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**One hundred years of solitude, accumulation and  
violence: A comparative historical analysis of the  
Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta Valley**

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## **Abstract**

This is an analysis of two moments in the Colombian history within a century of difference, where isolation, accumulation and violence interact in a region brought into the worlds' imaginary by the Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez in *One Hundred years of Solitude*.

A valley between four natural borderlines: the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, the Perijá hills, the Central and East 'Cordilleras' -mountain range- and the Magdalena River in the departments of Cesar and Magdalena (Colombia) part of what was called the department of 'Magdalena Grande' was blessed – or perhaps cursed – with wealth in natural resources; plenty of water streams, a unique biodiversity, cultural affluence and immense reserves of one of the purest steam coals.

This paper attempts to draw a picture of the superimposed and persistent power structures that apparently facilitate the accumulative processes and imbalances within one century of difference, making use of violence as means to maintain equilibrium. Environment is changed through politicized violent inflictions over society and nature. The resultant scars are the ones inflicted on a collective memory, as this valley is and will always be recalled by the poetic truth of the narrative of Gabriel García Márquez who recreated this mythic environment as 'Macondo'. He remembers his own story of early childhood that here serves as an excuse to analyze a region that is again being bled by accumulation.

## **Keywords**

Coal, banana, extraction enclaves, isolation, accumulation, violence, political ecology of violence, Colombia.

## Acronyms

ANLA	Agencia Nacional de Licencias Ambientales (National Agency of Environmental Licences)
ANM	Agencia Nacional Minera (National Mining Agency)
AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defense Units)
CGR	Contraloría General de la República (General Comptroller Office in Colombia)
DANE	Departamento Administrativo Nacional Estadístico (National Administrative Statistics Department)
IDEAM	Instituto de Hidrología, Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales (Institute of Hidrology, Meteorology and Environm. Studies)
IMF	International Monetary Fund (in Spanish: Fondo Monetario Internacional – FMI)
INCODER	Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural (Colombian Institute of Rural Development)
INGEOMINAS	Instituto Colombiano de Geología y Minas (Colombian Institute of Geology and Mining)
PNDM	Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Minero (National Plan of Mining Development)
SIMCO	Sistema de Información Minera en Colombia (Mining Information System in Colombia)
SINA	Sistema Nacional Ambiental (Environmental National System in Colombia)
UFC	United Fruit Company
UPME	Unidad de Producción Minero Energética (Mining-Energetic Production Unit)
USTM	Unión Sindical de Trabajadores del Magdalena (Trade Union of Workers of Magdalena)

# **One hundred years of solitude, accumulation and violence**

## **A comparative historical analysis of the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta Valley**

### **1 Introduction**

The aim of this paper is to analyze the social relations of production and social fields of power (Peluso & Watts, 2001) that have led to isolation, accumulation and violence in a region traditionally rich in natural resources. A comparative historical analysis is pursued, taking two deep cross-cuts in history: one each at the beginnings of the 20th and the 21st centuries.

The implications of the politicized relations generated at these two specific moments by two multinational companies, United Fruit Company (UFC) and Drummond Ltd., will be assessed. This document analyzes their incidence on society and the consequent transformations of nature performed during their productive processes, by responding to the query of how violence is interrelated with accumulation and if violence is cause or effect of the accumulation that was performed in two different moments in time.

#### **1.1 Historical perspective**

The Valley of the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta was for centuries considered a wild territory, a source of natural raw materials and cheap wage labour. It is an immense basin surrounded by four natural borders, which kept it isolated from the central territories for almost four centuries. Yet at the same time the extraordinary characteristics of its bay--where in 1525 the city of Santa Marta was founded and where this valley touches the sea--favoured the development of one of the first and most important Spanish output ports, from which raw materials and precious metals from all over Latin America were sent to Europe. The port was established for its easy access, shorter distance to Spain, natural anchorage for ships and long distance view of the Snow Mountains of the Sierra Nevada (White, 1978).

Nevertheless these same characteristics made the port vulnerable to continuous attacks, like the one by the pirate Drake in 1596 and by the Dutch in 1629 (White, 1978), which led to the destruction of the city and caused the region to be semi-abandoned and kept in oblivion until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was during this time that the region regained importance with the establishment of the UFC and the banana export industry in 1900 (LeGrand, 1984). From this time on, what was later called by academics and



researchers an 'Extraction Enclave' (Enclave Extractivo)<sup>1</sup> was created, which favoured patterns of accumulation and imbalance in the region for more than a century.

Typically one could speak of 'external groups' in a region which configure the accumulative processes. In that, multinationals as well as national companies, or elites that settle in an area without becoming part of it can take a leading role (Archila, et al., 2012, p. 22).

One century after the establishment of the 'Banana Enclave' by the UFC the same 'accumulative' patterns continue to be present in the region (Harvey, 1982). A different multinational company is at the forefront of the current 'Extraction Enclave' in the valley: the coal mining transnational Drummond Ltd., which settled further into the valley to this time establish an Enclave for steam coal export.

Since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Latin American countries, including the one this paper analyzes, have been moulded by patterns in the world's economy. Liberalism and later Neo-liberalism were followed by the Colombian and many other governments with no regard for the good or bad results for the development of the country and regions or the sustainability of their natural resources. 'Extraction Enclaves' (banana, petroleum, gold, palm oil) were favoured as response to the struggles of the central government to develop and integrate a 'savage territory'. Nevertheless, the result is visible after one hundred years: isolation, pollution and misery.

Dynamics assumed by governments generally favoured the establishment of 'Extraction Enclaves' in different countries in Latin America like Ecuador, Costa Rica, Honduras or Jamaica. The enclaves brought relevance to the regions at a national and global level. Colombia, like other countries, kept these regions under patterns of isolation that set them apart from the benefits of national infrastructure, institutionalism and culture. Economic favouritism maintained such regions isolated from the rest of the nations. In the region analyzed here it created differential interactions at political, cultural, and social levels that facilitated the presence of civil and armed official powers, which helped perpetuate the accumulative patterns in the productive model through the use of violence (Archila, et al., 2012). The class differences grew stronger, and the imbalances and implications of power dynamics favoured aggressive responses to and from the deprived groups, configuring the particular interaction dynamic assessed herein.

It is important to emphasize that this Research Paper does not concentrate on a conflict perspective or a human rights approach of the ongoing war in Colombia, which has certainly influenced the dynamics of social relations in

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<sup>1</sup> To understand the concept of 'extraction enclave' I make use of the definition that speaks about intensive exploitation of natural resources (mineral or agricultural) in a territory of importance for the national and global economy, that barely articulates with the nation, and where the presence of the state would mean more intensity in the presence of official forces and less visibility of the institutions that regulate the development of society (Archila et al. 2012, p.21-22).

production and social fields of power in many regions. This assessment does not focus either on the analysis of rural politics and their implications on the productive enclaves implied in the research, although these to some extent have to be included in the frame of analysis.

Instead, it makes use of the Political Ecology of Violence and Uneven Geographies theories to understand existing social, political and economic production relations and how they interrelate with violence in a particular region of Colombia in two specific moments in time. The research is based on an analysis of how society interacts with natural resources and how the accumulative processes intermingle with imbalances that are structured upon, and structuring of, violent behaviours.

Dumont, quoted by Michael Watts in his assessment of Petro-Violence in Nigeria and Ecuador (2001), said in 1995:

Ideas and deeds only exist in dialectical relationship. So does violence, which is a habitus...., at once structured and structuring: structured because the idea of violence results from historical events, stored as the memory of past deeds, of past encounters, of past frustrations; and structuring because the idea of violence informs human actions, determines the acceptability; even the banality of violence, if not the ability to erase the scandal of its occurrence... (Dumont 1995: 277)

Violence here is at the same time witness and hider of the past. Past violent actions left deep scars in the region and the country that have influenced future responses, marked by indifference and fear that won't allow a community reaction to global economical forces, as in other parts of the continent. Rather, violence is used at the same time as perpetrator and response for the vindications over rights and control over natural resources.

## **1.2 Geographical and environmental starting point**

The research takes place in the Valley of the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta, a basin limited by four natural frontiers: at the North-East the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta; at the South the East and Central 'Cordilleras' (mountain ranges) into which the Andes divide; at the East the Perijá hills; and to the West the Magdalena River, once the most important fluvial artery and still the largest river in Colombia.

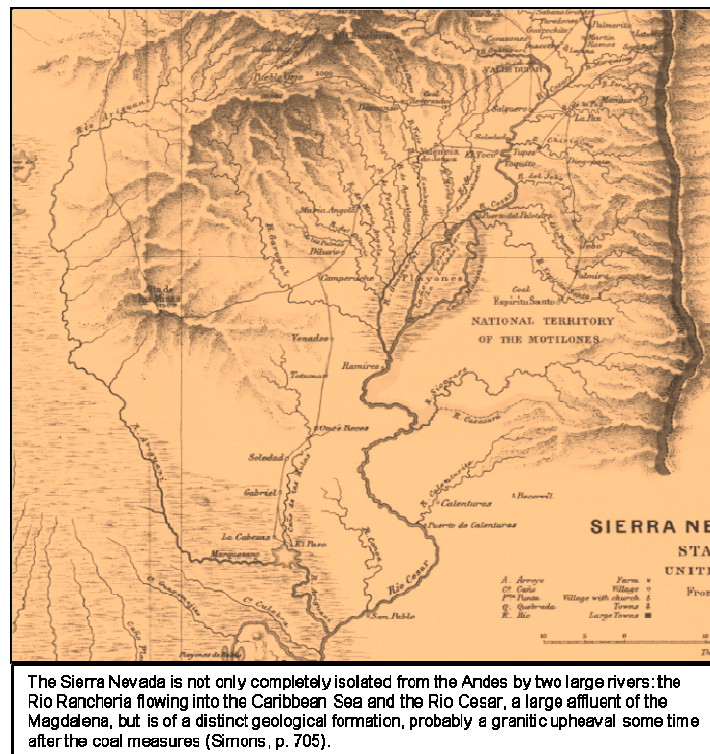
As expressed in a report by the English Geographer F.A.A. Simons in 1881, "it is a vast valley covered with no less than dozens of rivers, streams, canals and creeks that flow from the mountains and Magdalena River to the sea, constituting an extraordinary water system." Furthermore, its geological formations created a unique natural resources reserve described by Simons in his study of 1881 as follows:

At the beginning of the 20th century the zone was marked by the establishment of haciendas in the lower part of the Sierra Nevada in the valley of the seven rivers. At the end of the decade of 1870 many plantations were abandoned for the lack of commerce in the most important dominant city of the zone: Santa Marta, but the zone was specially adapted for the growth of cocoa, tobacco,

banana and sugar. Further in the valley there were large cattle ranchers near Valledupar with plantations of cotton, coffee and in Molino and Villanueva (White, 1978).

Now most of the water that once irrigated the valley and the flora and fauna that once proudly covered this mythic space are almost inexistent. The competition between cattle ranching, unsustainable agriculture and extractive industries during almost one and a half centuries has left only few scarce vestiges of its once rich nature.

**Map 1**  
**Sierra Nevada Valley in 1881**



### 1.3 Context of the cases analyzed

#### *Banana zone at the beginning of the 20th century*

The so called Banana Zone of Magdalena was marked by one of the worst massacres in Colombian history. In November 1928 the first numerous and organized protest of workers in the country took place. More than 32,000 people, among them workers, peasants from this and other regions and representatives of political parties, were united in the Ciénaga city square to support the work stoppage convened by the trade union of the United Fruit

Company (*El Tiempo*, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1928). The trade union claimed better working conditions and their recognition as workers (White, 1978).

The central government of Colombia, acting on UFC complaints, sent troops to control the situation. Unfortunately, the protest was ended by machine guns fired on protesters at the central plaza of Ciénaga, one of the most important banana supply points for the UFC, and where the protesters were supposed to meet the region's Governor. Before dawn on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, 1928, a platoon of soldiers opened fire on the protesters. The fatalities are still undetermined (LeGrand, 1980).

### ***Coal zone at the beginning of the 21st century***

Almost one century after the above events, on March 12, 2001, a group of armed men forcibly stopped one of the private buses in charge of transporting miners for Drummond Ltd., forcing off it two of the passengers who were later found tortured and killed in a nearby town. The persons killed were Valmoré Locarno and Victor Orcasita, leaders of the Drummond trade-union in Colombia. On August 2nd, 2004 a group of armed men irrupted into the Michoacán parcel, department of Cesar, killing two of the farmer leaders of the peasant group. Since 1999 they have been threatened. The peasants were terrorized and displaced and their lands were illegally sold with false titles (Verdad Abierta, 2010).

The killing of the Drummond trade union members has been at the national and international community's attention for more than a decade. In 2002 and 2009 the company was sued in United States courts for crimes committed against more than 600 peasants in the region between 1995 and 2005 and for the death of three trade union leaders. The lands where these people were killed are now part of the domains exploited by Drummond Ltd. (Noticias Uno, 2011).

What I try to convey here is how the region influenced the outsiders (in these two cases involving multinational companies) and how social relations of production--between the companies and local people--evolved in two different moments in time by using direct and indirect violence as means to get access to social fields of power. Characteristics existing in the province before UFC's arrival to the Magdalena Banana Zone strongly influenced the company's actions in the region (LeGrand, 1980). So did exactly the pre-existing violence in the Drummond trade union members and peasant killings cases.

Local dynamics bring winners and losers to the multinational and local power game. But it is fundamental to understand how national and international political economy and political ecology evolved during this century to create conditions that interconnect one moment to the other and to the conditions of nature in Colombia now.

In words of the first Colombian Minister for the Environment (1993-1994), Manuel Rodríguez Becerra: "this region was condemned to destruction many years ago." And this is what more than 100 years of extractive processes have left the region: isolation, misery, resource depletion and many forms of violence.

## 2 Theoretical and Analytical framework

### 2.1 Theories that frame the study

#### *Political ecology of violence*

Environmental problems are economic, political and social in their origin. All societies across history have struggled for access and control over resources. Political Ecology involves the constantly changing dialectic between classes and groups of society and the use of natural resources (Blakie and Brookfield 1987, P.17). Nevertheless to explain the conflicts arising in such dialogic relation we have to understand that the environment is

... an arena of contested entitlements in which conflicts and claims over property, assets, labour and the politics of recognition are played out (Bohle and Fuenfgeld, 2007, p. 668).

Since the World Commission on Environment and Development's report "*Our common future*" was published in 1987, poverty has been convicted as a main cause of environmental deterioration. From that moment on, degrading activities of the poor were made visible; but the impacts of global patterns of production and the power exercised behind these patterns were rarely contemplated. As Wolfgang Sachs said, "ecology was reduced to a higher form of efficiency." Therefore less awareness was put on environment sustainability and more on economic growth, since poverty was the main cause as well as effect of environmental problems (Escobar, 1996).

After the end of Cold War -during the 1990s- some of the worst conflicts in recent times erupted, especially on the African continent. The over-dimensioned military apparatuses of some of the big world powers were found useless. Environmental degradation and fighting over diminishing natural resources were portrayed to be central causes which justified the use of force to protect the threatened environmental resources. Theorists like Thomas Homer-Dixon (1991) (1994), Guenther Beachler (1996) and the journalist Robert Kaplan (1997) argued that human-induced pressures over natural resources were precursors of war and that scarcity was the phenomena behind the rising violence in Africa and other parts of the world (Fairhead, 2001). An apocalyptic Malthusian perspective of overpopulation and scarcity and Hobbes' theory of a central government that could avert the generalized war were key starting points for such claims. It was called Environmental Security and became the central discourse of the so-called "Green" war.

But if scarcity, overpopulation and unequal social distribution of resources are main causes of conflict, then something is needed to understand competition over natural resources wealth, and violence stemming from the power struggle to control it. In conflicts like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan it cannot be claimed that neither resource poverty nor overpopulation were the triggers to violence. Confrontations were generated in each of these cases by the control over resources and strategic properties in their value chain, which means the operation of a varied range of

actors in an arena constituted by fields of power (Peluso & Watts, 2001). It is not what has been extracted from the soil but what is still inside that links environment to conflict (Fairhead, 2001, pp. 221-222).

During this process of power struggle environmental degradation is performed intensely by forces in the international political-economy, but also by internal forces that are unleashed by the greed to have access to the resulting control apparatus. It is no surprise that the major destinations for resources extracted from the global south are industrialized nations whose markets hunger for diamonds, gold, industrial minerals or fossil fuels like oil or coal from developing countries (ibid., 2001, p. 215). It is no secret that developing countries don't consume most of the natural resources extracted, but receive most of the impacts generated from the extraction: pollution, unequal distribution of resources and violence.

At the end of 1990s the environmental entitlements approach emerged, to explain how differently placed social actors dominate environmental goods and services that are in turn fundamental for the welfare of society and individuals (Leach et al. 1999). Works like those of Gunter Beachler (1998), Thomas Homer Dixon (1999), Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler (2000) were strongly questioned for their simplistic connection between natural resources, overpopulation, scarcity, migration and weak states. In 2001 Nancy Peluso and Michael Watts would take this approach as the starting point for their theory of Political Ecology of Violence, saying

..It grants priority on how these entitlements are distributed, reproduced and fought over in the course of shaping and being shaped by patterns of accumulation (Peluso & Watts, 2001, p. 5).

Peluso and Watts compiled works of diverse authors like Paul Richards, James McCarthy, James Fairhead and Betsy Hartmann, developing an elaborated theory to help understand the interaction between environment, access to resources and violence from a political ecology perspective. They differed from the environmental security approach of the 1990s by not searching for "environmental triggers of violent conflicts" and not affirming that "the violence tended to be endemic in a region of environmental crisis" (Peluso & Watts, 2001, p. 25). For them the precursor is not scarcity but the relations between users and nature, a reciprocal relationship between nature and humans in which labour is active, transformative and social (Peluso & Watts, 2001, p. 27).

We see violence a site-specific phenomenon rooted in local histories and social relations yet connected to larger processes of material transformation and power relations (Peluso & Watts, 2001, p.).

Authors like Michael Ross in his 2006 "*A closer look at oil, diamonds, and civil war*" or Matthew Turner in "*Political ecology and the moral dimensions of 'resource conflicts'*," and many others like Jean and Rufin (1996), Kaldor (1999), N. Cooper (2002) Fearon (2004) Nordstrom (2004) still propose numerous different links between natural resources and violence, like the support of mineral revenues for the armed process of belligerents by Keen (1998) Weinstein (2007) who

argue that these revenues also shape motives of violence and behavior of armed groups.

In this analysis I will make use of the model developed by Peluso and Watts, as the most indicated to compare how social relations of production and social fields of power interact in two specific areas of a region in two moments of time, managing therefore to understand how accumulative processes are related to violence.

### ***Power and violence***

Areas of natural resources wealth are centres of production and transformation of nature where capital accumulates and power is concentrated in the hands of few. Political Ecology of Violence analyzes the game of forces in which the most powerful get the most important portions of natural resources in dispute. These are the so called historically and culturally constituted “positions within precise systems of accumulation and fields of power.” For violence perpetrators the environment is invisible and present at the same time (Peluso & Watts, 2001, p. 6). To explain these complex dynamics Political Ecology of Violence makes use of three approaches.

Property of natural resources and environmental practices shape social relations of production and social fields of power. Therefore “*social relations of production as arenas of opportunity and constraint focus on three broad horizons*”:

- 1) Patterns and regimes of accumulation
- 2) Forms of access and control over resources
- 3) Actors that emerge from the social relations of production (Peluso and Watts 2001, p. 27-29)

### ***Accumulation: the force that fuels violence***

Capital is highly dynamic and inevitably expansionary. Powered by the engine of accumulation for accumulation’s sake and fuelled by the exploitation of labour power, it constitutes a permanently revolutionary force which perpetually reshapes the world we live in (Harvey, 1982, p. 156).

Capital accumulation is the increase of wealth through a delivered concentration of assets; it is the basis of capitalistic economic system where investments are pursued to get individual financial profit. For accumulation of profit inevitably a dispossession of others ensues. Accumulation processes of capitalism inevitably produce imbalance as a result: commoditization and privatization of land and forceful expulsion of peasants from their territories for the sake of industrial production, the exclusivity of private property rights and suppression of collective, common and state rights in favour of privatization, the commoditization of wage labour and suppression of alternative forms of production and/or consumption, the appropriation of natural resources and other kind of common assets (water, minerals, forests, etc.), the credit system as radical means of accumulation and the state as backer and promoter of all

the mentioned processes and many others that here are not mentioned (Harvey, 2003).

The history of capitalism is replete with examples of pre-capitalist economies that have been destroyed and their populations proletarianized either by market forces or physical violence (Harvey 1982, p. 165).

Colombia is a story of accumulative struggles in which the dynamics of violence intervene to complement and perpetuate political and economic power. Forces that attempt to counteract the international power of capital economy are forced down by direct, structural and cultural violence exercised against the weakest population who protest for their rights.

## 2.2 Research questions

Is violence cause or effect of accumulation? How is violence related to accumulation and isolation?

- What does solitude or isolation mean to this particular region? How is it related to the absence of the state? How does it relate to accumulation and violence?
- What are the accumulative patterns present in the region? How are they related to violence and the isolation of the region?
- What does violence mean to this region? How does it interact with accumulation? What particular violence is exercised against society and natural resources?

## 2.3 Frame of analysis

Property of natural resources and environmental practices shape social relations of production and social fields of power. “*Social relations of production as arenas of opportunity and constraint focus on three broad horizons*” (Peluso & Watts, 2001, pp. 27-29):

Horizons of Peluso and Watts	Relations to establish in the case of Magdalena
1. Patterns and regimes of accumulation <i>as jagged rhythms and breaks, uneven spatial distribution and displacements of capital accumulation</i>	1. From international to national context
1. Forms of access and control over resources <i>as entitlements and modes of enforcement</i>	1. From National to Regional and viceversa 2. From National to Regional and viceversa
1. Actors that emerge from the social relations of production <i>as firms, workers, peasants, political leaders, etc.</i>	



To better understand the interrelation of actors, forms of control and regimes of accumulation we have to analyze them by different aspects that interact to produce and reproduce violent environmental processes.

This analytical model comprises the different stages that interact in the transformative process of nature. There, actors are first classified in four main groups that interact at four stages – local, regional, national and international – and are influenced by three systems or regimes: social, political and economic. Finally the process is shaped and shapes the dynamics of violence, leading to social imbalances and increasing disparities between actors.

## **2.4 Methodology: a comparative historical analysis**

Comparative Historical Research is a method of social sciences that compares social processes across times and places. It examines historical events to create explanations that transcend particular epochs and geographies, comparing either directly, historically, theoretically or to facts of the present day (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003). It is a causal explanation that narrates sequential events and processes which indicate a chain of causes and effects (Schutt, 2006).

This method makes use of basically four stages to systematically compare the historical data collected:

- Establish clearly the premise of the investigation, identifying events, facts and concepts that may explain the phenomena in the region analyzed.
- Delimitate the location to be examined.
- Compare and interpret the historical similarities and the differences.
- Propose a causal explanation for the phenomena found, based on the information gathered (Schutt, 2006).

This method is the most appropriate because it allows specifically analyzing secondary data and archival information to establish connections between the historical facts and present information. It also allows the researcher to compare and then interpret historical similarities and differences, which are required for analyzing two cases that happened within hundred years of difference.

The historical-comparative revision of the materials here pursued was based on an exhaustive analysis of archival information, grey literature, policies, reports from the government, and data analysis from other researchers. Important information was also compiled from local and international media. Finally, some key actors like analysts of the conflict in the two moments of time, were interviewed to confront the different visions of the same reality.

I conducted open interviews with three experts in different areas that helped me frame the extensive topics to be assessed. Professor Mauricio Archila Neira, Senior Researcher from the National University of Colombia in Bogota, and expert in the historic analysis of the Banana Massacre, contributed to the focus of the analysis on the Banana Zone. On the other hand, Manuel Rodríguez Becerra, first Minister of the Environment in 1993 and researcher from the Andes University in Bogota, shared a clear and profound assessment

of the environmental crisis during the present mining boom that led to the current environmental situation. Finally Alvaro Pardo, director of Colombia Punto Medio<sup>2</sup> and former Director of Mining from the Mining and Energy Ministry during part of President Pastrana's government and the beginning of President Uribe's government, contributed with a very good analysis of the political-economic roots of the mining business in Colombia.

### **3 Analysis of the Banana Regime**

#### **3.1 Patterns and regimes of accumulation: foundation of a banana republic**

##### ***Colombia and the world at the end of 19th Century***

At the dawn of the twentieth century, while the world was experiencing a polarization in political and economic contexts, Colombia's economy woke up into an expansion of its primary goods exports. Oil, emeralds, coffee and bananas were central elements of this evolution. Globally, liberalism was being recognized as a leading economic, political and philosophic system in most western countries, for its acknowledgment of civil liberties and opposition to any kind of despotism from decaying monarchies of the time. On the other hand, the communist victory over three centuries of hegemonic monarchy rule in Russia and Lenin's interpretation of the Marxist model brought another alternative to social and economic organization. This model communalized the social means of production, becoming at the time a major challenge to the emerging capitalist powers in the consolidation of their power.

Banana markets were mainly gathered in the European continent and North America, but it was the extraordinary growth of urban markets in the United States in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the concentration of capitals for the required investment in transport and marketing, that favoured its commercialization and set the basis for the florescence of the Banana Empire in Latin America in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (White, 1978).

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Colombia was a simple mercantile economy, based not on capital investments but on production of goods by independent manufacturers or direct workers subject to pre-capitalist relations (Moncayo, 2008, p. 93). The country's natural tendency, unfortunately persistent until now, was to act as a supplier of primary goods for metropolitan countries and an open market for consumer goods that were not produced locally.

UFC's partners (Lorenzo Dow Baker, Minor C. Keith and Andrew Preston) built their initial capital by commercializing different kinds of agricultural products during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Agudelo Velazquez, 1989). They achieved their first profits buying green banana bunches in Morant, Jamaica, for USD\$0.20 cents and selling them later in

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<sup>2</sup>Social movement in Colombia for responsible mining  
<http://www.colombiapuntomedio.com/>

Boston for USD\$3.00 dollars (Agudelo Velazquez, 1989). The Banana Empire was built in only five decades, a short period to convert small-scale salesmen into controllers of regional economies and the wages of thousands of labourers in producing countries like Honduras, Jamaica, Costa Rica and Colombia (White, 1978).

Their influence on social, political and economic elites in Latin American countries would later shape the pejorative term “Banana Republics” (Bucheli, 2004) for countries under the great power of the UFC. The company managed to dominate 77% of worldwide banana exports in 1910 (Agudelo Velazquez, 1989), a great commercialization net in the United States in Europe, and a fleet of 86 ships (the so-called white fleet) by 1928. Ships were equipped with the most advanced refrigeration technology available which allowed them to move fruit supply from one region to another according to the most convenient market possibilities. The transportation and commercial monopolies in their banana enclaves made them able to import and export additional goods as well, influencing local economies and even central governments (White, 1978).

### ***Arrival of the UFC to ‘Magdalena Grande’***

Before the arrival of UFC in Magdalena an exuberant rainforest naturally irrigated by hundreds of rivers, streams and creeks nourished by the melt waters generated in the Snow Mountains of the “Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta” covered the entire region. Agricultural production was dedicated to local consumption, and the boundaries between private and public properties remained undefined, while the demand for land was minimal due to the subsistence scheme prevailing in the zone. The only industry was timber exploitation to provide fuel wood and construction material to the nearest cities, Barranquilla, Ciénaga and Santa Marta (Agudelo Velazquez, 1989).

The banana business did not begin with the UFC. In 1887 Local Magdalena entrepreneurs associated with Colombian emigrants to the United States first attempted large scale banana production, dispatching the first export trade from Santa Marta to the port of New York in 1891. Their scarce experience in the transportation and storage of bananas, however, caused huge losses that forced the new entrepreneurs to sell part of their lands to pay the enormous debts. The buyer of their lands turned out to be a real estate business, *Colombian Land Company*, belonging to Minor C. Keith, one of the founders of the UFC (Viloria, 2009).

In 1897, the firm monopolized the purchase of arable lands (5,500 hectares) on both sides of the railway line between Aracataca and Santa Marta. The financial and organizational capacity of companies controlled by Minor C. Keith and his partners brought the necessary capital for business growth in the region. Magdalena production and exports increased from 75,000 bunches in 1891 to 485,000 in 1899 (Viloria, 2009).

### ***Political economy of bananas***

Colombia began the 20<sup>th</sup> century immersed in a terrible crisis during the presidency of José Manuel Marroquín (1900-1904). The country was dealing with one of its worst internal conflicts (“The Thousand Days’ War” 1899-1902) that killed 3% of the country’s total population and was accompanied by a lack of access to international credits, insignificant levels of exports and a hyper-inflation of 300%. Additionally, the country was facing the loss of the Panama Canal to the United States (Kalmanovitz & López, 2002).

Rafael Reyes assumed the presidency (1904-1909) at such a critical period for Colombia’s economy. Reyes, a businessman himself, was perhaps the first president that attempted to apply a capitalist economic model in Colombia (Kalmanovitz & López, 2002). He focused his government plan on three basic strategies: establishment of fiscal monopolies, financial stimulus to attract foreign investment, and increased public investment to improve infrastructure in different regions of the country (Viloria, 2009).

It was a moment of incredible growth in the export of large scale capitals by Europe and the United States (White, 1978), and the amazing fertility of soils and strategic location near the port of Santa Marta definitely attracted the eyes of UFC partners to the region for further development of their already growing business. Therefore, in 1901, with the “Thousand Days’ War” about to end, the UFC established operations in Colombia (Viloria, 2009). The company took advantage of strategic conditions but also of the low wages offered in the Magdalena region to establish one of its most important supply points for the next 30 years.

In 1909, pressured by local elites in Magdalena, Reyes granted specific tax exemptions for banana production and export (applicable until 1929) which favoured the consolidation of large scale banana plantations already present in the region and a massive growth of the UFC’s banana business. Financial incentives for foreign capital investments were an important factor in the company’s expansion in Colombia. During Reyes’ Presidency (from 1908 to 1910) UFC acquired more than 13,000 hectares near Aracataca and developed its own irrigation districts (148,400 meters), later deviating rivers like the Tucurínca.

### ***Land Rush for green gold***

The agricultural frontier was also expanded by Reyes’ public land allotment policy which was created to promote new production in unoccupied lands (Kalmanovitz & López, 2002). Over 12,000 hectares of vacant lands in the Magdalena department were made available to national and foreign investors in agriculture destined for export. A titling rush was unleashed in the region. Landowners from the Caribbean coast, investors from other regions of the country and even president Reyes acquired large extensions of land for banana plantations (Viloria, 2009, pp. 32-33).

New plantations extended to the department’s south and by 1912 the municipality of Aracataca - García Márquez’ Macondo - was founded as a

direct result. The railway was extended from Sevilla to Fundación to pick up the fruit from newly opened virgin forests where investors fought over terrains in a frenetic rush for plantations and a blind greed for wealth. The rising interest of Colombian investors not only concealed the crucial role of foreign investment in the banana boom but also the configuration of an export monopoly (White, 1978). Typical tropical rainforest vegetation was replaced by endless rows of banana plants that soon characterized the region.

In 1915 more than 14,300 hectares were cultivated in the Magdalena department; 6,050 hectares (42%) belonged to the UFC and 5,800 hectares (40%) to particular growers besides other banana companies that were slowly being absorbed by UFC. By 1920 the total cultivated area had increased to 30,800 hectares, of which 50% belonged to the UFC, and during the 1920s an additional 18,000 hectares were incorporated (Viloria, 2009). The company invested a total of US\$ 70 million in Magdalena by 1921, an exorbitant sum for the time and especially for a region with scarce development (White, 1978). The company reported more than US\$ 44 million in earnings at the moment.

Large scale operations and the huge capital managed by UFC allowed it to buy or eliminate any rival in the Magdalena department during the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as in the case of Cuyamel and Atlantic Fruit Company in 1928 (White, 1978). The region thus experienced an intense expansion of banana production that reached a 1929 export peak of more than 10 million stems annually, from the port of Santa Marta to other continents.

Banana exports grew without interruption from 1901 to 1913 and declined at the beginning of the First World War. Again in 1916 a period of export increases began that ended in 1930, when the company exported about 11 million bunches only from the Colombian Banana Zone (Viloria, 2009). Between 1929 and 1934 a contraction of the international markets and successive hurricanes in the region forced the company to decrease plantation areas by 75%, which were hardly recovered later (LeGrand, 1980).

**Graph 1**  
**Export of banana from Magdalena Department, 1891-1935**



The high growth in production caused many tensions between the different actors in the region and found its critical point in the massive killing at the Ciénaga Square in 1928. Its aggressive policy of land buying and appropriation of vacant lands in Magdalena would confront the company with peasants, landowners, producers and on occasions with the Colombian authorities. But the company established a good interaction with local and national elites which allowed it to maintain power in the region for more than six decades.

### **3.2 Forms of access and control over resources and actors that emerge from the social relations of production**

#### ***The dynamics of Banana Society and political relations***

In the 1920s the United Fruit Company (UFC) dominated the different spheres of economic, social and political life in the banana zone. No doubt that its investments in the Magdalena department led to the emergence of profound transformations in land tenure and social patterns, like privatization of lands and large scale migration to the region. At the same time the company had to adapt to the existing “social relations of production and social fields of power” (Peluso & Watts, 2001) in the region, represented in work practices, social and political patterns and forms of land tenancy (LeGrand, 2008).

Before UFC’s arrival in the region, the “Magdalena Grande” department, as it was known then, was barely inhabited; the capital city of Santa Marta had approximately 6,000 residents and the town of Ciénaga – second in importance for the region – comprised only a few fishermen’s cottages. Existing settlements were composed of scattered semi-abandoned colonial “haciendas” and small villages of colonizers on vacant public lands. Circa 1930, at the peak of the banana boom, Santa Marta’s population increased to 30,000 inhabitants and Ciénaga’s to about 40,000 citizens (Taylor, 1931) (Agudelo Velazquez, 1989).

#### **Joint venture of UFC and conservative elites**

The department’s elites, mainly of Conservative party affiliation, lived in the capital city Santa Marta and owned the mentioned immense semi-abandoned and almost valueless properties located mainly in Aracataca and the Riofrío zone. On the other hand, the second most important city, Ciénaga, was inhabited by owners of medium size properties belonging mostly to the Liberal Party that didn’t integrate easily with the demands of the company and that resented the special treatment the company offered to regional elites (LeGrand, 2008).

UFC understood very early on the power represented in regional social-economical elites that could influence other spheres of the national political power. Evidently the company favored businessmen belonging to such elites, as a way to gain their support in times when they had to negotiate with regional and central governments or press liberal entrepreneurs in the later process of monopolization (Viloria, 2009). One of the richest families of the region, who signed production agreements with the UFC in 1908, received company loans

at low rates to buy additional lands that were later acquired by UFC at convenient prices. The family pressured the central government to grant tax exemption for banana production until 1929 (Viloria, 2009).

Traditional wealthy families normally benefited from company credits at low interest, purchase of lands at affordable prices or subsequent contracts of estates given in administration and purchase contracts of banana production (LeGrand, 2008) (White, 1978). Members of these families occupied high positions both in the company and in the government of Magdalena and Colombia in general (Viloria, 2009) (White, 1978), so the alliance was of mutual benefit for both parts.

UFC strengthened its power in the region through associations that sometimes resulted in outrageous and objectionable circumstances. UFC employees simultaneously operated as Departmental Assembly deputies, creating clear conflicts of interest. As a result of these associations, representatives of the Ministry of Industries detected in 1924 that of 35,400 hectares of the nation's vacant lands, 32,9000 were acquired irregularly by the UFC (Viloria, 2009) (White, 1978).

These facts demonstrated the weakness of the state and the company's power of corruption, one of the characteristics that remain until now in enclave regions like Magdalena.

### **Disputes between the UFC and Renegade liberals**

Company relations with the liberal "mestizos" of Ciénaga were not at all cordial. Several times they attempted to sign agreements with UFC competitors to obtain better conditions in harvest purchases; however, they were always blocked by the power of the company that maintained control of the ports (White, 1978). In the fruit selection process Ciénaga's producers were subjected to even stricter controls than the rest of the growers (LeGrand, 2008).

Banana was an extremely unpredictable business, and the producers had to compete to get the company to buy the most quantity of fruit, due to the constant changes in market demand and the fragility of fruit to be kept in storages. It is calculated that only two thirds of the fruit produced would be bought for export, the rest would be rejected. But for opponents to the banana regime, the company rejected between 60% and 70% of their harvest (Viloria, 2009).

UFC took advantage of these tensions and divided producers to maintain its power (White, 1978). Imbalanced relations with the company as well as the monopolization of the business, infrastructure, financial assets and even food created conflicts that would trigger the tragic conclusion of 1928.

### ***Migrant proletariat and peasant society***

During the first two decades of the 20th century growth in the banana economy attracted not only investors but a massive migration of workers from other parts of the country to the region. Before UFC arrived the almost

nonexistent jobs available paid around \$0.30 cents a day, but when the company started production the workers were paid around \$9 pesos per week. This generated a rise in prices local economy prices that would affect inhabitants of the region for years (Taylor, 1931). Better salaries attracted a large number of immigrants from other regions of the Caribbean coast and the inner departments, looking for improved economic conditions and new opportunities for their families.

Although the plantation salaries were better in comparison to other parts of the country, they were far less than in other producing countries (Viloria, 2009). The wages paid to Colombian workers (\$0.50 cents/day) were low in comparison with Costa Rica and Jamaica, where the average salary was US\$1.00/day (White, 1978).

The newcomers were contracted by UFC and local growers by piecework and for seasonal periods (White, 1978). This kind of contract allowed “Mamita Yunay<sup>3</sup>” to assure that it had no workers in the region, thus evading payment of social security mandated by Colombian Law (LeGrand, 2008) (Viloria, 2009). In 1925, from an estimated 25,000 workers, only 5,000 had a direct contract with the UFC (Viloria, 2009). Labourers had to work in harsh conditions: long hours and poor sanitation. (See Appendix 1).

Not all workforces were constituted by migrants; some of them were small scale peasants and new settlers that didn’t incorporate immediately into the banana industry. Instead, during the first years of expansion this peasant society supplied local markets with agricultural products to feed the suddenly increased population. Nevertheless at the same time they were seasonal workers at the plantations (LeGrand, 1980). It is possible that UFC may have expelled settlers, not only because they needed their land but also because their labour was necessary for the plantations’ expansion (LeGrand, 1980, p. 240).

This segment of society was also greatly impacted by the installation of commissary stores by the UFC, where the company sold only imported goods. The system impeded workers from acquiring local products, as they were paid in vouchers that only could be redeemed at UFC stores (LeGrand, 1980, p. 241). This condemned small peasants to lose their livelihoods and lands, leaving them only the option to sell their work to survive.

### ***Asymmetrical forces on land disputes***

UFC confronted great frictions with local peasants for the land. As explained before, cultivation expansion caused a massive privatization of public lands. It generated conflicts that led to the expropriation of hundreds or perhaps thousands of settlers already living or recently installed in the region (LeGrand, 1980). Competition caused a rise in property prices and--as described in the previous section--a rush for the best available lands. Many traditional families sought old colonial titles in their genealogies in which boundaries were unclear and claimed as their own abutting vacant state lands to be sold later to the UFC. The company so accumulated approximately 60,000 hectares of private

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<sup>3</sup> So was the United Fruit Company called by the local workers.



property. Others sought government concessions to start new plantations (LeGrand, 1980). A territorial clash soon became inevitable.

The lack of boundary clarifications between private and state properties was a major cause of conflicts and the most affected were as always the weakest in society: small peasants and new settlers. The state only intervened when the company began to move in the direction of medium- to large-sized agricultural producers. (See case in Appendix 2.)

The majority of conflict events involved the UFC supported by local authorities who invariably used force against peasants who resisted eviction. In these cases armed forces resorted to diverse violent practices such as burning of houses, setting imprisonment of family representatives, or setting cattle loose to devour the crops existent on the property (White, 1978). All this generated strong discontent in the working class and the small peasant society against the injustices of government and the UFC.

### **Everyday resistance and the Revolutionary Socialist Party**

All the above-mentioned tensions generated different forms of resistance among settlers, small peasants and workers. At the beginning the settlers resisted the processes of land usurpation, but after the violent events in which armed forces were involved they claimed protection from the central government, as well as from the courts, to preserve their rights. Although many of the attempts to defend their properties were unsuccessful, they generated the conviction in the rural population that the UFC obtained lands belonging to the state illegally, and according to the law they were in position to reclaim this property as later occurred (LeGrand, 1980).

The first organized attempts in the region began in 1925 with the foundation of the “Trade Union of Workers of Magdalena<sup>4</sup>(TUWM)”, and later under the influence of the Revolutionary Socialist Party, founded in 1926 (LeGrand, 2008). The trade union was influenced by Spanish and Italian immigrants with anarcho-syndicalist ideas and assembled workers as well as small scale peasants in the region. Although the trade union’s efforts supported the claims of peasants threatened with eviction by the UFC, its main efforts were directed towards organizing a general strike against the company (LeGrand, 1980).

After 1929 the banana economy experimented a deep recession due to the contraction of international markets and successive hurricanes in the zone. UFC diminished its activities and thousands of workers lost their jobs. In this situation, many of the unemployed who had been peasants before assumed an offensive attitude, occupying UFC properties to grow subsistence crops. The company lost about 9,500 hectares between 1930 and 1935 that they never recovered again. Displacement was reversed because many of the invaders claimed the property from the government as legal settlers, according to Colombian land property rules (LeGrand, 1980).

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<sup>4</sup> Unión Sindical de Trabajadores del Magdalena USTM.

### **Massacre of 1928 rejection of symbolic enemy**

The 1928 strike was the first organized massive mobilization of the rural population in the region. Between 25,000 and 32,000 workers (Viloria, 2009) participated in the stoppage of company activities for more than three weeks, until the tragic outcome of the dawn of 6<sup>th</sup> December 1928 when the Colombian army fired against an unarmed population whose main motivation was to claim better working conditions and a space for peasants' food cultivation. It marked a singular event in the Colombian collective memory, described by García Márquez in his book *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

The massacre was greatly influenced by the polarization between traditional democracies and communist regimes. Most of the messages revealed by the Ministries, the U.S. Embassy and UFC would bring about the fatal ending. A complete analysis is shown in Appendix 3.

What is true is that hegemonic actors transformed the initial image of a labour conflict to a problem of war. Although the indubitable intention of the socialist's movement to spur an insurrection seems evident, this was far from being "guerrilla warfare." Therefore, the Army's reaction was disproportionately exaggerated: in using machine guns against strikers who "performed civil resistance actions and fraternization with the troops to disarm them," adducing loss of authority was not enough argument for the massacre (Archila, 2008, p. 167).

Let us analyze what happened one hundred years after the expansion of the Banana Regime in the Valley of the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta.

## **4 Analysis of the Coal Regime**

### **4.1 Patterns and regimes of accumulation: the Mining Rush**

To understand the mining voracity that Colombia is currently facing, we have to deal first with the previous period of Colombian political-economy, framed by the fall of communism in the late 1980s and the global diffusion of neo-liberalism that supposed a crisis of the welfare state and a clearing of many previous conquests in labour rights (Archila, et al., 2012, p. 64).

As we have seen previously, in 1990 Colombia adopted a neo-liberal model that determined GDP growth as the means to accomplish development and deal with poverty. Markets were liberalized and international investments were encouraged. The mining sector was one of the promised means for this future growth. Extraordinary reserves in minerals all over the country had already been discovered by the Spanish during colonization (gold, emeralds, platinum, silver), and in this century other minerals acquired importance (oil, ferronickel, coltan and coal). Immense reserves of the purest steam coals in the continent (7 billion Mt measured and 16 billion more calculated) were sufficient argument to promote Colombia as a mining hub for the industrialized world (Ministerio de Minas y Energía - UPME, 2006, p. 27).

Studies hired by the Colombian government in the 60s, 70s and 80s demonstrated the potential for steam coal exploitation and its possibility for international commercialization as a means for economic growth and subsequent sustainable development of the regions where the most important reserves were located. The departments of La Guajira (4,536 Mt measured) and El Cesar (6,556 Mt measured) (Petri, 1960) (Petri, 1961-1963) (Garcés González, 1976) (Charlton & Pontin, 1975) (Mejía, 1977) (Restrepo Londoño, 1981) were recommended for a clean exploitation that would bring the country out of the economic crisis that affected Latin America in the late 1970s and 1980s.

It was during the oil crisis of the 1970s that the eyes of the world turned to coal as an alternative to replace the space left by fueloil, which slowly was being discarded in global electricity generation. Thus, the government sought in 1976 specialized partners who could provide the best technology to properly perform the extraction operation in the principal areas of reserves (Salas, 2004).

Export began in La Guajira with the El Cerrejón mine operated by a joint venture between multinational capital (Exxon/Intercor) and the Colombian state (Carbocol). Nevertheless low international prices and high operational costs made business unfeasible (Labyx, 1992). Yet the constant world demand increase and recovery of prices during the second half of the 1980s made Colombian coal business again attractive for multinational mining investment (Ministerio de Minas y Energía - UPME, 2006, p. 13)

A transnational specialized in coal extraction with mines in Alabama, United States, Drummond Ltd. acquired the rights to explore/exploit the mines of Pribbenow and La Loma in Cesar department. Drummond started explorations at the end of the 1980s and exploitation and exporting in 1995 (Drummond Ltd. Colombia, 2012) after signing a contract with the Colombian government that has brought about the lowest tax rates and royalties in the coal sector for years (Idarraga, et al., 2010).

### ***Economical and legal changes***

At the end of 1998 Colombia was experiencing a fall in GDP of 6.7%, an unemployment rate of 20% and a generalized financial crisis (Ministerio de Minas y Energía, UPME, 2005). An extended agreement with International Monetary Fund (IMF) was signed in 1999 to “reduce poverty and modernize the state” by cutting down public expenses and moving along a “strong and sustained economic growth to promote employment and higher living standards for Colombians” (Ministerio de Hacienda - FMI, 1999, pp. 4-8). Privatization of a great number of financial, telecommunications, energy and mining institutions was part of the agreement, and so Carbocol--the company created to administer coal exploitation--was sold in October 2000 to a multinational consortium.

In 2001, with assistance from the World Bank, the government of President Andrés Pastrana abolished the existing Mining Law: Decree 2655 of 1988. The new law supposed a switch in the state’s role in mining exploitation

from entrepreneur to absent supervisor, the reinforcement of exclusive property of subsoil resources, and the right to expropriate assets from any individual or communities in their possession in favour of “public utility and social interest”.

Art 5: The minerals of any kind and location, lying on the ground or subsoil, in any natural physical state, are the exclusive property of the State, without regard to the ownership, possession or possession of the relevant land, whether of other public, individuals or communities or groups.

Article 13: In implementing Article 58 of the Constitution, be declared of public utility and social interest the mining industry in all its branches and phases. Therefore be decreed in its favor, at the request of an interested party and the procedures established in this Code, the expropriation of the property of real estate and other rights constituted thereon, which are necessary for their exercise and efficient development. (Law 685 of 2001).

Other aspects highly criticized by public opinion were Chapter 14 and 16 that handled participation of ethnic communities and regulation of cottage and informal mining respectively. Another important part as regards this paper is the environmental aspect handled in Chapter 20. It transfers responsibility of environmental, social and economic baseline setting to mining companies and does not include any review of environmental impacts during the normal deterioration process of the next decades (See articles 203, 207 and 208). Finally, Article 213 places high obstacles for the state in denying environmental licenses. It obstructs the state in fulfilling its role as “supervisor of the natural resources.”

The reality of Colombian mining policies seems to be determined by impositions of international commercial interests supported by a high lobbying capacity and the massive capitals of mining multinationals. Therefore mining giants have obtained in Colombia financial benefits, tax exemptions and few restrictions in the use of natural resources.

### ***Unrestricted expansion in mining***

Continuing Colombia’s transformation to attract mining investment, President Alvaro Uribe (2002-2010) implemented two national plans for the sector: PNDM<sup>5</sup> 2002-2006 reinforced the role of the state as absolute owner of subsoil and manager of its use for the “well-being of all citizens” (UPME, 2002), and PNDM 2007-2010 positioned mining as a contributor to “sustainable development of the hosting regions and the country’s understanding of mining as a process by which natural resources become the economic capital required to create or enhance other forms of capital” (UPME, 2007, p. 5). In addition, the PNDM: Vision 2019<sup>6</sup> (National Development Mining Plan) was launched in 2006, transcending particular

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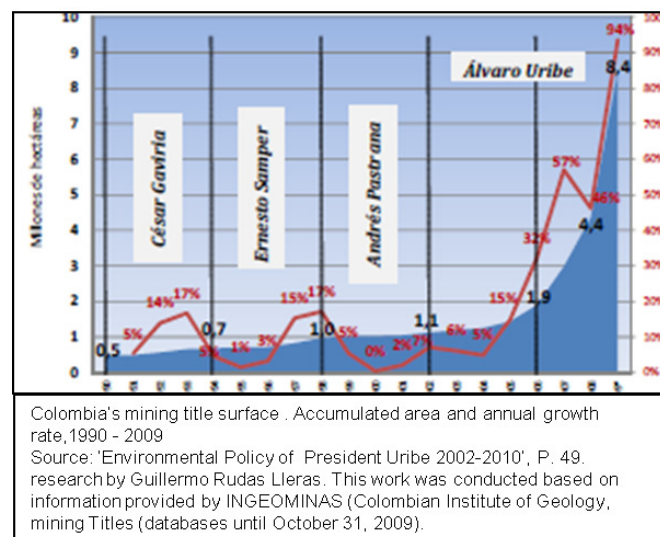
<sup>5</sup> Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Minero – National Plan for Mining Development.

<sup>6</sup> Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Minero: Visión 2019– National Plan for Mining Development: 2019Vision.

government plans and setting a State goal that established higher goals for mining economic performance. Some of its objectives were: 1) to turn the country into one of the first three destinations of private investment in Latin America, 2) to achieve a mining GDP growth above Latin American average and a participation in the nation's GDP of 25% by the end of 2019, and 3) To double the production of coal (to 120 Mt by 2019) as one of the strategic minerals for its potential in the mining industry (Ministerio de Minas y Energía, UPME, 2005, pp. 75-81).

The result of these high projections was a generalized increase in the total mining production (65.4% growth in the 8 years of Uribe's period), an uncontrolled growth in concession areas and a complete "rush" in the titling process (see Graph1). Before President Uribe, 1.05 million hectares were

Graph 1

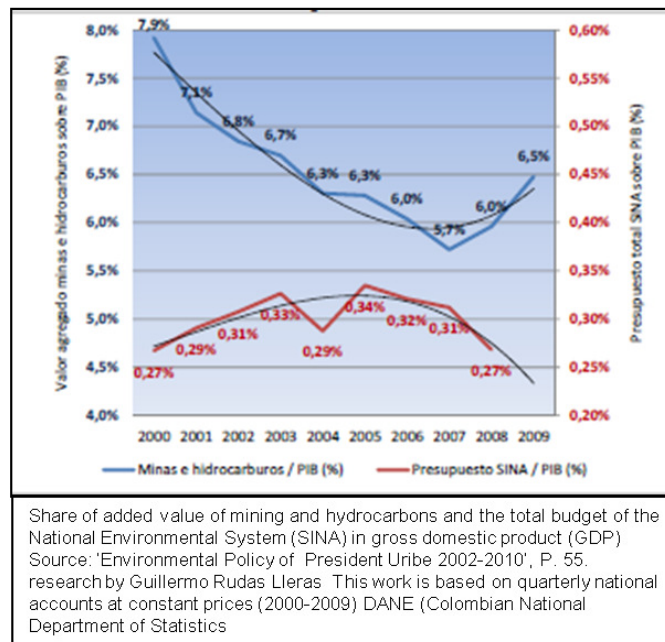


already granted for mining, but after his two consecutive terms the total area granted in concessions rose to 8.44 million hectares (Rudas, 2011) and over 40 million hectares more were requested for titling (almost 35% of Colombia's territory), exceeding any governmental capacity to adequately manage the pressures generated on the territory and natural resources (Rudas, 2010, p. 50). Other effects of the PDNM Vision 2019 were the growth of the total mining exports from US\$1.5 billion to US\$9.4 billion (UPME, 2012) and an increase in coal exports from 36.5 to 64.5 million Mt during the same period (SIMCO, 2012). Success in mining expansion goals nevertheless did not reflect any amelioration of the human conditions and protection of natural resources, as will be shown in the next facts.

In addition, as part of government's agreement with the IMF in 2003 to achieve fiscal savings, a restructuring and downsizing of the state was

implemented (Ministerio de Hacienda - FMI, 2003, p. 7). Many ministries were merged and institutions and offices were eliminated. Merging covered many sectors, but it is important to underline here the effects on SINA<sup>7</sup> as well as the Rural and Mining systems. The savings aim was never reached as shown by the recent re-division of the institutions during the present government of Juan Manuel Santos. Instead all divided institutions were weakened, hardly fulfilling their main duties due to reduction of available personnel and resources to cope with normal demands, much less to respond to increased demand in the mining sector (Rudas, 2010).

**Graph 2**



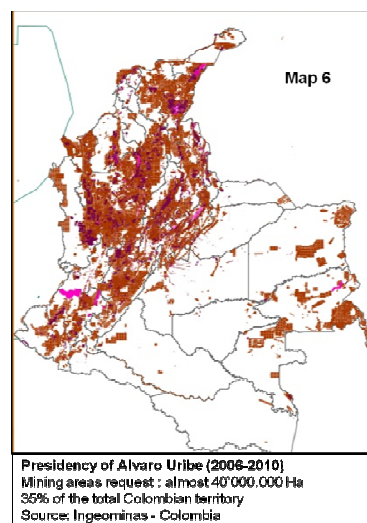
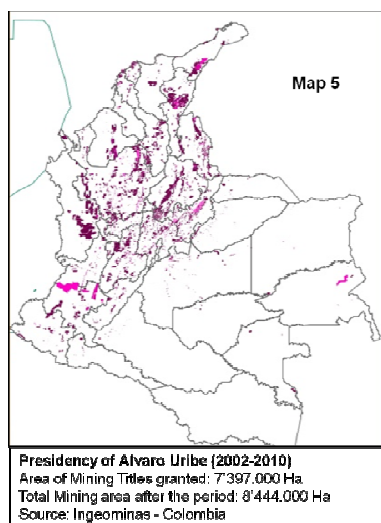
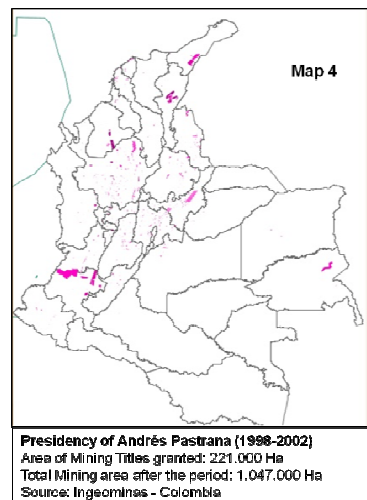
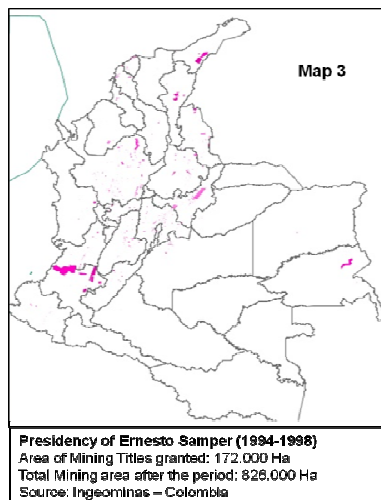
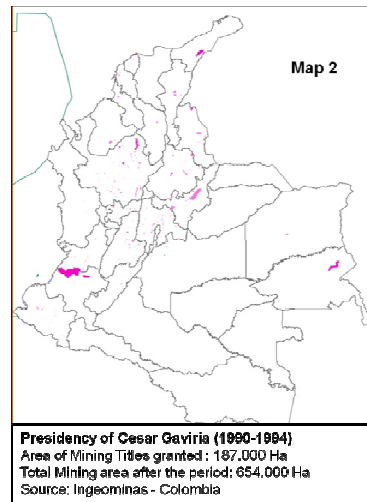
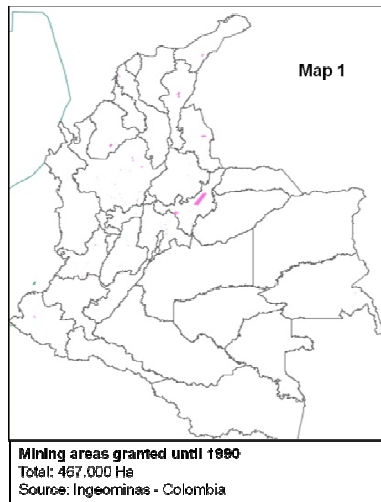
Demand increase for mining titling and speeding up of production in the sector was accompanied--since 2005--by a decrease in the budget for environmental authorities, making it difficult for such institutions to verify and control the negative impact over natural resources - See Graph 2. Similar situations were faced by institutions in charge of land legalization and mining grants like Incoder<sup>8</sup> and Ingeominas<sup>9</sup> all of which resulted in a generalized fragility in the country's institutions and difficulties in exercising an adequate environmental and territorial planning control (Rudas, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> SINA– Sistema Nacional Ambiental (National Environmental System).

<sup>8</sup> Instituto Colombiano de Desarrollo Rural: in charge of land.

<sup>9</sup> Instituto Colombiano de Geología y Minas (Colombian Institute of Geology and Mining) in charge of the exploration of subsoil and until recently of mine titling.

**MAP 1-6**  
**Mining land Titles since the implementation of the Neo-Liberal model**



Maps performed by  
 Guillermo Rudas Lleras and  
 presented during his  
 conference at National  
 Environmental Forum (Foro  
 Nacional Ambiental) Bogota,  
 13 April 2012

Consequently, supervision of mining extraction and its outcomes is far from rigorous, as stated in various Constitutional Court Sentences (e.g. C339 of 2002) and reports of General Comptroller's office CGN<sup>10</sup>. In 2006 CGN criticized continuous changes (from 1996 to 2006) in the administration of the mining sector leading to inconsistent results in mining supervision.

### **Legacy of rampant mining titling**

The government of Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2014) inherited an exorbitant mine titling request of about 35% of the total Colombian territory (See map 6). When the current government took office, a severe institutional crisis in the mining sector was found. A radical institutional reform was announced to tackle the precarious auditing capacity of the state to meet standards and commitments in the activity (Rodado, 2011). Santos based his government plan in the so called “five locomotives” for economic growth and employment generation (mining/energy, housing, transport infrastructure, innovation and agriculture). The mining and energy locomotive had a high possibility of growth due to increased projections in the coal, oil and gold subsectors. Nevertheless it was recognized as an “enormous responsibility for environmental management” because mining expansion may go “counter to the country's sustainable development” (DNP, 2010).

Serious deficiencies in human, technical and financial resources made it difficult to fulfil the government's regulatory function in the use of underground natural resources. The present government took drastic measures such as suspension of the mining titling process, a prerequisite to start exploration actions and subsequent exploitation. Serious inconsistencies in the process were found (Servicio Geológico Colombiano SGC, 2012). Although the National Agency for Mining <sup>11</sup>(ANM) and National Agency for Environmental Licenses (ANLA)<sup>12</sup> were created this year to regulate mining requests, and results have a prudential waiting period, the situation is critical. After two years of the current administration, problems have barely changed as shown by different sector and special reports of the CGR Office, demonstrating the existing institutional chaos in the mining and environmental sectors as well as their poor capacity in the auditing, monitoring and control of mining's impact on environmental resources (Contraloría General de la República, 2011, p. 15) (Contraloría General de la República, 2012). Other reports from this institution evidence millionaire fiscal evasions and losses in royalties from the mining sector. A recent declaration by the General Comptroller, Sandra Morelli, asserts that “the country is about to confront an environmental disaster” (Amat, 2012) resulting from cases like Drummond's and Prodeco/Glencore's that didn't comply with the water pollution

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<sup>10</sup> CGR Contraloría General de la República (Republic's General Comptroller Office), Informe de Auditoría Gubernamental con enfoque integral modalidad regular Ingeominas, agosto 31 de 2007.

<sup>11</sup> ANM Agencia Nacional de Minería (National Mining Agency).

<sup>12</sup> ANLA Agencia Nacional de Licencias Ambientales (National Agency of Environmental Licenses).

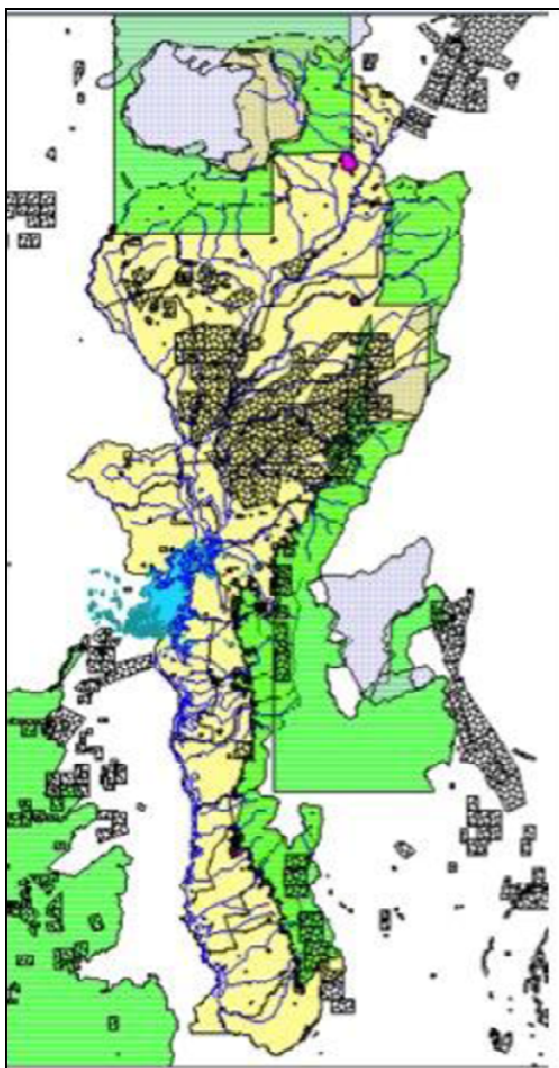


management, transported coal without proper coverage, spilled huge amounts of coal during the loading of ships contaminating sea and beaches, deviated rivers, etc. (Contraloría General de la República, 2012, p. 26).

The Cesar coal basin has a high to very high tendency to become a desert area in the medium term (2070) and to continue the large scale open pit mining can be extremely inconvenient in terms of the impacts that will continue to occur and increase over the water resources. (Contraloría General de la República, 2012, p. 26)

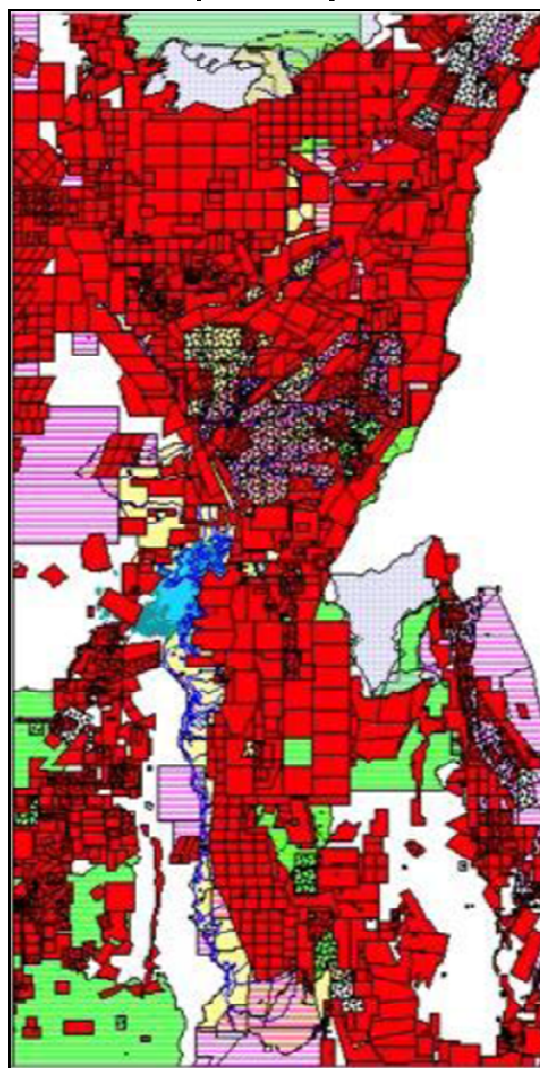
In 2011 the Mining Ministry planned to raise coal exports to 70 million tons in 2012 and 250 million in 2018, bringing more municipalities into coal exploitation as can be seen in the following maps of the department of Cesar.

**Map 7**  
**Existing Mining Titles**



Department of Cesar Granted mining titles 2010  
Source: Conference "Mining Context of Cesar" Mining Forum  
Valledupar, September 2011

**Map 8**  
**Requested Mining Titles**



Department of Cesar Requested mining titles by 2010  
Source: Conference "Mining Context of Cesar" Mining Forum  
Valledupar, September 2011

This expansion of mining will suppose the resettlement of peasant and urban communities as ordered by the Ministry of Environment (Resolution 1525 of 2010) which in turn will suppose a higher impact on population, social and environmental aspects in the country in the following years (Holguín, 2011).

Result over years of implementing a neoliberal model include the conversion of the state into an absent participant in the mining business, an irrational promoter of multinational investment, a deficient supervisor of the use of natural resources and an active restrictor of the rights of individuals, as happened one hundred years before. The Colombian state has been subdued to the directives of international economic organizations, reducing its capacities to cope with its social, political and economic functions. Instead it was limited to regulate and make necessary corrections in favour of “free competition” in the mining sector, facilitating international investment but not necessarily providing real welfare to the general population or protection to nature (Idarraga, et al., 2010).

## **4.2 Forms of access and control over resources**

### ***The control over the Coal Zone: a repeated violence***

The Cesar department was once famous for its cotton-rice plantations, its immense cattle herds and its richness in water. The subsequent marijuana bonanzas in the 1970s and 1980s spawned an uncontrollable violence from guerrillas and paramilitary groups in the 1990s and 2000s. Cesar was part of the Department called Greater Magdalena until 1967, when it was created by Congress. Agriculture and cattle ranching (1.5 million heads) were for years the principal income sources for the department, but in the last decade the department’s economy has become dependent on coal extraction.

As said before, Drummond Ltd. started explorations in the late 1980s and extractions in 1995 in the municipalities of La Jagua de Ibirico, Chiriguaná, El Paso, La Loma and Becerril, at the center of the department of Cesar. Now ten coal mining companies operate in the region: Carbones de la Jagua, Consorcio Minero Unido, Carbones del Tesoro, Sororia-Drummond (Cerro Largo), Norcarbón S.A., Carbones del Caribe S.A., C.I Prodeco/Glencore (Calenturitas and La Jagua), Drummond (La Loma and El Descanso, Emcarbón, Vale Coal (El Hatillo) and Carbones del Cesar (La Francia). Nevertheless 70% of the department’s total production and 33% of the country’s is performed by Drummond Ltd. (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2008).

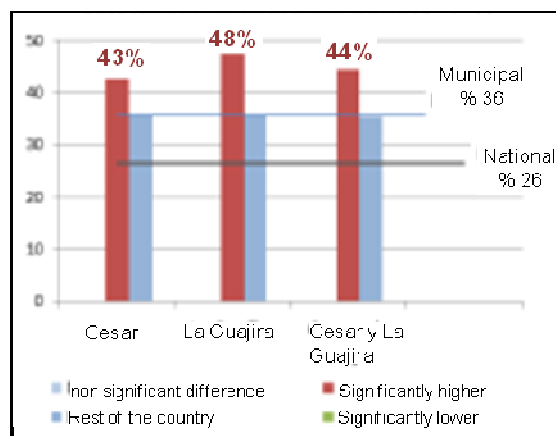
### ***Changes in society and landscapes***

Growing coal exploitation in Cesar has introduced changes in landscapes, livelihoods, society and the economy of the region. According to estimates by

the DANE<sup>13</sup>, mining raised its participation in Cesar's GDP from 8% in 1990 to 34% in 2005, while the agricultural sector reduced its share from 45% to 24% in the same period (Bonet, 2007). Finalizing the exploration stage in the center of Cesar in the early 1990s, titled lands and vacant areas of the municipalities of El Paso, La Jagua de Ibirico, Chiriguaná and Becerril, among others, were given in concession for mining in 1997 by INGEOMINAS<sup>14</sup>. The reserves lying in El Descanso only started coal and gas exploitation in 2009. Negotiation was the responsibility of the locally installed company, and conciliation with parcel landowners was the responsibility of the mining company, otherwise the state had to expropriate.

This was accompanied by a total neglect of rural development during the following years, especially in policies related to the development of small scale peasantry. The dramatic change resulting has meant the practical “extinction of peasant economy in the region”, a complete deficiency in food crops and the conversion of rural communities with access to land into settlements of landless rural workers dependent on few indirect and temporary vacancies offered by the mining companies (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2008). Drummond occupies around 3,600 workers in direct jobs, 2,700 contractors and 15,000 indirect jobs. With full production of the additional El Descanso mine (started in 2009) Drummond will reach a production of 45 million tons, thereby raising direct jobs to 6,200, contractors to 5,000 and indirect jobs to around 25,000. This is only about 4% of the total population of the department, not even close to the 22% of the total population that has been displaced until now in the department of Cesar (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2008).

**Graph 7**  
**Cesar Department:**  
**Infant deaths x 1000 live births 2004-2011**

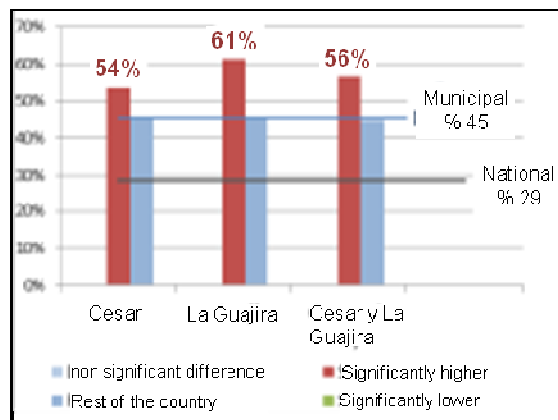


<sup>13</sup> DANE Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (Colombian Administrative Statistics Department).

<sup>14</sup> Instituto Colombiano de Geología y Minas (Colombian Institute of Geology and Mining).

Regarding impact on quality of life in municipalities that receive royalties from coal improvements these have not been significant or quality of life has even become worse. Although coal extraction has paid royalties in Cesar for more than 20 years, poverty indicators are worse than for non-producer municipalities in the same region and other parts of the country (see graphs 7, 8 and 9) (Rudas, 2011). Cesar went from receiving US\$27 million (2004) to US\$ 1.3 billion (2011) in royalties from coal mining (Servicio Geológico Colombiano, 2012). Nevertheless 20 of the total 25 municipalities of the Department don't reach the minimum sewage levels required by Colombian law and 50% of the municipalities don't comply with quality parameters for water (Bonet, 2007). Infant deaths, unsatisfied basic needs and population living in poverty are above the national and departmental averages, concluding that the royalties received from coal mining have not produced a significant positive impact on poverty indicators (Rudas, 2012).

**Graph 8**  
**Cesar Department:**  
**Unsatisfied basic needs 2004-2011**

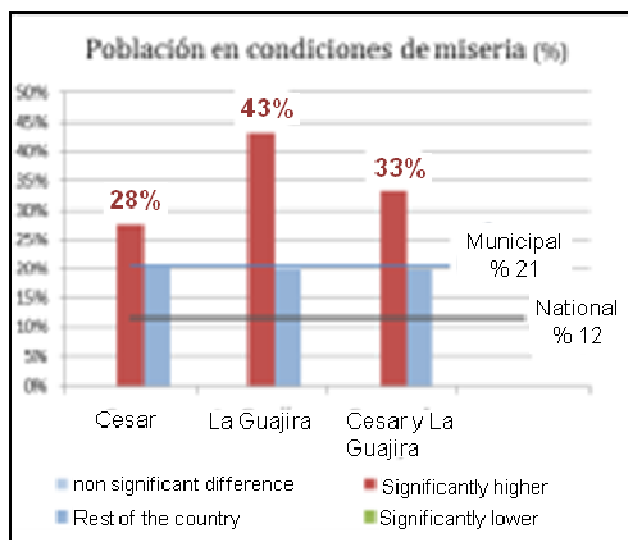


Meanwhile, environmental impacts that are also close related with quality of life of the inhabitants are evidently negative. Fourteen percent of the department ecosystems have been affected and the remaining 71% of mining titles requested would affect another 85% (Acción Social, 2010). Inadequate management of wastewaters as in the Manzanares River, groundwater affectation causing damages in the most important aquifers of Cesar, deviation of rivers from their original course according to the needs of mining companies, and coal dust pollution in the air and water have caused several additional impacts in soil degradation, deterioration of microclimates, and flora and fauna descent<sup>15</sup> (Pardo, 2012) (Contraloría General de la República, 2012). Fisheries have been also practically destroyed by the deviations of rivers that companies run to expand the coal extraction. Calenturitas River, which during

<sup>15</sup> Instituto de Hidrología, Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales (Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies).

the whole 20<sup>th</sup> century was source of food security for the region, was deviated by Glencore through 17 Km, affecting availability of hydro resources and loss of a great variety of fish species (Reyes, 2011).

**Graph 9**  
**Cesar Department:**  
**Population living in poverty 2004-2011**



Air and water are constantly impacted by spilling of coal dust during the transport and transference of the mineral from trucks (1,600 per day), into trains (26 per day), then boats and later ships. Efforts by the Ministry of Environment (MAVDI) in 2007 to achieve a cleaner production situation have only produced slight changes, as shown by the complaints of the Contraloría's office (Contraloría General de la República, 2012) (Contraloría General de la República, 2012b). There is noncompliance in adequate methods for loading and downloading of coal, which generates coal dust particle contamination into the air, sea, roads, etc. (Contraloría General de la República, 2012b). Immense piles of coal that overcome the natural barriers installed at the entrance of the mine are dispersed by the wind and deposited finally into vegetation, water bodies, animals and the air inhaled by neighbours of the mine, especially children and old people. Measurements by the Ministry of the Environment in March of 2008 showed how daily counts of suspended air particle concentrations exceeded the annual norm for quality in Plan Bonito, la Loma and La Jagua de Ibirico, with logical consequences in the population's health and respiratory problems, possibly connected to the high infant mortality rate demonstrated in Guillermo Rudas' study (Rudas, 2012).

### ***Rural communities: peasants and settlers***

Besides all the above-mentioned negative impacts on the environment and population, there is another fact that is equally disturbing. In the years following the granting of the first mining titles in El Cesar, surprisingly regional and central authorities did not anticipate any resettlement plan for rural or urban communities living in the areas of influence. The only resettlement plan for Cesar mining expansion performed until now by governmental authorities has been through Resolutions 970 and 1525 of 2010. As said before, resettlement was left to the conciliation capacity of mining companies with local communities. The result was macabre. The vagueness in Articles 5 and 13 of Law 685 of 2001 regarding the exact procedure for land expropriation in areas of influence in view of the “social interest of mining” resulted in the manifestation of a chronic disease suffered by Colombia: violence.

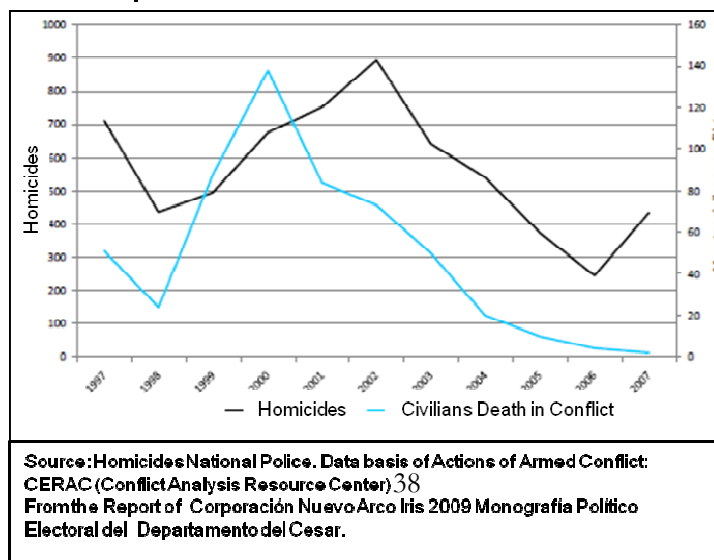
Numerous allegations from peasant communities of threats, selected deaths, kidnappings and disappearances came from Cesar in those years. Communities inhabiting territories granted by Ingeominas to Drummond Inc. in 1997 (El Descanso Mine with reserves of about 1,700 million tons of coal and earth gas) were particularly affected. (See paramilitary declarations in Appendix 4.)

Lands were legalized by bureaucrats connected with political leaders in charge of securing the profits of violence performed by armed forces, to be sold later to economic powers. Violence and corruption were means to dispossess rural communities and accumulate lands for the use of economic powers (both local and international).

### ***Armed actors***

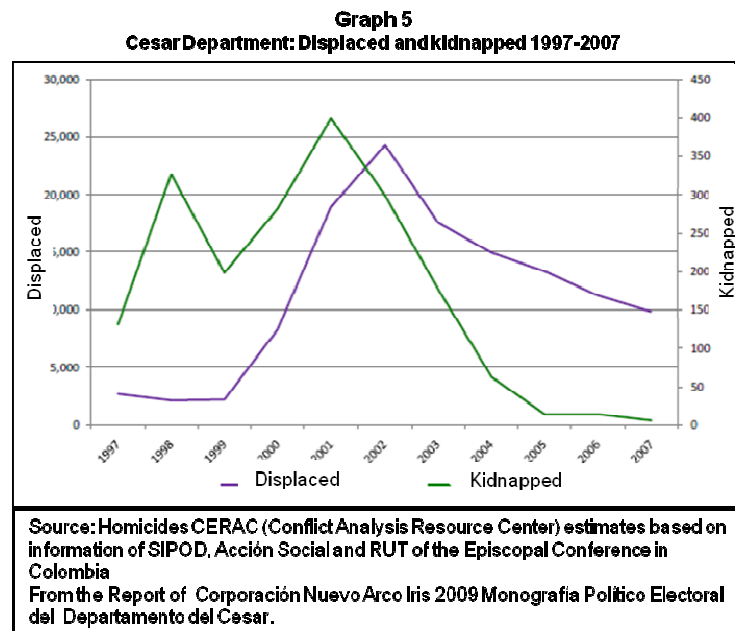
At the beginning of the 1990s, when the coal exploitation was about to start, different armed actors fought over control of the central Cesar department territory. Guerrillas arrived in the region at the beginning of the 1980s for its

**Graph 4**  
**Cesar Department: Homicides and Civilians Death In conflict 1997-2007**



strategic location in the middle of two mountain ranges (Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta and Perijá Hills), easy places to hide and important mobility and interconnection corridors for supplies, but also for guns and drug trafficking for outlaw groups (ACNUR (UNHCR), 2008). Guerrilla activities were related mainly to kidnapping and extortion of landowners and industrialists, especially during the 1980 and 1990 decades (Arcoiris, 2009).

Paramilitary groups started to form locally in the beginning of the 1990s as a response of regional elites to defend their privileges. In 1996 paramilitary groups were reinforced in the Cesar department by the entrance of members of the AUC<sup>16</sup> as part of their process of expansion and consolidation in the country in those years (ACNUR (UNHCR), 2008).



The Cesar department experienced an intensification of the armed conflict and violence especially between the years of 1999 to 2003 as shown in Graphs 4 and 5, coinciding with mining expansion and the decline of agriculture and livestock in the department. As we explained before, in the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s, guerrillas operated in the centre of the department where the most dynamic economies were situated (cattle ranching and industrial agriculture), kidnapping and extorting rich landowners. The paramilitaries confronted guerrillas in an effort to control territory, displacing most of the rural communities affected by the conflict (Arcoiris, 2009). Both guerrilla and paramilitary groups have fed their need for material resources from economic powers in the regions and both capitalize on the violent control of territories as a means to gain access to economic assets. Nevertheless, the nature of the

<sup>16</sup> Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defense Units).



creation of paramilitary groups creates a second characteristic: their access to social and political power that comes from their initial financiers, local elites. As explained by Jacobo Grajales, violent capital as control of organized violence; and social capital as supporting political power and bureaucratic networks that allow obtaining influence in administrative decisions support paramilitary actions, and so armed violence becomes institutional violence when governmental institutions recognize the grabbed land (Grajales, 2011, p. 772). Coal brings new economic opportunities to perpetuate the conflict and redesign the logic of violence in the region. Struggles for the control of the strategic assets for mining are part of this dimension where violent power, as well as political and social power, interacts to obtain profits from the new gains.

### ***Political power, paramilitary groups and the kiss of death from multinationals***

The department of Cesar was created in 1967 with the boom of cotton production that brought great wealth for about 25 years to the region. It is not difficult to understand the existing powers behind the separation of the former “Magdalena Grande” department. Control over resources--apart from the centralized power in the capital city of Santa Marta--was the main purpose of separation. In the mid-1980s a process of economic stagnation began. Cotton, at other times the department’s main income, almost disappeared in the region as result of the international markets crash. Most industrial agriculture producers left cultivation terrains semi-abandoned. An extensive cattle operation that was used as an alternative to reinvest cotton surpluses, became a low intensive investment option for facing difficult times (Gamarra, 2005). Later, agriculture and cattle ranching diminished from 265,000 hectares in 1990 to 134,000 in 2002, mainly as a result of violence. In 2005 there were still 1.5 million heads of livestock registered in the department. (Gamarra, 2005)

Regarding political power, since its creation the department was related to the central political powers, as the first Governor, Alfonso Lopez Michelsen, was a son of former president Alfonso López Pumarejo (1942-1945) and later president during the period 1974-1978. During 1950 and 1960 the Lopez family hosted sons of the most important families in the “Magdalena Grande” region (Arcoiris, 2009). In the years of the department’s creation the division between the Liberal and Conservative parties was merely nominal. Members of both hegemonic parties shared the political and economic power in the region (Arcoiris, 2009).

During the 1970s and 1980s these families consolidated their political and bureaucratic powers. Meanwhile, the subversive movement spread in the department. In those years guerrillas increased pressure over the groups that monopolized economic and political power. So, in the middle of the 1990s, beset by the massive presence of increasing guerrilla fronts, the department witnessed the birth of one of the most important leaders in paramilitary groups, Rodrigo Tovar Pupo, alias “Jorge 40.” Born in Valledupar, son of a retired army officer member of the department’s elite, Tovar entered the AUC



when a General of the Army's First Division gathered members of Cesar's most renowned families to conform little groups for defence against guerrillas (Verdad Abierta, 2008).

During the expansion of paramilitary groups that began in 1996, alliances between the governing class of the department and the paramilitaries commanded by Jorge 40 were sealed. The self-defence groups divided the areas with electoral potential into sectors and offered to candidates of the 2002 elections the necessary voter support to be elected (Arcoiris, 2009, p. 60). The support materialized in diverse forms, physical violence included. The department was divided into three sub-regions: the centre or mining municipalities were assigned to Mauricio Pimiento, the south to Alvaro Araujo and the north was not assigned, as was declared by Pimiento in his Supreme Court trial in 2009 (Arcoiris, 2009, p. 60).

The paramilitaries didn't need to enter the electoral game as they already had subordinated Cesar's political elite, thereby accessing the needed political power to complete their "criminal machine." Their power of capital accumulation in the displacement and terror of rural communities had the veiled purpose of offering political power to the political elites in need of support of the population's voters; no matter if that support resulted from terror or their dependency on subsistence means, both politicians and paramilitary got their particular purpose. Accumulation of territorial power was protected by a project of political supremacy that would offer the paramilitaries immunity from national and international justice (Duncan, 2005). The criminal pact was sealed in the Cesar department and control over territories, political powers and local economies would continue until the demobilization of the AUC in 2006. Mining came as a complement to complete their financial scheme as can be showed on the testimonies of demobilized paramilitaries. (See Appendice 5)

In this control over territories the growing economy created by coal extraction plays a similar role as in the banana zone. Local elites get the most benefit by offering political and bureaucratic power to the company as they belong to the same hegemonic families and share social and political influences in the region. Mining companies associated to local bureaucracies in the search of necessary permits to act in the region, offer high positions in the company to the elite class. But in this case there is a further ingredient added to the control of power in the region: paramilitary groups who offer their "services" to gain control over territories. A death alliance is sealed in the middle of an incommensurable increase in coal extraction in the department.

The sad result is that death alliances for resources wealth control are only part of the patterns that will continue repeating in the country.

## 5 Connections between findings

### 5.1 In-between accumulation and violence

Is clear that international politics and global economic patterns influenced installation of agricultural as well as mining 'Extraction Enclaves' in Latin American continent, creating a pattern that has been repeated for centuries. America was the 'Eldorado' (golden treasure), the promised land and the disputed territory; but above all was supplier of all needs of the 'old continent'. Colombia as part of imaginary is not the exception as has been shown on the present historical comparative analysis.

In the cases analysed, prevailing modes of accumulation affected definitely the interaction of installed companies that performed the productive processes. Control and access over natural resources emerged from preexisting social patterns that favored certain modes of violence differently exercised according to the historic moment that was happening.

Violence was cause and effect of the processes above described. It is something that can hardly be understood without the complete historic recount of the facts. For that purpose the great similarity as well as the differences are summarized in the following table that will make a precise approach for final assessment of the present research.

#### *Summary of similarities*

1900	2000
Patterns and Regimes of accumulation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From a simple merchant economy to industrial development of a Banana enclave.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From large scale monocultures (cotton, rice, palm oil) and cattle ranching to large scale industrial mining.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Florescence of liberal political and economic tendencies which influenced the so called Banana Republics in Latin American.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maximum expansion of neoliberal political-economic model influencing various Latin American countries.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Colombian government creates tax exemption for the new establishing banana industrial plantations for 20 years (1909-1929).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Colombian government facilitates investment of foreign capitals in mining sector since 1976 and sealed new conditions on the Mining code of 2001.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Large investments infrastructure performed by the company and concession granted by the government.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Large investments infrastructure performed by the company and concession granted by the government.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land accumulation to expand the business.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land accumulation to expand the business.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deficiency in boundaries clarification</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deficiency in boundaries</li></ul>

between private and public lands.	clarification between public, private lands as well as protected areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property over terrains only clarified under pressures of political and economic local powers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property over terrains only clarified under pressures of political and economic local powers supported by paramilitary groups and legalized by central government authorities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exponential increase in production and exports favored by government.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exponential increase in production and exports favored by government.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in production meant a great migration of newcomers and the uncontrolled expansion of agriculture frontier.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in production meant the depletion of existing agriculture zones by contamination resulting of coal extraction.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control over resources causes great damages on nature: expansion of agricultural frontier, deviation of rivers, contamination of water sources with drained water, large extensions with monoculture that at the end caused sterility of soils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control over resources causes great damages on nature: deviation of rivers, contamination of water, air and soils resulting from coal transport, depletion of fisheries, sterilization of soils, auditive contamination, irreversible loss of species, human and animal health diseases causing death and incurable diseases.</li> </ul>
<b>Forms of access and control over resources</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land rush is unleashed generating tensions at different levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land rush is unleashed generating tensions at different levels</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displaced communities, frictions between settlers and the company and between large scale producers and small scale peasants.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displaced communities, frictions between settlers and the company and between large scale producers and small scale peasants.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peasants displaced and dispossessed by government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peasants displaced by paramilitary and dispossessed later by government.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Companies adapted to existing social relations of production and social fields of power in their favor. For UFC meant interaction with local elites to exercise power.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Companies adapted to existing social relations of production and social fields of power in their favor. For Drummond was a multiple action with local elites and paramilitary groups</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local elites offered their political power to influence central government's policies in favor of UFC that benefited the expansion of the company.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company gets political influence of political elites, to access to central bureaucratic control. Control is supported by paramilitary groups that help get control of the region.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imbalance in relations of UFC with different social groups creates tensions and reactions of organized social movements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terror does not favor the generation of local reactions and organized social movements.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violations of the existing labour law. Extreme long working hours no social security, poor sanitary conditions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violations of labour law. More than 4.500 work accidents. Company not responding.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Force to is used by Army and Police responding to local and central political powers supporting UFC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Force is used by private armies at the service of political and economic powers interested in the benefits (financial and administrative) of Drummond multinational.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An undetermined number of deaths during the strike of November and December 1928 against the UFCo. Thousands of peasants forcibly displaced from their lands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 trade union leaders of Drummond killed and more than 600 peasants assassinated. Thousands more peasants displaced and dispossessed from their lands where now mine and railway are.</li> </ul>
<b>Actors</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small scale peasants were mostly immigrants to the region attracted by possibilities of banana growing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small scale peasants that resettled in vacant or semi-abandoned lands after the cotton crisis.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage labourers were mainly immigrants from other partes of the country in search of better salaries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage labourers mostly came from cotton crisis and worked later at the mines.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landowners and regional elites with political influence at a central level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landowners and regional elites interconnected with paramilitary groups and influence on central government.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political parties (Conservative, liberal and Revolutionary Unitary Party)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservative, liberal, polo democrático and new emerging parties in the region (ALAS from Araujo family, MIRA cristian religious party, Nuevo Partido, Colombia Democrática, Colombia viva)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caciques and Gamonals that exercise political and economic power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caciques and Gamonals that exercise political and economic power</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bureaucrats that keep local power and share it with their relatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bureaucrats that keep local or national power and share it with their relatives.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Army and Police</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Army, Police, Armed groups (Guerilla, Paramilitary)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central government /Institutions influenced only at certain point by the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central government/Institutions strongly influenced by regional political powers.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporations (United Fruit Co.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporations (Carbones de la Jagua, Consorcio Minero Unido, Carbones del Tesoro, Sororia - Drummond (Cerro Largo), Norcarbón S.A., Carbones del Caribe S.A., C.I Prodeco/Glencore (Calenturitas and</li> </ul>

	La Jagua), Drummond (La Loma and El Descanso), Emcarbón, Vale Coal (El Hatillo) and Carbones del Cesar (La Francia)
• Trade unions and unions of peasants in the region.	• Social movements (trade unions, opositors of large scale mining, defenders of human rights)
• Media (especially central country's press)	• Media (official and alternative media, persecuted journalists and renowned columns writers).

Interconnections between two moments in time are visible. Same patterns are repeated, same social relations of production and social fields of power are shared. Results are different but intrinsically interconnected. For reasons of space they can be found in Appendices 6. Nevertheless we will make further analysis through tree perspectives: solitude, accumulation and violence.

## 5.2 Solitude accumulation and violence: factors that explain the cause and effect of violence

### *Solitude or the process of isolation*

The analyzed natural resource wealthy region was converted into extraction enclave since the foundation of the port of Santa Marta in 1525. The territory gained importance nationally and internationally only on behalf of a possibility of extraction of natural resources. It was abandoned by Spanish at the impossibility to find gold nearby. Later the story was repeated when elites of the region kept their large properties semi-abandoned during most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to lack of opportunities or financial capital for industrial agriculture.

‘Magdalena Grande’ was barely articulated to nation falling behind of development for centuries. Its image of ‘wild territory’ with difficult access during colonial and republic times, due to exuberant forests and savage indigenous communities was one of the reasons for isolation. Territory was as inaccessible as described by García Marquez. Population hardly got contact to current ‘civilization’ discoveries like ice, as recounted also by people of the region at banana times. Only ‘civilization’ that reaches the zone is brought by the UFC building infrastructure as part of its own expansive capitalistic project. This proof of ‘progress’ is seen by the community as a representation of a state that never showed up, but to set policies of extraction and control any resistance. As in many states of ‘Global South’ the absence of central government’s presence creates a parallel territorial power that nurtures on the accumulation of capitals under the mission of a supposed development that never comes to the region.

Later isolation becomes an excuse to keep control over natural resources of hegemonic local powers that exploited and benefited from them. UFC

becomes ruler and controller of the region. It is helped by political elites and bureaucracies that at the end benefited from UFC power. Profit was only for few and rest of population had to suffer the harsh conditions of a tropical zone, full of diseases and with scarce presence of institutionalism that could support their basic needs. The solitude is also complicit of distorted images present by Army and Minister of War in the days before massacre of 1928 (See Appendices 3).

Separation of Cesar from 'Magdalena Grande' results also in solitude to cover the control of financial returns from cotton. The isolation is used later by local elites to benefit from coal extraction by benefiting from violent power of paramilitary. Isolation is also the mean to keep impunity in the dispossession of peasants from their lands, in violent and corrupt methods to protect prevailing capital and distance of possibilities of justice.

Patterns of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have barely changed. Isolation keeps the region behind from development for even a longer period as in the banana zone. Even results of coal mining are not enough encouraging as shows the analysis by Guillermo Rudas; poverty indicators are even worse than in non-mining municipalities and departments. Economy of coal mining has brought some job to the region, but the effects of communities' displacements and increase in the prices in the region, accompanied by a rampant corruption has same effect of other economies of enclave. Now departments of Magdalena and Cesar, as the rest of the Caribbean coast as well as other mining districts in the continent, are the regions with less access to basic infrastructure, higher child mortality and unsatisfied basic needs. Almost five centuries after the conquest of these territories the structure of feudal power of landlords over peasant population remains similar.

Isolation is also manifested in the ease of companies to alter nature. The absence of institutionalism responsible to keep ecosystems and maintain the sustainability of natural resources is causing a complete environmental disaster. Environment was left alone and helpless to the immense power of capital. It had to face the solitude of self defense of political and economical decisions of society. Institutions that were created to protect the interest of natural resources were unable to respond to the increasing demand of mining sector and are scarcely articulated with mining process. So environment is left alone; far away from the speech of Colombian government in international environmental summits and conferences. Isolation brings another solitude, the one of the dessert in which the region is converted.

Meanwhile they exercise power by means of violence is only possible as result of criminal practices that are not easy to realize for the solitude of the grievances of small peasants and workers that are violently dispossessed and violently deprived of health and basic leaving conditions. The deadly alliance with paramilitary was performed in complicity with solitude and abandonment faced by communities in search of development that never arrives. Solitude is the curtain used to keep region apart from the world's sight to perform the process of accumulation and the use of violence, leaving it behind from development.

### ***Accumulation of wealth and power***

As David Harvey says Capital is inevitably expansionary and it is the pattern repeated the Sierra Nevada of Santa Marta Valley where frontier of nature is trespassed further and further transforming a region once wealthy in natural resources in an almost deserted zone. Expansion of capitals brought an apparent development to a region that at the end practically disappears mired in poverty. When UFC left the region after 60 years of capital's intense accumulation the soils were left exhausted by monoculture, the rivers deviated and a deep economic crisis was spread all over the region, with a useless infrastructure only serving extraction of resources from the region. This infrastructure is nevertheless used hundred years later in another process of concentration of assets: coal mining.

Entrance of UFC brought definite changes in the landscapes, land tenure and the privatization of large extensions of the territory, but also in the dispossession of many peasants and settlers, the loss of lands due to loans of the company and an increasing competition over land that only generated imbalances. Its sole purpose was the gathering of 60.000 hectares for banana production that at the end were invaded by peasant communities for food crops. The entrance of coal regime to the region also performed profound changes in land tenure and landscapes, by the commoditization of lands and forceful expulsion of peasants for the sake of industrial production; by the suppression of collective, common and state rights in favor of capital increase (Harvey, 2003). It is affecting ecosystems until such a level that at companies departure in about 30 years all ecosystems will be destroyed and the production of any kind of agriculture will almost be impossible as effect of patterns of accumulation of a globalized economy. Continuous industrial agriculture regimes that followed the Banana Regime only reinforced the process of accumulation of lands and dispossession of peasant communities. So shows Colombian GINI coefficient of Colombia, along with Brazil's and Guatemala the highest in the continent: 86 according to a UNDP report in 2011.

In Banana Empire accumulation led to violence as mean to maintain a political and economic power. One hundred years later violence generates accumulation or better violence is the preferred method to achieve capital accumulation. It is also the pattern followed by political power accumulation. In banana times as well as present coal regime pre-existing social, political and economic fields of powers are used by multinationals to influence social relations of production and to keep the status quo for accumulation. Paramilitary accumulation of power was sold to the highest bidder or those who could offer better compensations to the 'military machine': political or economical. So coal multinationals paid for 'protection' against an inexistent communist enemy with a facade in guerrilla terrorism, but in fact it was paying for the possibility to disappear opponents to his 'accumulative' control of territories and natural resources. Peasants who refuse to sell their lands, trade union leaders and academic researchers were killed by the 'lords of war' (Duncan, 2005) as opponents of an Accumulation Regime, and for the sake of these accumulative patterns.

### ***Violence: trademark of Colombia's power relations***

Violence started in Colombia since arrival of colonizers in 1499. Extraction patterns arrived from Europe in the ships that departed from America loaded of gold, silver and precious stones. Eduardo Galeano in his book *Open Veins of Latin America* describes the constant plundering of natural resources of the region by colonial empires and describes the poverty of men as result of wealth on earth. This is our constant course and result of hegemonic patterns of accumulation.

Violence is the preferred instrument to perform accumulation in our continent: dispossession, imbalance, injustice and inequality are some of the expressions. In Colombia the stories here analyzed are reflect of patterns intrinsically interconnected with accumulation and violence. Colombian history is a story of violent massacres or submissions of Indigenous communities, like the case of Casa Arana in the production of gum at the Amazon. It is also the story of Spanish prisoners and African slaves brought for forced labour for capital accumulation in mining and agriculture industries in the colonial times. Ports of Cartagena and Santa Marta, some of the principal ports of Spain during the colony, suffered repeated attacks (from English and Dutch pirates) to control wealth extracted from the continent.

Violence was also inflicted upon cultures and religions to erase any trace of local beliefs imposing Christianity as supreme belief. Cultural practices were destroyed and races were despised prevailing white race as the only capable of controlling power in the country. White men ruled so over indigenous, over African descendents and over mixed races. Even now people suspects of strangers or newcomers; at least of non-members of their own race, social group or political party. At UFC times: white conservative elites rejected newcomers 'mestizos' belonging to Liberal Party. Also Army acted against a communist enemy represented in wage labourers and peasant who claimed for their rights (a different way of thinking). The same happens at the control of the coal zone, where the peasants and trade union leaders are again equalled to supporters of guerrilla and terrorist to justify violent actions.

Finally violence is reproduced in nature as a constant transformation by the accumulative patterns. Gold, silver, emeralds, then oil, coal, later coltan and again gold are being extracted from Colombia. The same process was experienced in Perú, Bolivia, Chile or Ecuador, as well as Indonesia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Congo. Regions once wealthy in natural resources are elevated to the category of 'Extraction Enclaves' to be 'rescued from underdevelopment' and 'eradicate poverty'. In the region analyzed, one hundred years later the region is almost depleted and the same misery looms at every corner. Waters, soils and air are contaminated, agricultural frontier is expanded and accumulative patterns now threaten remaining 'protected areas' of the region (Isla Salamanca, Parque Tayrona, Sierra Nevada) to disappear.

Violence is manifested in the absence of the state to supervise the social welfare and preserve natural capital of the regions. It is also manifested in the prevalence of corruption in the legalization of lands to impostor claimants at the paramilitary forces service.



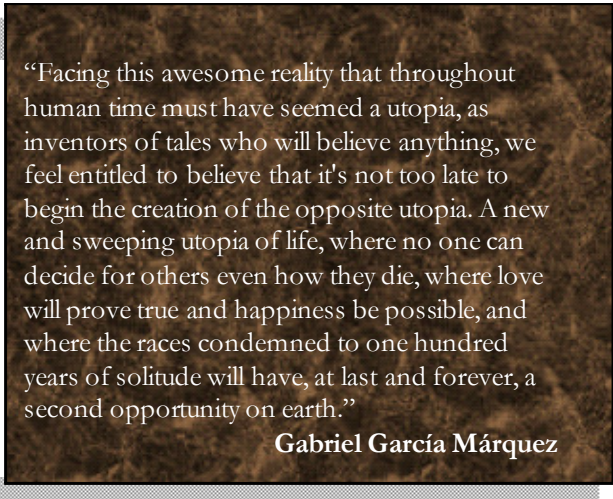
Violence is finally manifested in imbalance and injustice in the control over natural resources. Accumulation patterns prevail in the regions and power control over resources is more and more influenced by violence. In Banana Regime accumulation of capital and resources of UFC and elites led to violence by the efforts to maintain control of them. In Coal Regime violence led to accumulation, as manifestation of power of paramilitary to negotiate the territories with political and economic elites to get political and economic control and also for accumulation. In this second case is a pattern of accumulation for accumulation (of force, of lands, of political power, of capital, of resources control) and the mean used is violence.

## 6 Conclusions

Escobar's critique to Bruntland's understanding of Sustainable Development says that nature is reinvented as environment and it is capital, not nature or culture that is made sustainable (Escobar, 1996). A fallacy is created. Sustainability of nature is by this reasoning only possible in the perfect allocation of natural resources to reduce poverty.

This pattern of different discourse was followed many times by Latin America in depleting nature and ravaging culture. The result of alleviating poverty is not reached; instead patterns of accumulation of capital keep inflicting deep scars on the continent. Regions are being condemned to be developed by a system that is only bringing resources out but for many reasons not giving back any alleviation to the problem of poverty.

In the region analyzed the purpose of development was not reached either. Instead, a maddening game is repeated all over again. Accumulation leads to violence and violence leads to new accumulation. Both are closely linked. Accumulation is maintained by violence in the Banana Empire.



“Facing this awesome reality that throughout human time must have seemed a utopia, as inventors of tales who will believe anything, we feel entitled to believe that it's not too late to begin the creation of the opposite utopia. A new and sweeping utopia of life, where no one can decide for others even how they die, where love will prove true and happiness be possible, and where the races condemned to one hundred years of solitude will have, at last and forever, a second opportunity on earth.”

**Gabriel García Márquez**

Violence helps the purpose of accumulation in the Coal Empire. The fuel that keeps the wheel turning is power and control over natural resources. The wheel has been turning round and round since colonial times, and it is our duty as development connoisseurs to think about alternatives to bring a full stop to this wheel.

Gabriel García Márquez recounted in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in 1982 the extraordinary nature and unbelievable reality of Latin America that fuelled hallucinatory stories of the first conquerors. The mesmerized mind of the visitors raved for the stories of gold, precious stones, eternal youth and a haunting richness offered by this paradise called America. Delirium was replaced by greed, and avarice morphed into violence. It is a violence that has followed its inhabitants from Mexico to Patagonia, covering territories with war, blood, terror, refugees and grievances for oppression, looting and neglect of our peoples.

What is the hope of other regions in Colombia equally destined for “development,” like the Pacific Coast, the Central Region, or the Amazon? Is sustainable mining really possible as announced by present President Juan Manuel Santos during his intervention in Rio+20? A zone once wealthy in natural resources is almost turning into a lunar desert. What is the destiny of the departments of Vichada, Guainía and Vaupés (which are part of the Colombian Amazon), where large-scale mining concessions are being analyzed for “development”? One can imagine the result by seeing the impact of control processes over natural resources and accumulation patterns followed in the “Magdalena Grande.” Forests have to be torn down, and almost all biodiversity will be ravaged; roads and railways will be built impeding survival of ecosystems; rivers will be altered and diverted from their course, losing fisheries and livelihoods of indigenous communities; waters will be contaminated by production of mining and transport processes; and finally the region will be condemned again to the eternal solitude and persistent injustice in the Latin American continent. Desertification, corruption, power relations and violence are the only survivors of accumulation.

Violence is a cause and an effect of accumulation and the pre-existent social fields of power are accountable for the unfair responses of violent actors, more than a scarcity or abundance of natural resources.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

Many workers were affected by malaria, yellow fever and dysentery and it was calculated that almost 5% died from these and other tropic diseases. Port loaders had to wait sometimes 24 hours without sleeping for the next ship to be loaded and plantation workers had to receive only seasonal payment with no Sunday or holiday payment (White, 1978, p. 50).

### Appendix 2

The case of 'Las Flores' in 1927 (White, 1978, p. 62) that was reflected in local and national newspapers as: 'United Fruit operates in areas of the nation to grab them'<sup>17</sup>. Thus the 'Vacant Lands' Commission started an investigation that resulted in the complaint mentioned in the previous section of 32.000 hectares of the nation in hands of the UFC.

### Appendix 3

What were the facts behind this event? How could governmental authorities commit such disproportioned force act?

'Memory is just the representation of the past events. ... Always past will be remembered with attributing meaning of what happened; even principal protagonists of the facts will remember the events from the eyes of their own interests that reflect their position in the contradictory account of the facts' (Archila, 2008, p. 147).

Is complicated to understand what exactly led to the direct violence in this case, mostly when the country's memory tries always to consider the facts as a fiction constructed for literary purposes by García Marquez.

Demands asked by the worker's trade union were simply compliance of Colombian Labor Law<sup>18</sup>. It was not a call for a socialist revolution or the overthrow of the government as some groups pretended later. The first impressions of local authorities demonstrated the legal and peaceful nature of the strike. It was the UFC which declared the illegality of the strike, sending a telegram to the President adducing the imminent danger of a 'mutiny' (White, 1978, p. 91) Although the Ministry of Industries and the Trade Union settled a previous agreement on the three first points of the list of demands, the company refused to sign and even to accept the mediation of the Governor or even General Cortés Vargas, designed by the Ministry of War to control the strike (White, 1978) (Archila, 2008).

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<sup>17</sup> El Tiempo newspaper, January 19, 1928.

<sup>18</sup> The list of demands of the workers of the UFC included 9 points: 1. setting of collective insurance 2. Protection for work accidents 3. Compliance with national laws on labour rooms, social hygiene and public assistance and remunerated dominical rest. 4. 50% Raise in salaries 5. Suppression of the Commissariat Stores and free trade in the zone 6. Elimination of loans through vouchers 7. Weekly payments 8. Setting of collective contracts 9. Hospitals per 400 workers and one doctor per 200 workers.

Ministry of Industries was withdrawn from the strike management and the Ministry of War assumed the mission; at that moment information vision started to come from the military side (Archila, 2008). This had an implication hence the Minister of War, Ignacio Rengifo, alerted this year repeatedly to President Miguel Abadía Méndez (1926-1930) that the Communist Bolshevik revolution had the intention to take the power of Colombia. It was unleashed a persecution against everything that meant left in the country and the 'Heroic Law' was settled to silence every information attempt from the left party. Americans shared that same perspective as they had experienced in their country a similar wave of persecutions against possible communists and anarchist in 1919 and 1920 called the 'Red Terror' (Viloria, 2009) and so American newspaper like the New York Times spoke on December 6, 1928 about a 'Guerrilla Warfare' instead of a strike demanding labor rights in the Banana Zone of Magdalena (Archila, 2008, p. 161).

For Minister Rengifo and General Cortés Vargas insurrection of workers and aggressive reaction of the strikers was a reality. Although General Cortés Vargas recognizes in a communication days before the massacre that the strikers 'didn't have intention to attack', Minister Rengifo continues to release news about the railway blockades, assaults on UFC buildings, sabotage to telephone and telegraph lines and armed skirmishes, even denominating 'guerrilla' to the strikers in a clear form of constructing an enemy assigning it a more violent character than what it had (Archila, 2008, p. 161). It is sadly sort of what happens today in Colombia that every claim of rights of the deprived population (indigenous peoples, small scale peasants, displaced communities) are denominated 'guerrilla' by the government building a created enemy's image as will show later some of the testimonies of the paramilitary leaders.

Nevertheless communications of the Socialist Revolutionary Party and other left movements revealed that later was considered a possible insurrection. But at the beginning the demonstration was a simple attempt to claim for Labor Rights, so the 'machetes' used were for self-defense of. Main line of action was a civil resistance and not an armed uprising or guerrilla warfare like the Ministry of War tried to show (Archila, 2008, p. 158). But the perceived by Cortés and Rengifo most dangerous angle was not that the protesters were armed, but the sympathy and fellowship that they managed with the troops designated to the zone. For General Cortés Vargas demonstrators didn't 'recognize authority' and therefore soldiers would not be respected as representatives of control of the country (Archila, 2008, p. 162).

An additional ingredient was added to threaten of both sides: government and strikers. Information of a possible invasion of the United States to protect their citizens and the specter of the previous struggle for Panama, put both sides under alert. So would be told later by Cortés Vargas in his book and by Jorge Eliecer Gaitán<sup>19</sup> in his defense on the congress of the prisoners of the massacre in 1929 (Gaitán, 1988).

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<sup>19</sup> Leader of the deprived groups and defender of the prisoners of the massacre; *Liberal who became the outstanding Colombian populist, a leading protagonist in the politics of the country* (Posada-Carbó, 1998, p. 400); killed in 1948.

The night of the massacre the multitude was expecting the visit of the Governor who never appeared, so the men, women and even children standing that night at the Cienaga square were not at all ready for an armed confrontation with some 'machetes' that they brought ready only to speak with the authorities (White, 1978, p. 97).

What happened later were different versions that were shortened or extended according to the side that they were coming. The first information of the Ministry of War spoke about eight dead persons. With the time the figures changed. Versions of the American Ambassador Caffrey reported 100 deaths initially and then between 500 and 600. Later representatives of the Socialist Party would elevate the deaths to 1004 and the wounded more than 3.000. They sustained that the troops had followed those fleeing and killed them, throwing the bodies to the sea (Archila, 2008). In any case what followed here could be what Posada-Carbó denominates in his article 'Conspiracy of Silence (Posada-Carbó, 1998)', an attempt to erase from the memory the horror of the facts (Archila, 2008).

What is more surprising is the impunity that followed. Although the imprisoned were released after the defense performed on the Congress by Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in September 1929 (Gaitán, 1988), the army was never prosecuted by the crimes and General Cortés Vargas was promoted by Minister Ignacio Rengifo. United Fruit Company continued the accumulation process in the region, though with less intensity not because of the demands of the workers not satisfied after the night of the massacre, but because the conditions dictated by the 'invisible hand' of the international markets. They left the region in the 1960s to install in another extraction enclave: the Antioquian Uraba. Magdalena region was plunged into a deep economic crisis in the 1960s, in which most of the lands were left abandoned and invaded in the following years by new settlers. Agriculture frontier was expanded in the 30s, 40s and 50s more and more to the south of 'Magdalena Grande' where new plantations of rice and cotton were established. In the 1960 a new boom was generated causing political and economic powers to declare separation from the Magdalena Grande department. Three new departments were created in 1967: Magdalena, Cesar and La Guajira.

#### **Appendix 4**

As an example community of Michoacán, settlers who came from other regions at the middle of the 1990s searching for possibilities of livelihoods for their families were object of threats between 1999 and 2003. Selective killings were suffered by leaders of the community that refused to abandon their lands received from the government in 1997 as process of land reform. Displacement of the rest of the community occurred in 2004. The ownership of their lands was reversed by Incoder in 2007 alleging abandonment of the settlers. Some other parcels apparently were sold with false property conveyances as shows the signature of some of the peasants after their own death (Verdad Abierta, 2010).



These facts can be connected with the declaration of Alcides Mattos Tabares, Alias El Samario, one of the leaders of the North Block of the AUC after his trial in the process of Justice and Peace in November 2009.

"All this (displacement) is performed for the lands, which are rich in coal, this generates a lot of money, from there comes all this displacement. A conflicting land is worthless, where there are dead, displaced, one could buy a hectare of land for \$150.000 pesos" (Verdad Abierta, 2010).

## **Appendix 5**

Declaration of Libardo Duarte, alias BamBam, declared in an interview in January 2012 that was later presented to courts in Alabama, United States, that Drummond was paying his group of paramilitaries for "security." He also affirmed that peasants who refused to sell their land were murdered. Now the area is crossed by a new railway constructed by the company. Duarte specified that he met repeatedly with senior officials of the company like Mike Tracy (now responsible for mining operations, engineering, mineral property development, oil and gas development, and other administrative functions (Drummond Ltd. Colombia, 2012), Alfredo Araujo (Manager of Community Relations) and Jaime Blanco Maya, who would act as intermediary for payments (Verdad Abierta, 2012).

## **Appendix 6**

### ***Summary of interconnections***

#### **From International to National**

##### **Patterns and Regimes of Accumulation**

1. International politics influenced installation of Banana and Coal regimes. In both cases particular economic interests in the local predisposed Colombian politics to act in favor of multinational companies. Nevertheless in the present mining process is undeniable the influence of multilateral organizations in the structural changes performed in economic policies to favor large scale mining investment.
2. Policies to encourage foreign investment were established with a promise for development of the region and the country in the long run. In the case of Banana Empire the promise was never fulfilled. In the case of coal mining 20 years after starting the results are worse conditions for
3. In both cases generalized economical crisis in the country is taken as main justification to start structural process of change the establishment of extraction enclaves.
4. In both cases the crisis was followed by an authoritarian president that extended his government period.
5. In both cases companies got the control of transport infrastructure especially railway and ports of the region. Although during the Banana regime the train was used not only to extract the product from the region

but to bring multiple benefits to the people of the region, now infrastructure of ports and railway service are only for the mining extraction companies. Locals only receive the consequences of environmental deterioration resulting from the mineral transport.

## **From National to regional and Viceversa**

### **Forms of Access and Control over resources**

6. In both cases consequences of displacement were never contemplated by government, which never planned a resettlement process.
7. Tensions were handled differently at each time. At the banana zone settlers were evicted by the action of the police in the coal zone settlers were displaced by force of paramilitary actions.
8. The increase in production is accompanied with increase in discontent of inhabitants of the region.
9. The lack of boundaries clarification was used by power groups to capture large extensions of land. Hundred years after the banana empire the rural boundaries, and borders to protected areas are still unclear favoring the dispossession of rural communities.
10. In both cases exercise of power was managed conveniently by multinational for the land appropriation as well as for control of the means of production. Government acted in an absent way by not protecting population entitlements for land, health, healthy environment
11. In both cases the companies adapted to existing social relations of production and social fields of power in their favor.
12. The imbalance in relations created by the UFC generated reactions of the deprived groups: liberal party medium scale producers, small scale peasants and workers. The company took advantage of this to divide the groups and maintain the power.

## **Actors involved that prevail over the years**

### **Regional Elites**

Families belonging to the traditional elite of the region controlled the arable lands and means of production of the region of Magdalena since the colonization of this region and managed to influence the politics of the central government that could benefit them.

This has been a pattern in many regions of Colombia. Local large scale landowners associated with the international or national investors offering them political influence with the central government. In turn, the multinational companies would favor them by buying their lands to higher prices than the regional markets to have capacity of negotiation and pressure to the local or national government (Viloria, 2009, p. 26). That is exactly the same pattern followed today by the extractive multinationals present in the country.

## **United Fruit Company**

A local business converts into a regional empire that affected life of thousands of workers and banana growers in a dozen of Latin American countries. It has symbolized for years the rise and expansion of a capital empire in raw materials producing countries.

## **Governmental authorities**

### Central government

The most important president periods analyzed here are from Rafael Reyes (1904-1909) and Miguel Abadía Méndez (1926-1930) who set two important moments in the banana expansion: the governmental support for international investment of Reyes, and the violent response to the strike of 1928 by Abadía Méndez.

For some, the President Rafael Reyes used his land allocation policy as a strategy of political patronage to benefit some of his former comrades in arms of the Thousand Days' War and personal friends (Viloria, 2009, pp. 32-33). So he was personally benefited by the banana expansion as show the investments performed by a company from which he was one of the partners (Viloria, 2009).

Under President Abadía Méndez was unleashed a persecution of the left party by the 'Heroic Law'. His strong response to the Banana Strike weakened not only his power but also the power of the conservative party ruling the state for thirty years.

### Regional Authorities

Is important to underline how political power was in the hands of the same families that had the economical power in the region. This fact made them be able to create a joint venture that benefited them in the business and the UFC in obtaining necessary favors of the local and regional authorities. These authorities also suppose the 'Caciques and Gamonales' described by Jorge Orlando Melo in his article 'Caciques y gamonales: Perfil político' where he describe 'the rich men of little regions, owner of the most valuable lands, who dominates without rival the political sphere of the region corrupting and distorting the citizens participation in electoral matters' (Melo, 1988). This local power had extreme importance for the national political power in the moment of elections, so for the national politicians has been tradition to concede favors in exchange for the political support of the region.