actors working together with and learning from IDPs.

Policy from the ground up: Learning from IDP resilience

What are the sorts of policies and laws that can better address internal displacement and urban settlement? IDPs know better than anyone what they need and how to achieve it. They are not simply victims – they are also the agents of innovative and adaptive responses to displacement. Policymakers would do well to learn from the ways in which IDPs integrate into receptor cities, developing economic, social and political survival strategies. Along these lines, Davis (2012) suggests "turning attention to the ways individuals and institutions at the level of the community carve out spaces for action even in the most dire of circumstances" (p. 29).

What follows are a few key takeaways on how to learn from IDP resilience: focusing on long-term integration, supporting IDP community organizing, and reframing policy to target social networks rather than individuals.

Designing solutions for long-term urban integration

Above all, there must be a clear recognition that local integration of IDPs is an ongoing process that will require ongoing support. As IDPs build new lives, communities absorb and incorporate large influxes of vulnerable populations, municipal authorities adjust to shifting needs of their constituencies and the national government continues to struggle with the persistent violent conflict, the solution is not to be found in short-term emergency assistance but rather in long-term, comprehensive support.

Policymakers are too often swayed by the trends in international policy that do not take into account the local context. International pressure to enforce the "right to return," for example, can skew state policy towards return instead of compensation and support for local integration into new host communities (Smit 2012). For example, much of the 2011 Victims' Law is directed towards return when the fact is that around 80% of Colombian IDPs report preferring local settlement into cities (Carrillo 2009). Providing public assistance for urban integration should not be secondary when the vast majority of IDPs prefer it. As Albuja and Ceballos (2010) write, "development support is indispensable in the long run in cities [because] the bulk of IDPs appear to have the same aspiration as migrants, that is, to remain in the city permanently...If settlement in the city

of displacement is to be a durable solution, it requires realization of the entire spectrum of rights of IDPs, without discrimination" (p. 10).

When is a period of displacement *over?* For the generations that grow up in cities of reception and may never return to their communities of origin, displacement is by no means a short-term experience. Understanding and responding to the lived dynamics of IDP settlement over longer periods of time can prevent the kinds of emergency aid programs (like housing subsidies that run out) that are unreliable, temporary and ultimately destabilizing. Real local integration will require the continuous support of municipal authorities (and not just national policymakers) as well as the active participation of IDPs who live out the consequences of policy and aid programs (Ferris and Halff 2011a). Furthermore, municipal policies should be designed in a way that can effectively target IDP-specific needs without antagonizing or further marginalizing host communities (Davies and Jacobsen 2011).

Some of these long-term interventions could include livelihoods programs for the kind of socioeconomic stabilization that has thus far been lacking for IDPs. To avoid the mistakes of past programs that have exacerbated tensions within host communities and only increased competition for a limited and generally impoverished clientele, policy makers should focus less on individual entrepreneurship and more on collective or cooperatively-owned businesses. Community-oriented economic development recognizes that the wellbeing of a household is interdependent on that of the wider community. Collective businesses (e.g. agricultural cooperatives, artisan associations, etc.) serve not only economic functions but also create the conditions for social support, as well.

Supporting on-the-ground IDP community organizing

Confronted with limited municipal human and financial resources for IDP assistance, the Colombian government should take advantage of an important partner in this work by focusing on the ways in which they can bolster the groundwork already being done by IDP community organizations and movements. Recognizing the obstacles these organizations face in balancing the *triple jornada*, in securing safe meeting spaces, in bearing the transportation and opportunity costs of organizing and in confronting armed actors is the first step to building better and more supportive public policies. The provision (and protection) of safe and free or subsidized community spaces, transportation[98] and/or childcare subsidies for community organizers and community-led security initiatives in response to threats are all viable possibilities.

Reframing communities as units of intervention

Perhaps the most interesting and challenging implication for policy arising from the study of IDPs and urban settlement is the need to shift the focus to "communities" (in the form of spatially organized personal networks) as the units of intervention. At the root of displacement is the breakdown of social networks. Rather than providing aid on

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[98] As Davis (2012) sums up: "While one can develop programs to build social capital or employment capacity by engaging citizens in a variety of new activities and networks, if the recipients of these programs are prevented from the free movement in space necessary for acting upon their new connections, the development and utilization of social capital can only go so far" (p. 13).

an individual or household basis with little regard for the ripple effects this may cause in the wider community, stronger IDP assistance policies require the consultation and participation of all members of displacement-affected communities (including both IDPs *and* non-IDPs). Rao and Walton (2004) call for community-based interventions that move "from a focus on individuals to a recognition that relational and group-based phenomena shape and influence individual aspiration, capabilities and agency" (p. 30). Household-targeted public policies that bear no reference to or acknowledgement of the relationship between individuals and a wider web of actors lose out on the opportunity to bolster and enable community cohesion or collective action (Davis 2012).

One way of refocusing policy on communities would be to expand service provision beyond direct assistance to IDPs to include their non-IDP neighbors also living in extreme poverty. Community-level needs assessments, monitoring, and evaluation tools can more directly capture the full impact of urban settlement on both IDPs and non-IDPs and initiate the reconstruction of social bonds (Moser 2000; Singh and Robinson 2010; Ferris and Halff 2011a). A broad-based approach could lessen tensions between IDPs and the historic poor, diminish the pressures placed on the IDP-only system and potentially prevent armed actors and other profiteers from preying off of IDPs for their assistance funds. As Ferris (2008a) writes, "the state has to understand that displacement is not a problem for a particular group, but for the whole society" (p. 8).

Community building and social cohesion can in turn become mutually reinforcing for future conflict prevention and mediation (Frederico et al. 2007; Christensen and Harild 2009). As Colletta and Cullen (2000) write, "the admonition to 'get the policies right' may still be valid, but it is not sufficient. 'Getting the social relations right' is necessary for avoiding violent conflict" (p. 108).

Even beyond preventing future violence, a social networks approach is cognizant of IDP resilience strategies that rely on extended social ties to connect to economic and political opportunities. Recognizing the power of family, friendship, community and institutional relationships is central to building better cities not just for IDPs but also for all those who make their homes there.

So, what would community-based IDP policy *look like?* Unfortunately, there have been few concrete examples. A few experiments in community-based IDP aid have been implemented in a handful of countries, including Sierra Leone (Richards, Bah, and Vincent 2004), Indonesia (Mooney 2005), and the Philippines (Frederico et al. 2007), but it is still a relatively young field of policy innovation that is certainly worth further development and study.

Some examples of place-based programs that target spatial communities in which IDPs and non-IDPs live side by side include upgrades in urban infrastructure (e.g. water and sanitation, schools, health facilities) and the creation and maintenance of safe family-friendly spaces, community centers and other public spaces (Davies and Jacobsen 2011). However, targeting the more diffuse IDP social networks that most likely cross neighborhood boundaries is a more complicated task because such physical interventions are limited to those who live close by. One option would be to actively support the information-sharing function of these networks by providing trainings to community leaders on the most up-to-date national and local policy frameworks. Another option policymakers could consider, in addition to providing support for existing IDP civil

society organizations, would be to directly facilitate coalition-building and learning between these organizations.

Whatever the program, policy or intervention, municipal authorities should work in collaboration with IDPs, their neighborhoods and their organizations. This co-production of both knowledge and action can also help rebuild trust between the public and the state.

Rebuilding trust in public institutions

The international community can provide financial and technical support to the state efforts, but outside actors should ultimately not be designing solutions without local partnership. Emergency humanitarian aid may be necessary in the short-term for newer waves of IDPs, but by and large these stop-gap interventions by international actors should not take precedence over the importance of establishing long-term durable solutions that should emanate from the state and local civil society (Davies and Jacobsen 2011). This is the difference between humanitarianism and development.

In the end, it remains the state's responsibility to address durable solutions to internal displacement, and all levels of the Colombian government should consider rebuilding trust in public institutions as an investment in working towards sustainable peace. Even if the current peace negotiations between President Santos's administration and FARC end in a full resolution of all hostilities (which is highly unlikely), the aftermath of the conflict will still loom large as millions recover from violence, trauma and displacement. Rather than letting this suffering and misery linger and potentially serve as the hotbed for future tensions and conflicts, the government should act now and consider building stronger relationships with IDPs and IDP organizations as a preventative measure at the very least, if not a basic responsibility to their own citizens. There are a number of specific ways through which the Colombian state could work to rebuild trust.

Where policy design meets implementation:
Training and sensitizing front-line service providers

One of the major flaws in the way the 1991 Constitution established the current government institutions is the incomplete decentralization of authority and resources between the national government – where IDP policy is designed – and the municipal government – where IDP policy is implemented (Ibáñez and Velásquez 2008). Though law remains powerful for its role in developing a common language between civil society and state actors, in sparking social movements and in creating the basis for "footprinting," it would be much more powerful if it were actually implemented.

Addressing internal displacement in Colombia could be described as a "complex" problem because it requires solutions that are "highly transaction intensive, require considerable discretion by implementing agents, yield powerful pressures for those agents to do something other than implement a solution, and have no known (ex ante) solution" (Woolcock forthcoming, p. 11). The design of the IDP policy is important, but so is its implementation – so much can get lost along the way from words to actions.

Training and sensitizing front-line service providers and municipal authorities to better implement current policies would be a relatively easy first step to rebuild trust in public institutions. The role of front-line service provider discretion has been explored ever since Michael Lipsky's breakthrough book *Street–Level Bureaucracy* (1980), and it is worth considering the gateway power that municipal officials hold over the interpretation and implementation of IDP policy. As described in Chapter 6, the front-line service providers and public functionaries responsible for translating national IDP policy into on-the-ground IDP assistance are often discriminatory, ill-informed or simply overburdened by the quantity and complexity of requests.

But, if properly trained, supported and empowered, these very same service providers could become more effective agents of peaceful and sustainable urban settlement for IDPs. National authorities should provide the training resources to equip municipal officials with the most accurate, up-to-date information on IDP policies. They should also require mandatory sensitivity training for local service providers to prevent the discriminatory and offensive behavior that so many IDPs have witnessed upon seeking aid. The national government should provide the accompanying funds and personnel to ensure proper administration of national laws so that municipal authorities don't feel they are sacrificing one population (the historic poor) for another (IDPs).

Since most IDPs only come into face-to-face contact with these front-line providers, these are the people that in many cases come to represent "the state." The better the relationships with functionaries in UARIV, Corvivienda and other city offices, the greater the trust that is fostered between IDPs and public institutions.

Meaningful participation of IDPs in policy design *and* implementation

Another important way to build trust in public institutions is to offer IDPs a real stake in how they are treated and protected by the state. It is not enough to simply offer IDPs a place at the table – that place needs to *mean* something, to translate into actual outcomes. Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to review the long literature on participatory and inclusive urban governance,[99] it is worth reaffirming that the substantive participation of key stakeholders – in this case, IDPs – can improve outcomes, satisfaction with and sustainability of policies. It can also serve as an important opportunity for the exercise of citizenship, thereby actively building the vertical linkages that can serve as the basis for a newfound trust in public institutions.

Consultation on projects in which IDPs ultimately have no final say is not enough, says Humberto of APRODIC. The concern is that the advising councils set up by the government are just thinly-veiled token inclusion of IDPs. "That advice is just advice – it is consultation that doesn't oblige the state or the public officials to do anything," Humberto says. Without action and without teeth, these advisor councils are false or superficial forms of public participation.

If IDPs are to be included in a substantive way, their proposals need to be fully supported not just with political will but with money, as well, says Carolina. "What we are looking for is for our proposals to be included in the development plans of the

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[99] For some key readings on this topic, see (Arnstein 1969), (Fung and Wright 2003), (Fung 2004), (Smith 2009).

government so that they can be assigned real resources and they can finally be implemented," she explains. "We want to build *mesas políticas*, *mesas de concertaciones* [political councils, cooperative roundtables] with the government so from there we can make demands on the duty to implement the laws that have already been passed. The fact that IDPs today can benefit from humanitarian aid and from recognition on the part of the government is because we've worked hard to achieve these things. The fact that we can recognize ourselves as victims and as subjects of rights is because we have achieved *atravesar un poco esa barrera* [crossing that barrier a little bit], not as much as we would like, but through these movements, the state will wake up. The state will begin to see us as subjects, to give us the space for political participation, to not discriminate against us. We have achieved a lot, but we still believe the violation of our rights is the state's responsibility."

One way for the state to act upon that responsibility is to follow through on these demands for active and substantive participation of IDPs in the design of assistance programs as well as in the allocation of resources.

Conclusion

With over 28.8 million IDPs in the world today because of conflict, human rights violations and generalized violence, forced displacement is widely recognized as a tool of war and territorial control. Land and power shift hands, and millions are dispossessed and forced to find refuge on the periphery of urban areas. The internal armed conflict in Colombia is no exception. As many as 5.4 million Colombians are living in a state of displacement in host cities around the country. But as new generations of IDPs grow up far from their rural communities of origin because of the impossibility of return, *host* cities become *home* cities. Protracted conflict means protracted displacement, and IDPs are forced to forge survival strategies to get by in the short-term and the long-term.

Taking Cartagena, Colombia as a case study of IDP settlement, this thesis has charted the processes of urban integration from individual and family survival to social movement mobilization. Upon arrival, IDPs must satisfy basic survival needs (shelter, food, income), deal with trauma and navigate shifting personal and collective identities in the aftermath of displacement. The strategies that IDPs develop to respond to these multiple challenges ultimately necessitate joining existing or forming new social networks for information sharing, economic support and emotional connection. Despite obstacles to community organizing (including direct threats and violence), these social networks sometimes coalesce into coalitions among IDPs and between IDPs and non-IDPs, which serve as the basis for broader social movements that make claims on the state.

This thesis is a small contribution to what will hopefully become a much larger literature on the processes of IDP urban settlement and resilience. Much remains to be understood about the complex dynamics of internal armed conflict and its impacts not just on those directly in combat but also on those who live war as a social condition. In the meantime, there are several concrete steps that Colombian policymakers can take to develop truly durable solutions to internal displacement not only for IDPs but for their host communities, as well.

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Glossary

[Note: For most laws and policies mentioned in the thesis, see Chapter 6 for more information]

APRODIC
Asociación para la Promoción del Desarrollo Integral del Caribe
APRODIC is a community development organization that works in Cartagena and several other municipalities in Bolívar. Under the three main platforms of human rights, democracy and development, APRODIC works with marginalized and vulnerable communities, including both IDPs and historic poor residents of city slums.

Asociación Mis Esfuerzos
This IDP women's organization (known commonly as Mis Esfuerzos) works closely with LIMPAL. It is run by the women of Revivir de los Campanos, an IDP neighborhood in Cartagena.

Auto 092
A compliance ordinance passed in 2008 to protect IDP women under the 2004 Constitutional Court of Colombia ruling Sentencia T-025. Auto 092 required the government of Colombia to create and implement thirteen specific, tailored and gender differential programs to guarantee the rights of IDP women.

La Casa Úrsula
A national arts program for women's rights established after UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and sponsored by the *Corporación Colombiana de Teatro* [Colombian Corporation of Theater] and *FOKUS Foro de Mujeres y Desarrollo* [FOKUS Forum for Women and Development].

Comité de Seguimiento del Auto 092
The Comité is a group of IDP women community leaders from different neighborhoods around Cartagena. It was formed in 2008 in response to the passage of Auto 092, an ordinance issued by the Constitutional Court of Colombia to highlight the disproportionate impact of violence on women in the armed conflict.

Corvivienda
Fondo de Vivienda de Interés Social y Reforma Urbana del Distrito de Cartagena
The local government entity responsible for housing and community development within the district of Cartagena. Literally translated, its full title is Fund for Social Interest Housing and Urban Reform in the District of Cartagena.

Defensoría del Pueblo
The Ombudsman's office, a central governmental human rights agency responsible for assisting victims of abuse. It was established by the 1991 Constitution, though it lacks specific investigative and enforcement powers.

Fiscalía General de la Nación
The Attorney General's office, established by the 1991 Constitution.

FUNSAREP
Asociación Santa Rita para la Educación y Promoción
A community organization in Cartagena dedicated to the promotion of human development, social justice, solidarity and diversity, with a particular focus on the Afro-Colombian community.

Gender
Gender refers to socially-constructed and socially-maintained relations between men and women (including behaviors, expectations, norms and institutions), all of which are contingent upon the particular historical and cultural contexts within which they are located.

Grupo Espejo
A Cartagena-based non-profit organization that uses theater and art to teach people about non-violence.

Internally displaced person (IDP)
As defined by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, IDPs are "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violation of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internally recognized State border."

LIMPAL
La Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y Libertad
A branch of the international NGO Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. It has worked for the past 12 years in Colombia to promote and defend women's human rights, with a particular emphasis on the rights of adult and young women affected by the internal armed conflict. LIMPAL has offices in Bogotá and Cartagena.

Mesa DESC
Mesa de Derechos Económicos Sociales y Culturales
An umbrella organization comprised of women community leaders from around Cartagena and broader Bolívar. It is primarily an advocacy group that trains its member organizations in human rights and places pressure on public policymakers.

Sentencia T-025
This *sentencia* [court sentence] was passed in 2004 by the Constitutional Court of Colombia, which declared an "unconstitutional state of affairs" in the Colombian

government's failure to adequately address the impacts of internal displacement. It established the dominant normative framework for providing state-based aid to IDPs by requiring that national and local authorities adjust their budget priorities to reflect IDP needs and by allowing the participation of IDP groups in monitoring government progress in correcting the "unconstitutional state of affairs."

Social capital

The form of capital that arises from relationships between individuals, families, groups, communities, institutions and hierarchical structures of power that provides access to valuable benefits and/or resources. It is often analytically divided upon several axes, including (but not limited to) bonding, bridging and vertical linking social capital.

Social network

A set of voluntary direct and indirect relationships, communication and exchanges. These horizontal (though not necessarily equal) links are built on reciprocal trust. Social networks are adaptive, evolving and transforming over time to meet changing mutual interests or goals.

Procuraduría

The Inspector General's office, responsible for investigating official misconduct by state agents, which was established by the 1991 Constitution.

Red de Empoderamiento de Mujeres de Cartagena y Bolívar

The Network of Women's Empowerment in Cartagena and Bolívar is an umbrella organization that works with 11 smaller organizations on issues of women's rights, access to justice and ending violence against women.

UARIV

Unidad para la Atención y la Reparación Integral a las Víctimas
The Unit for the Attention and Integral Reparations for Victims, formerly known as the *Unidad de Atención y Orientación a Desplazados* (or UAO), is the local government office for IDPs under the cross-cutting agency known as *Prosperidad para Todos* (formerly known as *Acción Social*).

The Victim's Law

Ley 1448; Ley de Víctimas y de Restitución de Tierras
The largest victims' rights and reparations law in Colombia's history, with sweeping provisions for land restitution, compensation and a wide range of guarantees of services like preferential housing subsidies for victims of the conflict. For more information, see Appendix B.

Appendix A:
Gender and forced displacement in Colombia

Worldwide, women are disproportionately impacted by armed conflict and displacement, often as targets of sexual and gender-based violence or as those left behind to pick up the pieces of shattered families and communities. Women and children make up the vast majority of the world's IDPs and refugees (International Committee of the Red Cross 2004). In 2009, of the 40 million people worldwide displaced by war that year alone, 80% were women, children and youth (Cahn, Haynes, and Ni Aolain 2010). Women are by no means the *only* victims of the conflict, but their experiences and needs are often overlooked, their voices silenced by insecurity and fear, lack of political clout, and systemic power imbalances (Walker 2009; Lykes 2010).

Within the literature on forced displacement, there has been significant research on how the experience of migration affects gender relations. In the Colombian context, a fair amount has been written on the gendered implications of displacement broadly speaking (to take a few examples: Osorio Pérez and Breña 2008; Tabak 2011; Meertens 2003, 2012; Human Rights Watch 2012). Much less has been written on how gender relations reciprocally impact the social dynamics of displacement and eventual integration into urban host sites (Lubkemann 2008).

The majority of my sources were women, most of whom had some connection to the women's rights movement in Colombia. Sexual and domestic violence, frustration with the lack of women's participation in political and peace processes, and the gendered experiences of migration and resettlement among IDP women were common themes in my interviews. Unfortunately, only five of my sources were IDP men, so I cannot provide as full of an account of their experiences. A more in-depth exploration of the experience of masculinity in displacement would be an important addition to the literature in the field.

In 2007, the Constitutional Court of Colombia identified 18 specific ways in which forced displacement disproportionately affects women, including the increased risks of sexual violence, labor exploitation and obstruction of property restitution (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2011b). According to the most recent statistics available,[100] women and girls make up 52% of the Colombian IDP population (compared to 51% of the total population) and, of displaced families, 43% are headed by women (compared to 30% of the total population). Moreover, of the households headed by women, 68% have no spouse present, shifting the burden of family care entirely to the single mother (Meertens 2012). These single-headed households are the households in which the largest relative poverty is found among IDPs (ICRC-WFP 2007).

Forced or voluntary recruitment into armed groups, disappearances, kidnappings, and deaths of male family members leave behind women-headed households with smaller income streams and many mouths to feed (Moser 2001). In many parts of Latin America, it is often said that women are faced with a *triple jornada* (triple workday) because,

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[100] Compiled in 2008 by the *Comisión de Seguimiento* (Monitoring Commission of the Public Policy on Internal Displacement).

particularly in displacement, they are tasked with the three burdens of providing financial support, caring for the family and (re)building community life.[101] Because of this *triple jornada*, the deliberate or incidental wartime disruption of "the fine fabric of everyday life, its interlaced economies, its material systems of care and support, its social networks, the roofs that shelter it" has strikingly gendered consequences (Cockburn 2004, p. 35).

Understanding the gendered dynamics of social networks and social capital can help uncover underlying trends in how IDPs cope and survive in the midst of violence. With this in mind, Moser (2001) identified the unique kinds of social capital that men and women tend to cultivate, particularly in conflict zones. For example, while women are more vulnerable in the moment of displacement itself, they have been shown to adapt better than men during the period of resettlement and urban integration, largely because of their access to informal support networks. In comparison, men continue to rely more on formal institutional support. This kind of support comes much more slowly than the informal aid that most women pursue because formal institutions, like state agencies responsible for distributing emergency humanitarian supplies, are very often overtaxed, under-funded and under-staffed.[102] Women, in the meantime, spend less energy on the all-too-often futile search for formal support because they are "too busy with questions of daily survival, which requires a lot of personal networking: For whom is she going to work that day? Which neighbor will look after the children? Who can she ask for some food or a loan?" (Meertens 2001, p. 144).

Apart from gangs and armed groups (both of which are forms of social networks), IDP women are often the leaders of community movements and associations. "Even though they are in marginalized and poor neighborhoods, it's almost always the women who dedicate themselves to improving the wellbeing of the community," says Gloria, co-founder of APRODIC, a human rights organization in Cartagena. "It's the women who organize themselves and who form organizations." Women take the initiative and the primary responsibility for the *trabajo de base* [the groundwork], but *machismo* still dictates that men often hold the top leadership positions in most co-ed community organizations. Men tend to take on the visible public roles, while women handle the bulk of the organizing without much of the credit, says Gloria.

It is sometimes argued that conflict can in fact *empower* women because of the shake-ups in gender relations (including, for example, shifts in household bargaining power and community leadership roles, skills building among women, and even improved levels of self-esteem). However, those gains are generally superficial or short-lived

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[101] As one IDP woman I met joked: "*Nosotras las mujeres tenemos el nombre de 'Soyla.' Soy la que plancha. Soy la que cuida a los niños. Soy la que cocina.*" [We women are named 'Iamthe.' I am the one who irons. I am the one who takes care of the children. I am the one who cooks].

[102] For example, one study in capital city Bogotá showed that it can take up to two years between arrival in the city and first receipt of the humanitarian aid mandated by law. As a result, many IDPs in this study preferred informal support networks to satisfy their needs (Albuja and Ceballos 2010). One woman I met in Cartagena said she had been waiting seven years for a housing subsidy. Though this may be an extreme case, it does illustrate the fact that IDPs cannot simply wait for assistance to come to them – they are forced to engage in their own survival and coping strategies in the delay or absence of more effective government assistance.

because men still control financial resources (including land), political power and cultural dominance (Mertus 2003; Cockburn 2004; Calderón, Gáfaro, and Ibáñez 2011).

Appendix B:
A closer look at the Victims' Law

Colombia's Victims and Land Restitution Law, passed in 2011, has been lauded for being one of the most far-reaching attempts at transitional justice in the world. What follows is a brief exploration of the potential impacts and challenges to implementation of the Victims' Law.

Transitional justice and property restitution

The Victims' Law has only been on the books for a little over a year, but this is not the first time that a country in conflict has attempted to broker national reconciliation and peace through legal and institutional mechanisms like truth commissions, criminal prosecutions for past wrongs, reparations programs and governance reforms. In conflict and post-conflict situations, land ownership and occupancy is one of the first casualties. Forced displacement and migration, scorch and burn techniques and shady land transactions are common, leaving behind a patchwork of abandoned, destroyed and stolen property. In light of this, transitional justice mechanisms often take a property rights approach, attempting to restore pre-conflict property rights through land restitution or the "right to return." This symbolic right originated with the intention of returning refugees to their homes of origin, but has since been applied to internally displaced persons, as well.

The right to property restitution in post-conflict situations, while not firmly grounded in binding international law, has been extrapolated from the principle of right to return. It is a conception of right to property that has evolved in the past few decades, and international law has begun to develop new languages and norms around property restitution, though it may take more time for that movement to fully crystallize (Smit 2012; Ballard 2012). In 2005, a sub-commission of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR) endorsed a series of guidelines on post-conflict property restitution called the United Nations Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons, more commonly known as the "Pinheiro Principles." Borrowing heavily from the experience of property restitution in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the early 1990s war in former Yugoslavia, the Pinheiro Principles propose a legal, administrative and enforcement framework for the design and implementation of property restitution processes in the wake of conflict (Ballard 2012). The Principles are guidance, not binding law. As Mohan (2011) writes, "At best, the Principles can be considered 'soft law,' but more accurately they are a series of best practices" (p. 476). What the Pinheiro Principles do represent, however, is an international recognition of and commitment to property rights as a means to transitional justice.

That said, the results of property-based transitional justice have been mixed. There have been few "pure successes" in implementing the right to return for refugees or IDPs through housing and property restitution legal mechanisms because of the lack of political and financial support and "conceptually flawed strategies, biased policies and ineffectual institutions," as the former UN Special Rapporteur on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons said in 2004 (cited in Smit 2012, p. 45).

As Unruh (2005) writes based on the experiences of restitution in Mozambique, post-conflict property restitution is a "delicate and potentially volatile issue" in which "problems of legitimacy of governance and institutions (formal and informal) merge with reduced state capacity, scarce financial resources, animosities connected to the conflict, and overlapping claims" (p. 12).

These resource and political constraints present a significant challenge to successful property restitution implementation, especially in contexts in which land registries might be outdated, inaccurate, corrupted or, quite often, non-existent. Ballard (2012) lists the following logistical challenges for IDPs or refugees who wish to return home:

1. Proving a right to occupancy in light of inadequate property records
2. Confronting intentional or collateral destruction of physical structures
3. Overcoming abandonment laws that may deprive those who have fled of their property rights
4. Confronting secondary occupation (others who have come to occupy the home or land in their absence). Secondary occupiers may be individuals, families, groups of people, or even private companies.

Addressing these concerns is no small task for the administrators of a property restitution mechanism. There may be millions of IDPs or refugees making claims that are often difficult to prove, directly in contest with others' claims, and just generally overwhelming for any bureaucratic system, let alone one struggling to rebuild itself after or during conflict.

In addition to the problems of implementation, critics point out that though simplifying the goals of transitional justice to supplying housing and property restitution makes the huge task seem more manageable, it begins to lack relevance to the lived realities of victims. There is an uneasy disconnect between property rights restitution, which emphasizes ownership, and right to return, which emphasizes long-term livability (Williams 2005). A home is necessary to begin life anew, but so is sustained security, economic opportunity, access to education and medical care, and social integration into supportive communities. As Ballard (2012) writes of property restitution in Bosnia, "'the house' became the measure of success of the return process rather than the actual welfare of the people displaced from their homes" (p. 493). Property restitution is a good beginning, but it alone is not enough.

There is also the problem of scale: Most property restitution mechanisms (including those based on the Pinheiro Principles) are designed for individuals or households who can assert their individual rights to return. Rights-based solutions that takes the individual as the unit of analysis are inadequate when it comes to designing appropriate solutions for entire communities of people who are displaced en masse (Ballard 2012), as has often been the case for communities of indigenous peoples or Afro-Colombians on the Pacific coast of Colombia.

Furthermore, many property restitution schemes are too shortsighted. Implementation often ends with the humanitarian provision of emergency shelter, rarely moving past that to the re-assignment of property rights, impeded by the implementation issues mentioned above. The singular focus on a technical process of restituting property to individuals divorced from the political, social and economic contexts of post-conflict situations may actually exacerbate the underlying tensions that caused the conflict in the

first place. The emphasis on the Pinheiro Principles and other similarly technical guidelines for legal restitution processes can come at the detriment of longer-term security strategies that necessarily address the complex (and often highly contested and politicized) social, cultural, political and economic landscapes. Without that comprehensive, long-term approach, transitional justice based on property restitution may actually "undermine the sustainability of return and thus impair the legitimacy of a post-war state and the development of peace and stability" (Ballard 2012, p. 495).

The Victims' Law

The Victims' Law, signed into law in June 2011, is still at the beginning stages of implementation, which is why it is so important to monitor its progress now. The process by which land claims are adjudicated and administered if determined "rightful" is quite complicated and beyond the scope of this paper.[103] On paper, the Victims' Law looks promising, and it seems the government has thrown some significant financial resources behind its implementation. The Colombian government anticipates paying over $26 billion (US) to victims in the next ten years. In 2012 alone, the government expects to pay out $3.2 billion (US) in compensation and benefits to around 130,000 victims (an admittedly small percentage of the total four to five million IDPs) (Forero-Nino 2012). The first court decision based on the Victims' Law awarded 14 families title to the land they lost in the Caribbean city of Mampuján in October 2012, but courts are clogged with the already over 27,000 claims for close to five million acres (Neuman 2012a). Judges are expected to decide around 2,000 land restitution claims this year. By 2014, the government hopes to return 4.9 million acres of stolen property (Forero-Nino 2012).

That said, as past experience with transitional justice property restitution has shown, the hard part is translating the law (however promising it may be) into practice. From early reports on the Victims' Law, restitution claimants are already coming up against some serious implementation obstacles. Inadequate property records, as Ballard (2012) has pointed out about other restitution schemes, can become a major hurdle for land claimants. The Historical Memory Group found that only 30 percent of displaced peoples in the Caribbean coastal area of Colombia had registered titles to their former lands (Meertens 2012). Another estimate says only around 19% of all IDPs in the country held formal land title prior to displacement (Ramakers 2012). The Victims' Law has complicated provisions for exactly this situation, but the problem of lack of legal literacy rears its head when former property owners assume that entering the formal system established by the law is out of the question without that basic formal documentation in hand.

Furthermore, the prevalence of conflicting claims to the same property will clog up the courts and challenge the legitimacy of ownership, with or without formal land title. This restitution process is beginning a decade or two after most displacement occurred –victims can make "rightful" claims only for displacement occurring after January 1, 1991 – so the property, in many cases, has since been owned or occupied by secondary users (Ramakers 2012). Choosing who is the "rightful" owner among many

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[103] For a full description of the Victims' Law land restitution and compensation process, see (Ramakers 2012) or (Summers 2012).

will be a decision left up to the courts, a potentially risky assignment of authority in a judicial system that has been accused of corruption (Summers 2012). This is particularly vulnerable to manipulation when perpetrators of forcible displacement have been shown to use shady legal mechanisms[104] to obstruct restitution by covering up crimes and legalizing the dispossession of property (Andreu-Guzmán 2012).

Another implementation problem is the state's inability to guarantee security upon return. Colombia is unique in that this restitution process is taking place while the conflict is still ongoing, particularly in the rural regions from which many IDPs fled. Regaining legal possession of property may mean little if the prospect of return is overshadowed by insecurity and violence. Armed groups and the corruption and collusion of some public officials threaten safe return, and direct threats and violence against leaders of restitution movements and human rights efforts continue to generate widespread fear among potential claimants (Alviar García 2012). So far, around 300 people have reported being threatened for making restitution claims, and the government has offered protection to 159 of them (Neuman 2012a).

Beyond state capacity itself, there is also the question of political will to implement land restitution. The state goal of applying the Victims' Law to guarantee land restitution can come into direct conflict with another state policy of using land and agricultural resources as engines for economic development. To achieve this latter objective, the government would want to obtain larger agroindustrial outputs through what it would consider the most efficient and productive use of land, most often large-scale industrial agricultural. This clearly does not play well with the restitution of small and scattered plots of land to displaced small landholders. As Unruh (2005) writes about property restitution in Mozambique, the state must confront these ongoing and thorny questions about property rights between the many relatively large commercial interests (both foreign and national) and the indigenous or small landholders who can claim victims' rights after a conflict. These two groups lay claim to the same lands or properties, but "under different regimes of authority, legitimacy and proof" (p. 148).

To soften this contradiction in state policy, the Victims' Law includes special treatment and an exception for agroindustrial projects by which any land that would otherwise be restituted but is in use for an agroindustrial project can be leased to allow that project to continue while the title still goes to the victim claimant (Alviar García 2012). When certain multi-national corporations have benefitted greatly from displacement in order to accumulate large swathes of fertile agricultural land for mega-projects, agro-industrial projects or subsoil rights to gas and oil, this exception to the law may become a loophole that allows such abuses to continue. To reverse this process, political and economic measures (not just legal measures), as well as a vision for development that includes the agricultural and economic contributions of IDPs (rather than assumes their small landholding is unproductive), are necessary to complement the

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[104] Some of these mechanisms include successive purchase (to cover up the original perpetrator of displacement), revocation and subsequent reallocation of public land originally allocated to peasants under agrarian land reform because of accusations of "abandonment" (due to displacement), and the use of *testaferros*, or straw men, as stand-in current landowners actually working behind the scenes for perpetrator groups (Andreu-Guzmán 2012).

Victims' Law, argues Meertens (2012). She writes that these conflicting state objectives of restitution and economic development point to "the need to create mechanisms to bring the displaced peasantry back into the organizational dynamics of rural development and to recognize the increasing female leadership in their organizations" (p. 15).

There is perhaps a fundamental flaw within the design of the Victims' Law: The assumption that most IDPs wish to return to their original lands or properties is misguided. International pressure to enforce the "right to return" can skew state policy towards return instead of compensation and support for local integration into new host communities (Smit 2012), when in fact, around 80% of IDPs report preferring local integration to return to place of origin (Carrillo 2009).

The use of symbolic rhetoric and policy-making to appease the international community may force the restitution efforts to veer from more pragmatic and desired paths from the points of view of those supposedly benefitting from the Victims' Law. Vidal-López (2012) argues that the Colombian state has used "the rhetoric of transitional justice" to create an image (aimed at the international community) of a country that is stable and *post*-conflict, when in fact the victims (and perpetrators) of the conflict know that not to be the case (p. 14). This image-conscious rhetoric may actually impede the realistic and effective implementation of restitution.

At the heart of the critiques of the Victims' Law is the overemphasis on restorative justice and the missed opportunity to address the roots of the conflict. As Ramakers (2012) writes, within the Law, "structural violence and social injustice are seen as the context of the violence and not dealt with as causes of the conflict or the crime itself" (p. 11). Property restitution alone cannot address the accumulation and concentration of lands in the hands of a few, which in turn leads to social exclusion and unequal land distribution, which in turn causes (and further results from) the conflict.

That said, even if the Victims' Law cannot accomplish the lofty goal of justice for the victims of the sixty-year internal armed conflict in Colombia, the law can set a foundation for future struggles and social movements. It is not – and will never be – a panacea, but it can be at the very least a building block of transitional justice. As the Victims' Law enters the next phases of its implementation, public officials, policy makers, researchers, civil society actors and the Colombian people will have to activate the law from paper to practice.

Forging a women's rights movement in Cartagena

In late June 2012, a 19-year-old woman in Cartagena was brutally beaten with a machete and burned alive by her ex-boyfriend.[105] Her death was the most recent in a string of horrific abuses and murders of women in Cartagena, and it generated enough public outrage that the Mayor's office agreed to set a public meeting to address the city's responses to violence against women.

It is standing room only in the meeting two days after the young woman's death. The Mayor, the Chief of Police and various city officials sit around a long table in the front of the meeting hall. Folding and office chairs have been assembled into rows facing the table at the front, and the seats are packed with representatives from IDP and women's groups from across Cartagena, including all of those mentioned in the course of this thesis.

The purpose of the meeting is to plan a symbolic protest march that will take place in three days time. In addition to talking through the logistics of permits and police protection, the meeting turns into an open forum. The crowd in the audience sits and stands intermittently, passing a microphone around to deliver impassioned speeches, to press for policy changes and to respond to the Mayor's statements. The energy in the room is high, and speakers often interrupt each other. Press cameras flash from the back of the room.

Two hours later, the meeting is officially over, and the administration has decided that the march will culminate in a speech given by the Mayor at the gates of the colonial city under the famous Torre del Reloj. This year's contestants for the *Reinada*, the annual Colombian beauty queen contest for which Cartagena is famous, will also attend to show solidarity (and presumably to act as publicity ambassadors for the city). The Mayor requests that everyone wear white.

On the day of the march, hundreds of women, men and children gather outside the walls of the colonial city. The road is closed off on the route to the Torre del Reloj. Upon the signal to start, everyone begins marching, chanting and waving homemade signs that denounce not just violence against women but violence in general.

Very few people are wearing white, as the Mayor had requested. "We are doing our resistance,"[106] explains Carmen. "The administration is wearing white, but we're the community, and we're all wearing purple instead. They [the administration] say they're doing it one way, but it has to be *our* way. They said this and that person have to give speeches, and I said, 'When is it our turn to speak?' But no, we don't get a spot on the stage. So we are speaking from the ground, and if they don't give us sound, we'll bring megaphones!"

When we finally make our way to the Torre, the Mayor, the Chief of Police and the beauty queens await our arrival from their post on the stage. The crowd in purple

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[105] For more information on the specific circumstances of and reactions to her death, see the original report in the local newspaper *El Universal* in (Pallares 2012).

[106] As James Scott theorized, these small acts of "subtle, 'everyday' forms of resistance" can "moderate the authority of dominant groups without completely overturning the system" (Rao and Walton 2004, p. 24).

shouts and sings and cheers over the official speeches. They did, in fact, bring their own megaphones.

In the past few years, the women's rights movement has gained momentum by bringing together a number of formerly separate organizations and communities. It is built of IDPs and non-IDPs, women and men, Afro-Colombians and indigenous peoples, all coming together to fight for women's rights in the face of ongoing and very visible violence against women in Cartagena and across Colombia. [107] "Each organization has their own agenda, but we also have something in common, which is defending women's rights," says Carmen, who is affiliated with FUNSAREP and Grupo Espejo. "That brings us together to *hacer incidencia en política pública al estado* [advocate for public policy]."[108]

Carmen says a big turning point was the citywide celebration of International Women's Day (which occurs annually on March 8) five years back. "A huge number of people marched that day, and we began meeting each other. We met *Red de Mujeres*, we met LIMPAL, we met Mesa DESC, we met FUNSAREP. We all met and from there we decided we needed a *mesa* [council] with two representatives from each organization in Cartagena." The new council, known as the *Mesa del Movimiento Social de Mujeres de Cartagena y Bolívar* [Council of the Social Movement of Women in Cartagena and Bolívar], is comprised of 18 organizations, including all of those I have mentioned in the course of this thesis thus far.

The first few meetings of the *Mesa* were spent with each organization laying out their own laundry lists of priorities and actions. "Each organization had its own agenda, its own way of working, its own identity, its autonomy," explains Carmen. Groups of groups do not always work well together, particularly when there is territoriality between different neighborhoods or community organizations of IDPs. Some groups make claims of being the "first" or the "original" displaced, says Carmen, refusing to engage with newer IDPs or newer organizations. "*Se pelean la bandera* [They fight with their flags]," she explains. "I've heard people say '*my* women' as if those women were their property."

These rivalries are about marking off and laying claims to territory, to people and to causes. Such competition is counterproductive, worries Carmen, who thinks providing aid or support to IDPs is not about forcing them to identify with one group or another but rather about helping them gain access to information that they can decide to accept, to reject, to transform, or to apply to their own lives as they need or desire.

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[107] Rates of violence against women in Cartagena at the time of my fieldwork in 2012 were high and climbing. For example, in just the first two months of 2012, there were 169 reports of domestic violence in which the man was the aggressor and the woman was the victim (compared to 161 from the same period in 2011) (Cardona 2012). Across the country, it is estimated by the Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal that two women are sexually abused or raped every hour, for a total of 17,935 cases each year. By the Medicina Legal estimates, eight women are hit every hour and one dies every three days ("Todas somos Rosa Elvira" 2012). While I was in Cartagena, a horrific case of a young woman who was raped and burned alive by her male partner took the city by storm. In response to this attack, the Mayor's office hosted an emergency meeting attended by women's rights organizations from around the city and a public march was planned as a protest. More information on this march will be detailed in Chapter 6.

[108] Chapter 6 will go into more depth about how IDP organizations raise political consciousness and re-define understandings of citizenship, ultimately leading IDPs to make claims on the state.

"It's been a learning process," says Carmen. "In the beginning, it was hard to agree that in a given moment not everyone can raise their own individual flag. Instead, you have to take all those flags and colors, wash them and bring them back together in one single color and one single flag, which brings us all together."

The process of negotiating how the *Mesa* operates has been saddled with tension, and it has been an uphill battle to convince individuals to give up their "flags" for the sake of the whole, explains Carmen. "There have been moments when we thought everything was going to explode and the *Mesa* was going to stop and nothing would be left. There have been times that were so tense that we said 'Okay, this is over' or 'This is a disaster'," says Carmen. "But we say that we are positioning ourselves around diversity and difference, and that's where you need to understand how to *confluir* [come together] around that diversity and difference to come to a consensus. All of the organizations wanted to get final say, to put their own agendas forward, to say '*qué salga el mío*' [let mine come first]. But we had to say 'No, now it's not about *mine*, it's about the collective.'"

This makes joint decision-making a difficult task, to say the least, but it also allows for the creation of a sense of unity without erasing individual identities. Carmen offers the example of International Women's Day: "If on March 8, an organization wants to do their own internal event, that's fine, as long as they don't forget that they are part of something bigger, too."

Organizations have managed to build conflict resolution tools to manage the divides between them. Isabel says clear communication is the biggest priority for coordinating multiple groups. "I think that we are on a path to rights, to real rights, to defending women, to equality of rights, and so why should we fight with our *compañeras* [colleagues or friends]?" she says. "As an organization, communication is the most important because without it, that's where conflict comes from."

For example, once, when a press reporter covering an event gave credit to one organization rather than to the *Mesa*, the mistake caused tension within the group as a whole. Their solution was to designate the secretary of the *Mesa* as the only official spokesperson. "This doesn't mean each organization can't continue to speak about their own work, just that only one person can speak for the *Mesa*," clarifies Carmen. It's about striking that balance between staying true to the independence and autonomy of the member organizations without compromising the broader agenda of the coalition-based *Mesa*.

The experience of subsuming individual goals to contribute to a coalition is an exercise in trade-offs. What is gained from a larger movement (more political clout, access to more resources, more media coverage, etc.) has to make up for what is put at risk (individual ownership, specific agenda items, etc.) in order for it to be sustainable. This echoes the experience of IDPs in their transition from survival strategies to social network formation described in Chapter 4: Making the leap from individual to member of a group has to be worth it in the end, even if it means sacrificing some individual autonomy along the way.