

## War and Tourism: The Banal Geographies of Security in Colombia's "Retaking"

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*This paper explores the discourses and practices of state securitisation that Colombia underwent during the last decade. By focusing on the imaginative geographies of security resulting from the unexpected couplings of war and tourism in the country, it delves into the everyday and highly uneven spaces of (in)security forged by the Democratic Security regime. It shows how a feminist take on the geopolitics of war and peace offers a better understanding of the making and unmaking of banal spaces of security and their role in the production of hegemonic state formations in Colombia.*

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become a powerful locus of state power in Colombia. During the last decade, particularly with the implementation of a set of state policies of national security under the securitisation project of *Seguridad Democrática* (Democratic Security) in 2002, the discursive and material production of tourist sites became central to the conjuring of a pacified country that is now safe to travel in. I use the concept of securitisation referring to a political and cultural project of hyper-vigilance and exclusion of particular spaces and forms of citizenship, usually based on militarisation and the mobilisation of fear.<sup>1</sup> Under state policies of Democratic Security, the combined strategies of intensive tourism promotion, the War on Terror and

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the War on Drugs put into circulation new imaginative geographies of security, unrestricted mobility, peace and order in Colombia. Based on content and discourse analysis of official documents, press material and media products regarding tourism-based development initiatives, and on semi-structured interviews with government and NGO officials whose work and experience relates to tourism promotion, I trace the production of these imaginative geographies in official and media narratives.<sup>2</sup> I do so in order to better understand their role in the production of everyday spaces of “security” and the insecurities they imply.<sup>3</sup>

Simultaneously symbolic and material, imaginative geographies refer to the workings of power in the production of what Dianne Rocheleau calls “the maps that lie behind the eyes”: a sociospatial order of here/there so effective that it is almost unquestionable.<sup>4</sup> In that sense, imaginative geographies work as “spatial modalities” through which subjects and spaces are made intelligible.<sup>5</sup> The imaginative geographies of “here” vs. “there” effectively correspond to “our space” and “their space” and the productions of “us” vs. “them” they imply.<sup>6</sup> Drawing from Edward Said’s work, Derek Gregory has studied how imaginative geographies demarcate “the same” from “the other”, contributing to the legitimisation of violence and exclusion.<sup>7</sup> Within the field of geopolitics, there have been careful studies of how power relations saturate the production and mobilisation of imaginative geographies of fear, violence and “security”.<sup>8</sup> From different perspectives, they show how representations of secure and insecure spaces and places are inseparable from the multi-scaled geopolitics that materially binds concrete spatialities with discourses of terrorism and democracy, of civilisation and savagery, of order and disorder, among others.

I trace the imaginative geographies that were produced and put into circulation by the intensive tourism production that became central to security proliferation in Colombia. More than a top-down imposition from the state, I seek to show how these geographies have been produced and reproduced within and among the population. While particular strategies of tourist promotion have played an important role in the production of impunity in the country, my argument goes beyond the mere assertion that tourism effectively created a smokescreen under which a problematic state project was carried out. I contend that tourism has played a constitutive role in the conjuring of Colombia as a safe country under the production of a militarised sociospatial order. Ultimately, it was through the banality of tourism that particular notions and practices of security were established.

I thus explore tourism as an everyday geopolitical project through which particular geographies of (in)security have been forged. Apolitical in appearance, tourism often goes under the radar when analysing how spaces of security and insecurity are understood, imposed and negotiated.<sup>9</sup> A feminist standpoint allows for a more careful understanding of the contradictory couplings of war and leisure, forced displacement and travel, and securitisation

and touristification in Colombia. I pay close attention to feminist concerns with everyday life and social reproduction that situate quotidian and seemingly unimportant practices at the centre of power negotiations. Feminist scholars have pointed out the important role of everyday, ordinary practices in geopolitics, and have insisted on the need to embody and locate it.<sup>10</sup> Beyond seeing the global and the quotidian as two connected yet different scales, feminist geopolitics looks at their mutual constitution.<sup>11</sup>

From this approach, to which the question of ‘security for whom’ remains central, it is possible to better understand the violent dynamics through which spaces of war and peace have been congealed in Colombia. I start by outlining a brief history of the recent configuration of Colombia’s security state. Second, I detail the seemingly impossible connections between war and tourism, particularly during the last decade. The remaining section is devoted to a careful examination of the banal geographies of security in the country and the insecurities they imply. In the conclusions I point to the importance of a feminist geopolitical take on Colombia’s war.

### COLOMBIA’S SECURITY STATE

On 7 January 1999, FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia) leader Manuel Marulanda stood up then President Andrés Pastrana at the negotiation table set up for the televised inauguration of the peace process between the government and the guerrilla group. The episode of “the empty chair” marked the tainted beginning of the peace negotiations between the largest guerrilla group in the country and the Colombian state, which were finally broken off on February 2002.<sup>12</sup> That empty chair not only frustrated the possibilities of a negotiated solution to Colombia’s ongoing war in the near future, but served as the platform for launching Álvaro Uribe’s presidential campaign and the ensuing intensive militarisation of the country under his Democratic Security doctrine. With the logo “*mano dura, corazón grande*” (“iron fist, big heart”), Uribe assumed the presidency of the country in 2002. The broken peace negotiations also opened the doors to the implementation of Plan Colombia (and its subsequent versions) as the primary strategy of the war against guerrilla insurgency.<sup>13</sup>

Deeply gendered narratives of war and peace saturated official and popular discourse in the years after the failed peace negotiations. The urgent need for someone with “*los pantalones bien puestos*” (pants well on, i.e., “the balls”) and a “strong hand” were effectively mobilised in Uribe’s presidential campaign and his popularity as someone brave enough, man enough, to declare war on guerrilla forces quickly rose. As he said once in an interview with an important Colombian radio station: “Under my [business suit] is the flesh and blood of a soldier and policeman”.<sup>14</sup> The

masculinist discourses of war and security that were set in motion during the following year (2000) prepared the ideological background on which the intense militarisation of the country was performed and justified.<sup>15</sup> The production of impunity, the criminalisation of dissidence and a rising violation of human rights all became part of Colombia's political landscape during the last decade.

Militarisation is not a new phenomenon in the Colombian context, of course, and state violence has long been fundamental to the exercise of democracy in the country.<sup>16</sup> But it was under Uribe's government that militarisation became an explicit state policy, with what Ramírez refers to as the emergence and consolidation of the "counterinsurgency metanarrative".<sup>17</sup> In her research, she provides a careful analysis of how security has become the dominant paradigm of democratic rule, explaining the long coexistence between democracy and violence, and how "militarism and clandestine repression constitute the hidden face of Colombia's formal democracy".<sup>18</sup> As Roldán has rightly stated, in Colombia, "the existence or threat of violence [has been used] to justify the expansion of executive powers, the restriction of civil rights, and the suppression or demonization of dissent, while appearing to do so in defense of democracy and political stability".<sup>19</sup>

The "metanarrative of counterinsurgency" firmly instituted by Democratic Security measures has been informed by the specific geo-historical configurations under which Uribe was elected president in 2002. The events of 11 September 2001 in the United States marked significant shifts in global security policies towards the entrenchment of the War on Terror and the War on Drugs.<sup>20</sup> Narratives of peace and security in Colombia became saturated with the language of terrorism, subsequently framing guerrilla groups as the main obstacle to attaining peace in the country and, because of their participation in the drug business, as threats to international security.<sup>21</sup> Also in 2002, the United States government lifted restrictions regarding the use of antinarcotics resources in military operations against guerrilla combatants. Illicit crop eradication (mostly in the form of massive aerial fumigations with the broad-spectrum herbicide glyphosate) was conflated with the war against insurgency and the threat of terrorism, and the FARC guerrilla usefully became the paradigmatic image that condensed the three threats in one.

The convergence of an allegedly democratic regime and state terror became evident during the Democratic Security years. Aiming to regain control of the national territory, the securitisation project rapidly translated into the militarisation of different regions, the surveillance of citizens – from peasants to university professors – who were constantly framed as actual or potential terrorists (or their collaborators), and the intensification of violence often exercised by paramilitary groups with state sanction and even in alliance with military forces.<sup>22</sup> Democratic Security was produced as the answer to the urgent necessity to "restore order and the dominion of law"

in all corners of the country. Coercive means were openly included in how the project was conceived: “[Democratic Security] is the concrete possibility for all citizens to enjoy their fundamental rights . . . [a] possibility [that] only becomes true when the state’s prompt and effective *coercive action* is guaranteed”.<sup>23</sup> Multiple cases of human rights violations quickly ensued.<sup>24</sup>

The objective of “restoring order and the dominion of law” became a powerful legitimisation device for the intensive militarisation of the country. In 2009, national military expenditure reached over 10 billion dollars, the highest in the country’s history and the second in Latin America after Brazil, exceeding even Chile and Mexico.<sup>25</sup> Public funds were devoted mostly to the military and coercive apparatus at the expense of social service provision, in a country that in 2011 ranked as the most unequal in Latin America and the fourth in the whole world with a Gini Coefficient of 0.85.<sup>26</sup> The increased presence of military and police forces in cities, along roads and in tourist destinations was also accompanied by spectacular forms of militarism associated with the securitisation of spaces of travel and leisure. Military parades, rescue missions and the advertisement campaign *En Colombia sí hay héroes* (There are heroes in Colombia) started to populate billboards, newspapers, radio and television spaces.<sup>27</sup> It is in this context of generalised militarisation and the mobilisation of fear that guaranteeing territorial control became Democratic Security’s most important goal. And tourism occupied a central place in the concretisation of Democratic Security’s new sociospatial order.

#### “WITHOUT TERRORISM WE HAVE TOURISM”

One of the most remarkable changes that the country experienced during the last decade was the production of a dominant logic of sociospatial order based on security. The 2000s were characterised by the concomitant production of geographies of tourism and territorial reconquest, which were enabled and maintained through intensive militarisation. Statistics show that the level of foreign visitors to the country increased by nearly 26 percent from 2002 to 2004 and that national air travel experienced the highest increase in a decade reaching nearly 8.5 million domestic travellers in 2006.<sup>28</sup> The growing trend continued during the second half of the decade reaching nearly 2.5 million foreign tourists and over 10 million domestic travellers in 2009.<sup>29</sup>

While this noticeable increase of tourist activities might be interpreted as an outcome of the country’s securitisation, tourism was actually at the forefront of the territorial control project. “Tourist security”, defined as the state’s responsibility to guarantee the physical security of foreign and national tourists, became part of the requisites for economic development under Andrés Pastrana’s presidency (1998–2002). A *Red de Seguridad Turística* (Tourist Security Network) was implemented and police forces

were assigned to watch tourist destinations and routes. According to the guidelines described in the strategic plan, security's main function was to protect tourist activities. Tourism, in turn, would generate economic growth and social stability, conditions that would eventually translate into peace-building.<sup>30</sup>

Tourism's strategic plan was updated under Álvaro Uribe's government following the mandates of Democratic Security policies. Tightly interwoven with the securitisation project, tourism promotion and development became one of the most important agendas of his government. In a speech at the meeting of the United Nations' World Tourism Organization in 2007, Uribe made explicit the connection between tourism, the War on Terror and the War on drugs: "*Without terrorism we have tourism. Without terrorism we have joy . . . . No to illicit drugs, no to terrorism; yes to tourism!*"<sup>31</sup>

Among its main objectives, tourism's strategic plan included the creation of police and military surveillance networks on the roads, the intensification of police presence for the protection of tourist sites, and the creation of departmental and municipal Councils of Tourist Security through which local institutions participated in the design and implementation of security actions. Of the different measures that were implemented, the national programme *Vive Colombia, Viaja por Ella* (Live Colombia, Travel through It) has had the most impact. It intended to guarantee safe domestic travel by intensively militarising tourist destinations and the routes that connect them with main cities in the country. Established in 2002, *Vive Colombia* involves the mobilisation of armed forces – including police, army, navy and air forces – to oversee the safe travels of national and foreign visitors. In coordination with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism and the Ministry of Transportation, the programme has also produced and distributed route maps, has designed and launched a mass media campaign that announced it was now safe to travel to Colombia's "paradises awaiting discovery", and has coordinated a series of convoys – *Caravanas Turísticas* – with police and military escorts that include overflying helicopters during high peak holiday seasons.

The programme's role within the Democratic Security doctrine was specified from the beginning:

The National Government will guarantee the security conditions that will allow free movement through the main highways of the country through [the implementation of] an Integral Security Strategy in the roads. In this way, threats from illegal armed organizations and common delinquency over the national roads will be counteracted.<sup>32</sup>

*Vive Colombia* has been praised by official sources for finally "offer[ing] Colombians the opportunity to travel again and to visit the country's different places".<sup>33</sup> Its relevance to the security project has been expressed in terms of its capacity to "increase trips throughout the country during holiday

season and long weekends” and to “*rescue* those roads that, for reasons of public order, were not traveled anymore”.<sup>34</sup>

On the one hand, tourism and militarisation have been enabled and maintained by shared routes, itineraries, landscapes and spaces, such as those of *Vive Colombia*. The possibility of “travelling safe” in Colombia includes Hummers and small tanks on the road, soldiers with bulletproof vests and machine guns, and multiple checkpoints where policemen – sometimes undercover – perform searches and ask for documents. On the other hand, the evident connections between militarisation and tourism have deeper roots in Colombia’s ongoing war. One of the most powerful and contradictory results of this cartography of security is the production of the presence of men with guns as evidence of order, peace and stability. These entangled spaces of security and insecurity can be understood following Melissa Wright’s work on violent state formations in Mexico as she argues that politics is ultimately about whose life to protect.<sup>35</sup> The question of who deserves to live and who deserves to die has played a crucial role in the constitution of a sociospatial order through which the security state has been formed, legitimised and made indispensable in Colombia.<sup>36</sup>

While Colombia went through one of the most difficult decades in its long history of political violence, government and media outlets celebrated “the retaking of the country” from guerrilla forces, increasingly saturating popular discourse and propelling Uribe’s popularity. Colombia’s effective production as a world class tourist destination happened at a critical time. According to the results from the report from the Colombian Commission for the Assessment of Public Policy on Forced Displacement, between 1998 and 2008, about 4 million people (10 percent of the total population) were forcibly displaced from 5.3 million hectares of land in different regions of Colombia.<sup>37</sup> Political violence has been at the centre of such humanitarian crisis. For example, official statistics from the Attorney General’s Office count more than 50,000 persons forcibly disappeared during the last twenty years, not including the dead, with clear increases in the last eight years: “During Uribe’s first year (2002) there were four persons disappeared daily. But between 2002 and 2006 the number was seven persons per day, and between 2007 and 2008 this number rose to eleven. Eleven [disappeared persons] every single day”.<sup>38</sup> The problem is not only that the means for the configuration of these uneven geographies of security often involve a rampant violation of human rights, but also that these geographies in themselves depend on multiple forms of violence for their making and maintenance, as has been widely documented for the Colombian case.<sup>39</sup>

In Colombia, as noted above, tourism and securitisation have worked side by side towards the country’s “reconquest”. While often portrayed by media and government institutions as “collateral damage”, the negative consequences of securitisation for particular populations who have been criminalised such as peasants, indigenous and Afro-Colombian organisations,

journalists, union workers, critical scholars, human rights advocates and activists need to be taken into account. This is even more urgent in the Colombian context where the state has played a direct role in the violation of human rights including massacres and disappearances. Moreover, the securitisation of tourist routes and destinations has not usually translated into more safety for local communities as evidenced by the growing numbers of forced displacement and selective assassinations, as well as by less visible ways of warfare.<sup>40</sup> That those places that tourists can finally visit again are those to which millions of displaced people cannot return to speaks to the multiple violences that, through the discursive and material production of tourist destinations – an intensive process of touristification – are supposed to have made Colombia safer.

What privileged Colombians (usually from urban areas) celebrate as the possibility to finally return to their vacation homes, is what human rights advocates and state victims have denoted as a project based on state terror and the elimination of political opposition: a dirty war. This is evident in Amnesty International's early concerns surrounding the implementation of the Democratic Security policy:

We are dismayed to see that many of the measures adopted to guarantee greater security are not aimed at illegal armed groups, but rather at the majority of Colombians, whose rights are restricted and whose security against abuses of power and arbitrary actions is undermined. If security means the protection of a few at the cost of the insecurity and lack of protection of the rights of the rest of the population, it is but an illusion.<sup>41</sup>

The cartography of security that has characterised the period of 2002–2010 in Colombia is indeed a highly uneven one. Security has been carried out as a systematic programme of militarisation with the objective of guaranteeing a secure climate for business. This “oversecuritization of capital”, as Rojas puts it, has been carried out at the expense of the security of labour, social activists and the poor:

These programs overprotect already privileged citizens and under-protect others. Business, in particular the oil industry, wealthy landlords, and paramilitary groups benefit from exceptional measures . . . This contrasts with the under-protection of the nearly 3 million internally displaced Colombians [official statistics now count more than 4 million, about 10 percent of the population]. Most of these are women and children, members of Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, and/or trade unionists and social activists.<sup>42</sup>

The promise of the continuation of the Democratic Security policy was central to President Juan Manuel Santos's 2010 presidential campaign. The



language he used during the campaign was one of silence and impunity: The idea that “it is time to look to the future, not to the past” became a powerful narrative about the need of overlooking the rampant human rights crisis in the country in order to “move forward”. In the same vein, strategies of securitisation linked to tourism promotion have been an important part of his decisions during his years in power. Tourism is not likely to lose importance, militarisation still being at the forefront of guaranteeing a sociospatial order forged through violence.

### BANAL (IN)SECURITIES

I refer to “banal securities” as the daily practices through which security is understood and lived. With several works from the feminist geopolitics literature, I show how militarisation is present in our everyday spaces and how its acceptance often depends on the private scale.<sup>43</sup> James Sidaway’s concept of “banal geopolitics” offers insights too on the normalisation of warfare and how imperial geopolitics has become everyday and ordinary, taken as the norm.<sup>44</sup> Beyond that, following Michael Billing’s conceptualisation of “banal nationalism” and Cindi Katz’s subsequent elaboration of “banal terrorism”, I argue that it is through the ordinary, seemingly unimportant and everyday practices that hegemonic formations of security are implemented, legitimised and naturalised.<sup>45</sup> With Katz, I point to how banal securities interweave all scales, working “almost at the capillary level” to make particular versions of “security” – men with guns, curfews, arbitrary searches, etc. – seem necessary and common sense.<sup>46</sup>

Ulrich Oslender, drawing from Hannah Arendt’s reflections on the “banality of evil”, has made the case that recent years in Colombia can be characterised by the “banalization of forced displacement”.<sup>47</sup> According to him, the dramatic situation of forcibly displaced people has been trivialised to the point that it appears normal. While I agree with his main point, and share his concerns on how this “quotidianization” of forced displacement becomes a barrier for collective action, my argument goes beyond the mere assertion that material practices of security in Colombia have become part of the landscape, almost invisible. While I believe this is true, I follow feminist geopolitics’ broader concern with how hegemony is forged, maintained and fought through the processes of everyday life.<sup>48</sup>

Despite its seemingly apolitical character, tourism promotion has played a fundamental role in the production of everyday notions and experiences of security in Colombia. Democratic Security’s powerful narrative of territorial “reconquest” was inseparable from tourism. The possibility to travel to different areas of Colombia became both *the means* and *the proof* of this new sociospatial order based on security proliferation. Narratives of the “retaking” of the country contributed to travel becoming an important means of laying

claims to territory and constituting a militarised sociospatial order. Travelling itself became a civil duty; it was produced as one of ordinary Colombians' contributions to winning "The War". The image of successful military outposts being set up in order to "reclaim" the country from terrorist hands – guerrilla forces – became pervasive in government speeches, paramilitary statements and popular discourses. "Now it is safe to travel", "before we couldn't go to the *finca* (recreational home, farm)" and "Uribe gave us our country back" soon became common tropes in the collective imaginaries of security during the last decade.

Such powerful narratives of perceived security did not necessarily match more concrete conditions of safety. This was evidenced by the contrasting figures of rising rates of poverty, inequality, homicides, the actions of emerging criminal (neo-paramilitary) bands, human rights violations, massacres and forced disappearances, on the one hand, and Uribe's growing popularity, on the other.<sup>49</sup> The outstanding capacity to remain untouched by the jarring evidence of political violence, human rights violations and corruption scandals became known as Uribe's "Teflon coating",<sup>50</sup> his capacity to "give us our roads back" celebrated. While narratives of being now able to visit recreational sites are clearly connected with class and other related forms of privilege, they became pervasive in everyday language, even among less privileged Colombians. The framing of travelling as the evidence that the country was much safer became a common sentiment expressed on radio, blogs, commentaries to online newspaper articles and everyday conversation.

A government official who worked in tourism promotion described his perception of the dramatic changes the country experienced after 2002:

Before that year no one dared to go out to travel. You were sure guerrillas would kidnap you along the way . . . . But after 2002, everything changed with President Álvaro Uribe Vélez. He arrived in August 7, 2002 and only two months later *we were all free, happy to travel again* in [*Vive Colombia*'s] tourist convoys. . . . I remember well that holiday of October 12, 2002, we *all* hit the road. (my emphasis)

From his cubicle, he continued explaining that the display of police forces, the air force overflying planes and army troops reminded him that he could safely travel to his destination. "They were there to protect the tourist and [his/her] properties, so the secured routes allowed one to travel with confidence", he added while seeming authentically enthusiastic about the militarisation of tourist routes and destinations. He continued: "Here at the Ministry [of Commerce, Industry and Tourism], before Uribe, we feared that tourism would come to an end. Today, everybody travels with security. The government already reclaimed domestic tourism, now the challenge is to attract more international tourists and investors" (personal interview, Bogotá, August 2009).

Such narratives of unrestricted travel reveal how tourism became central to the production of banal spaces of security and the larger insecurities that sustain them. Colombia's new cartography of security is deeply rooted in imaginative geographies where "here" refers to home, usually an urban setting, a place where violence occurs as part of the extraordinary; and "there" refers to a destination, a seemingly paradisiacal and empty(ied) space where violence abounds.<sup>51</sup> The "paradises awaiting discovery" produced by *Vive Colombia* epitomise these imaginative geographies, tourist destinations usually represented as distant places of exuberant natures where order needs to be imposed. Moreover, Democratic Security discourses also played an important role in the production of a clearly fixed enemy – guerrilla combatants – as effective "others". In particular, members of the FARC guerrilla force have increasingly been portrayed as savage and irrational horror machines that have almost emerged spontaneously from the *monte* (jungles, wildlands), disregarding the processes behind their historical configuration and as a way of obscuring state-sanctioned violence.<sup>52</sup>

Imaginative geographies of distant places needing to be retaken from violent "others" have translated into powerful state formations. When traversing main national routes, soldiers and policemen appear on both sides of the road. Fully armed soldiers in jungle camouflage stand every few hundred metres along the paved highway, saluting every vehicle passing by with a thumbs-up gesture. This seemingly unimportant performance of security, implemented under *Vive Colombia* campaign, has been fundamental to creating and maintaining the illusion of a safe country. In its contradictory character, the presence of men with guns works as a constant reminder that a guerrilla attack could happen anytime, at the same time that it produces a sense of security that, even if contingent, has been widely celebrated. The display of force conceals the repressive and coercive apparatus that sustains it, at the same time that it makes state presence visible, concrete and legible, especially to ordinary citizens. Indeed, as Katz points out, the mobilisation of fear is fundamental to the state's security provision.<sup>53</sup>

In that way, theatrical manifestations of security – its performed, everyday, banal rituals – have worked as fundamental mechanisms for congealing state power, and tourism became the perfect realm for state's fantasies of spatial control to be enacted.<sup>54</sup> Tracing these hegemonic state formations allows for an understanding of banal forms of security through which power is exercised and contested. Secured roads and tourist sites materialised the state spatial project enacted through Democratic Security's measures, while revealing the localised spatialities of securitisation and their capacity for conjuring up a presumably military-guaranteed order. As I have noted, visiting "paradises awaiting discovery" became both the means for the effective "retaking of the country" from the triple menace – insurgency, terrorism and drugs – that guerrilla forces represented, as former President Álvaro Uribe often put it, and the proof that it was actually "retaken".

Everyday spaces of (in)security in Colombia are also evident in the configuration of new forms of citizenship, concretely in the militarisation of intimate spheres. The Democratic Security regime called for a vigilante citizen, social control based on fear, distrust and the use of privatised force.<sup>55</sup> The boundaries between combatants and civilians became increasingly blurred, as the project of making Colombia a country safe to travel openly demanded civilian participation. *Redes de Cooperación Ciudadana* (Networks of Citizens' Cooperation) were created in order to ". . . collaborate with the authorities according to their civil responsibilities and the solidarity principle. They will provide information about irregularities that may come up in the national roads".<sup>56</sup> As stated in the official document outlining the Democratic Security policy, "The government will promote the voluntary and patriotic cooperation of all citizens as part of their constitutional responsibilities".<sup>57</sup> We all, Colombians, were expected to take responsibility for guaranteeing security in our homes, workplaces, municipalities and regions, but mostly in the roads.

Under this mandate, the state promoted the creation of two figures. The first one, *Redes de Cooperantes* (Networks of Cooperating Citizens), consisted of civilians in rural and urban areas responsible for providing information that could lead to the prevention and persecution of criminal activities. The second one, *Redes de Informantes Civiles* (Networks of Civilian Informants), included any citizen who, in exchange for monetary rewards, provides information that could lead to the prevention and persecution of terrorists and members of illegal armed forces.<sup>58</sup> As evidenced in Uribe's final speech, all Colombians were expected to behave as cooperating citizens: "We need to surround, love, support and cooperate with [soldiers and policemen] . . . . In order to support our Armed Forces the weapons we need as citizens are love, trust and *a cell phone*".<sup>59</sup>

Of the two strategies, the latter proved to be the most appealing (and problematic). In 2004, around 2,500,000 people were registered as informants.<sup>60</sup> As Rojas notes, rewards were handed out by high ranking military personnel to masked informants in public ceremonies that were transmitted live on television.<sup>61</sup> The possibility of incorporating paid students in the informants' networks caused a lot of controversy after Uribe publicly offered the equivalent of US\$50 a month to students in exchange for information about criminals: "I use this occasion to call all citizens, students, housewives, teachers, entrepreneurs and storekeepers in order for us to understand that citizen security is a collective obligation", he said.<sup>62</sup> "Security" in its entire problematic dimension was made evident in the new forms of citizenship these militarised state formations called upon. Citizens' responsibility for attaining and maintaining security was constantly invoked as a way of ensuring the active participation of civilians the Colombian state required for guaranteeing territorial control and safe travels. In Uribe's words: "The civilian population should define its position in support of

our threatened democracy”,<sup>63</sup> implying that those who were not with his government, were against it.

Networks of Cooperating Citizens and Networks of Civilian Informants were not the only two manifestations of the militarisation of everyday life. Policies of Democratic Security created armed *Soldados y Policías de Apoyo* (Supporting Soldiers and Policemen) too:

[They] will constitute a complementary strategy to the network of informants, they will be persons that without abandoning their agricultural plots or their homes by the road will voluntarily join the Public Force and will receive a payment below the minimum wage in exchange for providing information and contributing to the security of the zones they inhabit.<sup>64</sup>

As Rojas explains: “For peasants, the demands of cooperation with the country’s security forces went further, by including them actively in conflict. The strategy consisted of the training of 100,000 “peasant soldiers” (*soldados campesinos*) or “soldiers of my Town” (*soldados de mi pueblo*), where peasants received 4 months of military training to enable them to participate in combat operations”.<sup>65</sup>

Another category, *Soldado por un día* (Soldier for a Day), was also implemented. Military personnel were in charge of outreach to health brigades and schools looking for volunteers willing to experience the life of a soldier for one day. The programme recruited and provided military training to government officials, journalists, firefighters, professors, university students and boys and girls alike. In tandem with this programme, the experience of militarisation became available, for a fee, as part of a tourist package. The description in one of the company’s webpages hints at the ways in which militarisation started to enter private, everyday spaces it did not have before:

Closing our first day of adventure, we will become soldiers for a day. It is a fun experience of the rhythm of the military game, with command voices and obstacles to overcome, with the intention of living for a moment the military experience of our dear Colombian soldiers, provided by the same trainers in charge of the military base of Tolemaida (about four hours from Bogotá).<sup>66</sup>

Travel and tourism certainly occupied a central place within these militarised forms of citizenship and the everyday state formations they evidence. *Vive Colombia* was a clear invitation to take part of the country’s “retrieval”, a call to repeatedly enact its “reclaiming” from the hands of the enemy (reduced to guerrilla forces). Uribe’s speech at the International Hotel Fair on 8 June 2010 exemplifies well the role tourists have had in this “re-conquest”: “Nothing would have been achieved by pouring our National Armed Forces

onto the roads if they had not been followed by a vigorous reaction from everyday Colombians. That holiday . . . of November 2002 was as if the country was being freed from a collective kidnapping, amazing”.<sup>67</sup> The “retaking of the country” was thus performed by soldiers and tourists, police forces and families on vacation, as a brave act by which they were defying insurgency. In this way, tourism became one of the duties of devoted citizens collaborating with the armed forces in the deed of regaining territorial control and reinstating order – a patriotic act.

## CONCLUSIONS

Framed as the logical response to the urgent need to retake the country and restore control over its territory, the policies of Democratic Security implemented under Álvaro Uribe’s two presidential terms translated into hegemonic state formations characterised by an intensive process of militarisation and a politics of war under which whose life counts –who security is for – was defined. More than a happy coincidence or a mere outcome of the securitisation process, tourism played a fundamental role in the project of Democratic Security and the resulting sociospatial order. The highly uneven character of this new map is made evident by a feminist take on the geopolitics of war and peace in Colombia. Taking seriously seemingly unimportant sites of securitisation and state power such as tourism, enables a closer look at how the spatialities of security have been forged during the last decade, making evident how processes of militarisation have profound impacts on quotidian and seemingly apolitical spaces. Moreover, as this paper has shown, the profound securitisation of the country during the last decade not only has transformed everyday spaces of travel, leisure and recreation, but it is through these banal geographies that the Democratic Security regime was constituted.

A feminist geopolitical take on the imaginative geographies that were produced and circulated in Colombia during the last decade also allows for a careful analysis of the everyday realities of (in)security in the country. The coupled processes of securitisation and touristification resulted in a new cartography: an archipelago of tourist trenches connected by militarised routes. As it has been noted throughout this paper, this new cartography is a profoundly uneven one. The banal geographies of security in Colombia point to how understandings and experiences of “security” are profoundly entangled with larger insecurities. Practices and discourses of Colombia’s “retaking” created pockets of security, almost enclave zones, where capital accumulation through activities such as tourism and investment were guaranteed. The new safer country existed, even if just as an illusion, for those whose privilege translated into the possibility of travelling safely.<sup>68</sup> At the same time that the possibility of going on vacation was celebrated, journalists,

political activists, union workers, critical scholars, opposition politicians and human rights advocates were confronted with reduced spaces of dissent and manoeuvre because of increased violence and insecurity. The prevalent discourse according to which “*el que nada debe, nada teme*” (those who have done nothing wrong have nothing to fear) further contributed to the cutback of these spaces.

These hegemonic versions of what security is (or should be) were not just imposed from above. Imaginative geographies of paradises awaiting discovery became central to how security was not only desired and expected, but to how it was performed and congealed at the everyday scale. Even if studies of violence and war in Colombia seem pervasive in academic literature, it is only by carefully analysing the discourses and practices of securitisation as they produce everyday spatialities of fear, suffering and dis-possession, and are produced by them, that new forms of security can be imagined and forged. A feminist geopolitical perspective, one that asks for the everyday, situated and profoundly uneven spaces of (in)security, thus seems urgent for better understanding and transforming the lived realities of violence in the country. In particular, feminist geopolitics’ insistence on the need to create alternatives to the hegemonic order makes possible new imaginative geographies that attend to the production of everyday experiences of security across physical and symbolic borders.<sup>69</sup> As Sara Koopman has shown in her work, feminist geopolitics suggests broader definitions and practices of security, some of which have played a crucial role in building alternative non-violent securities in Colombia.<sup>70</sup>

By disrupting the imaginative geographies that sustain the myth of a post-conflict society in the country, so effectively conjured by glossy brochures and advertisement campaigns, this paper hopes to contribute to the urgent need for questioning, unsettling and subverting current landscapes of security in Colombia. The possibility of challenging the dominant imaginative geographies – of drawing “imaginative counter-geographies” – is fundamental for contesting the generalised insecurities “security” implies.<sup>71</sup>

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#### NOTES

1. See J. Hyndman, ‘The Securitization of Fear in Post-Tsunami Sri Lanka’, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 97/2 (2007); C. Katz, ‘Me and My Monkey: What’s Hiding in the Security State’, in M. Sorkin (ed.), *Indefensible Space: The Architecture of the National Insecurity State* (New York: Routledge

2007); and M. Sparke, 'A Neoliberal Nexus: Economy, Security and the Biopolitics of Citizenship on the Border', *Political Geography* 25/2 (2006).

2. The arguments presented in this paper are based on ethnographic and historical research I carried out in Bogotá and the area of Tayrona National Natural Park between June 2009 and April 2011. In order to better understand the intricate connections between tourism promotion and militarisation in Colombia, I analysed the production and circulation of official and popular narratives. I carried out a critical analysis of presidential speeches, official documents, NGO reports and newspaper articles. I also draw from semi-structured interviews I conducted with government and NGO officials in Bogotá and Santa Marta. I interviewed a total of 26 professionals whose work and experience relates to tourism promotion and development in Colombia. I carried out the interviews in Spanish; English translations are my own. I keep all identities confidential.

3. For located and embodied analyses of the relation between security and insecurity see, for example, M. Ahmad, 'Homeland Insecurities: Racial Violence the Day after September 11', *Social Text* 20/3 (2002); J. Fluri, 'Bodies, Bombs, and Barricades: Gendered Geographies of (In)Security', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36/3 (2011); and A. Ingram and K. Dodds (eds.), *Spaces of Security and Insecurity: Geographies of the War on Terror* (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate 2009).

4. D. Rocheleau, 'Maps as Power-Tools: Locating "Communities" in Space or Situating People(s) and Ecologies in Place?', in P. Brosius, A. Tsing, and C. Zerner (eds.), *Communities and Conservation: Histories and Politics of Community-Based Natural Resource Management* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press 2005) p. 331.

5. R. Stein, *Itineraries in Conflict: Israelis, Palestinians, and the Political Lives of Tourism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press 2008) p. 73.

6. E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books 1994 [orig. 1978]). See also F. Driver, 'Imaginative geographies', in P. Cloke, P. Crang, and M. Goodwin (eds.), *Introducing Human Geographies* (London: Hodder Arnold 2005); J. Duncan and D. Gregory (eds.), *Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing* (London: Routledge 1999); and D. Gregory, 'Imaginative Geographies', *Progress in Human Geography* 19/4 (1995).

7. D. Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq* (Malden: Blackwell 2004).

8. See L. Bialasiewicz, D. Campbell, S. Elden, S. Graham, A. Jeffrey, and A. Williams, 'Performing Security: The Imaginative Geographies of Current US Strategy', *Political Geography* 26/4 (2007); Ingram and Dodds (note 4); C. Katz, 'Lost and Found: The Imagined Geographies of American Studies', *Prospects* 30 (2005); G. Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Writing of Global Space* (London and New York: Routledge 1996); and S. Springer, 'Violence Sits in Places? Cultural Practice, Neoliberal Rationalism, and Virulent Imaginative Geographies', *Political Geography* 30/2 (2011).

9. C. Enloe, 'On the Beach: Sexism and Tourism', in *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2000 [orig. 1989]) and Stein (note 6) are remarkable exceptions.

10. See D. Cowen and E. Gilbert (eds.), *War, Citizenship, Territory* (New York: Routledge 2008); L. Dowler, 'Gender, Militarization and Sovereignty', *Geography Compass* 6/8 (2012); L. Dowler and J. Sharp, 'A Feminist Geopolitics?', *Space and Polity* 5/3 (2001); C. Enloe, *Nimo's War, Emma's War: Making Feminist Sense of the Iraq War* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2010); C. Flint, 'Dying for a "P"? Some Questions Facing Contemporary Political Geography', *Political Geography* 22/6 (2003); J. Hyndman, 'Towards a Feminist Geopolitics', *The Canadian Geographer* 45/2 (2001); J. Hyndman, 'Mind the Gap: Bridging Feminist and Political Geography Through Geopolitics', *Political Geography* 23/3 (2004); Katz, 'Me and My Monkey' (note 2); A. Mountz, 'Embodying the Nation-State: Canada's Response to Human Smuggling', *Political Geography* 23/3 (2004); J. Sharp, 'Hegemony, Popular Culture and Geopolitics: The Reader's Digest and the Construction of Danger', *Political Geography* 15/6-7 (1996); J. Sharp, 'Embodying the State and Citizenship', *Geoforum* 38 (2007). See also D. Gregory and A. Pred (eds.), *Violent Geographies: Fear, Terror, and Political Violence* (New York: Routledge 2007) on how political violences are expressed in intimate spaces.

11. In relation to the politics of fear, Rachel Pain and Susan Smith state about the geopolitical and the everyday: "Our point is that there are not two scales which inspire and address fear by variously relating to one another; rather there are assemblages of fear built, trained, embedded, woven, wired, nurtured and natured into the way specific times, places, and events work". R. Pain and S. Smith (eds.), *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2008) p. 3.

12. Peace negotiations were not undertaken again until October 2012, ten years later, and are still in progress. For an analysis of the current process, see International Crisis Group, 'Colombia: Peace at Last?', *Latin American Report* 45 (2012).



13. Plan Colombia was implemented in 2000 between the United States and Colombia. A decade later, the US had invested more than 8 billion dollars in strategies against drug production and towards the strengthening of Colombian armed forces. See 'Plan Colombia: diez años después', *El Espectador*, 17 July 2010. For an analysis of the relation between US military aid and human rights violations in Colombia, see FOR and USOC, 'Military Assistance and Human Rights: Colombia, U.S. Accountability, and Global Implications' (Washington: Fellowship of Reconciliation and U.S. Office on Colombia 2010).

14. A. Uribe, 2002 quoted in M. C. Ramírez, 'Maintaining Democracy in Colombia through Political Exclusion, States of Exception, Counterinsurgency and Dirty War', in E. Desmond Arias and D. Goldstein (eds.), *Violent Democracies in Latin America* (Durham and London: Duke University Press 2010) p. 84.

15. Feminist scholars have pointed out how gendered discourses contribute to violence, in particular to state violence and warfare. See, for example, M. Wright, 'Necropolitics, Narcopolitics, and Femicide: Gendered Violence on the Mexico-U.S. Border', *Signs* 36/3 (2011); and I. M. Young, 'The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State', *Signs* 29/1 (2003). In their analysis of the relation between heteronormativity, sexism, nationalism and the War on Terror, Puar and Rai rightly assert that "... gender and sexuality produce both hypervisible icons and the ghosts that haunt the machines of war"; J. Puar and A. Rai, 'Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots', *Social Text* 20/3 (2002) p. 117.

16. Ironically, Colombia is often cited as the most longstanding democracy in Latin America. While the country did not experience dictatorships similar to the ones in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, it is crucial to note that systematic repression, an intensive militarisation and the concentration of power among two traditional parties – *liberal* and *conservador* – have characterised the country's long *durée*, regardless of the occurrence of periodic elections. For a historical account of authoritarian and antidemocratic policies implemented by the Colombian state see M. Roldán, 'End of Discussion: Violence, Participatory Democracy, and the Limits of Dissent in Colombia', in E. Desmond Arias and D. Goldstein (eds.), *Violent Democracies in Latin America* (Durham and London: Duke University Press 2010).

17. Ramírez (note 15).

18. *Ibid.*, p. 85. The same can be argued about "development" and violence: see for example H. Van der Wusten, 'Violence, Development, and Political Order', in C. Flint (ed.), *The Geography of War and Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005); A. Escobar, 'Development Violence and the New Imperial Order', *Development* 41/1 (2004); and M. Serje, 'Iron Maiden Landscapes: The Geopolitics of Colombia's Territorial Conquest', *South Central Review* 24/1 (2007). The close relation between militarisation and the imposition and preservation of a market economy has also been noted by Simon Springer in his study of human security discourses in Cambodia. As he argues, the "security pretext" guarantees the free flow of capital, at the expense of criminalising citizens and reducing them to consumers and sellers (S. Springer, 'The Neoliberalization of Security and Violence in Cambodia's Transition', in S. Peou (ed.), *Human Security in East Asia: Challenges for Collaborative Action* (New York: Routledge 2009)).

19. Roldán (note 17) p. 80.

20. See Gregory and Pred (note 11); J. Hyndman, 'Beyond Either/Or: A Feminist Analysis of September 11th', *ACME* 2/1 (2003); and Katz, 'Me and My Monkey' (note 2).

21. This contradicts evidence which signals that while the state was responsible for 17 percent of human rights violations at the beginning of Uribe's first term in 2002, four years later, it was responsible for 56 percent of the violations, compared to 29 percent by paramilitary groups and 10 percent by the FARC guerrilla in the same year (G. Leech, 'Distorted Perceptions of Colombia's Conflict', *Colombia Journal* (June 2008)).

22. The connections between paramilitary groups and Álvaro Uribe have been pointed out by scholars, opposition politicians, human rights defenders, etc. Former governor of the department of Antioquia, Uribe took part in the conformation and legalisation of the private right-wing militias *Convivir*. By Decreto 356 of 1994, the paramilitary groups *Convivir* were made legal and were defined as a "special vigilance and private security services that function in high-risk areas to restore tranquility and ally themselves with military and police agencies" (quoted in Ramírez (note 15) p. 90). *Convivir* contributed to the emergence of different paramilitary groups throughout different regions of the country that later consolidated in 1997 under the AUC (United Self-Defenses of Colombia). For a careful analysis of how political agreements enabled the paramilitary expansion in the country see M. Romero (ed.), *Parapolítica. La ruta de la expansión paramilitar y los acuerdos políticos* (Bogotá: Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris 2007).

23. Uribe, quoted in C. Barco, 'Discursos' (Bogotá: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores 2002), available at <[www.minrelext.gov.co/Noticias/discursos/discursodic12s.htm](http://www.minrelext.gov.co/Noticias/discursos/discursodic12s.htm)>.

24. One of the most problematic cases that illustrates Democratic Security's mechanisms of securitisation is the wiretapping scandal surrounding the national security agency DAS (Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad) that occurred in 2009. See J. Otis, 'Colombia: Cloud of Scandal Haunts Uribe's Legacy', *Time* (10 Dec. 2010); and "'DAS orquestó una estrategia de guerra política": Gustavo Petro', *Semana*, 5 May 2010. The agency operated with orders from top presidential advisors in the wiretapping of journalists, political activists, human rights advocates, opposition politicians and Supreme Court magistrates, among other key political figures and different members of civil society. Moreover, DAS operations included a systematic campaign to discredit, persecute and harass dissidents under the argument that they presented a potential threat to national security. See WOLA, 'Far Worse than Watergate: Widening Scandal regarding Colombia's Intelligence Agency' (Washington: Latin America Working Group, U.S. Office on Colombia, Center for International Policy and Washington Office on Latin America 2010).

25. 'Colombia, país latinoamericano con mayor gasto militar en el 2009 respecto al PIB', *El Tiempo*, 1 June 2010.

26. 'Desigualdad extrema', *Semana*, 12 March 2011.

27. Colombia has a long history of distrust of the army, and its role as an instrument of state repression has been well documented. This started to change under Uribe's government as an unprecedented campaign for vindicating the armed forces was instituted nationally, precisely when popular groups began to denounce military abuses. One clear example of these abuses was the "falsos positivos" (false positives) scandal. See FOR and USOC, 'Military Assistance and Human Rights: Colombia, U.S. Accountability, and Global Implications' (Washington: Fellowship of Reconciliation and U.S. Office on Colombia 2010). By 2008, the Attorney General's Office was investigating around 2,000 cases of innocent people, usually working-class young men, who were kidnapped and killed by army soldiers who then presented the cadavers as evidence of victory over guerrilla combatants. See *Semana*, 'Las cuentas de los falsos positivos', 27 Jan. 2009. The "extrajudicial killings", a misnomer since there is no death penalty within the Colombian judiciary system, were clear evidence of the high cost of the securitisation project throughout the country and the way it has operated along lines of class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, regional origin and political affiliation.

28. Ministerio de Comercio, Industria y Turismo, 'La Industria de los Viajes y el Turismo' (Bogotá: República de Colombia 2007), available at <[www.mincomercio.gov.co/econtent/Documentos/intervenciones/2007/TurismoColombia 2006.pdf](http://www.mincomercio.gov.co/econtent/Documentos/intervenciones/2007/TurismoColombia%2006.pdf)>.

29. Ministerio de Comercio, Industria y Turismo, 'Nuevos Retos de Competitividad: Camino a la Prosperidad' (Bogotá: República de Colombia 2010), available at <[www.mincomercio.gov.co/eContent/documentos/intervenciones/2010/Expogestion.pdf](http://www.mincomercio.gov.co/eContent/documentos/intervenciones/2010/Expogestion.pdf)>.

30. Ministerio de Desarrollo Económico and Policía Nacional, 'Seguridad Turística: Reto competitivo de Colombia. Plan Estratégico' (Bogotá: República de Colombia 2000).

31. A. Uribe, 'Palabras del presidente Uribe en la XVII Asamblea General de la Organización Mundial del Turismo (OMT), en Cartagena' (Bogotá: Presidencia de la República de Colombia 2007), my emphasis.

32. Presidencia de la República and Ministerio de Defensa, 'Política de Defensa y Seguridad Democrática' (Bogotá: República de Colombia 2003) p. 58.

33. Presidencia de la República, "'Vive Colombia, viaja por ella" se presenta en Organización Mundial de Turismo', *Noticias SNE*, 22 June 2006.

34. Ministerio de Comercio, Industria y Turismo and Policía Nacional, Seguridad Turística: Reto competitivo de Colombia. Plan Estratégico' (Bogotá: República de Colombia 2009), my emphasis.

35. Wright (note 16) p. 708. Wright's argument draws on Achille Mbembe's elaboration of necropolitics: A. Mbembe, 'Necropolitics', *Public Culture* 15/1 (2003).

36. Along with Achille Mbembe's notion of necropolitics (note 36) and Melissa Wright's work on femicide (note 16), Judith Butler's insights on what counts as life (lives lived) and death have influenced my reflections about security and insecurity in Colombia. Following Butler, I take seriously the urgency to consider "... what conditions might make violence less possible, lives more equally grievable, and, hence, more livable" (J. Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (Brooklyn: Verso 2009) p. viii). Jennifer Hyndman's reflection on whose bodies 'count' (Hyndman, 'Securitization of Fear' (note 2)) is also relevant for thinking the uneven distribution of life's value, and thus security, across spaces and places.

37. CSPPDF, *Magnitud del despojo y abandono forzado de bienes de la Población Desplazada en Colombia: III Encuesta Nacional de la Comisión de Seguimiento a la Política Pública sobre el Desplazamiento Forzado* (Bogotá: Centro de Investigaciones para el Desarrollo de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia 2010). On Colombia's generalised dynamics of accumulation by dispossession see

T. Ballvé, 'Territory by Dispossession: Decentralization, Statehood, and the Narco Landgrab in Colombia', paper presented at the International Conference on Global Land Grabbing, Brighton, 6–8 April 2011; J. Grajales, 'The Rifle and the Title: Paramilitary Violence, Land Grab and Land Control in Colombia', *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38/4 (2011); and D. Ojeda, 'Green Pretexts: Ecotourism, Neoliberal Conservation and Land Grabbing in Tayrona National Natural Park, Colombia', *Journal of Peasant Studies* 39/2 (2012).

38. A. Caballero, 'Detrás de las elecciones', *Semana*, 20 March 2010. I cite these statistics to give a sense of Colombia's dramatic situation (in Argentina, for example, accounts of the disappeared during Videla's dictatorship rank between 13,000 and 30,000), but such sinister accounting often obscures the violence and suffering behind the numbers. It is also worth noting that official statistics are based on reported crimes, and the fear of retaliation prevents most crimes from being reported. As it has been noted by different sources, most of the disappeared and the dead in Colombia, literally do not count. See, for example, W. Tate, *Counting the Dead: The Culture and Politics of Human Rights Activism in Colombia* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2010).

39. See L. Haugaard and K. Nicholls, *Breaking the Silence: In Search of Colombia's Disappeared* (Washington: Latin America Working Group and U.S. Office on Colombia 2010); Human Rights Watch, *Paramilitaries' Heirs: The New Face of Violence in Colombia* (Washington: Human Rights Watch 2010); United Nations Human Rights Council, *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in Colombia* (Washington: United Nations 2010).

40. E. Dickinson, 'Colombia's Invisible War', *The Atlantic*, 1 Aug. 2011; 'ONU: Por Bacrim, aumentaron en 40% las masacres en Colombia', *Semana*, 24 Feb. 2011.

41. Amnesty International, 'Colombia: Democratic security or insecurity for all?', *Press Release* (Washington: Amnesty International, 10 Dec. 2002) p. 1.

42. C. Rojas, 'The Securitization of Citizenship under Colombia's Democratic Security Policy', *CERLAC Bulletin* 5/5 (2006) p. 4.

43. See note 11.

44. J. Sidaway, 'Iraq/Yugoslavia: Banal Geopolitics', *Antipode* 33/4 (2001); J. Sidaway, 'Banal Geopolitics Resumed', *Antipode* 35/4 (2003); and J. Sidaway, 'The Dissemination of Banal Geopolitics: Webs of Extremism and Insecurity', *Antipode* 40/1 (2008). He draws from David Harvey's argument on how the banality of mundane everyday local experiences defines truths that become common sense. See D. Harvey, 'Cosmopolitanism and the Banality of Geographical Evils', *Public Culture* 12/2 (2000).

45. M. Billig, *Banal nationalism* (London: Sage 1995); C. Katz, 'Banal Terrorism: Spatial Fetishism and Everyday Insecurity', in D. Gregory and A. Pred, (eds.), *Violent Geographies: Fear, Terror, and Political Violence* (New York: Routledge 2007).

46. Katz, 'Banal Terrorism' (note 46) p. 351.

47. U. Oslender, 'La banalidad del desplazamiento: de peleas estadísticas y vacíos en la representación étnica del desplazamiento forzado en Colombia', *Universitas Humanistica* 69 (2010). See also D. Pécaut, 'From the Banality of Violence to Real Terror: The Case of Colombia', in K. Koonings and D. Kruijt (eds.), *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America* (London: Zed Books 1999).

48. As Dowler notes: "Militarization takes root in the banal processes of daily life that are essential to the reproduction of sovereignty" (Dowler (note 11) p. 497).

49. 'ONU: Por Bacrim' (note 41) n.p. quotes the United Nations on the country's worrisome situation by the end of Uribe's government regarding alliances between politics and paramilitarism, impunity and human rights violations. It is noted in the article how massacres and forced disappearances alone have shown a 40 percent increase in recent years.

50. Otis (note 25).

51. On geographical imaginaries through which violence is produced as the exclusive preserve of the "other", see Springer, 'Violence Sits' (note 9).

52. The FARC were created in 1964 as a communist guerrilla force. Envisioned as a Popular Army, the armed group intended to fight US imperialism in Colombia, to redistribute access to land, and to confront state violence. For a brief history, see F. González, I. Bolívar, and T. Vásquez, *Violencia política en Colombia: De la nación fragmentada a la construcción del estado* (Bogotá: Cinep 2002). My intention is not at all to diminish or disregard guerrillas' dramatic acts of violence and terror throughout different regions of the country, including kidnappings, assassinations, massacres and displacement. I seek to point out their problematic and effective construction as the most important or the only "enemy" of peace and order at a time when guerrilla actions were made visible in order to legitimise and obscure state and paramilitary violence.

53. Katz, 'Me and My Monkey' (note 2); and Katz, 'Banal Terrorism' (note 46).
54. Stein (note 6). As Katz states: "Banal terrorism is sutured to – and secured in – the performance of security in the everyday environment" (Katz, 'Banal Terrorism' (note 46) p. 351).
55. Rojas (note 43) p. 1.
56. Presidencia de la República and Ministerio de Defensa (note 33) p. 60.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., pp. 60–61.
59. Uribe, quoted in Caracol, "'Apoyemos todos al Presidente Santos, a su Gobierno", pide Uribe en discurso de despedida', *Caracol*, 5 Aug. 2010.
60. More than 6 percent of the country's population. Comisión Colombiana de Juristas, quoted in Ramírez (note 15) p. 97.
61. Rojas (note 43) pp. 1–2.
62. Uribe, quoted in 'Gobierno advierte que red de informantes no estará integrada por menores de edad', *El Espectador*, 27 Jan. 2010.
63. Uribe, quoted in Ramírez (note 15) p. 97.
64. A. Mompotes, 'Los vecinos encubiertos', *El Tiempo*, 11 Aug. 2002.
65. Rojas (note 43) p. 2.
66. 'Melgar Tolima – Día 1: Escalada deportiva – Paintball – Carrera en Avestruz – Soldado por un día', *Colombia Extrema*, n.d., available at <[www.colombiaextrema.com/melgar.htm](http://www.colombiaextrema.com/melgar.htm)>.
67. A. Uribe, 'Discurso de Inauguración de la Feria Internacional de Hotelería', *Presidencia de la República*, 8 June 2010.
68. The entangled spaces of security and insecurity in Colombia are well exemplified by what Stein refers to as "highly uneven regimes of mobility" (Stein (note 6) pp. 26–27). Who can move, and perhaps more importantly, who can stay put, are at the centre of warfare in Colombia. For careful analyses of power and (im)mobility see T. Cresswell, 'Embodiment, Power and the Politics of Mobility: The Case of Female Tramps and Hobos', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24 (1999); T. Cresswell, 'Towards a Politics of Mobility', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28 (2010); and K. Hannam, M. Sheller, and J. Urry, 'Editorial: Mobilities, Immobilities and Moorings', *Mobilities* 1/1 (2006); among others.
69. See N. Hiemstra and A. Mountz, 'Geopolitics', in V. Del Casino, M. Thomas, P. Cloke, and R. Panelli (eds.), *A Companion to Social Geography* (Oxford: Blackwell 2011); and S. Koopman, 'Imperialism Within: Can the Master's Tools Bring Down Empire?', *ACME an International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 7 (2008); S. Koopman, 'Alter-Geopolitics: Other Securities Are Happening', *Geoforum* 42 (2011).
70. Koopman, 'Imperialism Within' (note 70); and Koopman, 'Alter-Geopolitics' (note 70).
71. Derek Gregory defines imaginative counter-geographies as "... deliberate attempts to displace, subvert and contest the imaginative geographies installed by dominant regimes of power, practice and representation" (D. Gregory, 'Imaginative Geographies', in D. Gregory et al. (eds.), *Human Geography Dictionary* (London and New York: Blackwell 2009) p. 371. See also Ingram and Dodds (note 4) p. 3 on how a critique of the war on terror needs to question the imaginative geographies of security and how security cultures are formed.