

MOBILIZATION OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED WOMEN IN BOGOTÁ COLOMBIA

By

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To the women of La Red who inspire me with their strength and humble me with their
laughter

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANMUCIC	Asociación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas e Indígenas de Colombia
CODHES	Consultancy for Human Rights and the Displaced
ELN	National Liberation Army
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMP	La Alianza Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz
INCORA	National Land Reform Institute
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SMO	Social Movement Organization
TAN	Transnational Advocacy Network
UAC	United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UP	La Unión Patriótica

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Colombia's civil war, which has lasted more than half a century, has left an unfortunate legacy in its wake. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the total number of internally displaced persons in Colombia is currently estimated at over 3.3 million. Of these, it has been estimated that 55% of all internally displaced people are women.

Recent scholarship by Colombian scholars has begun to document the disproportionate impact of displacement on women. These studies tend to focus on how the act of displacement is itself motivated by gender considerations, how displacement ruptures the traditional female/private, male/public dichotomy, and the ways in which women are able to negotiate identity and create new roles for themselves as a result of being displaced. However, to date, there is a lack of research on the ability of displaced women to organize in order to make demands regarding the protection of their rights.

The objective of this thesis is to analyze a group of displaced women organized as *La red de mujeres en acción hacia el futuro* (*Network of women in action towards the future*). In relaying the stories of the women of *La Red*, this thesis aims to contribute to

the growing literature about the gendered dimensions of displacement in Colombia. This thesis will also provide a critical analysis of *La Red's* progress in carving out a political space for their group in terms of lobbying the Colombian Constitutional Court for the protection of the rights of displaced women. In order to provide an explanation of the factors that facilitated the formation of *La Red*, I rely on social movement theory. By analyzing the specific case of *La Red*, I propose some ideas about the ability of displaced groups to play a role in the Colombian political system and the possibility of these groups to effect changes in the lives of the displaced population.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Objective

In mid-February of 2009, 200 displaced¹ Colombian families seized a park in downtown Bogotá. Largely ignored by U.S. newspapers, the seizure represented one of the largest demonstrations of unified, collective action by the displaced population in Colombia since the 2000 seizure of an office of the International Red Cross in Bogotá by 100 displaced families. Parque Tercer Milenio was seized in order to protest the lack of housing for displaced families, rising unemployment amongst the displaced, and the tardy and ineffective services provided to the displaced population by the Colombian government.²

The seizure of Parque Tercer Milenio is significant for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the existence of thousands of disheveled and desperate people living in this makeshift, metropolitan refugee camp, serves to illustrate the enormity and the urgency of the crisis of displacement in Colombia today. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the total number of internally displaced persons (IDP) in Colombia is currently estimated at over 3.3 million which places Colombia right below Sudan in worldwide rankings (Springer 2006). Secondly, reports published about the seizure have drawn attention to the fact that the majority of the park's occupants were displaced women (CODHES 2009a; 2009b). In this sense, the composition of the

1 The term "internally displaced" refers to a person who has been uprooted from their home due to violence or natural disaster but has not crossed official state boundaries and so cannot be called a refugee

2 In late July, the park was vacated due to the discovery of swine flu in a few of the park's occupants and a negotiated settlement to the demands of the displaced population is currently being undertaken by a representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Colombian government.

park's occupants mirrors the national reality of displacement as more than 55% of Colombia's internally displaced people are women whose husbands or male family members have been killed in the violence, forcibly disappeared, or have joined an armed group (Ramírez 2001). The preponderance of displaced women in Colombia has led to what some have called the "feminization" of the conflict (Ramírez 2001).

The disproportionate impact of displacement on women in Colombia has been well-documented by other researchers. The existing studies of gender and displacement explore how the act of displacement is itself motivated by gender considerations (Ramírez 2001; Meertens 2001), how displacement ruptures the traditional female/private, male/public dichotomy (Meertens 2001; Henao Arcila 2004), and the ways in which women are able to negotiate identity and create new roles for themselves as a result of being displaced (Meertens 2004; Osorio Pérez 2008). However, little has been written about displaced women's capacity to organize and mobilize in order to make demands upon their government towards the protection of their rights. The literature that does delve into these issues mostly describes the role of major women's organizations, comprised of women of all backgrounds, displaced or otherwise, who collectively lobby for a very broad spectrum of rights for a broad population of women (Cockburn 2005; Rojas 2004).

The objective of this thesis is to analyze a group of displaced women called *La red de mujeres en acción hacia el futuro* (henceforth referred to as *La Red*). In relaying the stories of the women of *La Red*, this thesis aims to contribute to the growing literature referenced above that highlights the gendered dimensions of displacement in Colombia. However, this thesis seeks to go beyond descriptive studies of displaced women by

examining the significant personal success these women have achieved in overcoming the destructive and disempowering experience inherent in forcible displacement. This thesis will also provide a critical analysis of *La Red's* more modest success in carving out a political space for their group in terms of lobbying the Colombian Constitutional Court for the protection of the rights of displaced women. Finally, I employ the use of social movement theory in order to put forth an explanation of the factors that have facilitated the formation of displaced groups such as *La Red*. By using *La Red* as an example, this thesis proposes some ideas about the ability of displaced groups to play a role in the Colombian political system and the possibility of these groups to effect real changes in the lives of the displaced population.

The Study

I first met the women of *La Red* in the summer of 2009 at a forum entitled, *Verdad, justicia y reparación para las mujeres víctimas de la violencia*.³ This forum was organized by various Colombian women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including *La Ruta Pacífica* and *Casa de la Mujer*. A representative from *Casa de la Mujer* whom I had interviewed early in the course of my research invited me to the forum and promised to introduce me to a group of displaced women who would be attending. On the day of the forum, during the afternoon break, the *Casa* representative confidently steered me over to a group of women who were sitting on the floor of the convention center eating lunch, laughing and chatting. I nervously introduced myself, explained my research and asked if they would be interested in being interviewed. The women surveyed me with a mixture of curiosity and skepticism. Nevertheless, in a

³ Translation: Truth, justice and reparation for female victims of violence.

wildly optimistic gesture, they invited me to sit with them for the duration of the lunch period where they asked me all about myself and why I was interested in them. They were very curious as to why a young American woman with no familial ties to Colombia would be so interested in displacement.

I explained how I had first stumbled upon the issue of displacement in Colombia when I worked with Colombian asylum seekers in Miami and how later, as a graduate student, I became even more absorbed in the topic. When the afternoon break ended and the women assembled once again into the auditorium for the second half of the forum, I was asked to sit with them. When the meeting ended, they invited me to one of their meetings which would take place at the house of one of the members the following day. Thus began my relationship with the women of *La Red*.

La Red is a group of fifteen displaced women who were brought together by *Casa de la Mujer* in 2005. The women who make up *La Red* share the same stories as the occupants of Parque Tercer Milenio. Arriving in Bogotá, where they have no family or friends, rarely finding stable employment due to their lack of educational achievement or sometimes due to the stigma attached to displaced people, these women are for all intents and purposes cast aside by society and marginalized by the Colombian government which is incapable of providing adequate services to this needy population.

Despite their disadvantageous position, the women of *La Red* have overcome significant obstacles in transforming themselves from victims into agents. Through their participation in *La Red*, these women have begun to lobby for their rights and for the rights of all displaced women in Colombia. *La Red* is primarily concerned with ensuring the implementation of public policies aimed at the displaced population and monitoring

the implementation of the Colombian Constitutional Court's mandate regarding the rights of displaced women.

In my interviews with the women of *La Red*, I was interested in their family and community structures prior to their displacement, how their displacements had occurred, and what their resettlement experiences were like. I was curious as to how the women had gotten involved with *Casa de la Mujer* and how *La Red* came into being. I asked the women about their needs and demands as displaced women and what they had accomplished thus far, what they hoped to accomplish in the future, and how they sought to accomplish their goals.

During the seven weeks of my visit in the summer of 2009, I conducted in-depth interviews with six women from *La Red* and attended six of *La Red's* meetings as an observer. In order to explore the possible disincentives to participating in a displaced person's group, I interviewed five non-organized displaced women. Two of these non-organized displaced women were family members (one sister and one daughter) of members of *La Red*. The other three non-organized displaced women that I interviewed were living in Parque Tercer Milenio at the time of my visit and were introduced to me by one of the women of *La Red*.

I also interviewed three representatives of Colombian NGOs including *Casa de la Mujer*, SISMA Mujer, CODHES, and one government official from the institution responsible for providing aid to displaced women, Acción Social. I obtained vital information prior to beginning my research from key informants currently researching women and displacement at the Universidad Javeriana and the Universidad Nacional,

both located in Bogotá. I also attended lectures on women and displacement organized by the various universities and attended a two-day conference on women and violence.

Organization

This thesis is organized in the following way. Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of the Colombian civil war and the origins of displacement. It then proceeds to summarize the literature on displaced women in Colombia and relates this literature to case studies on women and displacement in other regions of the world. In Chapter 3, I share the stories of the women of *La Red* and describe the group's beginnings, what they have accomplished thus far, and their goals for the future. Chapter 4 analyzes *La Red* using the lens of social movement theory in order to provide the theoretical basis for the observations laid out in Chapter 3. Finally, I provide some reflections on the significance of this research for studies of political mobilization by marginalized groups in Latin America and the contribution of this research in furthering studies of women in situations of forced displacement.

CHAPTER 2 WOMEN AND DISPLACEMENT

The goal of this chapter is to explore the unequal impact of displacement on women, or as it has been more aptly termed in the literature, the gendered dimensions of displacement.⁴ However, before it is possible to delve into this topic, it is first necessary to consider how and why displacement has occurred in the first place. Below, I will briefly summarize the roots of the Colombian civil war and the origins of displacement. I will then review the existing literature on displaced women in Colombia and in the latter half of the chapter, I will compare what has been written about the Colombian case with other studies on displaced women in other regions of the world in order to highlight similarities and to situate the Colombian case within the larger framework of gender and forced migration.

Background: The Civil War

In order to understand the roots and the persistence of the civil war in Colombia, it is important to consider the crucial role that geography has played. Colombia has often been called a country defined by regions and this is due to the fact that the Andean cordilleras divide the country into two distinct regions. The capital city of Bogotá, as well as two other major Colombian cities (Medellín and Cali), are located on the western side of the cordillera whereas the eastern side constitutes over 40% of Colombia and is mostly characterized by wild, open land and dense jungle (Watson 2000).

Because of this layout, some authors have argued that the Colombian nation-state has never been able to exert its presence in the majority of Colombia (Watson 2000). The Colombian state did not even build infrastructure or provide public services

⁴ See Gururaja (2000).

in many of the regions on the eastern side of the country (Watson 2000). These neglected regions of Colombia have therefore been politically, socially, and economically excluded from the central government and have tended to regard the Colombian state with mistrust, suspicion, and even contempt.

The social exclusion was furthered by an oligarchy divided into two rival political parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, which dominated Colombian politics since the early twentieth century. Partisan wars between the Liberals and the Conservatives have been considered a major factor in instilling and promoting violence in Colombia. However, to provide a backdrop to the violence, it is also necessary to consider the major changes that occurred in Colombia in the 1930s and '40s. Rapid industrialization and increased urbanization coupled with growing unrest due to struggles for control over land in the countryside were all factors which exacerbated partisan wars (Roldán 2002). Colombian politics at this time resembled a revolving door of Liberal and Conservative party elites whom, when in power, would enact legislation and promote policies agreeable to their supporters only to see these policies undone once they were out of power (Roldán 2002). Frequently, changes of power were marked by spikes in violence by supporters of the opposing party.

Nevertheless, while the partisan wars between the Liberals and the Conservatives were a great impetus for violence in many regions of Colombia, explanations of the conflict that are rooted in partisan differences alone are inadequate. In a case study of violence in the Colombian department of Antioquia, Mary Roldán (2002) draws attention to the existing local tensions rooted in racial discrimination, ethnic strife, and class wars

that dominated specific geo-cultural regions. In this sense, the national war between political parties was not the cause but merely the catalyst for regional violence.

Intra-governmental fighting between the Liberals and the Conservatives came to a head as a result of the 1946 presidential campaign when an outsider, the popular leftist leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, was assassinated on April 9, 1948. Gaitán's assassination provoked a massive outburst of political violence in Colombia in which supporters of Gaitán, as well as splintered Liberal groups, began mass looting and targeted attacks against Conservative party members and their supporters (Kay 2001). The Conservatives retaliated by using their influence with the army to defend themselves and to carry out retaliatory acts against Liberals. Soon after Gaitán's assassination, the first cases of mass murders of peasants and forced displacement in the countryside were reported (Kay 2001). This period, between 1948 and 1963, is known as *La violencia*.

One of the most important outgrowths of this period was the formation of guerilla and paramilitary groups. Guerilla groups in the countryside mobilized entire rural communities and sought to topple the Colombian state (Watson 2000). The largest and most infamous of these groups are the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). These groups, formed in the mid-1960s, continue to thrive, largely funding themselves through kidnapping, extortion, and involvement in the drug trade (Thoumi 2002). As a response to the formation of the guerilla, Colombian elites armed and funded groups of paramilitaries. In 1997, an umbrella paramilitary organization known as the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) was formed. The AUC has been responsible for numerous egregious

human rights abuses (Watson 2000). The AUC entered into peace talks with current Colombian President Álvaro Uribe Velez, and since 2003, more than 30,000 paramilitaries have demobilized under a mediated amnesty program (BBC 2009).⁵

The Origins of Displacement

The final actor in this conflict is the peasant, caught between warring factions that do not respect civilians' rights to neutrality. The peasants are terrorized as different factions try to recruit them or force them to provide material support. Often they are run off their land and forced into an exodus away from their homes and the only life they know. It is important to note that forceful displacement is not merely an outcome of the civil war; it is also ultimately a strategy for land control (Oslender 2007). Peasants are forced to leave land that is either strategically located or economically rich, thus making it invaluable booty for the armed actors.

Despite the longevity of the conflict, official numbers on displacement did not become available until the mid-1990s due to the fact that the incidence of displacement shot up rapidly at this time and in addition to the sheer volume, more and more displaced people resettled in major urban centers such as Bogotá and Medellín. It thus became increasingly difficult for political leaders to downgrade the extent of the crisis or to characterize displacement as merely “a chronic malady of certain rural areas” (Pécaut 2000).

Since the 1990s, scholarly work on the displaced in Colombia has mushroomed. To date, most of the academic literature on this topic has been concerned with the psychological and sociological process of adjusting to life upon resettlement (Pécaut

⁵ Reports by human rights groups have shown that new groups of paramilitaries are forming and that even demobilized paramilitaries have not totally abandoned their terrorist activities (BBC 2009).

2000), the impact of the militarization of the conflict on the rising levels of displacement (Watson 2000; Gill 2009), and the inability of the Colombian state to protect the rights of a large number of its population (Mason 2005). However, recent academic works have begun to draw attention to the fact that the displaced cannot be lumped together as though they were a homogenous group. As best put by one scholar, “although they share the common lot of being the victims of aggression, insecurity and fear...these experiences pass through specific filters such as social position, gender, and generation, amongst others” (Segura Escobar 2000). Therefore, an analysis of displacement through these filters is important in order to understand the different ways that displacement is experienced and to explore the specific resources available for the displaced to draw upon in reconstructing their lives. In the following section, I will review works that have viewed displacement thorough the specific lens of gender.

Displaced Women in Colombia

In previous works on women and displacement in Colombia, scholars have described how the male/public and female/private dichotomy has been upheld in studies of forced migration. This dichotomy places men in the public sphere which is comprised of formal economic activity, political participation, and involvement in civil society. Women are thus relegated to the private sphere of domestic activities within the home, family life, and participation in the informal economy.

The male/public, female/private dichotomy is important for an analysis of the community and family life prior to displacement. Many displaced women lived in traditional rural communities where they were mostly confined to tasks and duties that took place within the home such as cooking and child-rearing, in addition to undertaking agricultural activities. For these women, interaction with the outside world was severely

restricted by decisions made by their father, husband, or male family member, thus access to information, mobility, and community networking, etc. were all male domains (Meertens 2001). For women who lived in such social exclusion, the arrival of the conflict to their doorstep was much more abrupt and debilitating because the women had no expectation of violence and perhaps were not even aware of the political situation engendering the violence.

The loss of identity that accompanies displacement has been discussed at length in other works and I will not repeat them here (Meertens 2001; Pècaut 2000; Segura Escobar 2000). However, these works serve to highlight how women perceive their identities as being closely linked to their domestic lives. With the experience of violent displacement and the destruction of the physical home (and all of the domestic activities that occur within it) comes a serious upheaval to women's sense of rootedness in place. This sense of lost identity is experienced by men as well but because they also have their social and political identities due to their activities in the public sphere, displaced men lose just one of their identities, whereas displaced women lose their sole identity once uprooted (Meertens 2004).

The male/public, female/private dichotomy has also been used to explain *why* women suffer higher rates of displacement than their male counterparts. According to some studies (Meertens 2001; Segura Escobar 2000) the predominance of displaced women is due to the fact that violent displacement is strongly motivated by gender considerations. Because men, more frequently than women, tend to be war makers, it is more likely that they will also become casualties of war. Furthermore, because of their relationship with the public sphere, men are also more likely to be involved in

social or political organizations prior to displacement and are thus perceived by armed groups as being more threatening than women.

Women, on the other hand, become the “vicarious victims of war,” meaning that they are not perceived as being threatening because of who they are, but rather because of who they are connected to (Segura Escobar 2000). Therefore, women are sexually violated, beaten or displaced because of their connection, real or assumed, with potentially threatening male actors. In the case of Colombia, this gender-based perception of different threat levels has meant that although both men and women experience violence, women are more likely to survive attacks by the armed groups and thus suffer greater rates of displacement.

However, it is important to keep in mind that although men are more frequently the perpetrators of violence, violence is not an exclusively male tactic. Over the course of Colombia’s armed conflict, women have not always been the victims of violence, but have at times been the aggressors as well. To give an example, it is estimated that more than a third of the FARC’s members are women, several of whom hold high ranking positions (BBC 2008). At the time of my visit, one of the FARC’s commanders, known by her nom de guerre, Karina, surrendered to the Colombian army after having evaded arrest for several years on charges of murder and kidnapping.

Regardless of the gender of the aggressor, once displaced, many women whose husbands have been killed in the violence or forcibly disappeared must not only cope with the loss of their spouse but suddenly become thrust into the role of head of household. Displaced women head between 49 and 53% of all displaced households (Alzate 2007) whereas they head only 24% of households nationally (Meertens 2003).

The experience of suddenly becoming the primary financial provider and caregiver constitutes an enormous responsibility for these women. Studies have shown that responsibility for the care of their children is the primary motivation for displaced women to become immediately consumed in the reconstruction of everyday activities in order to ensure a sense of stability and security for their families (Meertens 2001). This finding implies that displaced women, although suffering from the deep loss of self-identity that accompanies displacement, are still responsible for recreating a collective identity for their families.

For all displaced families, the first step to regaining stability is to search for a means of earning a living, what is known as the *rebusque*. This task is complicated by the fact that more than 80% of the displaced were smallholders and derived their subsistence from farming, fishing, or in some cases, mining (Springer 2006). Needless to say, none of these skills are useful in urban environments. Furthermore, almost one-fourth of the displaced population has no formal schooling, while 50% of the displaced have only primary education (Henaó Arcila 2004). These factors push the displaced population into the informal economy.

Curiously enough, in the case of two-parent households, displaced women have been shown to adapt more easily to the informal economy than do their husbands because they are able to translate their domestic activities (cooking, cleaning, caregiving, etc) into marketable skills (Meertens 2001; Meertens and Segura Escobar 1996). Displaced women often work as street vendors, nannies, maids, or in low-paying jobs that do not require any technical knowledge. Displaced men, on the other hand, are not as easily able to translate their prior income-generating activities into secure

employment which normally means they suffer from a loss of status and a loss of identity.⁶ Just as it has been maintained that women see their identities as linked to their domestic activities, so too do men perceive their identities as very much connected to their work and to their role as family provider. In cases where the displaced woman is out of the house, earning money and engaging in the public sphere, there is an inevitable renegotiation of gender roles within the displaced household.

Because of their greater ability to find employment and because of their responsibility to create a sense of stability for their families, some scholars have suggested that women become rooted faster than men and also tend to look towards the future where men tend to cling to the past (Meertens 2004). Unable to find work and suffering a loss of identity, displaced men seek to return, if not to their original land, then to other rural regions in order to resume their pre-displacement lifestyles. The desire to return is motivated by a need to regain status and reestablish traditional family roles. This obsession with return has made men somewhat permanent fixtures at governmental institutions where they actively demand a productive and efficient governmental response to their situation that will speed up the process of return.

Displaced men will therefore link themselves with institutions in order to seek emergency aid and immediate restitution of property. Displaced women however, occupied with the daily struggle to keep their families fed and sheltered (which as described earlier, has become chiefly a female responsibility) do not have the time to engage in the bureaucratic run-around. However, this is not to imply that displaced

⁶ This is not to imply that displaced men do not also become incorporated into the informal economy. See Miraftab (1997) for an analysis of men's involvement in the housing/construction sector in periphery settlements.

women do not link themselves to government institutions to demand the restoration of their rights. Rather, as I will argue in the subsequent chapters, displaced women actively engage in the public sphere in order to demand long-term aid, the protection of their rights and the protection of their family's future. In other words, where displaced men's advocacy is rooted in the past, displaced women's advocacy is aimed towards the future.

Displaced women's involvement in the public sphere coupled with their efforts to create a sense of permanence for their families, encourages them to rebuild social networks and kinship ties with other displaced women. However, although the existing literature does discuss displaced women reuniting for social reasons (Osorio Pérez 2008; Meertens 2004) what has been left out thus far is an analysis of displaced women organizing in order to make demands. Those works that do discuss the political mobilization of women in Colombia normally focus on the role of large women's organizations in incorporating the demands of displaced women into their own organization's agendas.

In a recent article describing the women's movement for peace in Colombia, Cynthia Cockburn (2005) describes the origins of two major women's organizations: *La Ruta Pacífica* (The Peaceful Route) and *La Alianza Iniciativa de Mujeres Colombianas por la Paz (IMP)*. Both organizations were formed in the 1990s and both have a certain amount of national prestige. However, these two organizations, like many women's organizations in Colombia, consider their members to be feminist activists, represent broad and diverse groups of women, and have varying demands from an end to the violence against women to an insistence on women's inclusion in the peace process.

La Ruta Pacífica defines itself as primarily a feminist movement. Their members are feminist activists and academics, indigenous women, Afro-Colombian women and displaced women. The goals of *La Ruta Pacífica* are inclusive of a broad spectrum of women. For instance, they not only demand an immediate end to the violence (as in the civil war) but also an end to all forms of violence against women (as in domestic abuse, rape, etc.). For the women of *La Ruta Pacífica*, the civil war is merely another means of perpetuating the forcible submission of all Colombian women. *La Ruta Pacífica's* bold agenda and forceful presence has been important for drawing attention to the needs and demands of displaced women. Nevertheless, this is not an organization of displaced women created for the specific goals of displaced women.

If *La Ruta Pacífica* is not grassroots enough, the *Iniciativa por la Paz (IMP)* is even less so. The impetus for the formation of the *IMP* came from Swedish trade union activists who were in Colombia at the time that the Colombian government was engaged in peace talks with the guerilla. These activists offered to host women from the FARC, the Colombian government, and various women's organizations in Colombia at a peace negotiation which would take place in Stockholm. Since then, the *IMP* has been primarily concerned with inserting the women's agenda into all meetings with political officials, guerilla and paramilitaries. The *IMP* has taken up the cause of the displaced women as well and actively advocates for the rights of displaced women and their inclusion in public policies. The members of the *IMP* include high-profile feminists, scholars, public officials and foreign activists, all of whom are far removed from displaced women and their reality.

As for more grassroots women's organizations, one which stands out due to its advocacy for displaced women is the National Association of Peasant and Indigenous Women (known by its Spanish acronym ANMUCIC). This organization, formed in 1985, was created with the aim of furthering the development of rural women, and it has played an important role in lobbying for the land rights of displaced women. ANMUCIC, together with then first lady Ana Milena Muñoz de Gaviria, was the main force behind Agrarian Law 160 which instructed INCORA (the agency in charge of agrarian reform) to give priority to displaced women in giving out land titles (Deere and León 2001). However, while the passage of Law 160 certainly showed a firm commitment to displaced women's rights on the part of ANMUCIC, the law has essentially been a failure as there have been significant obstacles to its full implementation (Mondragón 2006).

The major contribution of women's organizations such as those described above is their ability to use their organizations' platform in order to draw national and political attention to the needs and demands of displaced women. However, from the point of view of displaced women, there are also disadvantages to being lumped into broad-based organizations. Firstly, the displaced women's agenda is one among many items for these organizations instead of being the sole or primary focus. This means that displaced women's specific demands can and do take a backseat to other major issues and projects. Furthermore, organizations like *La Ruta Pacifica* identify their members as being activist feminists when it is not evident that displaced women identify themselves in this way or that they necessarily support the values espoused by these organizations. These disadvantages suggest why displaced women have felt the need

to form organizations specifically oriented to their unique needs and demands.

However, before moving on to a discussion of the forms these displaced groups have assumed, I will first discuss the existing literature on gender and forced migration and how the Colombian case relates to these.

Gender and Forced Migration

Studies on displaced women fall into the literature on gender and forced migration, which is a relatively new research field. In the existing literature on gender and forced migration, there is a tendency towards lengthy case studies of uprooted people living in certain places at certain points of time. These studies are largely descriptive and do not make connections to other cases of forced migrants in different regions of the world. The lack of comparative analysis limits our ability to create broader theories of gender and forced migration. In this section, I will summarize some of the existing studies of displaced women that relate to the experience of displaced Colombian women described above.

The field of gender and forced migration suffers from the tendency in migration studies to lump refugee and displaced women into studies that primarily concern women who migrate voluntarily. However, the essential difference between the two forms of migration is precisely that one is voluntary and the other is forced. For forced migrants, the element of choice is absent. Forced migrants are not able to choose whether or not to move and they have limited control over their destinies once they have been uprooted.

Therefore it is not only necessary to distinguish between experiences of voluntary and forced migration, but it is further necessary to avoid creating what Gomez (1998) has called “unilinear concepts of refugeeism” in which refugee identity is not bounded in

gender, class, race or age. Recent works which study forced migration through a gendered lens have made significant contributions towards understanding the varying ways women and men experience being violently uprooted, how identities are renegotiated by this experience, and the potential opportunities that arise for contesting membership rights. These studies have also been vital for drawing attention to the importance of “home” as the primary locus of identity formation and how the destruction of home that occurs upon displacement can lead to reconstructions of identity, a process normally undertaken by women.

The concept of home has been approached differently by the various academic disciplines that study migration. Mainstream neoclassical economics has been apt to view the home as an unemotional landscape, full of rational-minded individuals with shared interests, and represented by the male figurehead, a sort of unofficial household CEO (Indra 1999). Decisions to migrate were thus attributed to the household as a basic unit of analysis and the desire to maximize utility and diversify risks. Feminists were quick to strike back by demonstrating that household relations do not constitute an even playing field and that the interests of the male figurehead were often in juxtaposition to the interests of the other household members. The decision to migrate may not be in the interest of every member of the household; migration may signify the continued subordination of the woman (Indra 1999).

International relations theories, which focus myopically on the nation-state as the sole unit of analysis, overlook the level of the household entirely. Writing on migration is more concerned with the policies of sending and receiving states instead of with issues of membership and the conception of the household as the primary foundation of self,

social and national identity (Khattak 2006). Recently, cultural anthropologists have begun to perceive of the home as less of a physical place and more of a “complex of ideas that may refer to a country of origin and an associated national identity; it may also correspond to a specific dwelling place, household or family” (Giles 1999, 85).

In a collection of studies of gender and forced migration edited by Navnita Chadha Behera (2006), a group of feminist anthropologists explore how refugee and displaced women conceive of their homes, how this perception is socially constructed, and how the perception of home is inextricably connected with their perceptions of themselves. From her interviews with Afghan refugee women, Khattak (2006) points out that women, for historical and social reasons, tend to perceive of their homes as an extension of their own self-identity. For this reason, women use material possessions in order to make their homes reflect their identity and their place in society. Thus, being forced to flee the home and its material possessions represents a significant blow to women’s self-identity. Furthermore, women are not only bound to their homes because of material possessions, but also because of their connections with family members, who upon displacement, lose proximity and connection with each other leading to a feeling of profound uprootedness.

Khattaks’ findings deepen our understanding of the profound loss experienced by uprooted women. Her suggestion that the destruction of the home is related to the loss of material belongings and familial/communal ties relates to the displaced Colombian woman’s loss of self-identity once ripped from the private sphere in which she has lived. As mentioned in the previous section, the loss of identity is so profound because many displaced women had no social or public identities to fall back on. However, once

overcoming the initial feelings of loss, women's day to day activities to ensure their families' survival also open up opportunities for them to begin to engage in the public sphere and forge new identities.

In her research on displaced Burmese women living on the Burmese-Thai border, Mary O'Kane (2006) describes the development of political mobilization among displaced women and how this mobilization is facilitated by the women's current state of displacement. In other words, the women's condition of what she calls "liminal" residence between two nations, while not belonging to either, fosters the conditions for a lively contestation of membership and a renegotiation of identity.

O'Kane's case study counters the notion of the modern nation-state as being responsible for ensuring basic human rights and affording protection to its "citizen-members". According to this characterization, membership in a nation-state involves the ability to rely on the protection of the state. However, in the case of the displaced Burmese women, as in the case of displaced Colombian women, both of whom have been marginalized and excluded from their own nation-state, they are essentially residents of "liminal" spaces that are state-less (O'Kane 2006, 233).

Although lacking in basic protection, O'Kane goes on to show how Burmese women, assuming roles of displaced activists, unite members of the displaced community in demanding defense of their human rights and calling international attention to the oppressive Burmese government and the treatment of all Burmese women [who are not displaced.] O'Kane describes how political mobilization is facilitated in this case due to the shared experience of de-territorialization, the collective memory of oppression and injustice and the ability to effectively use the

“foundationlessness” of their situation in order to “thicken” their clout in the international human rights regime.

The Burmese case has many similarities with the case of displaced Colombian women. Both groups have been excluded by society and marginalized by their governments. As regards political mobilization, O’Kane’s study attributes this to the work of a few displaced women activists who rally other displaced women in order to demand their rights. However, as I will argue in the subsequent chapters where I discuss displaced Colombian women’s political mobilization, having a shared experience of victimization is necessary but not sufficient for political mobilization to occur.

In Chapter 3, I will recount the stories of the women of *La Red* regarding the experience of displacement, resettlement in Bogotá, and how they became organized into a displaced women’s interest group. Their stories of loss, fear, and survival in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, are reminiscent of the case studies of displacement presented above. However, the distinct opportunities that allowed for their organization and the success these women have obtained in demanding their rights, advances the study of displaced women’s resettlement experience one step further.

CHAPTER 3 LA RED DE MUJERES EN ACCIÓN HACIA EL FUTURO

Thus far, I have discussed the roots of violence in Colombia, the rise in the number of displaced people, and the way that displacement is experienced differently by men and women. In situating the Colombian case in the existing literature on gender and forced migration, I highlighted how forcibly uprooted women in other regions of the world suffer a loss of identity upon displacement but also discover a means of recreating an identity not rooted in the private sphere and are able to organize themselves for political goals.

In this chapter, I will first recount the stories of the women of *La Red* revealed during my interviews. I will describe their experience of displacement and resettlement in Bogotá and their subsequent involvement in *La Red*. I will also discuss the relationship between *La Red* and the feminist NGO, *Casa de la Mujer* which has played a fundamental role in organizing the women and facilitating the group's activities. This section will also describe the success the women of *La Red* have achieved in lobbying the Constitutional Court for increased protection of displaced women. Finally, I will summarize *La Red's* current efforts to create a microenterprise in order to fund their organization, generate income, and raise their members out of poverty.

Who are the Women of La Red?

La Red is composed of fifteen women of diverse backgrounds all from different regions of Colombia. They range in age from twenty-six to fifty-five. None of the women of *La Red* are black or indigenous, reportedly because displaced women who are minorities prefer to join displaced groups specifically composed of people of their

own ethnicity. All of the women of *La Red* hail from rural backgrounds and derived their subsistence from the land prior to their displacement.

Below, I will share the stories of the women I interviewed. The names of the women have been changed in order to protect their identities. It is important to note that when recounting their stories of displacement, the actor that figures most prominently in the women's stories is the "they." The women often use sentences like, "*they* came one night," or "*they* told me." The reason for this lack of clarification is because many of the women come from regions where the paramilitaries, the guerilla, and the Colombian Army all had a presence at the same time. Often, the women were not sure *who* had displaced them. For them, "they" were the men with guns.

Of the women whom I interviewed, three had been displaced due to the FARC's practice of forced recruitment of young men. Typically, boys 15 years or older are forcefully recruited into the FARC and if the parents should refuse to let their sons be taken, they are either threatened or killed (Markey 2009). In the case of one of the women I interviewed, whom I will call Marcela, the guerilla approached her on various occasions and demanded one of her sons, a demand she adamantly refused.

It's difficult when you have to give up one of your sons and you ask yourself, which one of the two am I going to give up? It's like giving away your own life. It's like dyingOne starts to think, what will this boy's life become? When they kill them and you never get to see them again, that is sad. And they don't give you any guarantee that they will ever come back to you.

Marcela made desperate attempts to sneak her sons out of the house to escape the guerilla. She explained to me how she would arrange for her sons to leave the village one by one so as not to attract attention from the guerilla or any unsympathetic neighbors. When the guerilla came looking for them, she would make up stories and

excuses and tell them that her sons were away on a trip, or that they were in school, or that she didn't know where they were. Finally, after multiple threats from the guerilla, Marcela took her family and left. Then the guerilla seized her land and destroyed her house. She was not given any time to pack her belongings or decide where to go. She just had to leave.

Another woman, who I will call Marisa, was threatened and physically intimidated when she refused to give up her sons. Marisa's family, who hail from the department of Meta, owned a farm and ran a small store. At that time, Marisa's two eldest sons were sixteen and seventeen years of age and Marisa knew that they would soon be recruited by the guerilla. She and her husband decided to send their sons away before the guerilla could come get them.

However, even though her sons managed to escape, Marisa and her husband were left to deal with the guerilla's accusations. They came to her house one day with their guns while Marisa was at home taking care of her younger children, who were sick. The guerilla told her that they wanted Marisa and her family to leave immediately, but Marisa held her ground. She said she couldn't leave with her kids being sick and with nowhere to go. Then they hit her in the chest and shoved her. They told her that she had until the next day by six am to get out. Upon recounting this story to me, Marisa said, *"I told him, 'Kill me then, because I won't leave'.... It will be eleven years this June since that happened but I'll never forget that day."* Marisa and her family left at dawn the next morning with nothing but a bag filled with their belongings.

The third woman I interviewed was also displaced because she protested the recruitment of her sons. I will call this woman Carolina. Carolina and her family are

from Putumayo and like Marcela and Marisa, owned a farm where they raised animals and grew fruit trees, vegetables, and some coffee. Carolina described to me how even before they got into trouble with the guerilla, their livelihoods were threatened when fumigation planes meant to kill coca being grown in the region, also destroyed many of their crops. Their village, mostly run by the guerilla, faced an escalation in tensions when the paramilitaries entered the scene. Carolina knew that it would only be a matter of time before they came for her sons, so she and her family sneaked out of the village late at night and went to a nearby village where her sister-in-law lived. However, the conflict eventually came to that village as well.

One night, while everyone was sleeping, the paramilitaries came to her sister's house and demanded that everyone get outside and form a line. Carolina told me how she stumbled in the darkness as they grabbed her and pushed her outside and how she fell to the ground, hitting her mouth. Carolina's jaw is still misaligned because of that fall and she is in constant pain because she can't afford to get it fixed. The house was searched, the family threatened, and the next day, Carolina's family moved once again—this time to Bogotá.

Another of the displaced women I interviewed was displaced because of her father, rather than her sons. This woman I will call Magdalena. Twenty-six year old Magdalena, the youngest member of *La Red*, is originally from the department of Santander, a region which she describes as always having been a *zona roja* (danger zone) due to the presence of both the guerilla and the paramilitary. Magdalena's father was the leader of a peasant group called, the *Comité de derechos humanos de campesinos de Santander*. She describes how when the paramilitaries entered her

village, they killed a lot of people and displaced others. But her family thought they were immune to the conflict because they didn't see what it had to do with them. Then, in 2004, the paramilitaries killed her father. The following year, they killed her brother.

In reference to her father's murder, Magdalena says:

I cried more from anger than from sadness. Because to talk so much of human rights and to dedicate your whole life to defending the rights of others and defending them at the most critical moments, to then kill that person, in their own community and for no one to say anything...that's what makes me sad.

Magdalena was not directly threatened by the paramilitaries nor did they tell her to leave. Instead the local mayor's office told her that she, her mother, and her sister had better leave the village and not come back. Magdalena left her then three-year old daughter with her mother in a neighboring village and came with a friend to Bogotá. She lived with this friend for a few months until she found a job and a place to stay and then she brought her daughter to live with her and her sister in a room they rent in Bogotá.

The only woman I interviewed who was displaced for reasons of political persecution, I will call Clara. Clara was a member of a now-defunct leftist political party named *La Unión Patriótica* (UP). Clara and her family are from Tolima and owned a farm, grew crops, and raised a few animals. Clara's first displacement came about when she became involved in political organizing in her community, following in the footsteps of her father who was also a community organizer. In 2001, Clara was a candidate for the council of the UP and she began to receive threats from the paramilitaries whom she constantly spoke out against. One day, a plot was discovered to assassinate her. She was told by the *personero* (a local official) and the mayor's office that she had better get out as soon as she could. Clara and her family moved to

another village, where she began running a restaurant with a tavern on the second floor. One night, her restaurant was the site of an armed confrontation between the paramilitaries and the guerilla. Clara herself got shot in the altercation but recovered and suffers no lasting effects. After this episode, she and her mother fled to Bogotá.

The final woman I interviewed, who I will call Violeta, was displaced twice, once by the paramilitaries and once by the guerilla. Violeta's first displacement came about after her eleven year old step-daughter disappeared. Her neighbors told her that her step-daughter had been seen entering the house of a known paramilitary commander. Violeta went to the army base to ask the soldiers for help in getting her step-daughter back. The soldiers helped her gain entrance to a hotel that was controlled by the paramilitaries, and she found her step-daughter doped and naked on a bed. When she took her step-daughter to a clinic, the nurses confirmed that she had been raped. One of the paramilitary leaders showed up at the clinic and threatened Violeta not to report the rape and kidnapping.

A guy approached me and he said, 'Don't even think about denouncing.' He said that if we did, they would kill my husband. I looked at him and I told him that I didn't care what he said, that I would denounce him. He told me that if I did, I knew what would happen to me. In other words, they would kill me, chop me up into pieces and throw me in the river, because in those days, they chopped people up and threw them in the river.

Violeta and her husband moved to a nearby village with their daughter where her husband found work in an *asadero* (a grilled chicken shop). The town they moved to had a heavy guerilla presence and Violeta's family, through no fault of their own, ran into trouble once again. Violeta described to me how there was a garage, close to where her husband worked, where the guerilla stored drugs. One day her husband went down to work while the guerilla were loading a truck with drugs. By sheer chance,

that truck was stopped by the army in a neighboring town. The guerilla blamed Violeta's husband, saying that he *había sapiado*, or had ratted them out. They began to receive threats, calling her husband a *sapo*, and threatening to kill him. Violeta and her husband decided to leave once again. The morning that they were getting ready to leave, the guerilla, tipped off by an informant, cornered them and shot her husband in the back.

I almost died. I felt as though the bullets had hit me. It was a loud and horrible sound. When I saw my husband, I tried to grab him and the guy pushed me, one of them pushed me away, and they shot my husband again. They said, '*por sapo.*' I stayed by my husband and screamed and cried, and no one came to help me. Nobody wanted to help me.

After witnessing the murder of her husband, Violeta fled to the home of one of her few relatives, a sister-in-law who lived in a small town near Calí, borrowing money from neighbors. After a few months living there, she moved to Bogotá with her daughter, where she had no other family members or friends.

Resettlement in Bogotá

After enduring these horrifying experiences, one would think that resettlement in Bogotá would be somewhat of a relief. However, all of the women I interviewed arrived in Bogotá with few or no belongings and, in most cases, not knowing anyone whom they could rely on for help. All of the women whose stories I recount above came to Bogotá with their children and, in three of the women's cases, with their husbands. In the course of my interviews, the women recounted feelings of shock, loss, and fear when they first arrived in Bogotá. Marisa described her psychological state in the first few months of displacement this way:

When you first leave the countryside, you're traumatized. It's very hard. In these eleven years I have learned a lot, but when I first got here, I was so

scared. I thought that everyone who looked at me wanted to kill me or hurt me. It was a long time that I lived that feeling.

In addition to the psychological trauma that comes with displacement, these women are also flung into situations of abject poverty. According to a recent study, displaced household incomes are more than 25% lower than the incomes of the poorest households at the national level (Osorio Pérez 2008). This poverty is especially devastating when one considers the fact that all of the women come from rural areas where their subsistence was derived from the land. In an urban setting, their subsistence depends on finding employment and earning enough money to buy the things that they used to grow themselves. As Marcela explained to me,

It's hard, it's hard. When one comes here to Bogotá with nothing [con una mano delante y una mano detrás] without anything to eat, without any money that I would have made on a farm. I got here, and I had to beg for shelter.

According to Colombian law, these women are technically eligible for emergency humanitarian aid and a program of assistance for the first three months after displacement. Law 387, enacted in 1997, was created to ensure emergency humanitarian aid and to establish a sustained institutional response in the form of free social services to the displaced population such as education and health care. However, the displaced are only eligible for these services *after* they have registered as displaced with the government entity, Acción Social. Amongst the many flaws with the enactment of Law 387 which have been pointed out in other works (Easterday 2008; Fagen et al. 2003), possibly the biggest flaw is that so few displaced people register-- mostly because they have no idea that they should. In the words of Magdalena:

I got here and I had no idea I was displaced. The only reason I came here to Bogotá was because I was told to leave and not to come back. My mother and sister came here and they went to denounce and declare

themselves displaced. But I had no idea why they were doing it, because I had no idea what they were hoping to gain by declaring themselves.

The failures of the institutional response to displacement combined with the fact that most displaced people have no knowledge of their rights, means that upon arriving in Bogotá, the women that I interviewed were left in vulnerable situations where they had to beg for food, sleep on the streets, or rely on acts of random kindness by total strangers. In Marisa's case, when she arrived in Bogotá with her small children and her husband, she told me that they just sat in the bus terminal because they had no idea where to go.

A woman approached us, she saw the kids coughing, and she invited us to drink tinto with her. She started asking us about ourselves and I told her everything. Then she said that she had a place where we could stay. We stayed there for two months. That was a blessing.

After a period of time, the initial feelings of loss and desperation are alleviated somewhat as the women become more situated in their new environments. Because of the urgent need to provide for their children and create a stable atmosphere for their families, these women have boldly engaged in the struggle for daily survival and the process of giving meaning to their experience. These needs have pushed the women I interviewed to become involved in demand making.

The Needs and Demands of Displaced Women

In my interviews with the women of *La Red*, one question that always elicited an emotional response was when I asked about their needs and demands. After reading the horrific stories of loss and destruction relayed above, it is probably not that difficult to imagine what the needs of these women are or what their demands would be. However, in their answers I noticed that while the needs enumerated represent the

basic needs of any human being, the demands were a little more elaborate and abstract. Below, I share some of the common answers.

As mentioned in the previous section, displaced people often live in very precarious economic situations, and the women of *La Red* are no exception. Finding affordable housing is a very big problem for displaced households. Both Violeta and Magdalena rent rooms where they live with their daughters. Carolina, her husband and their two sons live in what used to be a classroom in an abandoned elementary school. Clara and Marisa both live with their families in small rooms which they rent. All of them live in the poorest sectors of Bogotá.

Marcela is the only member of *La Red* who does not live in the city center. She lives in the outskirts of the city, barely in the peripheral areas of Bogotá. Her house, constructed out of salvaged, corrugated metal and tarp, is so far removed from the city that the day I visited her, I had to take the metro to the southernmost station, then take a bus further south until its last stop, then hike up an unpaved road for fifteen minutes in order to find her house. Where she lives, there is only pirated electricity and rationed water brought in with hoses from a nearby community center; it is at least a fifteen minute walk to any food stores.

Obviously, one of the women's major needs is for decent housing. In a recent study conducted by Ana María Ibáñez, Andrés Moya, and Andrea Velásquez (2006), it was revealed that the majority of displaced households lived in houses prior to their displacement, but once resettled in urban centers, had to suffice with renting an apartment, or a room to share with their families. The study also found that displaced

households are prone to overcrowding and that the houses themselves are normally constructed with poor quality materials.

Furthermore, it is not just the housing itself which is the problem, but their location as well. Marcela lives nowhere near a school, a hospital, or any law enforcement agency, thus essentially placing her in a state of total isolation and non-protection from any national or subnational aid or services. Carolina mentioned to me that in the area where she lives, delinquency is so high that she is often afraid to leave her house. This was especially true after her son was the victim of a mugging at knife-point on his way home from school.

The women also expressed a desire to have some land to farm. This does not mean they want to return to their original farms, as they know that these are now in the hands of armed actors and it is not safe to return. However, because they previously obtained their subsistence from agricultural activities, the women see their present food insecurity as linked to their lack of land ownership. Their desire for land has prompted an attempt to collectively purchase a farm, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

Another major demand that was recounted during my interviews was the need for stable employment. The women of *La Red* have varying levels of education, but none of them worked outside of the home (except in agricultural activities) prior to their displacement. For this reason, the women struggle to compete with the urban poor for jobs which require little schooling, few skills, and no work experience. Marcela derives her income from selling bags of limes and oranges on the street. Carolina and her husband collect used clothing, toys and shoes from middle-class neighborhoods and sell them in impromptu flea markets known as *pulgas* on the weekends. Magdalena

sells cell phone cards in the streets and Marisa sews and does alterations in her house. Neither Clara nor Violeta had found jobs at the time of my visit and were perhaps those in the most precarious economic situation.

When asked about what they would like the government to do about the lack of employment, most of the women answered that what they needed was job training, but they added that this alone would not be sufficient. There do exist free job training sites for the displaced but just because they exist doesn't mean the women have the money or the means to get to the sessions or that they can give up a day of looking for work to attend a class. Therefore, a more institutionalized approach is needed in order to provide real employment opportunities.

The other needs enumerated by these women revolved around their concern for the well-being of their children and their families. Plain and simple, these women want affordable food and education opportunities for their children. During my interview with Carolina, she mentioned that when she has no money to buy food, she goes to the wholesale markets in downtown Bogotá and picks up food that has been thrown out. Other women recounted stories of going to bed hungry on numerous occasions because they gave their only food to their children. As regards education, all of the women expressed anxiety that their children would not be able to find jobs once they finished school or lamented that they could never afford to send their children to university. The high school dropout rate for displaced households is almost 40%, as many youngsters are obliged to find work in order to supplement the family income (Ibáñez, Moya, and Velásquez 2006). The high dropout rate is troubling not solely because it contributes to a cycle of poverty but also because it has profound

psychological impacts on those youngsters that are not able to help their families.

Marcela's son, displaced as a teenager, dropped out of school in order to look for work.

After years of not being able to find work, he became addicted to drugs and tried to commit suicide.

Although most of the needs expressed represent the most basic, concrete needs of the average person, the women's demands are a bit more complex. When asked about their demands, the women's answers ranged from demanding increased national and international attention to the displaced population, to laws specifically protecting the rights of displaced women, to an end to the armed conflict. In the following section, I look at how these women, through their involvement with *La Red* and with the help of *Casa de la Mujer*, began to lobby for more extensive and more definite demands towards the protection of their basic human rights.

The Women of La Red and Casa de la Mujer

The story of *La Red* is deeply connected to the work of the *Corporación Casa de la Mujer*, a Colombian feminist NGO that will herein be referred to as *Casa*. *Casa's* primary mission, according to the representative I interviewed, is to build a feminist consciousness in Colombian women, challenge the discrimination of women in social, political and economic arenas and incorporate women into a national dialogue regarding the development of the Colombian nation. Since its formation, *Casa* has provided assistance to vulnerable groups of women, including poor women, women of color, indigenous women, and women who face discrimination because of their sexual orientation.

Within the last ten years, *Casa* has become increasingly involved in extending its assistance to the growing population of displaced women in Colombia. *Casa* became

involved in advocacy for the displaced population and soon realized that a group of women advocating for their own rights would ultimately be more effective in demand-making than a third party, such as themselves. In an interview, a representative of *Casa de la Mujer* explained that *Casa* employees actively recruit displaced women in neighborhoods on the outskirts of Bogotá where many of the displaced reside. In a typical scenario, a *Casa* employee approaches the displaced woman, introduces the organization, and proceeds to tell her about their rights of the displaced and about the protection and services that are available to them from the Colombian government. At this point they tell the woman about the *talleres*, the free capacity-building workshops they offer.

These capacity-building workshops are intended to *concientizar*, or to raise the awareness of the women regarding their rights as displaced people. These workshops include lessons on international human rights law, the rights of women, and specific information about Colombian legislation and policies for displaced people. It should be mentioned that *Casa de la Mujer* is not the only NGO that provides these workshops in capacity building. I interviewed at least one other feminist NGO located in Bogotá which provides similar *talleres* on the same subjects. This other organization is SISMA Mujer. The representatives of each of these organizations impressed upon me the necessity of these workshops without which the displaced women would not be conscious of their rights or how to go about demanding them.

Casa employees were able to recruit women who attended the *talleres* to become leaders of a displaced women's group. Five of the women were eager to join and these became the founding members of *La Red*. From the point of view of the women I

interviewed, their involvement in *La Red* came about almost by accident. Many of them seemed to have gotten involved without having any real expectations about the group or knowing exactly what they were going to accomplish. Magdalena describes her involvement with *La Red* this way:

One day I went to get assistance for my daughter and there was a guy there who told me that there was going to be a meeting for displaced people that day and so I went. They introduced us to a group that helps displaced people and they told us that Casa de la Mujer was developing a program of leadership and empowerment of women and they asked who would be interested. And I wasn't sure what would happen, but I signed up and I ended up in a process with Casa de la Mujer. So I went to a meeting of women, one of the first meetings there were, and at the end they asked us if we wanted to join *La Red*, and I said yes.

The participation of these women in *La Red* has been vital for a variety of reasons.

Through their participation in *La Red*, the women have developed an awareness of the enormity of the crisis and, as many recounted to me during my interviews, they began to feel a sense of shared community with women who have had similar experiences.

Participation in *La Red* is also important for creating a sense of empowerment and agency that the women describe not feeling previously. During my interviews, it was common to hear the women divide their life into before and after they were *concientizada*.

We started to look at the situation of displaced women, and I saw that I wasn't the only one, that there were more of us and because of destiny, we were still alive and we had to keep fighting. ---Marcela

Now we are the actors. Now we know. We know how to demand our rights, but before it wasn't like this. ---Marisa

Because of this, organizations like *Casa de la Mujer* play a crucial role in ensuring not only that the displaced women are aware of their rights but also that they feel empowered enough to advocate for them on their own. *Casa* is also incredibly

important in its role as a support system for the women in a less abstract way. First of all, the *Casa* building is not only the location for the *talleres* but is also offered as a meeting place for *La Red* whenever the women should desire it. *Casa de la Mujer* provides refreshments and sometimes even catered lunches for the women who come to the *talleres*. *Casa* also provides a *bono*, or compensation, for transportation, normally in the amount of 3 mil pesos (the equivalent of \approx \$1.50 US) which buys two bus tickets for Transmilenio, Bogotá's highly efficient public transportation system.

This more basic support cannot be underestimated because by providing food and transportation compensation, *Casa* removes two very real obstacles to active participation. For many of the women, it would be virtually impossible to get to the meetings if they weren't given the money to get there. Furthermore, the food served at the meetings would often be the first time these women would have eaten that day and more than one woman who received food could be seen wrapping a piece of bread or crackers in a napkin to take home. With the support of *Casa*, the women of *La Red* have taken significant steps towards lobbying for their rights through the court system as I outline below.

La Red's Involvement in Auto-092

Although the Colombian government has taken some steps to address the crisis of displacement, such as via Law 387, the primary institutional actor that has taken up the role of defender of the rights of the displaced is the Colombian Constitutional Court, which I describe in greater depth in Chapter 4. The principal idea behind the formation of *La Red* was to create an organization by and for women that could demand legal protection (*hacer incidencias*) and legal claims in order to ensure the implementation of public policies aimed at the displaced population. *La Red* is specifically concerned with

the courts' ruling, the *Sentencia* T-025 and the subsequent decrees (*autos*) that followed.

Sentencia T-025 was a landmark decision by the Constitutional Court in 2004. It is perceived in Colombia and around the world as one of the most significant rulings in favor of displaced persons in history (Easterday 2008). The *Sentencia* essentially declared the Colombian government to be in violation of the Constitution due to its recurring inability to protect the rights of displaced people. In the ruling, the Court proclaimed itself the official watchdog of the government's actions towards the displaced population and has ordered measures to improve aid to the displaced and regular reports as to the government's progress. Since then, the court has issued subsequent decrees (*autos*) that are aimed at protecting the most vulnerable of the displaced population.

The women of *La Red* have taken advantage of having such an activist court and a sympathetic magistrate, Manuel José Cepeda Espinosa. Beginning in 2008, human rights groups operating in Colombia and coalitions of displaced organizations and feminist NGOs began to work towards getting the Court to adopt a proactive position on the gendered dimensions of displacement. *La Red* was one of the many forces behind this great lobbying effort. In 2008, the Court invited representatives of the NGOs and the displaced women's organizations to present their position in front of the magistrate.

The result of this effort was the *Auto-092*, the Court's ruling that all Colombian political entities improve their attention to the displaced population with a specific attention to gender. The Court reached the conclusion that women are disproportionately impacted by the violence due to ten risks, or in their words, ten

“factors of vulnerability” that uniquely impact women. These factors include the risk of sexual violence to intimidate and coerce, the risk of exploitation of labor by the armed actors, the risk of forced recruitment of children, the risk of the assassination or disappearance of the primary family provider, and the risk of loss of land which women are more vulnerable to because of their “historical position in regards to property ownership in rural areas” (Corte Constitucional de Colombia 2008).

In order to prevent these risks, the Court outlined thirteen programs that the government was ordered to enact to ensure the protection and welfare of displaced women. The thirteen programs are as follows:

1. Program to prevent the disproportionate impact of displacement on women, through the prevention of extraordinary risks faced by women as a result of the armed conflict.
2. Program to prevent sexual violence against displaced women.
3. Program to prevent familial and community violence against displaced women.
4. Program to promote health care for displaced women.
5. Program to help displaced female heads of households to find employment and productive opportunities.
6. Program to facilitate education for displaced women, older than 15 years of age.
7. Program to facilitate the access to land for displaced women.
8. Program for the protection of the rights of displaced indigenous women.
9. Program for the protection of the rights of displaced Afro-Colombian women.
10. Program for the protection of women leaders of community groups.
11. Program for the guarantee of truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition.
12. Program for psychological treatment.
13. Program for the elimination of barriers to protection programs for women.

The *Auto* makes it clear that the entity responsible for creating and implementing these thirteen programs is Acción Social. According to the *Auto*, the Director of Acción Social, “will be autonomous in the selection of the instruments and means to design and ensure the implementation of each program” (Corte Constitucional de Colombia 2008, 127). Furthermore, Acción Social is responsible for including, in a participatory fashion, displaced women’s groups and organizations that help displaced women in the formulation of these programs.

In a recent article examining the impact of the *Auto-092* on the lives of displaced women, Donny Meertens (2010) cautions that although the ruling has made a significant contribution to the way that gender and displacement is approached in Colombia, considerable obstacles remain as to its implementation, leaving displaced women vulnerable. Amongst the positive aspects of the *Auto* is the fact that for the first time an official entity recognized the disproportionate impact of the armed conflict on Colombian women and explained in great detail why this occurs and why displaced women require specific and unique protection. Secondly, the *Auto* is important for demanding programs that are meant to go beyond basic humanitarian assistance programs such as access to health care, psychological services, and education. Instead, the *Auto* demands Acción Social and other government entities to consider the question of truth, justice and reparation for the female victims. In this sense, according to Meertens, the Court is challenging the state to look beyond a “humanitarian category” to a “rights category.” In other words, displaced women are not only entitled to aid but to their basic rights as well.

Although the Court presents these questions, it does not do a good job in answering them. A cursory look at the thirteen programs prompts the basic question of how the objectives are to be achieved. How are sexual violence and familial/community violence to be prevented? How does one obtain justice for the victims? How do we quantify truth and reparations? In addition, how will these programs be funded? Who will supervise them? What are the timelines for these programs? How will success be measured?

It is still too early to judge the impact of the *Auto* on the women of *La Red* since it was decreed only in 2008. At the time of my research, *Acción Social* was still scrambling to put together a plan to implement the thirteen programs. Nevertheless, when I asked the women of *La Red* about the *Auto*, it was clear that they felt proud and emboldened by the opportunity to contribute to the ruling. Many of the women told me how the most significant part of the experience was that they were listened to. They described to me how nervous they felt sitting in front of the Magistrate and telling the Court their stories and enumerating their demands. When the *Auto-092* was issued, the women described a tremendous sense of pride at what they had helped accomplish. As Magdalena put it:

When one sits and thinks about what we have accomplished and when we were in the countryside, sitting and dreaming underneath the trees, never did we think that we would be sitting in front of a magistrate in the Constitutional Court.

This sense of empowerment and the confidence the women gained as a result of their success with the *Auto-092*, combined with the capacity-building workshops, have encouraged the women to push the objectives of their group one step further. In the following section, I describe *La Red's* current efforts to create a microenterprise.

La Red's Plans for the Future

By focusing on the creation of a microenterprise, the women of *La Red* are not giving up their role as policy watchdogs or as displaced women activists. However, their precarious living conditions described earlier have prompted them to formulate a plan to raise funds in order to improve their livelihoods.

As described earlier, all of the women of *La Red* hail from rural areas where they derived their subsistence from their land. For many of the women, resuming their pre-displacement agricultural activities is the only way they can see to live with dignity, because as Marcela put it, "*If you have a farm and you grow your own food, you don't need any help from anyone.*" The women of *La Red* have thus decided to purchase a piece of land on the outskirts of Bogotá which will be owned collectively by the members of *La Red*. They intend to work the land themselves, growing crops and raising chickens. Each member will contribute their labor to the farm and they would sell the crops, eggs, and chickens to the surrounding neighborhoods. The profits are to be divided evenly between *La Red's* members.

However, *La Red* first needs to raise enough money to buy a farm. Towards this end, the women of *La Red* began taking proposal writing workshops offered by *Casa*. The women were taught how to draft proposals, come up with objectives and set realistic timelines. I attended three of these workshops. The workshops very much resembled a classroom environment where the *Casa* employee would clearly outline the lesson for the day on a whiteboard and then would give the women an assignment to be completed by the next meeting. After the workshops, the women would meet on their own, without the presence of the *Casa* employee, to discuss what gains had been made in searching for a suitable piece of land or to discuss the timeline of the project.

As a side note, it is curious that the women of *La Red* are focusing solely on purchasing a piece of land since there is land legislation that favors displaced women obtaining land, including Law 160 mentioned in Chapter 2 and the *Auto-092*. Perhaps the women's focus on purchasing land rather than demanding their right to it is reflective of just how weak the women perceive the institutional ambience to be in complying with the legislation.

At the time of my visit, the proposed microenterprise activity simultaneously inspired a lot of excitement and a lot of arguments. Possibly the most heated debates arose around the question of how the profits from the farm should be distributed. All of the women believed that the profits should only be shared amongst the members, but then the question of how membership was to be determined became controversial. As mentioned earlier, *La Red* is technically comprised of fifteen women and their immediate families (including only husbands and children). At one meeting, the women drafted a list of the "active" members, but there was a lot of disagreement about who qualified as an active member. Some women who had not been included in the list argued that not every woman could be as involved in the group as others because of work or family constraints. Every effort to define active membership (such as attendance at all meetings) led to fresh arguments and accusations of exclusion.

Like many other groups, *La Red* is prone to the free rider problem, wherein some women want to receive the benefits of active membership without actually contributing their labor. It is difficult to say whether or not the proposed microenterprise will ever become a reality due to this debate over membership. At the time of my departure, the

lack of resolution to this problem had led to a total standstill on the project and a funding proposal was still being drafted.

Non-organized Displaced Women

The sections above have outlined the horror of displacement, the difficulty of resettlement and the way that displaced women have gotten involved in demanding their rights and creating projects to ensure a more stable future. However, the obstacles that have been overcome by the women of *La Red* by participating in a displaced women's group, have not led other women in similar situations to participate in similar groups. As one would expect, not every displaced woman is able to participate in a displaced group and those who are able may choose not to do so. As part of my research, I interviewed five displaced women who did not participate in any type of displaced people's group in order to understand possible disincentives to their involvement.

In my interviews with these five women, two major obstacles to participation were voiced. The first obstacle I will categorize as practical considerations. Two of the women interviewed had children less than six years of age and considered that they were not able to participate in displaced groups or go to capacity building workshops because they had no one with whom to leave their children. They also mentioned the cost of traveling to and from meetings and how every hour they spent at a meeting was an hour less that they could spend trying to generate income.

Three of the women I interviewed added another obstacle to participation, the lack of knowledge, an obstacle that was as important as the practical considerations. These three women were living in Parque Tercer Milenio, the makeshift IDP camp in downtown Bogotá. During my interviews, it became clear to me that they had no idea of what

benefits they were entitled to or of their rights. One of the women told me that she had been living in Bogotá for over two years and still had not received her emergency humanitarian aid. Another woman had been there for over a year and also had not received any services. Carolina, who had been tagging along on my interviews with these women, told me that this was very typical. She constantly heard stories of women who waited in line for hours at the government offices waiting for aid and when their turn came to speak to the official, they were told that they did not have the right documents or that they should come back another day. These women, not certain of what they were being told, just went away confused and intimidated.

When I asked these women why they did not get involved in a displaced group to advocate for their rights, their vague answers suggested that they were not really sure what I was talking about. I would list a few of the major organizations working for displaced rights such as *La Ruta Pacífica* or *Casa de la Mujer*, and the women told me that they did not know anything about these organizations or about any free capacity building workshops. Two of the women frankly acknowledged their lack of information,

I don't even know what rights I have or who I'm supposed to demand them from. I don't know this city. I have no idea where I need to go.

Another woman said,

I don't participate because I haven't been given the opportunity. Here, there's a lack of knowledge.

My interviews with these women led me to reflect on both the incentives and disincentives to participation. The first obstacle these women described was practical impediments to participation such as family/work considerations or lack of money for transportation. However, these same obstacles are faced by the women of *La Red*, three of whom have small children and all of whom live in precarious economic

conditions. Those women of *La Red* who have young children normally bring their children with them to the meetings, and all of the women of *La Red* are given food and transportation compensation in order to facilitate their participation.

Furthermore, the lack of knowledge about their rights expressed by the women living in the IDP camp, was very reminiscent of the interviews I had with the women of *La Red* who told me that before they got involved with Casa de la Mujer, they had no idea that they were displaced and no idea what rights displaced women had. From the experience of the women of *La Red*, therefore, it is possible to overcome this obstacle.

After conducting interviews with both organized displaced women and non-organized displaced women, one of the factors that stood out most clearly was the importance of third-party actors, such as Casa. These actors facilitate participation by helping displaced women overcome significant obstacles. However, is the existence of *La Red* or any other displaced group solely attributable to the work of third party actors? Are there other factors to consider which help explain how third party actors are able to unite disparate groups of people and inspire them into collective action? Furthermore, which conditions have helped these displaced groups nudge their way into the political environment? In Chapter 4, I will situate the case of *La Red* in the literature on social movement theory in order to provide a theoretical framework for the analysis of displaced groups.

CHAPTER 4 LA RED AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY

Social movement theory came about as a way of explaining collective action.

Social movement theorists were interested in predicting when a group of people would organize in order to make demands, which political systems were more amenable to collective action and which techniques were used to united disparate groups of people. In the previous chapters we have seen two very distinct forms of collective action. On the one hand we have the occupants of Parque Tercer Milenio, who seized a park and vowed not to move out until the Colombian government provided dignified housing, employment opportunities, and humanitarian aid. On the other hand, we have the women of *La Red*, who have organized for the same reasons and towards the same goals as the occupants of Parque Tercer Milenio.

Because both of these examples take place within the same political system, we can say that perhaps Colombia's political structure has created the opportunity for the existence of each group. However, the seizure of the park represented a dramatic, spontaneous, and desperate attempt to achieve the demands of displaced people, while the women of *La Red* are engaged in a more institutionalized dialogue with the political system. Apart from considering the political structure, then, what other factors have contributed to the formation of *La Red* and the course it has pursued thus far?

In this chapter, I will connect the analysis of the formation of *La Red* to the broader theoretical framework of social movement theory. I will first provide a brief literature review of social movement theory and then describe the favorable conditions created by the opening of Colombia's political system in the 1990s that contributed to the increased space for organization. I will also consider the influence of key third party actors such

as feminist NGOs that have contributed to the modest success of the displaced groups. Finally, I will propose collective action frames that tie displacement to issues of international human rights and victimized women.

Before delving into the literature review, an important note must be made about the terminology I employ. In drawing on social movement literature, I am not attempting to classify *La Red* as a social movement organization (SMO) but merely draw parallels between the existing literature on SMOs and my study of *La Red*. However, it is worth noting that social movement scholars have been hindered in their attempts to distinguish between political parties, interest groups and social movements, mainly due to the fact that efforts to do so rely heavily on placing these three groups along a continuum of institutionalization where it is not always clear where to draw the line between one group and another. Because of this, Paul Burnstein (1999) has suggested that it is more academically prudent to think of social movement organizations and interest groups as pertaining to a hybrid classification of “interest organizations” and I follow his advice.

Furthermore, in the Colombian case, trying to create neat categories of social movement, interest organization, interest group, etc., detracts from our ability to analytically study collective action. To give an example of the futility of this exercise, Herbert Kitschelt (2002) defines an interest group as working outside the electoral arena but using institutionalized and legislative avenues to further their demands. On the other hand, he defines social movements as not only working outside the electoral arena but also purposefully orienting their group against institutionalized avenues by using mass demonstrations, mass occupations, etc., to advance their goals. Therefore,

in considering *La Red's* efforts to use the Constitutional Court and public policies to demand their rights, we could say that they are working outside the electoral arena but using institutionalized means to advance their agendas. However, *La Red's* involvement in mass demonstrations and protests would seem to fit within the category of social movements as well, at least as per Kitschelt's rather vague definition. In short, though I may use terms which place *La Red* within the framework of social movement studies, this is not an oversight on my part but merely an attempt to avoid using categorizations based on unclear, constantly shifting parameters.

Background: Social Movement Theory

Current studies of social movements have an enormous amount of literature on which to build their analyses. In current social movement literature there exists a trinity by which most movements are explained: political opportunity structures, the role of resource mobilization and resourceful actors, and the use of collective action frames. These three aspects are interrelated but they stem from different theories of social movement formation that I describe briefly below.

Early theories of collective action greatly overemphasized the role of ideology and emotion as key causes for mobilization (Tarrow 1998). In this vein, social structures that caused injustice and suffering would naturally engender a group of people willing to act collectively against these conditions. Because of the focus on grievances as the key factor for mobilization, early social movement theorists tended to view these forms of action as disorderly mobs that used violence and extremism as the sole forms of contention. The problem with collective behavior theory is that it viewed collective action as a spontaneous outburst and not as a sustained interaction with the socio-political. The fact that the logic of mobilization in collective behavior theory is relegated

to emotion also left out an analysis of organization and engagement with existing political structures.

The inability of collective behavior theory to provide a complete analysis of social movements created the need for a totally new approach. Favorable conditions for this new approach were developed in the 1960s which bore witness to the civil rights, student, and women's movements. The 1960s also marked an increase in the use of economic theory and rational choice models in explaining collective action. These factors gave birth to resource mobilization theory which sought to counter the problems with collective behavior theory by stressing that a movement also needed resources, strategy, and rational actors in order to succeed (Fireman and Gamson 1979).

Resource mobilization theory owes much to the utilitarian approach proposed by the work of the American economist Mancur Olson (1971) because it was against this approach that resource mobilization theory was launched. Olson claimed that rational people act for their own self-interest and, by nature, do not attempt to resolve their problems collectively. Rational people have no incentive to incur the costs of collective action for a collective good or benefit, when they can take advantage of the efforts of others who do participate. This phenomena known as the free-rider theory makes it seem that social movements are at an immediate disadvantage because there is little incentive for collective action.

Olson's work was key in generating major questions which propelled the formation of the resource mobilization approach. First, the utilitarian approach does not explain why some groups are successful at mobilizing while others remain stagnant. It also does not explain how movement participants are able to assess what gains and losses

may be achieved through mobilization. For resource mobilization theorists, a key component that serves to answer these questions is through an analysis of what some scholars call “resourceful actors” (Fireman and Gamson 1979).

Resourceful actors are those key individuals within a movement that seek to convince movement participants 1) that there is a problem; 2) that something can be done about it; 3) that they are the ones who *can* do something about it; and 4) that the failure to act will result in dire consequences. They also have the responsibility of searching for ways to increase the incentives (or rather decrease the cost) for mobilizing and for sizing up the political opportunities available to impel their movement to action.

One of the ways that resourceful actors are so important is in framing the cause of the movement and promoting this frame amongst movement participants. The definition of what are known as collective action frames, as put forth by Scott Hunt, David Snow and Robert Benford is, “action oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate social movement activities and campaigns” (Hunt, Benford, and Snow 1994). Frames have also been tied to studies of culture as a factor in mobilization and the construction of individual and collective identity.

Gamson (1995) proposes that frames can best be understood through the analysis of three main components: injustice, agency, and identity. An injustice frame draws attention to the grievance suffered by movement participants and is meant to provoke a strong emotion in order to impel people to action. Once the injustice has been pointed out, the next step is to convince people that they can indeed do something to resolve the problem which contributes to a sense of agency and empowerment in movement participants. The final component seeks to identify the group of people, the “we,” who

will be instrumental in bringing about the resolution of the injustice. The identity component normally needs an opponent, a “them,” which could be a person, group of persons, or an abstract conception such as war, poverty, etc. The us vs. them dichotomy is very important for creating a sense of unity and collective identity amongst the “we” who can be people of disparate backgrounds, classes, genders, and races.

The research of Hunt, Benford, and Snow (1994) ties the idea of collective identities with master action frames by claiming that collective identities are implicit in all master frames. While they recognize that there is a bottom-up process of identity construction on behalf of movement participants which is informed by how they perceive and experience the world around them, their analysis is more interested in how social movement actors are able to contribute to and affirm collective identities or at times to attribute identities to the movement participants. They recognize that identity is constantly being shaped through the process of interaction and much like marketing executives determined to find the right tone for an advertising campaign, movement actors seek to influence and manipulate collective identities in order to give meaning to master frames (Johnston, Laraña, and Gusfield 1994).

The political process model which studies the political opportunities for mobilization differs from resource mobilization theory by emphasizing the mobilization of resources *external* to the group (Tarrow 1998). In this vein, the social movement is formed when changing political structures create openings for social actors with few resources to use culturally resonant frames and “known repertoires of contention” (Tarrow 1998). The contentious part of contentious politics is created when regular people challenge elites and authorities and bring new actors and new issues to the fore.

However this is not to imply that all movements do is contend; they also build organizations, engage additional participants, mobilize outsiders and construct identities.

The advantage of political opportunities is that they allow weaker groups with fewer resources to jump on the bandwagon of stronger, better organized movements who have chipped away at the existing political structure in order to create a window of opportunity for others. These “early riser” groups provide models of collective action, master frames, and mobilizing structures (Tarrow 1998). It is important to note that political opportunities alone do not lead to contention. Rather political opportunities must be combined with culturally resonant master frames and resourceful actors who can facilitate mobilization.

In his seminal work on social movements and contentious politics, Sidney Tarrow (1998) points to key structural factors that lead to contention: increased access of participation; perceived political realignment; support from influential allies, and the inability of the state to contain dissent. Tarrow mentions that in nondemocratic systems, the inclusion of new political actors into the political system causes contention and this idea will be revisited in more depth in the following section on political opportunities in Colombia. Political realignment leads to contention if participants perceive the realignment as a sign of instability, uncertainty, or weakness in the hegemonic power. The concept of divided elites normally refers to divisions between hard-liners and soft-liners which allows participants to take advantage of this division to further their movement. Finally, it is important for movements to have influential allies, or friends in high places. These could be external actors who are willing to lend their support to the

movement or at the very least negotiate on their behalf. These allies could be religious organizations, guerillas, political parties, and most recently, what have been termed transnational advocacy networks.

The latter potential ally, transnational advocacy networks (TAN), have been receiving much attention recently due to the increased influence of these networks in promoting or assisting social movements (Keck and Sikkink 1998). In fact, work on transnational advocacy networks overlap with works on social movements as seen in the recent compilation of essays edited by Guidry, Kennedy and Zald (2000). TANs comprise international and national non-governmental organizations, activist groups, and human rights regimes and serve to give voice to movement actors who do not have the resources to achieve this on their own. In nondemocratic or weak democratic systems, TANs make visible domestic injustices and bring the discussion to an international level thus contributing to the “transnational” aspect of many modern social movements which I explore further in the next section.

The section that follows will utilize the three theoretical frameworks described above: resource mobilization, collective action frames, and political opportunity structures to outline the formation of displaced mobilization in Colombia. These sections overlap in content and this is all to the benefit of this research because it demonstrates that no single approach can lead to the formation of a social movement without other factors being present.

Political Opportunity Structures

One of the problems with explaining the formation of social movements from a political opportunity perspective is that there are many possible explanations for what may constitute such an opportunity. For this reason, I will propose a few factors that

created a fertile ground for displaced mobilization in Colombia. These factors are the opening of the political system following the drafting of the 1991 Constitution and the saliency of the work of human rights NGOs and TANs.

The 1990s in Latin America are characterized by the arrival of neoliberal economic reforms which effectively shrunk the state in its role as social provider for its citizens (Alvarez et al. 1998). However, the 1990s also witnessed what some scholars have termed a “third wave” of democratization in which, at the very least, electoral democracy became the name of the game (Yashar 2005). The political liberalization that has accompanied the transition to democracy has, as Tarrow predicted, lead to increased spaces for political mobilization. This political liberalization has not been realized solely by holding elections but also by officially declaring a commitment to democracy. In Colombia, this desire for a renewed commitment to democracy was exemplified in the drafting of the 1991 Constitution.

The 1991 Constitution was the result of mobilization by leftist political parties, student groups, indigenous Colombians, Afro-Colombians, human rights NGOs and others, all of whom desired to create a document that reflected the democratic, pluriethnic, non-sexist, inclusive and accountable state that the new Colombia would become. The Constituent Assembly in charge of drafting the new Constitution reflected the heterogeneity of Colombian society and was sensitive to the demands of the various participants. The result was a Constitution that dedicated itself to the respect of democracy, the representation of all Colombians regardless of sex, race, or ethnicity, and the protection of human rights as defined by international standards.

The 1991 Constitution was important for creating a space for political mobilization for a variety of reasons. First of all, it demonstrated that at least rhetorically, the Colombian state was committing itself to the promotion and protection of human rights. This served to facilitate the creation of a 'human rights frame' because movements that viewed themselves as being either promoters of human rights or victims of human rights violations were able to take advantage of the fact that there existed an official document advocating their cause.

In describing the "rights frame" employed by the American civil rights movement, Rita K. Noonan (1995) stresses that the rights frame was anchored in American ideals about inalienable rights and justice for all. Because of this, the rights frame had deep cultural resonance and helped promote the civil rights cause in the United States. In the Colombian case, movement actors and movement participants that worked towards the promotion of human rights were able to link the objectives of their movements to the ideal laid out in the Colombian Constitution of the importance of human rights protection.

In a less abstract way, the 1991 Constitution was significant because it created a legal/judicial framework by which Colombian citizens could seek redress for human rights violations. The Constitution created the Constitutional Court, an Ombudsman for Human Rights, and created a legal system called an *acción de tutela* whereby any citizen could bring a lawsuit, or *tutela* in front of the Court if they felt one of their fundamental rights had been violated. These changes to the judicial system have created an enormous political opportunity for NGOs and displaced interest groups.

Using the *tutela* system, many displaced families have brought their cases before the Court. Article 2 of the Constitution which declares that the state must protect the “life, dignity, property, beliefs, and other rights and freedoms” of all Colombians is vague enough that most *tutelas* that are brought before the court cite it (Easterday 2008). The sheer volume of these *tutelas* brought before the Court has resulted in mandates such as *Sentencia* T-025 whereby the Court found the Colombian government to be unconstitutional because of its inability to fully protect the fundamental rights of the displaced population. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, this mandate was groundbreaking because according to the 1991 Constitution, the Constitutional Court has the authority to act as legal overseer of the state in order to ensure compliance with its rulings (Easterday 2008).

The favorable conditions created by the opening up of the political system and the increased access to the judicial system have led to the increased mobilization of NGOs (movement actors) and movement participants. Often, NGOs are responsible for encouraging displaced families to bring *tutelas* to the Court by promoting awareness of their legal rights as displaced persons, recruiting them into human rights capacity-building workshops, or creating interest groups of displaced persons. Indeed, the role of NGOs and the human rights regime in general, has played as major a role as the 1991 Constitution in carving out a space for political mobilization which I describe below.

As mentioned earlier, one aspect that creates the political opportunity for mobilization, according to Tarrow, has to do with having influential allies. In the case of Colombia, there are several entities which could be considered influential. In Chapter 3,

we saw how an activist Constitutional Court and a sympathetic magistrate greatly advanced the demands of displaced women. In this category we can also place subnational authority figures, such as several former mayors of Bogotá, some of whom have been vociferous advocates for the displaced population.

One of the major changes that took place in Colombia in the 1990s was the increased effort to promote decentralization, which was seen as a way of consolidating democracy (Brookings Institute 2008). Towards this end, municipal mayors who had previously been appointed by the president, became elected officials. The duties and responsibilities of the mayors were also enhanced, making the mayor responsible for providing public services as per national law, drafting a social and economic development plan, and ensuring the preservation of law and order (Brookings Institute 2008).

In the case of the city of Bogotá, there was a very real impetus behind adopting an activist stance on displaced issues. Bogotá is one of the largest receptor sites of newly displaced IDPs. In fact, in 2008, Bogotá received nearly 41% of IDPs in the country (Brookings Institute 2008). Because of the large numbers of displaced people in Bogotá, it is perhaps not surprising to note that Bogotá has been home to some outspoken advocates on the displaced issue. One mayor that stands out most particularly is Luis “Lucho” Garzón, mayor of Bogotá from 2004-2007. Garzón’s development plan was called “Bogotá without Indifference” and one of the main issues it aimed to address was protecting the rights of displaced people. Garzón’s plan differed from earlier development plans in the sense that it focused more on restoring and protecting the rights of the displaced instead of concentrating efforts on a welfare-based

approach. During his time in office, education and health services to the displaced population were improved (Brookings Institute 2008).

Another one of Bogotá's former mayors, Antanas Mockus, is currently campaigning for the Colombian presidency, placing him in an extremely influential position to advocate for displaced people. In a recent presidential debate, Mockus and the current frontrunner, Juan Manuel Santos, both espoused a firm commitment to protecting the displaced population. While Santos promotes the idea of continuing to provide humanitarian aid and public services to the displaced population, Mockus has taken the stance that while these services are important, more important is the need to prevent the massacres that cause displacement in the first place (El País 2010).

Although both candidates appear to be portraying themselves as the champion of the rights of displaced people, neither can be labeled an influential ally quite yet. First of all, the displaced issue is not a highlight of the campaign for either candidate nor has there been a clearly laid out plan for the implementation of protection or prevention programs for the displaced population. Therefore at least for the time being, their commitment is merely rhetorical.

Other entities that would more strongly represent the concept of influential allies are the domestic NGOs and TANs which have played an instrumental role in creating the political space for mobilizing. The contribution of these key allies have helped make displacement visible, linked the crisis in Colombia with international human rights lexicon, and pressured the Colombian government to uphold its commitment to the protection of human rights.

Winifred Tate's work on the human rights regime in Colombia (2007) describes how NGOs came to have a presence in Colombian society and how they became key political actors. Prior to the 1990s, the crisis of displacement went virtually ignored both within Colombia and in the international community. At this time, Colombia's escalating drug-related violence helped mask the major exodus of peasants from rural areas. Internationally, the crisis went unseen because international agencies working inside Colombia were almost non-existent. Furthermore, Colombia's functioning electoral democratic system and relatively high level of per-capita income made it ineligible for large amounts of international humanitarian aid (Tate 2007). These same factors contributed to masking the human rights crisis which was at the time more prominent in Central America and Peru.

The first report of internal displacement was published by the Colombian Episcopal Church in 1995 which produced combined statistics on displacement for the previous ten years. This report was fundamental because for the first time, the magnitude of displacement was made visible and the legitimacy of the Church made the report credible for government officials, academics, and domestic NGOs. This report represented the "shot heard round the world" in the sense that it gave birth to a flurry of research into displacement and gave impetus to local NGOs and other religious institutions who had also been working with displaced populations to come forth with their findings. By the late 1990s, the U.S. Committee for Refugees had declared Colombia to be one of the worst cases of displacement in the world after Sudan. In 1998, the UNHCR opened an office in Bogotá and four years later had three operating offices in Colombia.

Once there was a solid presence of human rights networks in Colombia, the first step was to convince the Colombian state to acknowledge the fact that there existed a humanitarian crisis. Domestic NGOs, supported by the human rights regime, set about doing this using a variety of tactics. They began organizing lectures on displacement and changing the language that was used in Colombia to describe the crisis. Previously, a person who was forced to flee their home because of the internal conflict was known in Colombia as being a “victim of violence” or “an unprotected person.” The term “forced displacement” did not exist either. Instead it was referred to as “internal exodus” (Osorio Pérez 2001).

By changing the way that displacement was discussed, NGOs were able to connect the crisis of displacement in Colombia with displacement in other countries in the world and also link what was happening in Colombia with the international human rights framework which had very specific laws about the rights of displaced people (Osorio Pérez 2001). The work of these NGOs contributed to the creation of a human rights frame which characterized the work of the NGOs (and later displaced interest groups) as being fundamentally about the protection of human rights.

Resource Mobilization

Scholars have long realized the contribution of transcommunity networks such as churches, unions, or NGOs to social mobilization. As Deborah Yashar asserts, “networks enable people (or communities) to interact, to exchange information, to build social capital, and to mobilize for change” (Yashar 2005). In the previous chapters, I have described the role of the Colombian feminist NGO *Casa de la Mujer*, in forming *La Red* and contributing to its success. It should be noted that the case of *La Red* is not unique. Indeed, during the course of my research I have discovered that most, if not all,

displaced interest groups owe a great deal of their organization to the support of some sort of transcommunity network.

In Chapter 3, I discuss how *Casa de la Mujer* came up with the idea of forming a group of displaced women, thinking that such a group would be more effective in demanding their own rights than a third party group doing it for them. With this in mind, *Casa* actively recruited displaced women from neighborhoods with large displaced populations and also recruited women who attended meetings of displaced people. Once the members were recruited, *Casa* proceeded to *concientizar* or raise awareness amongst the women of the grave injustices that had been committed against them. These capacity building workshops also served to make the women aware of international law and public policies that existed to protect displaced people. Furthermore, these workshops served to draw attention to the inadequacy of some of the existing public policies so that the women would realize how much work was left to be done in order to achieve full protection of displaced people and what they could do to make a difference. Through these workshops, the women of *La Red* became informed. Through their activism in helping to bring about the *Auto-092*, they became empowered.

The importance of *Casa* was especially evident when I interviewed the displaced women who were not involved in any type of displaced group. The women of Parque Tercer Milenio did not feel empowered by taking over the park. If anything their residence in the park made them feel even more vulnerable. The anger and frustration of these women was palpable. They did not know what services they were entitled to, where to go to receive them, or who to complain to when they did not get them. It was

clear to me that these women, unlike the women of *La Red*, felt absolutely no control over their resettlement experience and did not believe their situations would improve.

This demonstrates the crucial role that organizations like *Casa* play in ensuring not only that the displaced women are aware of their rights but also that they feel empowered enough to advocate for them on their own. *Casa* acts exactly how resource mobilization theorists would predict. First, they make the women aware that there is an injustice and that something can be done about it. Then they convince the women that they are the ones who have the power to resolve the injustice. Finally, they create and promote collective action frames which help the women situate their experiences within a broader framework. It is to the construction of these frames that we turn to in the next section.

Collective Action Frames

As I mentioned earlier, by drawing upon international human rights lexicon and subsuming distinct identities into a broader category of displacement, NGOs were able to impose a top-down ideology upon movement participants, which I have called the human rights frame. In this section I will concentrate on how within this frame a different one has appeared: that of the *mujeres víctimas*, or victimized women.

In Chapter 2, I outlined how women have been disproportionately affected by the violence and how displacement and resettlement are experienced differently by men and women. Feminist scholars and feminist NGOs have been instrumental in pointing out these differences and questioning what this difference says about Colombia's democracy and rhetorical commitment to gender equality. By highlighting the unique ways that women suffer displacement, NGOs were able to create a *mujeres víctimas* frame that has been very effective in uniting disparate groups of women in Colombia

towards an end to the conflict, the respect for women's rights, and the protection of "*mujeres víctimas de la violencia*" (women who are victims of the violence).

The *mujeres víctimas* frame is interesting because it employs a disempowered and empowering strategy simultaneously. First, by relying on academic research and feminist NGO reports on the escalating levels of violence against women, the frame is being used to convey the idea that women are victims not only of the conflict but also of the weak institutional response to assist displaced women. Furthermore, because of the Colombian governments' inability to resolve the conflict, women are also the victims of a weak government. In other words, the government is seen as perpetuating the victimization and marginalization of women.

However, the frame does not solely paint a disempowered image of women. The frame also seeks to convey that because women are affected uniquely by the conflict and because they suffer displacement disproportionately, they are in the unique position to take action against the injustice of the conflict and the negligence of the government. This frame is useful for a couple of reasons. First of all, it serves to unite a disparate group of women from different socio-economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Second of all, the frame is broad enough to include women who are not necessarily displaced themselves but who can still consider themselves victims of violence. As one scholar put it when describing a women's pro-peace movement in Colombia, "In defining themselves this way, they referred specifically to both the life-threatening violence of the three sided armed conflict and other, 'less visible, because less fatal' manifestations of violence against women: rape, abduction, and forced labor" (Cockburn 2005).

The frame of *mujeres víctimas* has been used for a variety of mobilization efforts by women in Colombia. I will cite two examples that I witnessed firsthand during the course of my field work. At the time of my visit in the summer of 2009, the women of *La Red* and hundreds of other small interest groups, NGOs and the women's pro-peace movement, were preparing a huge mobilization campaign for a march set to take place on November 25, 2009, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The march successfully galvanized 3,000 women who joined together to protest all forms of violence against women, including forced displacement, sexual violence, and domestic abuse (El Tiempo 2009).

The fact that the march was organized on a day selected by the United Nations promotes the idea proposed in this paper about a human rights frame wherein Colombian NGOs actively seek to link their cause to international human rights norms and also that they seek to depict their mobilization as part of a larger movement of women who are victims of violence around the world. The march against violence also highlights the *mujeres víctimas* frame in the sense that the mobilization was not comprised solely of displaced women or women who were directly impacted by the conflict. Rather, this was a day when anyone could come out in support of Colombian women because all women are at the very least *indirectly* affected by the violence.

The second example was a forum that I attended entitled, "International Forum of Truth, Justice and Reparation: A Pending Debt to Women as Victims of Violence." This forum, a combined effort of four feminist NGOs and funded by the European Union and Oxfam International, gathered together feminists, displaced women of various ethnicities, scholars, and Colombian statesmen. The objective of the forum was to

explore how violence has become a central part of all Colombian women's lives and what can be done about it. The range of topics discussed included the escalation of forced displacement, the gendered dimensions of displacement, the rise of rape as a tool of the conflict, the forced recruitment of young women into the guerilla, and domestic violence.

At the end of the first day of the forum, the women were asked to break up into groups and devise a list of resolutions to end the violence against women. This list would be presented to the Ombudsman for Human Rights on the following day. This activity was very interesting because it served to convince the women of their ability to devise solutions for problems that they themselves had identified. It was also significant because on the following day, the women were able to stand in front of the Ombudsman and read their recommendations, thus serving to promote a sense of empowerment and control over their destinies.

It was impressive to note that many of the women's recommendations were not limited to resolving the problems of violence against women. Many women linked the violence against women to the violence that has been a part of Colombia for more than fifty years. By making this link, the women were implicitly connecting the respect and protection of women to the promotion of peace in Colombia more generally. The fact that women were advocating for their rights and the rights of all Colombians shows the extent to which they had internalized the "women as victims" and "women as defenders of human rights" frames that I have laid out above.

This chapter has attempted to incorporate social movement theory into an analysis of the formation of interest groups of the displaced population. By focusing on the three

major approaches advanced in social movement literature, political opportunity, resource mobilization and collective action frames, I have attempted to capture the reality of displaced mobilization in Colombia. The ideas that I have proposed are based on my own observations and my own interpretations of what I have experienced in doing this research. I have not attempted to discuss all political opportunities that may have contributed to the ripe environment for mobilization, nor all of the various actors that may in some way play the role of resourceful actors. As for collective action frames, the human rights and *mujeres víctimas* frames are my own suggestions for how to analyze these movements.

However, the question remains as to whether or not the existence of a displaced persons group such as *La Red* or a massive mobilization of displaced people such as the occupation of Parque Tercer Milenio, might be the beginnings of a national social movement of displaced people in Colombia. I will explore these questions in Chapter 5 and offer some final thoughts on the significance of my findings and the contribution this research has made to studies of gender and forced migration and grassroots mobilization of marginalized groups in Latin America.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

The objective of this research was to use a gender perspective to explore the crisis of internal displacement in Colombia, a product of a civil war that has lasted over half a century. In the preceding chapters, I have described how displacement has become “feminized” due to the fact that more than half of the displaced population is comprised of women whose husbands or male family members have been murdered or forcibly disappeared as a result of the armed conflict. Despite suffering a tremendous blow to their sense of self-identity upon losing their family members and witnessing the destruction of their homes, displaced women have proven to be the primary actors in the reconstruction of life upon resettlement in the cities where they have ended up.

In Chapter 2, I explored how upon resettlement, displaced women become immediately engaged in the search for work, the *rebusque*, in order to be able to feed and care for their families. They also become immediately immersed in the reconstruction of everyday tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and child rearing which helps provide them with a sense of continuity to their past lives in the private sphere. These women’s actions to ensure day to day survival have been used to explain why displaced women become rooted quicker than their male counterparts.

My research has also shown that although displacement is generally a disempowering and destructive experience, it may also open up opportunities for empowerment and create spaces for political mobilization. However, displaced women cannot normally give meaning to their experiences and begin to organize in order to demand their rights without the help of a third party actor. In the case of the women of *La Red*, the support and guidance of the Colombian feminist NGO *Casa de la Mujer*,

was necessary to make the women aware of their rights and enable them to become their own advocates.

The role of *Casa* as a third party actor has been vital for the formation and success of *La Red*. Nevertheless, as I described in Chapter 4, the assistance of key resourceful actors, such as *Casa*, is also not sufficient to explain why groups of people organize when they do and how they do so. For that, an analysis of political opportunity structures and collective action frames is necessary. In the case of Colombia, the political opening created during the 1990s by the drafting of the 1991 Constitution combined with the help of key influential allies such as an activist Constitutional Court, a few former mayors of Bogotá and the international human rights regime, created a favorable environment in which displaced groups could mobilize. Furthermore, the use of the human rights and *mujeres víctimas* frames facilitated the mobilization of disparate groups of people who united around the same cause.

The Future of La Red

At the time of my visit, the women of *La Red* had experienced an enormous boost in self-confidence and a great sense of accomplishment due to their role in the issuing of the *Auto-092*. Nonetheless, as of yet, the *Auto-092* has not made any real difference in the everyday lives of these women. Interestingly enough, there seemed to be little doubt in their minds that the *Auto* will come to fruition because, as several of the women mentioned during the interviews, they have no intention of backing down until it does.

The stories of the women of *La Red*, recounted in Chapter 3, illustrate the significant obstacles the women have overcome at a personal level in order to lobby for their own rights and for the rights of all displaced women. Their success at the institutional level has perhaps been more modest. Nevertheless, *La Red* serves as an

example of how other displaced groups can become organized, what channels they can use in order to make their demands, and how they can effect change in the treatment of displaced people. However, what is left to consider is how real this change is.

As I mention in Chapter 3, the *Auto-092* introduces more questions than it answers. The more concrete questions concerning funding, execution of, and oversight of the thirteen programs make me somewhat skeptical as to the probability that the programs will be implemented or that they will be effective. After all, there are major obstacles to their implementation. In a study commissioned by the Brookings Institute (2008) regarding the role of municipalities in aiding the displaced population, the authors find that there exists a significant gap between national level policies for the displaced and municipal level capabilities.

With the increased demand on the government to protect the displaced population, the central government has in turn been loading more responsibilities on municipalities. However, according to the Brookings Institute (2008) study, the municipalities are not only excluded from the creation of national level policies regarding the displaced, but furthermore they are not given adequate resources to pay for the public services they are supposed to provide. In many instances, what the municipalities are forced to spend on the displaced population comes at the expense of other vulnerable groups, such as the disabled (p. 24). These challenges pose some very important questions: Can the state deliver on its promise to uphold the Court's rulings? And if not, will the women keep believing that the government can and will protect them?

Furthermore, it is equally wise to question whether *La Red's* income generating project will ever be realized. The sense of empowerment and confidence the women

gained as a result of lobbying for the *Auto* might waver once the women tackle the obstacles of defining membership and submitting funding proposals. Undertaking a project of this sort may be beyond the abilities of *Casa* as well. *Casa's* staff has not been trained to deal with agrarian reform issues which may explain why *Casa* has not encouraged *La Red* to seek land ownership through existing land reform legislation, but rather encourages a market-based approach. Therefore, when analyzing *La Red's* success up to this point, it is important to maintain a reasonable amount of skepticism.

Major Contributions

In the course of this research, I became aware that the topic of displaced women in Colombia has been marginalized in two major areas of research. The first is within the existing literature on gender and forced migration and the second is within the field of mobilization of marginalized groups in Latin America. In the literature on gender and forced migration which I described briefly in Chapter 2, there is a tendency towards lengthy case-studies normally done in Southeast Asia and Africa. These case-studies are largely descriptive and do not operate within set theoretical frameworks which make them seem unconnected and overly specific to certain regions. However, in doing this research I have become aware of similarities between the experience of displacement of women in Colombia and women in Afghanistan and Burma, to name a few examples. The lack of cross-country comparative analysis hinders the study of gender and forced migration by not allowing us to observe patterns or question deviations.

The study of displaced women in Colombia is also missing in the research on grassroots mobilization of marginalized groups in Latin America. Although research on social movements in Latin America has mushroomed in recent years, these studies tend to concentrate on movements of Afro-descendants (Escobar 2008), indigenous groups

(Yashar 2005), or *campesinos* (Deere and Royce 2009). However, even though the mobilization of displaced people in the form of interest organizations such as *La Red* or in the form of large-scale, spontaneous acts of disruption (such as the occupation of Parque Tercer Milenio) cannot yet be called a social movement, it is still necessary to consider the factors that have triggered this specific form of political action.

The study of the mobilization of displaced people, like the studies of mobilization of *campesinos*, indigenous groups, or others, makes us question whether this sort of political expression is a response to the fragile state of Latin America's democracies which have historically excluded and marginalized bulks of their populations, or whether the presence of these groups illustrate the existence of a powerful and active civil society. Therefore, a closer look at the displaced case would be beneficial for an analysis of the strengths or weaknesses of Colombia's democracy.

A Displaced Social Movement in the Making?

At the end of Chapter 4, I asked whether the presence of so many displaced interest groups such as *La Red* and the existence of a mass mobilization of displaced people such as the one that seized Parque Tercer Milenio, might be considered the beginnings of a displaced social movement in Colombia. Certainly, such a movement would benefit from the increased political associational space created by the 1991 Constitution and the presence of the key influential allies. However as regards the resourceful actors, I am less confident that the necessary organizational support exists to support such a movement.

First of all, many resourceful actors represent specific displaced groups, such as women, Afro-Colombians, indigenous groups and hyphenated hybrids of displaced people such as Afro-Colombian women. There needs to be a resourceful actor with the

capacity to organize a very disparate group of people. The second problem is the collective action frame. The human rights frame that I have proposed would be useful in uniting the displaced population but this frame tends to be subsumed beneath other frames such as the mujeres víctimas frame.

However, I do not want to sound the death knell for the possibility of a displaced social movement. Displacement in Colombia constitutes a crisis that will not soon go away. With the escalation of the conflict in the countryside, more and more displaced families will pour into urban centers like Bogotá each day, thus increasing the national awareness of displacement and putting increased pressure on the Colombian government to improve its institutional response to the needs of the displaced. What I do suggest is the possibility that the strength of the women's movement which has successfully incorporated Colombian women around the desire for peace, democracy, and the promotion of human rights for all Colombians (not just women), provides perhaps the greatest hope for giving voice to those who, as yet, have not been able to speak for themselves.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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