

## Introduction

This paper is based on a six months consultancy I carried out in Colombia between March and September 2012. Two outcomes came out of it: first, a socio-political mapping of the county of Huila; where the aim was to understand the political and social setting in which an oil company was carrying out exploration and production activities. Second, a model of intervention for the county of Caquetá; the goal was to offer to the same oil company a new set of guidelines to reach what we called ‘social licence’. The consultancy was structured into two phases. Between March and May I visited Neiva, the largest city in Huila, and Gigante and Garzón, the two towns in which the oil company’s wells were situated and in which the Colombian Government had given permission to construct five new multi-well platforms. From July to August I visited Caquetá. I spent a week in Florencia, Caquetá’s largest city and travelled to San Vicente del Caguán, a town in the northern part of the county in which the oil company had started production since 2010. Based on these two field visits a multidisciplinary team of four people produced two reports, which offered a historical analysis of socio-political structures and a set of recommendations for the company to start a new model of interaction in the region.

This paper seeks to criticise the common drama circulated amongst Colombian scholars, social activist and politicians that oil producing regions are dominated by a ‘Dracula-style dynamic’ in which the oil companies take advantage of powerless populations in order to drain the region from its natural resources. These regions are far more complex scenarios in which transnational networks circulate emotions and narratives, which not only empower populations and limit oil companies’ ‘way of doing things’, but also shape the ‘transactions’ between oil companies and local actors resulting in what I would call an ‘ambiguous mutual utilitarianism’.

The paper is divided into three parts. In the first part I offer an emotional international political view of the link between oil, insurgency and development in the region where I carried out the fieldwork. The second part problematizes this view by offering an affective geopolitical analysis. In the final part, I draw the theoretical tool underpinning such a geopolitical analysis, what I call a geo-political affective dispositif.

## The Emotional International Politics of Caquetá

Caquetá and Meta have been constant referent objects in conflict resolution studies since the infamous 1998-2002 peace talks between the Pastrana administration and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC).<sup>1</sup> The cornerstone of the talks was the agreement that FARC was to have the "effective control of a Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) the size of Switzerland".<sup>2</sup> Five municipalities were part of the 42,000 Km of the DMZ, four of them in Meta (La Uribe, Mesetas, Vista Hermosa, and La Macarena) and one in Caquetá (San Vicente del Caguán). According to Carroll (2011), this region had been a FARC's stronghold since 1964.

After three years of negotiations the Colombian Army (COLAR) was finally given the order to take over the DMZ. Pastrana listed kidnappings, drug trafficking, and extra-judicial killings, as the main reasons why he, Colombia and the International Community had been fooled by FARC.<sup>3</sup>

Last February, the Mayor of San Vicente del Caguán Domingo Perez and President of Colombia Juan Manuel Santos separately organised events to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of end of the DMZ. Perez's public event sought to make visible the violence suffered by the inhabitants, which according to him is related to the stereotype of San Vicente

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<sup>1</sup> Chandra Lenkha Sriam...

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/feb/23/colombia.usa> (retrieved 27 Nov 2010)

<sup>3</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/latin\\_america/newsid\\_1760000/1760972.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/latin_america/newsid_1760000/1760972.stm) (retrieved 27 Nov 2012)

as a guerrilla-town.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, Santos organized a, privately held, Council of Ministers to “demonstrate that the state would never again abandon San Vicente and thereby the suffering during the DMZ would never be experienced again”.<sup>5</sup>

Whereas Perez and the Governor of Caquetá were invited to the second part of the private Council of Ministers, the key participants of the public event were ONGs and social movements. Although marginal compared with other regions (i.e., Santander and Arauca), some global and national NGOs had started engaging with grassroots organizations; thus consolidating an evolving network campaigning for human rights, at the centre of which was the organisation called Caguán Vive. Caguán Vive was at first a human rights platform created by campesino social movements that have traditionally organised political and economic affairs in San Vicente. It later took a life of its own and became a central part of the political coalition that brought Perez to power. Since 2006, Caguan Vive has not only campaigned against COLAR involvement in human rights violations, but also against the presence of Multinational Companies (MNC) in the region. Two MNCs were very visible in the region, the oil company Emerald Energy and Nestlé that buys 80% of the milk production.

In 2009, the Uribe administration gave Emerald Energy (then a British private company today Chinese state owned), the right to set up various wells around Los Pozos. Los Pozos is a village of about 500 people and 29 km away from San Vicente. The village has also been part of the emotional international politics of the Pastrana-FARC peace talks, for it was in Los Pozos that a new building was constructed to hold the negotiations and host the national and international visitors that made their way to San Vicente.<sup>6</sup> Against a script linking Los

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ellider.com.co/2012/02/17/%E2%80%9Cqueremos-que-nos-vean-con-otros-ojos%E2%80%9D-domingo-perez/> (retrieved 27 Nov 2012)

<sup>5</sup> [http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2012/Febrero/Paginas/20120222\\_08.aspx](http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2012/Febrero/Paginas/20120222_08.aspx) (retrieved 27 Nov 2012)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cromos.com.co/personajes/actualidad/articulo-143505-farc-no-se-han-ido-de-san-vicente> (retrieved 27 Nov 2012)

Pozos to FARC, Santos offered through the Council of Ministers a new script linking Los Pozos to oil and progress.

Both scripts condense the contested views that are part of the emotional international politics in which San Vicente is framed. Caquetá, being the geographical region in which San Vicente is located, is usually referred to as a FARC stronghold. For some, it is an alternative model of state making (Hough, 2011), whereas for others it demonstrates that Colombia is, or at least, was a failed state (Milliken & Krause, 2002). The national media constantly shifts in its portrayal of Caquetá from a stateless county to a county recovering from the effects of the DMZ.<sup>7</sup> Nowadays, some global NGOs list the county as one doomed by natural resources.<sup>8</sup> Such resources, which have brought MNCs into the area, are targeted by FARC and thus have increased the sense of insecurity. According to this account, this insecurity is not compensated by social investment in the region.<sup>9</sup> On the contrary, MNCs have destroyed the roads in which oil is transported and have diverted the normal track of underground rivers having a negative impact on the environment and the social conditions of the inhabitants.<sup>10</sup>

The Santos administration, however, considers Caquetá as a window of opportunity to economic growth. This view is shared by consultancy companies working closely with the oil industry. According to this line of thought, FARC is a risk-factor to be managed through the appeasement of social movements, which they see as closely linked to FARC. Therefore, in order to deal with the MNCs' security concerns, Santos has opted for a mixed strategy: a military build-up and social investment through the Unidad Administrativa de Consolidación Territorial (Territorial Consolidation Office, hereby TCO). Yet the emphasis has been placed on a hard security approach. Back in June, for instance, it was made public that two new

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<sup>7</sup> <http://m.semana.com/nacion/diez-anos-del-caguan/172345-3.aspx> (retrieved 27 Nov 2012)

<sup>8</sup> For the latest ABC's report on mining in Colombia see: [http://www.abcolombia.org.uk/downloads/Giving\\_it\\_Away\\_mining\\_report\\_ABColombia.pdf](http://www.abcolombia.org.uk/downloads/Giving_it_Away_mining_report_ABColombia.pdf) (retrieved 28 Nov 2012)

<sup>9</sup> <http://m.semana.com/nacion/diez-anos-del-caguan/172345-3.aspx> (retrieved 27 Nov 2012)

<sup>10</sup> Personal interviews with campesino social movements' leaders (19 Jul 2012)

battalions were to be created in the county.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the mega-infrastructure projects at the top of the government agenda are not necessary linked with improving conditions for campesinos to sell their produce but rather with the mobility of the troops in the region.

I would like to suggest three possible emotional international political analyses of Caquetá. An emotional realist analysis along the lines of Crawford (2000) will look at the success of the last two administrations in the active push against FARC. It will emphasise the on-going suffering of civilians in the region thanks to FARC terrorist attacks against MNCs. Furthermore, it calls for increasing solidarity with the Colombian government and will strongly criticise FARC's international connexion with Chavez. This line of thought, will be constantly concerned with the fear of Colombia becoming a failed state and the spill over effect it could have in the region. Trapped in this security dilemma, the partnership between Colombia and the United States (US) becomes a crucial element to establish a secure environment in a region constantly hostile to the national interest of neoliberal economic elites.

An emotional liberal analysis along the lines of Lebow (2005) will suggest that the work of global NGOs promoting human rights has been key in halting the targeting of civilians. Moreover, it will focus on demonstrating how by empowering communities and pushing for accountability mechanisms democratic institutions have been strengthened. This analysis would suggest the importance of empathy with civilians by local governments', MNCs', and the International Community. Therefore, as the escalation of the conflict between FARC and COLAR would be seen a threat to human security, the presence of INGOs and NGOs in the region are key to ensure a constructive environment.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.ellider.com.co/2012/06/16/caqueta-tendra-dos-nuevos-batallones/> (27 Nov 2012)

Contrary to realist and liberal emotional view, a critical emotional analysis along the lines of Fattah and Fierke (2009) will focus on the ways in which the US war on terror polarised the region. A critical emotional analysis show that because of the labelling of FARC as a terrorist organization, the George W. Bush administration contributed to radicalization of larger sectors of Colombian society. FARC's push against Bush's anti-terrorist empire therefore found echo in the strong opposition to economic neoliberalism amongst some social movements, which under the Obama administration have become increasingly more important. This line of argumentation would suggest that the recognition of alternative economic models and the respect for the cultural heritage of these communities should be the core of an international politics of dignity.

To sum up, the complex issues linking Caquetá to international politics could be discussed through realist, liberal and critical emotional lenses. A critical emotional analysis offers a comprehensive account to understand how insurgency in the county is linked to geopolitical contexts; the liberal one offers a better glance in the links between a local institution-building process and global governance; and the realist one shows the link between the rationale of military elites and the interest of MNCs. This picture of Caquetá, however, actually misses the contested geographies and the complex formation of collective identities. This is because an emotional international politics approach takes for granted the collectivisation of emotions. Therefore, the next section unveils the complex web of relations in which collective actors emerge and are transformed, concentrating on northern Caquetá.

### The Affective Geopolitics of San Vicente del Caguán

Caquetá's borders are not as clear-cut as the previous accounts suggest. In fact, the 14 km of border between Caquetá and Meta is in dispute. The Dispute Zone (DZ), as it is known, has been contested since 1959. However, the issue regained attention in 2006 when the Uribe

administration gave licence to Emerald Energy to explore for oil reserves in the region.<sup>12</sup> Although political elites of both counties contest the rights over the 5,500 square metres of the DZ, there has traditionally been a total disconnection between these regions and state regional institutions. In fact, the political and economic structures are outside the formal structure of the Colombian state.

A closer look at San Vicente del Caguán shows that the political division of the county based on the villages in which there is a representative of the state (a police inspector) does not account for the dense socio-political fabric that has brought communities together. Looking at *campesino* (peasant) organisations instead it is possible to understand how different villages are integrated. Although the *campesino* associations' dense socio-political fabric had been completely disregarded by previous administrations, the 2012-2015 Development Plan of San Vicente del Caguán highlights and is based on such socio-political fabric.<sup>13</sup> Local state institutions back up the alternative political division emerging from *campesino* associations because for the first time, since the mid-1980s, such organisations have a majority in San Vicente's municipal council and because Perez was elected on behalf of a leftist platform made of such organisations and the leftist Polo Democratic Party.

In this context, *campesino* associations are using the local state institutions to push their agenda in order to benefit their communities. Usually, when social movements appropriate the rationale of statecraft, political imposed borders are reified. However, in the case of La Asociación Campesina Ambiental de Lozada y Guayabero (ASCAL-G), the strategy has been quite the opposite thanks to the border dispute between Meta and Caquetá. Because of this formal disagreement, the San Juan de Lozada inhabitants can elect representatives to two municipalities (La Macarena –Meta and San Vicente del Caguán –Caquetá). Thus ASCAL-G

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-4540702> (retrieved 28 Nov 2012)

<sup>13</sup> The development plan is available online at: <http://sanvicentedelcaguan-caqueta.gov.co/planeacion.shtml?apc=plxx-1-&x=474> (retrieved 28 Nov 2012)

manages to get around the issue of being determined by the political structures of only one county. As ASCAL-G is part of the coalition of the Perez administration the links between San Vicente and ASCAL-G have been strengthened.

The human rights platform Caguán Vive and ASCAL-G have traditionally worked together. In fact, Caguán Vive was not the product of a global NGOs' crusade to set up human rights grassroots organisations. Rather, ASCAL-G, ASOREGIONAL and other campesino associations created it to make visible the human right violations in the region. Due to the strong presence of FARC in the region, COLAR counterinsurgency campaign had usually targeted social movements and campesino associations. For this reason, Caguán Vive's archives show that most cases of human rights violations are carried out by COLAR.<sup>14</sup>

Caguán Vive's human rights campaigning has not only been limited to civil and political rights, in recent years, the campaigning for economic and social rights has increasingly become a central part of the platform too. This decision is related to the campesino associations' opposition to the presence of MNCs in the region. Such opposition is not only based on environmental reasons, or because they fear that their traditional way of living will be changed, but mainly on the fear that they will lose their land. Peasants do not have property titles because they created the region by colonizing the internal frontier due to the failure of state-sponsored settlement schemes (Manshard & Morgan, 1988).

The Colombian state as a territorial entity that covers the area from the Amazon River in the South to the Guajira Peninsula in the North is only a desire in the mind of some economic, political, and social, networks (cf. Doty, 2000). Regions in which these networks have not managed to set up state institutions and bring COLAR to keep the population under control continue to escape the imagined geography of the Colombian state (cf. Said, 1995).

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<sup>14</sup> Personal Interview with a Caguán Vive Human Rights defender (19 Jul 2012)

Campesino associations additionally oppose the presence of COLAR, because they fear that the development they have achieved to satisfy basic needs, such as housing, water and sewage systems, education, and roads will be at risk in the crossfire between FARC and COLAR. Furthermore, their relationship with FARC is far more organic than with COLAR. Peasants and FARC share a long history, which goes back to what Ramirez (1981) call's "armed colonization". Moreover, during the DMZ FARC built up roads connecting various villages, this together with the work carried out by campesino associations accounts for more than 600 km of roads interconnecting the region.<sup>15</sup> Against the backdrop of this collective effort, some campesino leaders portray COLAR as an intruder.

The relationship between the campesino associations and the military does not mean that they do not call for the presence of the state. They do. However, their position is quite ambiguous. They would like the state to sponsor projects to build proper housing facilities, water and sewage systems, they also request public financial support to improve the roads, set up middle and long term productive projects, build hospitals, and to bring electricity to the villages. But campesino associations do not want the state to bring its institutional infrastructure, nor its political, judicial, and military institutions. They do distrust the state but do see it as a partner for their economic development.<sup>16</sup>

By contrast, and perhaps due to the influence of the Communist Party, campesino associations do not see MNCs as partners in development. They list environmental, social, economic, and political reasons for opposing their presence in the region. Water pollution and water loss are on top of the list. Regarding the economic impact, it is argued that the resources are taken away from the region leaving only poverty because the land becomes of no use. Moreover, MNCs change traditional economic activities for wage labour, bringing

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<sup>15</sup> Personal Interview with a Political Leader of Polo Democrático Alternativo in Caquetá (17 July 2012)

<sup>16</sup> Information drawn from a focus group carried out with 5 members of ASCAL-G (18 July 2012)

prostitution and changing social practices. Finally, regarding politics, they argue that MNC's presence goes against Colombia's sovereignty. Yet again this shows the ambiguous position vis-à-vis the state: in terms of the rule of law they challenge the state but in terms of an imagined Colombian motherland they defend its territory.

Although most campesino organisations share these criticisms, ASOREGIONAL seems to have moved away from such a stand. ASOREGIONAL brings settlers from Los Pozos and neighbouring villages together. For the last three years, campesino leaders have been dealing with the oil company in this area. Although there was a clear opposition to the presence of the company at the beginning, nowadays ASOREGIONAL has stopped campaigning.<sup>17</sup> ASCAL-G members have publicly said that some of its leaders have been working for the company. They talk about it as a negative shift going against the welfare of the community.

The reality nevertheless is more complex. According to regional sources, thanks to lobbying Emerald Energy, ASOREGIONAL managed to build up strong enough pressure to bring electricity to the town.<sup>18</sup> It is expected that the village will be interconnected to the national energy network by 2014. If this is the case, this would be a great step forward for a town in which, according to the aims of the Pastrana-FARC peace talks, the 'New Colombia' was going to be founded. Nowadays not even the building in which the 1999-2002 talks were held stands. Landmines surround the site, making it a no-go zone in the middle the town, 200 metres from a school. Moreover, FARC has attacked the place several times because the COLAR set up the temporary headquarters of a special task force and today Mobil Brigade N. 9 headquarters are nearby.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Personal interview with a community leader (19 July 2012)

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.ellider.com.co/2012/07/05/campesinos-ven-realidad-sueno-de-tener-energia-electrica/> (retrieved 28 Nov 2012)

<sup>19</sup> <http://m.eltiempo.com/colombia/otraszonas/farc-atac-antigua-sede-de-dilogos-de-paz-en-caquet/10945070> (28 Nov 2012)

FARC is an army style guerrilla organization (Gutiérrez Sanín & Giustozzi, 2010). The terrorist attacks against the oil company that stepped up from June 2011 to November 2012 (during which four Chinese were kidnapped and kept hostage)<sup>20</sup> were ordered by the Secretariat, the highest decision-making body within FARC made of seven Block commanders (Brittain, 2010). However, the attacks were carried out in a highly decentralised way. In Caquetá many different fronts operate, but Los Pozos has a dynamic of its own. The South Block is the structure under which the Fronts 14 and 15 operate, but the Columna Móvil Teofilo Forero (CMTF), which became FARC's special task force, and the East Block's Front 62 also operate (see Medina, 2011: 201, 264).

The relationship between FARC and the community varies. Although the military argue that in Lozada and Guayabero campesino associations are subordinated to FARC, it seems that the relationship between the organisations and FARC is based on a *mutual relative subordination*. FARC cannot impose a particular agenda on the campesino associations, nor can the campesino associations act without FARC's consent. But likewise, FARC cannot act unilaterally without consultation with the campesino associations. The complex way in which different actors sharing the same space interact, is what is usually simplified as FARC stronghold. For, of course, FARC military power is greater in this region, but this does not mean that there cannot be strong campesino movements that negotiate, discuss and implement with FARC and other actors in the region actions to improve the conditions of living of the inhabitants.

The campesino associations' and FARC's mutual relative subordination suggest that both ASOREGIONAL's and ASCAL-G's stand vis-à-vis the oil company in the region could be supported by FARC's different units, even though ASOREGIONAL goes against the vision

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.semana.com/nacion/quienes-cuatro-ciudadanos-chinos-liberados-farc/188491-3.aspx> (retrieved 28 Nov 2012)

of the Secretariat. To recognise the level of independence that these units have does not seek to reinforce the idea that FARC is fragmented. Rather, it seeks to open the door to discuss the importance of affect and emotions in the decision-making process. For as it is implicit throughout this section, people are affected by other people and the decisions they take, but they also affect others and the decisions they make. Before turning to the affective dispositif, a term I use to describe the mechanisms for the circulation of emotions, I outline the way how some private companies, MNCs and the Colombian state are inserted in this complex web of relations, connecting these 'local processes' with the unfolding geopolitics of the 'post-war on terror'.

The Santos administration has substantially shifted from the Uribe administration's foreign and domestic policy. It has rebuilt partnerships with Latin American countries and is addressing the unequal distribution of land in Colombia by passing the Victims and Land Restitution Law. Nevertheless, the focus on the 'Mining-Energy Locomotive', which became the pillar of Colombia's macro-economic model since the Uribe administration, has remained unchanged.<sup>21</sup>

It is in this context that Sinochem, the fourth largest Chinese company, bought Emerald Energy back in 2010 and Colombia became its entrance point to explore for oil in Latin American territories.<sup>22</sup> By the time the company was bought the Uribe administration had already granted permission to explore in San Vicente del Caguán. The change from being British-owned to Chinese-owned affected the communities' perception of the company as less community-friendly and more 'stingy'. In short, people in San Vicente del Caguán complain of the company's inward looking approach. China, which was once regarded as an

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<sup>21</sup> [http://www.peacebrigades.org/fileadmin/user\\_files/projects/colombia/files/colomPBIA/111203\\_mining\\_in\\_colombia\\_web.pdf](http://www.peacebrigades.org/fileadmin/user_files/projects/colombia/files/colomPBIA/111203_mining_in_colombia_web.pdf) (retrieved 28 Nov 2012)

<sup>22</sup> Personal communications with Emerald officers (March-August 2012)

example to follow by social movements and guerrilla groups, is now scripted as a ruthless player embodied in the practices of Emerald Energy.

The inward-looking approach was reinforced by the first Head Security Officer chosen by the company. Because of his military background, the security strategy relied exclusively on COLAR. By militarising the security strategy the company polarised social movements and campesino associations. Such a polarisation reinforced the importance of Caguán Vive as the platform to defend the human rights of San Vicente's socio-political fabric. Caguán Vive merged civil and political rights with economic and social rights in a local campaign that made visible the downside of an evolving 'military multinational complex.' Through staging roadblocks across San Vicente, social movements grabbed the attention of regional and national media making the link between oil production and human rights in the region part of a national drama.<sup>23</sup>

Alongside social mobilisation, FARC stepped up sabotage against the oil company. Snipers targeted oil tankers, improvised explosive devices were activated on the road between Los Pozos and Florencia, and armed attacks were carried out against the company's installations. The subsequent insecurity isolated the company from the local constituencies and created doubts within the company about their security strategy. As a result the line of management changed, precipitating the removal of the Head Security Officer. The Chinese managers were replaced by educated middle class Colombians who understood more the politics of dealing with the regional elites.

To replace the security strategy the new Colombian line of management hired a consultancy firm to draw a new 'model of interaction' with the communities in the region. The coincidental meeting between staff from the firm and local inhabitants from Caquetá

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.lanacion.com.co/2011/09/26/nuevo-ataque-a-caravana-petrolera/> (retrieved 28 Nov 2012)

provided greater access than the firm's previous engagement in the county. This opened, the otherwise, sealed door to social movements in San Vicente. As a result, the consultancy firm could offer reports that challenged the previous scripting of the region by Emerald Energy officers and offered alternative ways of engaging with communities' concerns. It is unlikely that the company will implement all the recommendations, because it is trapped in between following the global principles of corporate responsibility, the neoliberal principles of a Chinese state owned company and the institutional weaknesses of the Colombian state.

The Santos administration is committed to continue with the Uribe administration's attempt to monopolise the means of violence under the Colombian armed forces. In doing so, it has carried on building up the military. Alongside this however, Santos has also adopted a political strategy to end the armed conflict.<sup>24</sup> As a result, the Plan Consolidation with a strong military component has been transformed into a National Consolidation Strategy with a stronger social component.<sup>25</sup> Such a transformation has been taking place against a backdrop of the geopolitics of the post-war on terror. According to this geopolitical imagery, resilient states must be able to (1) control criminality within their borders; (2) play by the rules of electoral democracy, and (3) protect the civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights of imagined global liberal subjects against de-territorialised threats. Los Pozos, San Vicente del Caguán, and Caquetá become, in this context, key sites for the materialisation of the geopolitical project of a resilient Colombian state in a post-war on terror world.

To conclude, this section carried out an affective geopolitical analysis of San Vicente del Caguán. It did so by focusing on the contested geographies and the complex web of relations in which collective actors constantly emerged through affecting each other by, amongst other

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<sup>24</sup> For an analysis of how likely a negotiated solution of the armed conflict is see: Policy brief UCL

<sup>25</sup> Check consolidacion website.

processes, an unspoken circulation of emotions. I discuss next the mechanisms underpinning such a circulation.

### A Geopolitical Affective Dispositif

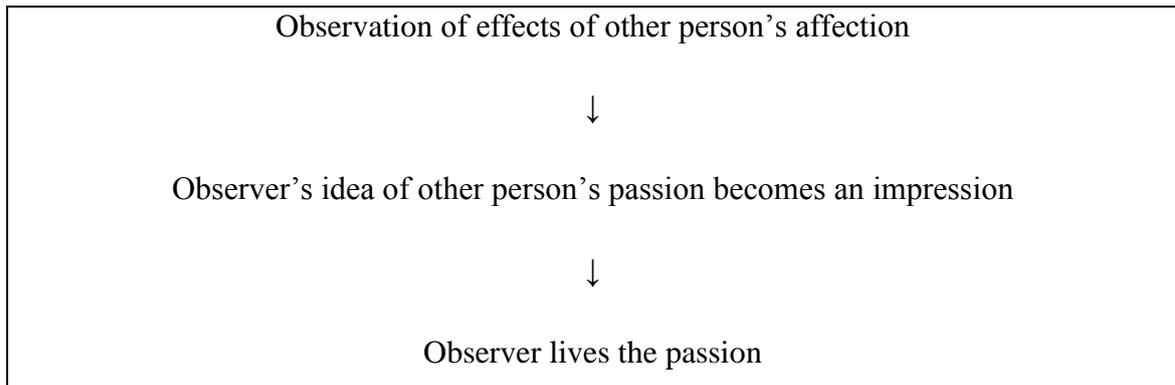
There is a main difference between an emotional international politics approach and affective geopolitics. The former focuses on explaining how collective subjective experiences, whether they are socially constructed or not, shape the world people live in (Crawford 2000; Fierke, 2004; Bleiker & Leet, 2006; Ross, 2006, 2010). The latter instead, concentrates on understanding how both the world people live in and collective subjective experiences emerge in tandem as a result of the body's capacity to affect and be affected (cf. Anderson, 2010).

As the previous section shows, affective geopolitics pays attention to the everyday life linking it with international representations and processes, for collective emotions emerge and are “experienced as simultaneously *both local and global*” (Pain 2009: 476). Although I discussed how the circulation of representations in San Vicente del Caguán unfolded alongside national and global processes, what the analysis misses is the pre/non-discursive mechanisms that make possible the collectivisation of emotions.

In order to explore the pre/non-discursive character of such mechanisms, it is worth recalling Brennan's words: “the transmission of affect was once common knowledge; the concept faded from the history of scientific explanation as the individual, especially the biologically determined individual, came to the fore” (2004: 2). According to her, the shift in the philosophy of science in the eighteenth century contributed to the decline of the concept. It is not coincidence then that I go back to this period to discuss the first pre/non-discursive mechanism for the transmission of emotions.

## Sympathy

David Hume's (1911) account of sympathy differs from the traditional understanding of sympathy as the product of voluntary empathy with other peoples' suffering. In his view sympathy operates as follows:



According to Hume's principle of sympathy, passions, such as sorrow or joy, increase in a given space-time in which individuals and groups interact. Since emotions are transferred between human beings, sympathy does not make a negative emotion to go away, but rather it makes it "more bearable although the emotion remains unabated" (Árdal, 1989: 55). Hume's principle of comparison, in contrast, explains why on some occasions the same emotion is not transferred. This accounts for anti-social tendencies, such as malice, which "involves joy at other people's misfortune rather than concern about their welfare" (Ibid.: 69).

Despite the fact that Hume offers a hint into the mechanisms of affect, which go beyond the subjective experience of emotions, his main emphasis on the association of ideas results in a representational account of passions that puts eloquence at the centre of the transfer of emotions. Therefore, Hume argues that sympathy "is nothing but the conversion of an idea into an impression by the force of imagination" (1911: 137).

Nevertheless, I borrow four elements from Hume's contribution to conceptualise sympathy as a mechanism for the transmission of emotions. First, sympathy is not another passion/emotion. Second, it is a mechanism for the transference of emotions that is not restricted to language. Third, eloquence is, however, an important element of sympathy, in particular when individuals and social groups existing in different places and times are connected. Fourth, the force of imagination plays a central role in sympathy.

In a nutshell, the mechanism of sympathy is different from emotions such as compassion, benevolence, and pity. Sympathy enables human beings to *feel like* other human beings. Hence, sympathy is one of the mechanisms for the collectivisation of emotions, which enables the circulation and increase of similar emotions amongst people. Yet sympathy has a propensity for homogenisation that is counterbalanced by the reproduction of different emotions. The next section discusses such a mechanism.

### Antipathy

The understanding of antipathy here gets closer to Hume's aforementioned principle of comparison, whereby he explains how human beings can experience opposite passions to the ones felt by other human beings in inter-subjective interactions. However, one of the key differences with Hume is that he considers it the source of anti-social behaviour; this gives the principle of comparison a tint of negativity. The emergence of opposite passions is not negative itself – thanks to such an emergence spirals of violence can often be halted. Therefore antipathy is better seen as a mechanism which balances out the forces of homogenisation produced by sympathy (cf. Foucault, 2002).

To illustrate, the mechanism of antipathy allows people to exchange sorrow for happiness; once such exchange occurs the realization (through judgment) of feeling the opposite passion solidifies the capability of *feeling unlike* other human beings. Jeremy Bentham's

understanding of ‘antipathetic sensibility’, according to which the human propensity “to derive pain from the happiness, and pleasure from the unhappiness, of other sensitive beings” (2000: 47), gets closer to the pre-discursive mechanism of antipathy. This is not a call, however, for reissuing Bentham’s principle of sympathy and antipathy. If only because according to him “(1) antipathy is not a positive principle of itself, (2) it can never be a right ground for action, and hence (3) it requires always to be regulated” (Ibid.: 23, 25-6).

The connection between Bentham’s philosophy of morals and Hume’s is evident. Indeed, according to Rosen (1996: lxvii), “he did not abandon the Humean location of reason within the passions.” He did, however, make clearer the connection between the principle of sympathy and its reverse: “For sympathy itself multiplies the sources of antipathy... In the same manner does antipathy multiply the sources of sympathy” (Bentham, 2000: 50).

In short, borrowing from Hume’s and Bentham discussion I argue, first, that antipathy is a mechanism through which opposite emotions are exchanged between individuals and groups. Second, that, the mechanism of antipathy is not exclusively a source of wrongdoings. Third, that, the heterogeneous becoming of the world is made possible by antipathy, which balances out sympathy (a mechanism of assimilation and homogenisation). Fourth, that, when judgment comes into place the capacity of feeling unlike other people solidifies.

So far it seems as if antipathy and sympathy work in a dialectical way, counterbalancing each other. By circulating the opposite emotion, antipathy breaks the possibility of feeling alike other people (sympathy). Yet this is not the case. The next part deals, therefore, with the mechanism in between sympathy and antipathy.

Indifference

In order to discuss indifference one has to move away from philosophers of the Enlightenment. Hume and Bentham's disregard of indifference is not surprising, for indifference is apparently secondary (even a subsidiary) to antipathy. Indeed, in Michael Herzfeld's sociological account indifference is closely related to the traditional emotional understanding of antipathy, for he argues "indifference is the rejection of common humanity" (1992: 1). The core of Herzfeld's critique is the hostility against difference and the rhetoric of identity-stereotypes.

This understanding of indifference informs Michael Barnett's (2002) analysis of the politics of indifference within the UN. Drawing on Herzfeld's discussion of indifference and bureaucracy, Barnett (1996, 1997) uses the concept to understand the failure of the international community, embodied in the UN, in Rwanda and Bosnia. Although Barnett's contribution brings to the fore the importance of a bureaucratic structure as a source of inaction, this section proposes a different understanding of indifference.

The contrast between sympathy/antipathy and indifference is sharp; whereas the former are continuously represented as good/bad ways of engaging with other people, indifference is usually represented as part of the wickedness of humanity. However, the discussion of indifference does not revolve around the idea of it being bad in itself but around the issue of not stopping wrongdoings; indifference actually enables them to happen for the lack of engagement.

Herzfeld and Barnett partially indicate how the production of indifference by western bureaucracies is involved in the unfolding of violence. However, a more complex understanding of indifference would enable one to investigate how indifference is central part of intersubjective interactions and hence it can be utilized to both allow things to happen or stopping them. To do so one could regard indifference as a mechanism short-circuiting the

collectivisation of emotions. The mechanism of indifference interrupts the constant flowing of emotions, thereby reinforcing the entropic unfolding world people live in. The collectivisation of emotions does not take place through indifference; rather it takes place by criticizing the non-transmission of the same emotions.

In sum, indifference is a neutral mechanism, which is characterised by being always activated in relation to sympathy and antipathy; therefore, it allows things to happen instead. Thus, indifference aids multiple collective selves to coexist. So far sympathy, antipathy, and indifference have been discussed. Nonetheless, a central element is missing to fully account for the circulation and collectivisation of emotions. Such a component is closely related to memory and hence to the politics of time.

### Oblivion

The discussion of oblivion has been usually linked with the discussion of memory. For this reason, most of the work on oblivion comes from arts and humanities scholarship (Albright, 1994; Blanchot, 1997). Recently, however, with the proliferation of memory studies, anthropologists and historians have started to pay some attention to the subject of oblivion (Allen, 2009; Werbner, 1998). IR scholars have not yet regarded the importance of oblivion in global politics, and yet, as suggested by Davenport-Hines (2001), the criminalization of humans' pursuit of oblivion is at the core of the US 40-year War on Drugs. Oblivion is not only at the centre of the securitization of transnational criminal networks, in particular associated with drug trafficking, but also as Roniger and Sznajder (1998) discuss with post-cold war democratization processes, which in the case of Argentina and Uruguay were based on a 'politics of memory and oblivion.'

As a subjective experience, oblivion is the feeling of forgetting an experienced emotion, whether, for instance, it is compassion or hatred. Oblivion is the mechanism to negate both

the transmission of a similar emotion (sympathy) and the transmission of an opposite emotion (antipathy). However, the negation of feeling alike/unlike other people means that oblivion is a productive mechanism: for an emotion can only be obliterated if a different emotion is generated instead –a ‘new’ emotion which is not necessary the opposite to the emotion which is to negate. Hence, although both antipathy and oblivion contribute to energize the entropic world people are part of, it is the productive character of oblivion which produces a multiplicity of emotions that are not restricted to the production of an opposite emotion vis-à-vis an ‘original’ emotion.

Oblivion from this perspective is not negative in itself. Rather, as Achugar rightly notes “the twin poles of forgetting and remembering are fundamental to the construction of a collective identity” (quoted in Roniger & Sznajder, 1998: 157). Thus, the importance of making “a conscious distinction between two forms of oblivion”: as an “imposed mechanism that signals a society’s inability to confront thorny issues” and as a “voluntary mechanism, instrumental in selecting themes to remain in the public domain and in the continuous shaping of collective identity” (Ibid.). It is against the former that resistance emerges to counterbalance with remembrance the forces of oblivion (cf. Blix, 2007).

As I argued above, in the collectivisation of emotions the mechanism of oblivion is not only exclusively associated with negating an emotion but also with the productive forces of memory. As Passerini says, “any operation aiming to cancel memory cannot help being also an effort to produce another set of memories, to replace the previous one by force” (2003: 241). Since, constant remembering could only but freeze people’s everyday life, oblivion unleashes creative processes of imagining the past to perform in ‘the present’ and imagine the future. Human beings’ power of imagination is activated when the (un)voluntary mechanism of oblivion opens up space for the production of representations which apparently reveal what really happened. Through the production of ‘contested histories’ (cf. Hodgkin &

Radstone, 2003), oblivion complements the mechanism of indifference by consolidating the unfolding of a world in which multiple collective identities constantly emerge.

The collectivisation of emotions constantly occurs through the mixture of memory and oblivion. Some collective identities construct themselves through “a monumental enterprise of remembrance”, as Jewish people do, while others construct themselves through “an art of forgetting”, as Roma people do (see Fonseca quoted in Ibid: 241-2). However, neither an art of forgetting nor an enterprise of remembrance, are fixed strategies for the production of collective identities and the correlated collectivisation of emotions. Instead, human beings constantly shift from one to another, when they (un)consciously construct themselves emerging from a context.

In other words, the mechanism of oblivion is the capacity of the body to negate its own emotions and the emotions of others by creating new emotions that shape memory as a strategy for the performance of identity. Oblivion operates in four steps: (1) two bodies meet affecting each other; (2) through sympathy and antipathy the bodies exchange the same or the opposite emotion; (3) the emotion is obliterated; (4) a new emotion is put into place.

In opposition to indifference, which aids the collectivisation of emotions by enabling people to refer to the non-transmission of the same emotions, oblivion starts from the transmission of emotions, but the very collectivisation of an emotion is negated. Thus new emotions are put into place. Whereas indifference works between sympathy and antipathy, oblivion encompasses antipathy and sympathy by negating them. For this reason, oblivion is an overriding force that surpasses the possibility of feeling alike or unlike other people, making it possible to *feel something new* instead.

Altogether, the above discussion suggests that these four pre/non-discursive mechanisms for the transmission of emotions are integral part of the body. However, as the body exists in a

space, such mechanisms are not contained within the body but cut across it. Therefore, following Deleuze (1992), they constitute a *dispositif*, that is, an apparatus made of lines of force, intensities, propensities, and dispositions that enables the pre/non-discursive circulation of subjective experiences which are then complemented by the exchange of representations in unfolding social processes. The (un)conscious and pre/non-discursive transmission of emotions connecting bodies and environment is the bedrock for the collectivisation of emotions and the undistinguishable process of socially constructing them. People constantly refer to subjective experiences in relation to the space in which they exist. Thus, the affective *dispositif* becomes inseparable from the geopolitical imagination whereby collective emotions are represented as inherent to the territory in which people live; I call this a geopolitical affective *dispositif*.

## Conclusion

In this paper I have advanced an affective geopolitical analysis of the link between oil production, insurgency, social movements, human rights and development in a region in south Colombian. Contrary to an emotional international political approach, which looks at the region through the framework of emotional relations between states, INGOs, and NGOs, I linked local processes with the everyday life dynamics in which some actors in the region were involved. By linking the transformations experienced by collective actors and the contested scripts reinforcing such transformations with transnational processes and geopolitical narratives, I argued the case for an affective geopolitics of San Vicente del Caguán. Although this approach showed the circulation of representations amongst emotional actors, I argued that the analysis is incomplete if one does not understand the pre/non-discursive mechanism for the circulation of emotions. Thus I offered the concept of a geopolitical affective *dispositif* as a tool to study the collectivisation of emotions. The foregoing

indicates that the affective geopolitics of San Vicente del Caguán need to be complemented by a future analysis. Such research could investigate the ways in which the mechanisms of sympathy, antipathy, indifference and oblivion were the bedrock upon which the collectivisation of emotions enabled the transformation of various actors involved in social, political, economic and military processes in the region.

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