Introduction

In 1996 the United States "decertified" the Colombian government after then-President Ernesto Samper was accused of having received campaign donations from drug traffickers. In legal terms, the decertification was a consequence of Colombia's noncompliance with counter-narcotics efforts led by the United States. Nevertheless, the U.S. declared that its action was "a decertification not of Colombia but of President Samper . . . , a vote of no confidence for him, not the country" (Marc Thiessen; quoted in Crandall 2002, 119). Despite this alleged distinction, decertification "resulted in the cancellation or delay of US$35 million in counter-narcotics assistance to Colombia" (Crandall 2002, 138), a suspension of trade preferences for Colombian exports, an automatic veto by the United States of Colombian requests for funding from international financial institutions, and a hold on guarantees for U.S. investments in the country (De Rementería 1996).

In response to the action by the United States, President Samper hardened his stance against drug trafficking, increasing aerial fumigation of coca plantations in the Amazon region and tightening controls on the sale of cement and gasoline which are used for processing coca leaf into paste. This crackdown on illicit drug cultivation and processing sparked an uprising among *cocaleros* (coca producers and harvest workers) in the departments (equivalent to states or provinces) of Putumayo, Caquetá and Guaviare, and in the Baja Bota area of the department of Cauca in the western Amazon region (see map 1).[1] In the summer of 1996, more than 200,000 *campesinos*, including women, children and indigenous people, marched from their farms to the nearest towns and department capitals to protest the heightened threat to their livelihood.

It is important to clarify that when inhabitants of this region mention their activity as *cocaleros*, they refer to themselves in several different ways. At certain times they identify themselves as *colonos* (settlers who came from the Andean region of Colombia) and *cocaleros*, while at other times they call themselves *campesino colonos* or *campesino cocaleros*. It is clear throughout this work that they identify more as campesinos and/or colonos than as coca-

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Map 1. Western Amazonia.

leros, given that coca is seen by them as a crop like any other. They distinguish themselves from the "drug trafficking mafia" by asserting their identity as small campesinos or colonos who grow coca leaf. Movement leaders will be quoted repeating this distinction throughout this book. The terms *campesino cocaleros* and *cocalero campesinos* will be used without distinction.

This book analyzes this cocalero uprising as a "diagnostic event" that "reveals ongoing contests and conflicts and competitions and the efforts to

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Figure 1. Women and children at the cocalero marches. The poster says, “Yes to the strike, No to fumigation.” (León Darío Pelaez, Casa Editorial, *El Tiempo*)

prevent, suppress, or repress them” (Moore 1987, 730). It was also a “critical event” as described by Das (1995, 5–6) in reference to consequences: “new models of action came into being, which redefined traditional categories . . . equally new forms were acquired by a variety of political actors.”[2] The book also examines a paradox: it was precisely the illegality of coca that enabled the campesinos to put the region’s social and economic crisis onto the national and international agenda, finally overcoming the government’s apparent lack of interest in their plight.

During the cocalero uprising and mobilization of July–August 1996, Colombia came face to face with the previously unrecognized reality that its place in the Andean cocaine production chain had been transformed. Although Colombia had long been a processor and distributor of cocaine, by 1996 the country was the second largest producer of unprocessed coca leaf in the world. The following year, Colombia overtook Peru as the largest producer and remains so as of 2009. Coca had been grown by some indigenous groups in what is now Colombia since time immemorial, and its use was a significant part of their cultural heritage, but the 1996 cocalero marches

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drew the country's attention to a new social phenomenon: the cultivation of coca had increased dramatically to supply the international drug trade. Large quantities of coca were being grown by small campesinos in marginal and peripheral areas of the country.

The first of these regions was the western Amazon, comprising the departments of Putumayo, Caquetá, and Guaviare, where cultivation of coca as a commodity began in the 1970s. This was an area where the state had never successfully consolidated its control. In fact, the region was dominated by non-state armed actors at the very time of the 1996 marches. The state's presence was so weak that guerrillas and drug traffickers were free to carry out their illegal activities without interference, as became evident in my interview with Putumayan campesino Miguel Lucero. Miguel recalled how the United Nations arrived in his department in 1991 for the first voluntary coca eradication and alternative development program, and how the anti-narcotics police arrived at the same time. According to Miguel people began to believe that they would have to stop growing coca, but someone said, "Wait. Maybe there'll be a way to do business with the anti-narcotics police." "Of course," Miguel told me, "people who had more money got some resources together so they could make offers if it became necessary, and the anti-narcotics police made alliances with producers, so coca survived."[3] In fact, coca not only survived but spread, since in practice it was not being suppressed by the police who were ready to accept bribes.

While the 1996 cocalero movement constituted a coherent social phenomenon across the three departments in the Amazon, it unfolded and was resolved differently in each of them. The movement had different outcomes in Putumayo, Caquetá, and Guaviare as a result of the varied organizational histories and distinct politico-spatial identities of these departments, among other factors.[4] This book's analysis will focus primarily on the cocalero social movement in Putumayo but will reference certain moments of the social movement in the other two departments.

The Setting

Amazonia—and specifically the department of Putumayo—has always existed "at the margin," both geographically and conceptually, with respect to Colombia's central order. The characteristics of the tropical forest and the inaccessible location of the region made it marginal to the rest of the country. Putumayo was not even made a department until 1991. Up to that

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time it was territory that depended on the central government for all political and administrative matters, with no say in the choice of local authorities or policies.

Today, the department of Putumayo's thirteen municipalities depend on only two roads to move people and goods to and from the center of the country.[5] One road across the Sibundoy Valley in Upper Putumayo runs between the municipality of Mocoa and the city of Pasto in the department of Nariño. It is almost completely unpaved and takes seven to nine hours for a motor vehicle to travel. Another road from Mocoa goes to Pitalito in the department of Huila. This road was fully paved by the end of 2007 as a result of persistent popular demands that began in 1986. This trip takes six hours (these areas are depicted in maps 2 and 3).

The limited public transportation within Putumayo consists of service by bus or improvised bus (fashioned on a small truck frame) between town centers (*cascos urbanos*) on mostly unpaved roads.[6] Although the poor condition of these inter-municipal roads is a problem, campesinos complain more about the condition of the secondary and tertiary roads used to reach their own *veredas*, the rural precincts.[7] People commonly travel these minor roads by foot and frequently cross rivers and streams without the benefit of bridges. When roads are impassable for motor vehicles, campesinos must walk hours or days to reach the nearest town center. For example, to reach the center of Puerto Asís from the veredas near the Ecuadorean border one must walk two or three hours to reach a bus route, ride two hours on the bus, spend twenty minutes crossing the Putumayo River by ferry, and then travel ten minutes in another small vehicle. To get to Puerto Asís from a vereda on the Lower Putumayo River near the Piñuña River, one must walk up to three hours, wait for a boat that comes from Puerto Leguízamo, travel three to four hours on the river, and walk ten minutes from the river into town. The price of river transport, currently 50,000 pesos (US$26.90) per person, is an additional obstacle.[8] During the rainy seasons, transportation becomes more complicated, as the water rises and makes many rivers and streams impossible to cross without the use of small boats.

Not surprisingly, Putumayo is also marginal with respect to the market economy. This is a key factor with regard to why coca is so strongly preferred over crops such as corn and plantain that are grown in other regions. Unlike indigenous peoples with a coca tradition, campesinos in the western Amazon think of the crop exclusively as a means of economic survival in a context of inadequate public services.[9]

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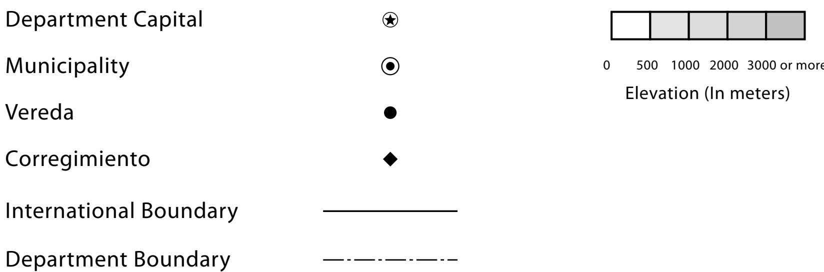

Map 2. Area of fieldwork: Putumayo and Baja Bota of Cauca.

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The Construction of a Marginal and Uncivilized Territory

This book takes its place within a body of scholarship (Aretxaga 2003; Das and Poole 2004; Tsing 1993, 1994; Borneman 1992; Ferguson 2001) that has called attention to the importance of borderlines and margins as peripheries where inhabitants find themselves between inclusion and exclusion, legality and illegality, order and disorder, ruled and unruled. These ambiguous spaces pose threats and demands and contest the relationship of their inhabitants to the central state, although they are legally intrinsic to the state and its constitution.

Tsing (1994, 279–80) defines margins as places where "contradictory discourses overlap, or where discrepant kinds of meaning-making converge," and she calls attention "to the tension between the constraining versus the empowering aspects of 'culture.'" The forms of dialogue established between the state and its margins are paramount in shaping communities. To explain the configuration of socio-economic and political processes in the region, we need first a historical analysis of the cultural and political construction of marginality by the state, and second an analysis of the marginalized people's perceptions and interpretations of the state and of their own situation. The case of Putumayo provides an opportunity to make sense of the role of the nation-state in social experience by examining the meanings and interpretations that people ascribe to the large-scale context in which they are immersed (Herzfeld 1985). My aim is to explore the dialectic between periphery and center within the nation-state from the perspectives of these different actors. I will examine the way in which this marginal space is imagined and constructed by both the central state and its inhabitants as well as how these actors resist, reinforce, and reconfigure its ascribed meanings.

Due to fierce resistance by the native population and its dense forest environment, Putumayo remained "uncivilized" for three hundred years after the Spanish conquest. Beginning in the early nineteenth century it was populated by people displaced from the central areas of Colombia identified as colonos. These colonos have been depicted ever since as migrants without roots—therefore without any regional identity—and, since the 1960s, as people in search of "easy money." This population has become the first and weakest link in the global chain of cocaine trafficking and has long been subject to the de facto "rule" of guerrilla armies dominating the region. As a result, the central state represents the region as uncivilized and dis-

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orderly, where inhabitants follow alternative codes of behavior and justice beyond its hegemonic control. In sum, the region poses a challenge to the status quo. Since guerrillas and drug traffickers have operated in Putumayo for over thirty years, outsiders associate its inhabitants with the barbarity and violence of these groups. The population is seen as contaminated by these traits and is accused of promoting violence by accepting and submitting to these forces. When paramilitaries entered Putumayo in 1997 to fight the guerrillas, the predicament caused by such perceptions was worsened. The paramilitaries accused many in the local population of being "guerrilla auxiliaries" and declared such collaborators "military targets." Well-documented ties between paramilitary and Colombian military forces have made this stigma even more dangerous for residents.[10]

The Colombian state has been driven by a longstanding crisis of sovereignty to exert control over the peripheral areas of its territory (Lefebrve 1991). Meta-narratives offered by the central government refer to the "re-conquest" of the territory: the cleansing of the region of illegal crops and laboratories, the relocation of migrants and adventurers and the mending of a social fabric destroyed by violence and coca. A more recent example is a Colombian senator's description of anti-guerrilla marches held in 2008 in Colombia's big cities as "against barbarity" and "a symbol of civilization and tolerance."[11] Social benefits such as incorporation of the borderland into the nation-state and the imposition of the rule of law, as well as the state's attempt to acquire a monopoly over the use of arms, have legitimized military operations and aerial fumigation programs in the area.[12] The military is pictured as advancing from the center on a civilizing mission, conquistadors arriving to set the periphery in order. Many of the actions and debates before, during, and after the 1996 cocalero mobilization can be viewed as struggles over the meaning of civilization and the transformation of uncivil into civil behavior responsive to the nation-state (Keane 1998).

The coca growers contested their marginalization by demanding their rights as citizens under the law. They disputed the state's goal of bringing the rule of law to the region by enacting their citizenship on their own, as a way of being included in the legal and "civilized" nation-state. Consequently, it can be argued that the cocaleros were simultaneously inside and outside the law. As coca growers they were considered criminals, yet they rejected that status by exercising their right to participate as citizens.

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State Exclusion vis-à-vis Citizen Participation

Dryzek (1996) has noted that the state itself engenders social movements by being "actively or passively exclusive."[13] In his discussion of Latin American social movements, Foweraker questions whether these movements in fact expand the public sphere—as has been assumed in social movement theory (for example, in Cohen and Arato 1994)—calling attention to the characteristics of Latin American public space, which "has been lacking, or is far more restricted [than in Europe or the United States], with the state a bulwark of social and economic exclusion" (Foweraker 1995, 32). This picture becomes more complex in Putumayo when to the historical exclusion of the Amazon region by the central state we add the presence of armed non-state actors and illicit ventures, which further both the state exclusion and the feeling of abandonment. The state intervened in the zone not to meet its responsibilities and compensate those who suffered by its absence but to represent them as criminals and punish them with violence reinforcing their exclusion and marginality. In response, politicized collective identities (Laclau 1994) emerged and gave birth to a social movement. Moreover, in Colombia a dirty war against grassroots leaders has been waged since the 1980s with the cooperation or acquiescence of the armed forces to thwart the opening of new political spaces. With this in mind, we can argue that the state has been both actively and passively exclusive in maintaining the long-term structural marginality of Amazonia.

Aretxaga (2003, 407) has pointed out that state "exclusion is always present as a potentiality, a *sine qua non* of the law and the state as an embodiment of its form" and she concludes that "those who are excluded are included through their exclusion." Though the cocalero social movement was born out of struggles against political and other types of exclusion, it sought to redress the campesino cocaleros' exclusion through their participation and influence in government, in particular *concertación* (a cooperative effort between the movement and government agencies to provide basic services).

Furthermore, the relation between the cocalero social movement and the state was strategic to the continuity of the movement itself. The fact that the movement depended on its engagement with the state for its existence meant that its social identity was not an autonomous phenomenon. The line between the internal and external realities of the movement was as diffuse as the distinction between the contingent and the essential. In the light of

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a social opening or at a moment of social change, hegemony as "a type of political relation" results from interactions between multiple factors. Thus, considering that "autonomy, far from being incompatible with hegemony, is a form of hegemonic construction" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 140), I argue that the cocalero movement sought to interact with and exert its influence on the hegemonic state discourse of democracy and citizen participation as a form of its own empowerment. Having experienced their exclusion as a negation of citizenship, the campesinos' demand for citizenship rights and inclusion of themselves and the region in the nation-state was a meaningful political act with cultural implications for their regional identity. In a country where campesino displacement is commonplace and despite the fact that many of them or their parents had already been displaced from other regions, the cocaleros insisted that Putumayo was the place where they legitimately belonged, from which they would resist further displacement.

In the context of exclusion, the state also became a nucleus of affection. The population desired and demanded its presence precisely because they felt abandoned by it. Finding a way to come to terms with the state so that it would take care of its citizens the way a responsible father meets the needs of his children became the motor of the movement. For the campesino colonos the return of a paternalistic state (*estado paternalista*) was a form of reparation after years of mistreatment.[14] I argue that the *politics of recognition* (Taylor 1995) was at the core of the emergence and constitution of collective identity in the cocalero social movement and its demands on the state.

The Cocalero Social Movement and the Recomposition of Collective Identities

The state's skewed representations of the western Amazon and the repressive policies applied and legitimized as a result of those characterizations helped trigger the 1996 social movement. Not only did this movement create a collective social identity for its members as cocaleros, but it also redefined this label, used previously only to stigmatize and criminalize them. In Putumayo, an imposed collective identity enabled a subaltern group to mobilize and articulate subjective positions in order to contest the regional political and ideological hegemony. Through collective action to protest fumigation of their coca crops, campesino cocaleros rejected the notions that they had

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no roots in the Amazon region and that they only wanted to enrich themselves as individuals and return "home" to their places of origin.

Cocaleros cast their social movement as a civic moment—*civic* in reference to citizenship, civility, and being "good citizens" (Moliner 1998, 646) as in the phrase "a civic act"—to encapsulate the message that the residents of Putumayo wanted to convey to the central government. The movement adopted various strategies to call attention to the needs of Putumayan citizens without using force or violence to get their way. In other words, they behaved as good citizens should. This was their response to their portrayal as barbarians or uncivilized people who use force over reason.

However, these negative identifying markers still led to the use of repressive measures in response to the civic mobilizations. Although the marches were not violent, similar demonstrations had been characterized since the 1980s as "guerrilla instigated." This blanket portrayal denied the region's inhabitants their agency and subsumed their demands, their needs, and the construction of their collective local and regional identities into the dynamics of the armed conflict and international war on drugs.

The cocalero movement can be categorized as a "new social movement," a newly structured base of collective action that transcended class struggle with struggles over meanings (Escobar 1992a, 1992b). A redefined cocalero identity emerged in the search for institutional reforms to increase members' opportunities to participate in decision making. Although it can be argued that small-scale campesino cocaleros have social demands as a subordinate social class, their condition as such was not what defined their social movement.[15]

The campesinos' self-identification as small coca growers and harvesters—in spite of the illegality of these activities—determined the configuration of the social movement. It was their open acknowledgment of this role that provided an opportunity to negotiate as valid interlocutors with state representatives and to propose their own alternatives for the region. Furthermore, the cocalero campesinos became empowered as a social group as they began to show they could defend their "right to have rights" (Arendt 1949) and right to be heard. This book describes how the cocalero movement fought not only for social and political rights but for civil rights, democratization, the protection of human dignity and life, and for overall recognition of campesinos as Putumayan citizens.

The movement's exercise of the rights of citizens enabled cocalero cam-

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pesinos to establish a new role for themselves in relation to the state that affected the configuration of the state at the local level. In an area experiencing sharp conflict, this meant the state recognizing how Putumayan communities were affected by government social and economic policies and, above all, by political violence.

Local State Formation and Civil Society in a Conflict-Ridden Region

Various authors have challenged the conceptualization of the state as monolithic (Abrams 1988; Corrigan and Sayer 1985; Joseph and Nugent 1994; Mitchell 1991, 1999; Aretxaga 2003; Trouillot 2001; Hansen and Stepputat 2001). Their work enriches the discussion of local state formation in Putumayo, a region where the state's monopoly over violence is contested by the presence of two non-state armed actors (the guerrillas and the paramilitaries), and where internal state fissures are so deep that local mayors at times have become part of a *non-state within the state*. Putumayo is an example of how "margins break up the solidity often ascribed to the state" (Das and Poole 2004, 20).

I will analyze the ambiguities and ambivalence of relations between central and local state representatives as well as relations among cocalero movement leaders, local and central state officials, and guerrillas. We will observe a series of strategic alliances, negotiations, manifestations of resistance, and for the most part, a blurring of group boundaries. In the ethnographic analysis of the negotiations following the cocalero marches it became apparent that the state was "a significantly unbounded terrain of powers and techniques, an ensemble of discourses, rules, and practices cohabiting in limited, tension-ridden, often contradictory relation with one another" (Brown 1995, 174). Moreover, the campesinos' feeling of abandonment was shared by local representatives such as mayors and other officials, who blurred the line between the state and civil society by ceasing to identify themselves as agents of the former and becoming active members of the latter.

Putumayan civil society also demanded the state's support in gaining autonomy from non-state armed actors. Coca growers were seeking to free themselves from dependence on illegal armed actors with their participation in civil society and interaction with the state as an active provider of services. When the cocalero movement sought a commitment from the state to allow for its democratic participation, the notion of civil society was im-

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bued with new meaning. In the context of the Colombian armed conflict, the usual boundaries between civil society and the state are blurred; it becomes necessary to reconsider the extent to which strengthening civil society requires autonomy from or opposition to the state. I argue that in conflict-ridden zones, an alternative model is emerging where there is continuity between the state and civil society, each seeking to establish cooperative relations with the other to oppose violence and bring state presence back to areas where it has been wholly or partially absent.

In Putumayo, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC) acts like a state (Aretxaga 2003) and fulfills the functions of a government by exercising local power and territorial control, regulating the illegal coca market, and enacting laws and norms enforced with strict sanctions. However, the two governing powers that exercise juridical functions in this zone—the local state and FARC—do not necessarily supplant each other. The tension that exists between the state and the guerrillas on the one hand, and between the people of Putumayo and their two "governments" on the other, makes the definition of boundaries between the state and civil society even more complex, as will be discussed. Foucault ([1976] 1994, 1979) emphasizes the generalization of discipline and power to the extent that social subjects appear to be condemned to subjection, and to the extent that political or ideological opposition to the disciplinarian structures is nonexistent. But the cocalero movement challenged and contested campesino subjection to both the state and the guerillas. Throughout this ethnography of the 1996 cocalero movement I have sought to emphasize the agency of its subjects.

Natural Leaders: The Central Actors in the Cocalero Movement

The leaders of the Civic Movement for the Comprehensive Development of Putumayo are the central actors of this ethnography. I interviewed them, transcribed those interviews and their public speeches during various phases of the movement, and used the resulting texts throughout my analysis. Because these leaders wanted the history of the movement to be written, they contributed openly and generously to this work. When this research was published in Spanish it circulated widely in the region and was welcomed as a recognition and validation of campesino struggles (M. Ramírez 2001). Now I wish to give these subaltern and situated actors the opportunity to share their understandings of coca cultivation and armed conflict in

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Putumayo with a wider audience. A careful examination of the movement leaders' arguments and discourse is thus at the core of this book.

These individuals are defined in the region as "natural leaders." Huber Ballesteros, a unionist, explained the meaning of this term:

> A natural leader is a grassroots leader who starts in the countryside and stays there. We've all gone through the process, but when we understand what kind of organization we need, and that we need to take up other goals—political and economic goals that may be national in scope—then they say that we're not so natural anymore. But it seems to me that if you're a campesino, then you continue to be a natural leader. You don't become a leader through things like academic studies, although some do study when they have the opportunity. But you continue to be a natural leader not from what you learn in classes but from a step-by-step process of self-improvement. Some go faster and some go slower; some make more progress and others make less, but that's the way it is.[16]

Recognition as a campesino is key to being considered a natural leader: a member of the community struggling to improve the welfare of his or her fellows. As natural leaders attain formal education, they gain access to social and cultural capital that enables them to make connections between local and national struggles.[17] It may seem that such individuals would cease to be considered natural leaders, but as Ballesteros clearly articulates, it is a person's campesino origins and continued campesino identity that gives him or her legitimacy as a "natural" representative of a campesino community.

The leaders of the cocalero social movement were not only campesinos but also colonos and representatives of colonos as a social group. Some came to the western Amazon from other marginalized areas of Colombia where they had also settled as colonos, such as Caquetá in the case of Ramiro Grisales or Arauca in the case of Luis Emiro Mosquera. They arrived in Putumayo during the 1980s, uprooted a second time due to their participation in leftist and alternative political parties. Other leaders such as Gilberto Sánchez had been in the department longer. Sánchez took up a leadership role after participating in government workshops and programs during the 1980s.[18]

Under the National Rehabilitation Plan (Plan Nacional de Rehabilitación, PNR), assemblies called Rehabilitation Councils were established in all the

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municipalities of the western Amazon and the Baja Bota of Cauca.[19] These councils were to be spaces where government officials and community representatives could sit down together "to channel community demands and assure the appropriate use of resources provided by the Plan for the development of a more democratic political culture and local political leadership" (National Rehabilitation Plan 1994, 14). Local leaders and community representatives participating in the Rehabilitation Councils learned to negotiate with the government and became familiar with participatory democracy and legal ways to defend their rights. The PNR also held skills development (*capacitación*) courses for community leaders. These courses are remembered in the region as one of the great achievements of the PNR because the skills acquired by local leaders allowed communities to communicate their needs and proposals to the government effectively. These new spaces for negotiation with the state and organized civic participation have been a feature of the local political culture since the days of the PNR, and they became central to the 1996 Putumayo cocalero social movement. The leaders' negotiating skills were incorporated into the struggle against crop fumigation and were used above all to pressure the state to meet its constitutional obligations.

What did all of the movement leaders have in common? They rejected the use of arms and sought to increase spaces for popular participation. They had all chosen to participate in politics to lend a future voice to colono campesinos, the department, and the region. For example, Ramiro Grisales was elected to Mocoa's municipal council in 1988 and to the departmental assembly in the 1990s. Gilberto Sánchez was municipal councilman to Puerto Asís starting in 1992. Both of them, and most of the other movement leaders who entered politics, belonged to alternative political parties.

Thus, events in Putumayo led by these "natural leaders" also provide an opportunity to examine how civic movements develop into political and electoral movements. As we shall see, the region has experienced ambiguous political processes, with advances and reversals in degree of autonomy from the traditional parties and from the guerrillas. New forces seeking to find autonomous space within local politics are articulated in accordance with the conjuncture of relations between the regional and national forces that impede or strengthen their attempts. In this book we will closely consider the actions and positions of Putumayo's "natural leaders," who can also be considered local intellectuals (Mallon 1995, 323) or peasant intellectuals (Feierman 1990).

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Fieldwork in a Conflict-ridden Zone

I did the bulk of my fieldwork in 1998 and the first half of 1999, working intensively in the Putumayan municipality of Puerto Asís and in the municipality of Piamonte in the Baja Bota region of Cauca. In addition, I spent time in other Putumayan municipalities for purposes of comparison. I returned to Putumayo in 2001 when Plan Colombia—a security and antidrug assistance program funded in excess of $6 billion by the United States beginning in fiscal year 2000—was being implemented, and I visited several times in 2001–8 to monitor its implementation, the responses of coca growers and government officials to its anti-drug, counter-insurgency, and counter-terrorism policies, and the way that the cocalero social movement was adapting to changing circumstances. Between 2000 and 2004 I updated the data and wrote a chapter on the implementation of Plan Colombia. I made further updates in 2006–7.

When I was collecting data in the region early in 1998, the paramilitaries and FARC were in the midst of an intelligence war. Each was concerned that unknown individuals might be informants for the other side and both were carefully monitoring the comings and goings of outsiders in Puerto Asís. To establish a role for myself in the community, I stayed in town with the family of a female anthropology student at the University of Popayán, and introduced myself as the young woman's professor there to supervise her thesis work on the oral history of Santa Rosa, a municipality in the Baja Bota. In this capacity I was able to conduct interviews without raising suspicions that I was a spy or a possible enemy who could use people's words against them. As I mentioned above, most people were ready to be interviewed, believing that the history of their struggle should be recorded and that their points of view on coca should be heard outside the region.

Working with this student, I learned that we had to keep our physical distance from the police station in Puerto Asís to avoid being considered police informants. Even if we had to take a very indirect route to walk somewhere, it was important not to pass by it. I could not visit the jail to interview imprisoned cocaleros or anyone else related to the drug trade, such as drivers or processors, because that would have linked me to them and their activities. We were advised not to raise suspicion by staying in town more than a few months. We were to arrive, do some work, and then leave as people expect researchers to do. I extended my fieldwork to Piamonte in the Baja Bota so as not to spend too much time in any one place.

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The Baja Bota is an ideal spot for the study of marginalization because it is peripheral in both national and departmental terms. It shares all of the social, cultural, political, and economic characteristics of the western Amazon, including the dominant presence of FARC guerrillas (who use the area as a refuge due to its extreme isolation) and the intensification of coca cultivation in the last two decades. Although the book centers on the cocalero movement in Putumayo, my research in the Baja Bota of Cauca deepened my understanding of the social movement by providing a basis of comparison.

An additional advantage to working in the Baja Bota as well as in Putumayo was that I was able to observe the attitude of FARC regarding the establishment of the new municipality of Piamonte in 1996. This was the first time the state had attempted to impose civil authority in an area where the guerrillas had theretofore exercised absolute control. FARC had been in the region for several decades and the population was used to seeing the local guerrilla commander as the primary authority in their area. FARC frequently called meetings about local matters that were attended by community leaders and members. The fact that local people freely discussed the outcomes of these meetings helped me to understand their perspective on FARC and its role in their lives. Due to the guerrillas' firm control of the Baja Bota at the time of my fieldwork, there was no paramilitary presence. In this sense the Baja Bota was a safer place to do fieldwork than Puerto Asís. Since the area was not contested, I did not have to worry about being targeted by paramilitaries and had to gain permission to work only from FARC.

Stating my research objectives clearly was essential to my own personal safety. After attending a meeting to discuss planning for the new municipality of Piamonte, I was approached by a member of FARC in civilian clothes. He was a *miliciano*, a guerrilla assigned to intelligence duties in town. "So," he said, "you're the one who's researching the culture of coca for COLCIENCIAS?"[20] When I realized that he knew I was a researcher, I thought that somehow he must know what I was doing and that I should answer his questions. Several people in the area had advised me that this was the best policy. I responded, "Well, the notion that there is a 'culture of coca' is debatable and that's discussed in the research, but I don't see it that way. Do you think there's a new culture that relates specifically to growing coca? Maybe coca is just another crop, another way for campesinos to get by."

My student assistant got nervous and moved away. The miliciano asked me why my friend had left and I answered, "Because she's from Puerto Asís.

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You know that people here are very careful about talking to strangers and you haven't really introduced yourself. Also, she'll still be here in the region after I'm back in Bogotá. I can leave when I want to and there's less danger that someone will accuse me of being with one or another armed group. Anyway," I said, "if there's any question about the project I'm the one to ask because I'm the director." He then gave me a copy of a FARC communiqué about their campaign to protect the natural environment. It said that people should not dump chemicals used to process coca leaf into the rivers. He said, "If you or I call a community meeting to talk about these environmental issues they wouldn't come but if FARC calls a meeting they show up. You're an anthropologist. Can you explain why that is?" I hadn't told him that I was an anthropologist so that made me even more convinced that he knew a lot about me. "Well," I said, "people obey FARC because they're the authority here, but I think it's possible to get people together if it's for something that interests them."

He returned to the topic of the chemical waste and pollution produced by processing coca leaf and asked if it was possible to propose a project and apply for funding to promote environmentally sustainable practices. "Yes," I said, "but the proposal would have to come from some organization or institution." The miliciano then asked me why he had not seen me in the eastern part of Piamonte where coca was being mono-cropped. There had recently been a shooting when some of the officials of the new municipal government were visiting veredas to give talks on the municipal land-use plan. I had been traveling with them but when the official was shot the tour was cut short. I told the miliciano what had happened, but he said that the shooting had been investigated and determined to have been an isolated act. "People were angry that experts were being hired from outside the municipality to work in the municipal government," he said, but the problem had been cleared up and now it was safe to go back to the veredas. He was implicitly giving me permission to continue my research. Once I acquired that permission, people were willing to open their doors to me.

When I went to look for my assistant, she warned me that the man had not introduced himself and that you have to know who you're talking to. I told her that I answered his questions because he knew a lot about me. When a local woman came up to us, I asked her who that man was whom we had been talking to and she confirmed that he was a FARC miliciano. The next day I saw the miliciano in the street and I started to greet him, but he turned away after gesturing to me that we should not recognize each other. I had passed the test and he had no further interest in talking to me.

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In my fieldwork I utilized the cocalero movement as a central theme and conducted semi-structured interviews of differently socially situated actors (local, regional, and central government officials, coca growers, movement leaders, and others). I used these interviews to describe and analyze these actors' perceptions and interpretations of illegal crops, the movement, the region, and the local and central governments. I collected movement narratives that revealed multiple tensions between the actors. As an ethnographer I analyzed related documents and local texts as social practice in order to demonstrate how discourse structures behavior (Foucault 1971, 1973). I examined newspaper, television, and radio interviews of peasant leaders, government officials, and NGO representatives to reveal how discourse shaped the views of the differently situated actors, including their points of agreement and difference. I also examined written materials, including newspapers, as cultural texts (Gupta 1995).

The Structure of the Book

The first chapter provides a historical outline of the colonization of Colombia's peripheral areas during the twentieth century, revealing that colonos were living in these areas when coca arrived and turned them into cocaleros. This chapter also gives a historical perspective on the arrival of guerrillas and paramilitaries in Putumayo.

The second chapter provides an overview of coca production in Colombia from 1994 to 2006, comparing it with the cases of Peru and Bolivia in order to understand the market dynamics of coca production in a regional context. It describes the unfolding of antidrug policies promoted by the United States, emphasizing how in Colombia the drug war became, in practice, a counter-insurgency war that legitimized state violence. This chapter also describes the process of coca cultivation, harvesting, and processing in local laboratories, and provides ethnographic vignettes of daily life in a region rife with armed actors and drug traffickers.

The third chapter describes the civic movements of the 1970s and 1980s and discusses the movements of the 1990s as predecessors to the cocalero social movement. It discusses how the conversion of civic movements into political movements has become practice in this marginal region, as a way to make demands heard by the central government.

Chapter 4 examines how the constructed marginality of the Amazon region mediates social, political, and cultural practices and affects central government policies. It analyzes the organization of the social movement

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and its submerged networks, emphasizing the ambiguous alliance between cocalero leaders and guerrillas. The analysis develops the argument that collective identities in the Amazon region are shaped by a sense of exclusion, abandonment and misrecognition by the state.

Chapter 5 relates the principal negotiating goals of movement leaders and maintains that this social movement focused on one fundamental demand: that the Colombian nation-state recognize the campesinos in their condition as social actors rather than criminals and acknowledge their "right to have rights." It also describes the suspension of negotiations, the development of the initial agreement, the nature of the final agreement, and the end of the mobilization. The description of these events provides additional detail for the ethnography of the social movement.

Chapter 6 examines local state formation in Putumayo through the analysis of governance practices of both FARC and the national and local state representatives during the negotiations.

Chapter 7 analyzes the strategies used by movement leaders after the negotiations to continue representing the cocalero campesinos. It develops the argument that the politics of citizenship was at the core of the cocalero social movement and that in this conflict-ridden region a redefinition of civil society is occurring.

Chapter 8 explores what has happened to the cocalero movement and its central demand for citizenship in Putumayo under the strictures of the U.S. war on drugs. Because Putumayo contained 54 percent of the Colombian total of illegal crops in 2000, it became the epicenter of Plan Colombia. Aerial spraying was intensified and alternative development plans began to be implemented as compensation for fumigation and forced eradication.

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