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## **POLITICS AND SECURITY IN THREE COLOMBIAN CITIES**

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## Politics and security in Three Colombian Cities

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### Abstract

*This paper discusses the “metropolitan miracle” that has taken place in Colombia since the early 1990s and which consists of the radical improvement of security in two of Colombia’s three major cities (Bogotá and Medellín) - an improvement that experts considered highly unlikely. This phenomenon has been described, but not explained, and this is the purpose of our paper: to provide a political explanation of the miracle. We suggest here that the explanation lies in politics: coalitions, organisation, and state building. We claim that: a) the metropolitan miracle happened because a new, heterogeneous, governing coalition came to power which had strong enough incentives to disentangle itself from the dynamics of private provision of security; and b) the miracle was more likely to occur in very large cities. In contrast to Europe, where relatively small size can coexist with prosperity, for example via conurbations, in Latin America in general - and in Colombia in particular - only in the metropolis does the middle class have substantial power.*

### Introduction

Homicide rates fell drastically in two of the three main Colombian cities (Bogotá and Medellín) in the 1990s and the first decade of the present century. In the third city (Cali) not only did they remain at a very high level but other indicators remained frighteningly high as well.

How can we explain this contrast? Some may think that the drastic positive change that took place in Bogotá and Medellín was simply an expression of a more general improvement in Colombia’s security indicators.<sup>6</sup> Cali would thus simply be a slow starter. However, the trend in Bogotá and Medellín has three differentiating characteristics: it preceded the national decline; it was much more abrupt and sustainable (see, for example, Figure 1); and its outcome was that the state had a more obvious hold over the territory. The latter characteristic was not necessarily evident throughout the process of transformation but is quite clear at the end of it. In effect, as can be seen in Figure 2, when the national homicide indices were still very high, the rates in Bogotá were already having a radically deflating effect on them. These cut national rates by a ratio of two to three, and the same also

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<sup>6</sup> This trend may be changing.

happened later in Medellín, indeed to a more radical degree. Furthermore, the pacification of Colombia is at least partially attributable to the delegation of power from the state to private agents. In Bogotá and Medellín, the state is the protagonist of the security success.<sup>7</sup>

The phenomenon is easy to describe but difficult to explain. In fact, the trend went against the expectations of intellectuals and students of violence in Colombia, who in the late 1980s had emphatically asserted that ‘more than the violence in the mountains what is killing us is the violence in the cities’ (Sanchez, 1987: 80). At that moment, the statement was not false (See Figure 3). So what changed so radically in Colombia over the course of five or six years? What caused the change? The protagonists of what can be called, without exaggeration, a ‘metropolitan miracle’ have produced an explanation that is quite an idiosyncratic discourse: an ‘urban ideology’ (Peñalosa 1994; Mockus 1994; Acero 2007; Baracaldo 2007, Elster 2007). This highlights the importance of norms, culture, and spatiality in urban governance in contrast to theories that emphasise the role of repression or social reform, or a combination of both – theories that had previously been largely dominant in the country. The notion of the importance of cultural engineering and of the creation of an ‘urban-citizen culture’<sup>8</sup> as a key security issue were of paramount importance for the new style implemented by the creators of the miracle (Sánchez et al. 2003; Formisano 2002; Latorre Lopez 2004). According to them, the majority of criminal events that took place in big cities were the product of emotional transgressions committed by citizens who had been ‘infected’ by the virus of violence and disrespect of the law, but who were otherwise inconspicuous people. In another version of events, it was the deterioration of public space that allowed violence to thrive. In both variations even criminal organisations could be tamed if they fell under citizen control. The main obligation of the municipal authorities, therefore, was to improve the urban environment operating on the norms and perceptions of the citizens or changing the landscape. In all three cities the mayors invested huge amounts of money and energy into tracking indicators of violence in order to replace negative values with new ones and to transform the landscape.

This discourse is hardly credible, for several reasons. Students of culture have long flagged the typically sluggish and slow nature of cultural change. How, then, was this cultural engineering promoted by the reformers in the three cities supposed to trigger a spectacular transformation over the span of three years, a mayor’s term?<sup>9</sup> There is evidence that at least in Bogotá the cultural engineering did have some degree of success but was it so dramatic as to explain abrupt changes in indicators of violence? Second, the ‘urban citizen culture’ discourse did not propose specific mechanisms that would explain how it worked on hardcore members of criminal organisations. It did include reasonable hypotheses and, as we will see, a set of specific policies about how it could impact on the general public. Yet how were well-intended discourses supposed to change the mentality of assassins or ‘*narcos*’? Was this an explanation without an ‘active principle’? Several critics believed so, and set out to prove that the real reason for the improvement in the security situation in the cities was the increase of investment in security.<sup>10</sup> If the new discourse did not clearly address the hard realities of security, it also blissfully ignored social inclusion in a country characterised by very high

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<sup>7</sup> This point is open to discussion as regards Medellín. See below for further detail.

<sup>8</sup> In Spanish, both notions are captured by the same expression: ‘cultura ciudadana’.

<sup>9</sup> In 2001 the mayoral term was changed to four years through Decree 2899. See Diario Oficial, December 2001.

<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, many of these criticisms have their own problems. For example, Sánchez, Fabio et al (2003) included deaths in car accidents in his statistical evaluation of the security results of the *cultura ciudadana* policies. This seems rather anti-intuitive.

levels of inequality and by a war that only served to deepen them.<sup>11</sup> In other words, the two elements at the core of the old security rhetoric had suddenly been wiped out of the public landscape.

We will suggest here that although the critics are right to some extent, in a very specific but very important sense it simply does not matter. What the urban citizen culture ideologues and its critics have failed to take into account is politics: coalitions, organisation, and state building. To understand the metropolitan miracle it is necessary to bring politics back in. This is the purpose of our paper: to provide a political explanation of the metropolitan miracle. Our departure point is that any viable explanation of the miracle should simultaneously explore:

- a. Why the miracle took place at all;
- b. Why it took such rapid effect;
- c. Why it took place in Bogotá and Medellín and not (or not yet) in Cali;
- d. Why it has not taken place in other parts of the country, or rather, what is the specifically metropolitan dimension of the miracle.

We have two basic claims in answer to these questions. First, the metropolitan miracle happened because a new governing coalition came to power. Its arrival was enabled by the institutional designs of 1991. The new coalition incorporated, and expressed, values and perceptions that were adopted by the media, a large section of middle class opinion, technocrats of neoliberal leanings, and the political left. The old coalition, which governed through longstanding partisan networks, had a clear governance template which in many ways worked very well. Precisely because of this, however, it had no incentive to escalate organisational complexity. On the contrary, it was convenient for it to maintain a 'flat and penetrable' set of agencies. The new coalition, instead, had to establish new forms of communication with the citizenship and lacked the strong social and political networks of the traditional parties. Improving the 'citizen culture' was one piece of the more general jigsaw of organisational strengthening, expressed through increased bureaucratisation, stronger taxation, and a universalist approach to social conflict. Second, this miracle was far more likely to take place in very large cities. Unlike in Europe, where cities of relatively small size parallel prosperity, for example via conurbations, in Latin America in general and in Colombia in particular the middle class only hold substantial power in the major cities. Furthermore, media and state organisations converge to produce a dense network of agencies that support bureaucratic practices and middle class routines. Clearly, Bogotá is privileged on all three accounts. The majority of state bureaux and of strong media are also located in the capital.

The first claim above is a 'possibility' statement, and the second a 'necessity' one. A corollary of the discussion is that ideas count (Hall 1997). In the first section of this paper we offer a brief narrative of the political evolution that has taken place in the three cities. In the second section we describe, similarly succinctly, the 'metropolitan miracle' through its main ideas, personnel, policies and achievements. The third section concentrates on the institutional underpinnings of the process of change. Fourth, we focus on our first claim and follow this by focusing on our second. Finally, we summarise and discuss the issue of sustainability. We show that the adoption of the new course of action has had rather spectacular effects, but that it has also involved heavy tradeoffs.

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<sup>11</sup> The Colombian conflict has produced one of the highest levels of displacement in the world. By very conservative standards (the governmental figures), there were over two million internally displaced persons by the late 1990s. A substantial portion of these fled to the big cities.

## A timetable of political change

Until 1990, Colombia had a tradition of relatively stable bipartisan government.<sup>12</sup> With the approval of the popular election of mayors established in 1986 (but implemented only in 1988) and of a new constitution in 1991, the political dynamics at the sub-national level changed quite substantially. This was especially true for Bogotá (Reyes and Balcazar 2001; Dávila and Gilbert 2001). In 1992 the elected mayor, Juan Martin Caicedo Ferrer, was impeached after a corruption scandal.<sup>13</sup> He was replaced by another member of the dominant Liberal party, Jaime Castro, a person known for his successful career as a traditional politician. Castro, however, issued a new set of regulations for the city in 1993, the *Estatuto Orgánico de Bogotá*, that undercut the power of the municipal council and of clientelistic operators.<sup>14</sup> This, in addition to the impact of the 1991 Constitution, produced a revolution in the voting patterns of the city.<sup>15</sup>

In 1994, Antanas Mockus, a philosopher and mathematician not affiliated to any of the two Colombian traditional parties (Liberal and Conservative), was elected mayor. During the campaign Mockus had been supported by several NGOs and sectors of the intellectual left. However when he took power he highlighted more a 'citizenship of duties' than a 'citizenship of rights' (Mockus 1994). Influenced by previous experiments that had taken place in Cali, Mockus not only developed in minute detail the discourse of '*cultura ciudadana*', but also emphasised its security dimension. The '*cultura ciudadana*' rapidly became a nationwide blueprint for governance. Mockus was succeeded by Enrique Peñalosa,<sup>16</sup> a person of a rather different trajectory. He had been a member of the Liberal Party and had been comprehensively beaten by Mockus in the 1994 campaign. He decided to reinvent himself as an independent, which became an important factor in his 1997 victory. Much more than any other mayor, Peñalosa had seriously studied the city's problems and arrived in power with a developed set of proposals oriented towards the transformation of the urban landscape rather than its culture. However, he had many things in common with Mockus, who won yet another election in 2000.<sup>17</sup> By then, the city had undergone a deep transformation: it was much less violent, much more assertive, had (thanks to Peñalosa) a working system of public transport adequate for its level of development, and was looking confidently towards the future. In 2003, a new actor entered the fray: the political left through the *Polo Democrático Alternativo* (PDA). The capital was the primary electoral stronghold of the left, and the PDA ran with a charismatic trade unionist. The other major candidate was a modern technocrat, supported by Peñalosa and the media. This was a split between members of the same coalition. Indeed, other candidates, perceived by both the media and the capital's public opinion as clientelistic and/or pertaining to old politics such as Jaime Castro, were systematically marginalised by the media. They did not stand a chance. The trade unionist won, and he was succeeded by yet another PDA leader, who triumphed over a heterogeneous

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<sup>12</sup> However, this was not as stable as is commonly believed. For details, see Gutiérrez, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> For more information see the editorial of *El Tiempo*, 15 January 1992.

<sup>14</sup> Law 1421 of 1993.

<sup>15</sup> For a chronology of the presidents of Colombia and the mayors of the 3 cities in the period under study, see Table 4.

<sup>16</sup> In Colombia mayors cannot be re-elected.

<sup>17</sup> Mockus was supported by a very broad coalition that included the media, NGOs, and the political force of the indigenous people (ASI).

field headed by Peñalosa.<sup>18</sup> Once again, justly or unjustly, those candidates that were seen as representatives of traditional politics were comprehensively beaten.<sup>19</sup>

The evolution of events in Medellín has been more straightforward but also more surprising. If Bogotá had reached high levels of violence in the late 1980s, Medellín was in another league altogether. It was not only the epicentre of the eponymous cartel, but it also witnessed genuine urban warfare between leftist urban militias and criminal groups. Between 1990 and 1996 it suffered a homicide rate of more than two hundred per hundred thousand inhabitants, and the widespread presence of organised crime. In 1994, the city's authorities successfully negotiated a sub-national peace accord with the urban militias, which were legally reorganised into a private security cooperative: COOSERCOM. However, before long the members of COOSERCOM were at war with each other. In just a few years the majority of them were killed. By the end of the century, the paramilitary ordered the takeover of the city's underworld, undertaken with huge success. They not only evicted the remaining leftist militias and dissident paramilitary affiliations (Rincón n.d.) but also coordinated criminal groups that helped them to maintain social control in the *barrios* (Gutiérrez and Jaramillo 2004).

While Bogotá has historically led political innovation in Colombia, the voting patterns in Medellín revealed strong traditional, bipartisan preferences. All attempts to advance non-traditional politics failed. However in 2003 another mathematician, Sergio Fajardo (2003-2007), was elected mayor. He was supported by a heterogeneous coalition in which NGOs and the intellectual left were conspicuous,<sup>20</sup> but where entrepreneurs, the Chamber of Commerce, and the media also found a place. Once elected, Fajardo made a strong turn to the centre or, as perceived by some of the NGOs that helped to elect him, to the right.<sup>21</sup> He developed a '*cultura ciudadana*' programme that borrowed many of its themes and policies from Mockus and, more generally, from the Bogotá experience.

Two aspects of the Medellín process are particularly noteworthy. First, Fajardo's success in itself is remarkable. Indeed, since Medellín's violence had a high component of organised crime, scepticism about the efficacy of the '*cultura ciudadana*' formula in the new context was pervasive. However, the fall in homicide rates in Medellín was the steepest in the country. The nature of this reduction has been hotly contested, as critics have asserted that it was due to an internal regulation within the paramilitary and that it was punctuated by spectacular occurrences of state brutality. These allegations will be briefly considered in section three of this paper. The second noteworthy point concerns the sustainability of the Fajardo experience. Fajardo picked his Government Secretary, Alonso Salazar, an outstanding intellectual and journalist, who had a long research experience with the urban militias, as his candidate for the 2007 elections. Despite Fajardo's enormous popularity, several factors suggested that the city would fall back to its traditional political preferences. Many of the NGO cadres that had supported Fajardo were now highly critical of his performance, and of what they thought to be Salazar's move towards the right. Salazar was a

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<sup>18</sup> Peñalosa demonstrated that he was as disastrous a politician as he was a good manager.

<sup>19</sup> For example Leonor Serrano de Camargo, an agro-industrial entrepreneur, invested heavy amounts in her campaign, that never really took off.

<sup>20</sup> Fajardo won at the head of a coalition called *Compromiso Ciudadano* (Citizen Engagement). It included prominent NGOs (Corporación Región, Instituto Popular de Capacitación), trade union forces (Escuela Nacional Sindical), neighborhood associations (Convivamos, CEDESIS), and expressions of the political left (some members of the Polo Democrático, the indigenous electoral force ASI). All these coexisted with centre and right wing leaders (members of the coalition of the president, el Partido de la U, and el Nuevo Partido).

<sup>21</sup> IPC home : [http://www.ipc.org.co/page/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=581&Itemid=0](http://www.ipc.org.co/page/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=581&Itemid=0)

much less charismatic and media-friendly personality than Fajardo. Furthermore, the only figure in Medellín more popular than the mayor was the president, Uribe.<sup>22</sup> The traditional candidate for mayor, Luis Pérez, was endowed with a strong client-based political capital, and was a staunch collaborator of the president. At the beginning everything seemed to go as expected: Pérez led with the explicit backing of Uribe and Salazar lagged far behind. However, in the final stages of the campaign the latter received public support from the nation's first lady and from the world famous singer Juanes, each crossing from the *Uribista* entourage. In addition, a myriad of voices from the Medellín bourgeois class, including several outstanding intellectuals, added their support. They begged voters not to allow a reversal in the process of modernising the city. The president withdrew his initial support for Pérez and simply, backed off.<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, Salazar won.

Cali was the pioneer of anti-violence policy design. Mockus publicly recognised that many of the themes he used to link '*cultura ciudadana*' and security were taken from early Cali experiences. However, the city has not been able to push forward a sustainable modernisation process. What has happened? The first two elected mayors, the liberal Trujillo Garcia and the conservative Germán Villegas, continued traditional politics in the region. They were succeeded by Rodrigo Guerrero, a traditional politician but also an intellectual who presented himself as a 'civic leader' and conceived violence from an epidemiological approach, taking it to be an infection. He created an 'Observatory of Violence' and pushed forward several ways of controlling the 'infection'. He was replaced by Mauricio Guzmán, a Liberal independent who was jailed for corruption. In successive electoral contests, both 'independents' and 'traditional politicians' took the position of mayor, but none was able either to transform the city physically or to reduce the rates of violence. Furthermore, corruption scandals remained at the centre of public life in the city. Intellectuals and public figures hotly debated how to find future alternatives and asked themselves how the examples of Bogotá and Medellín could be replicated. In 2003, Apolinar Salcedo, an outstanding member of the municipal council and an independent figure, was elected. He was blind, and this symbolised his 'otherness' as, in a way the colourful and different personalities of Mockus and Fajardo had symbolised theirs. However, Salcedo failed miserably. One day, in the midst of deep crisis in the city, the streets were filled with racist attacks against the mayor (El Tiempo, 09/01/2007). Later on he was impeached due to irregularities in his contract with the private firm that collected taxes in Cali. In the most recent elections a new independent figure was pitted against a traditional politician, an exponent of the city's oligarchy and of the Conservative Party tradition. The former eventually won, despite the fact that he allied with sectors that were accused of having links with drug traffickers.

### **Institutional underpinnings**

The miracle would not have been possible if the institutional context had not changed substantially between the mid 1980s and the mid 1990s. At least three dimensions of institutional change must be considered in order to understand the metropolitan stories narrated here.

First, the popular election of mayors is important. In the old institutional world, mayors were members of a chain of command headed by the president. In a country that has suffered from chronic political violence, stability is a major concern. Thus, perhaps the main role of the

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<sup>22</sup> Uribe was born in Medellín.

<sup>23</sup> In contrast to Bogotá, where he bitterly opposed the leftist candidate –to no avail. In Bogotá the voice of the president, although mighty, has less weight than in Medellín.

mayors was to guarantee peace by coordinating the interests of local political parties and pressure groups. Each of the two main parties was highly factionalised and mayors had to ensure that every Liberal and Conservative on the spectrum had proper representation in the urban administration and in the policies adopted in order to avoid discord. The mayors were appointed to maintain stability and any sign that they had failed to do so could prompt their downfall. However, the municipal councils had the real political power. They could block policies, decide the salary of municipal officials, and had seats on the management boards of public utilities. Unlike mayors, councillors were endowed with a legitimacy that came from being elected and thus were able to prove that they had real popular support. This did not necessarily mean that mayors were decorative figures. Many of them were able to accumulate overwhelming power, for example through patronage, and occasionally launched real processes of modernisation which profited from specific international conjunctures.<sup>24</sup> However, they could only support themselves using traditional party coalitions; any other form of coalition building was not viable.

At the sub-national level, the traditional parties increasingly competed with each other through techniques based on patron-client relationships which were devoid of any content other than on the spot material exchanges. Because these techniques were the decisive factor in accessing seats and power, traditional politicians - and thus mayors - had no real incentive to promote organisational build up and complexity. Certainly, the National Front (1958-1974) pushed through several reforms that were intended to strengthen the regulatory role of the state. For example, it created planning departments at the sub-national level. However, politicians profited from the planning agencies to negotiate legal and semi-legal settlements in a country that was undergoing an extremely accelerated process of urbanisation. Basically they allowed friendly politicians to promote those settlements, and then they provided them with public utilities. All this, of course, was a favour that had to be electorally rewarded. Interestingly, all this could also be supported through 'urban ideologies'. For example, the on the ground practices of urban planning departments could be said to correspond to John Turner's notion of self building cities (Turner, 1972 and 1977), where the role of the state was not to hinder the initiative of poor citizens but to help them develop their own housing projects.<sup>25</sup> Colombian urban planning agencies were selectively Turnerian: they activated the initiative-promoting principles whenever a friendly politician mediated the process.

After the institutionalisation of the popular election of mayors in 1986 (though only implemented for the first time in 1988) mayors were much more powerful.<sup>26</sup> They enjoyed more legitimacy than municipal councillors, as they had more votes. They could alter the local power equilibrium without the risk of being fired. They held broader decision making powers. At the same time, the C91 regulation also reinforced sub-national planning, although this had a positive impact only where there was a modicum of technical prowess to implement it. In small and even medium size cities, this made local government a target of armed criminal and/or political groups, and in many cases opened the door to blatant corruption and inefficiency. However, in the big cities where there was a bigger concentration of security forces, stronger state organisations and a complex economy, autonomy did not necessarily feed the interests of sub-national illegal agents; it was potentially a genuine autonomy.

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<sup>24</sup> For example, Virgilio Barco, a remarkable mayor of Bogotá between 1966 and 1969. In Cali, the Panamerican Games, held between 30 July and 13 August 1971, produced a boost in the development of the city infrastructure. These early experiences also triggered civic discourses that seem to parallel the current discourse.

<sup>25</sup> Part of this is narrated in Gutiérrez, 2007. Through this, electors and politicians had real decision power.

<sup>26</sup> Chapter 2do, title 12 of the C91. Regulated by Law 152 of 1994. Diario Oficial No. 41.450, 19 July 1994.



Secondly, the 1991 Constitution was explicitly crafted as a rejection of traditional politics, and thus as a route towards modernity. 'Independents' were inspired and buttressed by it as it implemented several measures to lower the barriers to allow the entry of new actors and to permit the political participation of social and citizen movements.<sup>27</sup> It also introduced innovations in the area of security. It again increased the power of the mayors and created the term 'citizen security' in contrast with the practice of 'national security' which had been dominant until then. The latter was a product of the Cold War based on the idea of the state defending itself from communist infiltration (Leal Buitrago 2006). The former stressed the need to protect citizens, but also gave mayors some, rather hazy, security responsibilities that have been permanently re-negotiated ever since. During the César Gaviria Government (1990-1994) a 'National Strategy Against Violence' was enacted through the *Presidencia de la República 1991*. This reinforced the rights and responsibilities of mayors over security. Although the president remained the person in overall charge of security, departmental governors and mayors could take some actions, though always as agents of the central government<sup>28</sup> Mayors became chiefs of police at the municipal level, which put the latter in an ambiguous position since, by the chain of command, they remained subordinate to their (national) hierarchical superiors.<sup>29</sup>

In sum, the C91 appointed mayors as new security decision makers and at the same time created ambiguity. In theory, the nation would be in charge of combat against large illegal organisations, including the mafia, the guerrillas and the paramilitaries. The mayors would then be in charge of issues of daily coexistence and would deal with petty crime. Police institutions were to be coordinated between the national and the municipal levels.

Third, the adoption of the *Estatuto Orgánico de Bogotá (Organic Statute of Bogotá)* excluded municipal councillors from direct participation on the boards of public utilities and in the adjudication of contracts, thus undercutting a major source of pressure on the patron-client relationship. Though conceived only for Bogotá, the effects of this statute were broadened to the rest of the municipalities through Law 136 of 1994. This culminated a process of institutional change oriented towards concentrating municipal power in the hands of mayors instead of municipal councils.

### **The cast of characters: the miracle, its political personnel, its politics and its limits**

The urban miracle was partially crafted and managed by a new breed of politicians, technocrats and intellectuals. However, this was not an *ex novo* creation but was built on past insights and achievements.

In Bogotá a Liberal party member, Jaime Castro, conceived and drove forward the *Estatuto Orgánico*. The key element in Antanas Mockus' electoral victory in 1994 was his capacity to interact with the media. As rector of the National University he showed his buttocks to a group of students that was interrupting him in a public debate and this rapidly, and rather surprisingly, created a snowball effect in his favour. Once elected, he promoted discourse and practice in four main areas. First, he transformed the practices and norms of the *bogotanos*. He more than tripled the funding of an until then small agency, the Institute of Culture and Tourism (IDCT).<sup>30</sup> The IDCT launched a series of educational campaigns, for example

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<sup>27</sup> C91, Title IV, Articles 104 to 131; Statutory Law 134 of 1994.

<sup>28</sup> This responsibility is different from the mayoral role in all other areas, in which mayors are autonomous.

<sup>29</sup> The chain of command is further explored through C91, Number 2, Article 315.

<sup>30</sup> According to the figures of the Chamber of Commerce. See <http://camara.ccb.org.co>

promoting attention to level crossings, driving in a secure and respectful fashion, respecting public space and saving water. These aimed to change behaviour and also to re-educate the bureaucrats, especially the police (Secretaría de Hacienda 2000).<sup>31</sup> Second, Mockus addressed respect for law and order. The *Bogotanos* were engaged in a prisoner's dilemma with each other: everybody wanted everybody else to respect the rules of the game and yet at the same time to have the individual right to transgress them. Third, he stood up for the sacred nature of public goods against the patron-client relationship and corruption. He encouraged leaders and rulers to be fully transparent; no proposal that could not be made publicly should be made. In this vein, the relations between the mayor and the municipal council were changed. Instead of being regulated by bargaining, they would now be regulated by educating. This produced several governance issues which were especially fought over by the mayor and the council (Veeduría Distrital 2003). Last, he created the vision that one of the main functions of the mayor was to confront particularism. During several social protests, Mockus was able to frame the debate as one between interest groups and the urban public good.

Throughout each of these four themes, security was highlighted. 'Wrong' norms, including intolerance, a fascination with illegality, the lack of 'social capital'<sup>32</sup>, and pre-modernity, were considered the breeding ground of violent practices. To reduce these, Mockus took action in three ways. First, he encouraged the bureaucrats to 'think violence' and to follow up on indicators of violence. This preceded the strengthening of the police force (See Table 5). Second, as seen above, he launched a series of 'cultural' campaigns including 'vaccination against violence' and re-education at street level. These had strong media support. Finally, he limited certain practices. The underlying notion to this was that the state should compensate the lack of citizen self-control by providing external regulation and education, at least until internalisation began. This civilizing programme, which has a long tradition in Colombia (Gutierrez Marquez, 2008) was expressed through policies such as restricting the functioning of bars, limiting the sale of fireworks,<sup>33</sup> and trying to put a ban on the possession of weapons. This latter measure pitted the mayor against the national army, which opposed the ban on the grounds that weapons should be taken away from delinquents and not from decent people. Ultimately, the Army prevailed. The same logic was applied to other areas. Mockus, for example, devised public follow up for transit transgression and water saving during times of scarcity and launched a mass campaign to promote the additional payment of taxes. These yielded impressive results, even when the campaigns included direct calls to the citizenship to incur costs in order to contribute to the common good<sup>34</sup>. He also promoted the now internationally famous 'no car day' to reduce pollution.<sup>35</sup>

If at the beginning the 'great and the good' of Bogotá had watched the mayor's antics with distrust and sometimes with laughter, in a short time they discovered the power behind the

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<sup>31</sup> The so-called formation of citizen reformers. The police were conceived of as educators, but to do their job well they had to be educated themselves.

<sup>32</sup> A key advisor of Mockus, John Sudarsky, is the main Colombian expert in 'social capital'.

<sup>33</sup> Fireworks used to be a non negligible industry in Bogotá, especially during Christmas and other holidays.

<sup>34</sup> In the latter, the proportion of positive answers may not have been too high, but was nonetheless notable given the nature of the campaign (for example, the call for increasing voluntarily tax payment).

<sup>35</sup> He was even more innovative during his second period, and engaged in policy antics, for example when he introduced a 'day without men' (9 March 2001). This was a gender curfew, according to which men had to hold a permit written by their significant other to be able to be out at night. The discourse that surrounded the idea also had security overtones, as men are eminent carriers of testosterone, and thus considered more dangerous.

governance template that Mockus was proposing. With the radical fall in homicide rates,<sup>36</sup> the Chamber of Commerce started to support not only the mayor, but especially his educational proposals.

Enrique Peñalosa preferred more 'hard cement' oriented programmes, than 'soft' culture oriented ones. However, he converged strongly with Mockus on many critical issues.<sup>37</sup> One was that security was much more related to citizen control and attitudes than to other variables. Both Mockus and Peñalosa believed that 'citizen identity', a sense of pride and respect in belonging to a place, were fundamental to the defeat of violence. In this they were supported and preceded by the Chamber of Commerce. Both believed in the crucial importance of public space for building citizenship. Peñalosa believed that the main way to do this was to coordinate changes in the urban landscape and to make efforts to improve security. In effect, Peñalosa adhered to the 'broken window theory' that originated in New York and stressed the need to promote microscopic tidiness, green zones, large scale public transport programmes, and efficient policing. These were intended to create or consolidate the gains in the realm of security. However, Peñalosa also believed in the principles of '*cultura ciudadana*' through the notion of '*convivencia*' (coexistence). Peñalosa was also able to maintain low homicide rates and to boost police functionality both financially and operationally. After another Mockus administration, that insisted on the citizen culture themes, the city turned to the left. The two PDA mayors did try to maintain the Mockus-Peñalosa heritage without introducing radical innovation. Certainly, Luis Garzón's main programme, 'Bogotá without hunger', had a security aspect: to trim down inequality and poverty as a way of preventing social violence. This was quite explicit.<sup>38</sup> Until recently though, security seemed to be following the path set by Mockus and Peñalosa in the 1990s. Reports that the paramilitary are extending their influence in certain areas, that the number of homicides may be increasing, and that a bitter conflict between the national government and the mayor regarding who is in charge of security policies is emerging (El Tiempo, 25 June, 2008), have raised questions about the sustainability of the Bogotá miracle.

In the previous section we stressed the conditions that fed the scepticism over the possibility of Medellín solving its chronic problem of violence. Yet this is only part of the story. For an entire decade urban authorities, NGOs, intellectuals and activists converged in an effort to tame violence. This effort included public forums and debates, specific policies from the strengthening of the police force and the armed forces to measures of social inclusion, and campaigns of '*cultura ciudadana*'. Most notably, a municipal peace accord was signed in 1994, which the municipal authorities correctly claimed to be unique in Latin America.

However, it is probably not an exaggeration to state that the preferred security instrument in Medellín was the micromanagement of conflict (Jaramillo et al. 1998). Micromanagement was a set of measures that gave neighbourhoods the possibility of negotiating settlements with violent actors and of incorporating them into normal life through work, communal activities, and re-education. The peace accord with the militias was reinforced by financial support for social inclusion and micromanagement. The problem with this model was that it reincorporated previously armed people but provided a system of incentives that favoured

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<sup>36</sup> Many other indicators had a strong impact on the mentality of the citizens. For example, the reason for the ban on the selling of fireworks was that many children were burnt while using them. The media followed the decline in the figures of children being burned very carefully.

<sup>37</sup> Despite partial divergence the two have systematically supported each other.

<sup>38</sup> However, contrary to what has been said about this programme, this is not a very new concept. It has actually been a key part of the security rhetoric of the Colombian elites in the last decades.

new entrants. When Fajardo became mayor he appointed Salazar his secretary of government. Salazar had studied the urban militias in detail; indeed, he is author of two outstanding books on them (1990; 1993). Micromanagement was changed to a more universalistic approach. Fajardo was also able to combine notions taken from the '*cultura urbana*' and 'broken window' programmes and, as seen above, achieved a stunning security success that made him the most popular mayor in the country. Fajardo embarked on a strategy of 'return to legality',<sup>39</sup> and a series of pro-'*cultura ciudadana*' campaigns with the media to ridicule uncivilised behaviour. In addition, he accelerated investment in infrastructure under the 'Integral Urban Projects', using strategies of urban mobility and urban refurbishment in schools, public libraries and poor neighbourhoods.

Fajardo had to face the power of the paramilitary, which in Medellín was much greater than in any other large Colombian city. His challenge can be divided into two expressions of power: the illegal activity of the paramilitary, and their penetration of the state, especially the security forces. Recent evidence has disclosed that their state involvement was extensive (Jaramillo, 1987). The national government also decided that Medellín would act as a pilot case for the peace accord that the state had started to negotiate with the paramilitary in 2002. This necessitated the coordination of municipal and national authorities, many of whom were in contact with the paramilitary. Finally, an uneasy equilibrium was achieved. Fajardo took care of the reinsertion of the paramilitary into Medellín society, with the support of entrepreneurs and international cooperation (mainly from the OAS). On the other hand, shortly before Fajardo came to power, the recovery of territory from the remaining leftist guerrillas was conducted through a spectacular army operation: Comuna 13, the last bastion of Medellín's urban warfare. It appears that the Comuna 13 recovery involved brutal human rights violations.<sup>40</sup> Even more controversial was the way in which the municipal authorities, already under the leadership of Fajardo, dealt with the paramilitary. Instead of an open attack, as used against the guerrillas in the Comuna 13, they preferred to engage in a gradual strategy of disassembling the paramilitary networks, which entailed a certain amount of cooperation, however tacit. The rationale behind the strategy is that eventually the state would be able to broaden its range of operation without destabilising the city. Indeed, the paramilitary was rapidly pacified and reduced. Certainly, many factors may help explain this outcome. On the one hand there was the impact of municipal policies and the fact that the paramilitary were already engaged in a peace process. On the other, there is evidence to show that the Medellín paramilitary coordinated a low profile stance in order to maintain their assets and networks and to make a smooth transition to legal, or at least tolerated, business. As explained above, the possibility that the municipal authorities, convinced of the benefits of gradualism, turned a blind eye to some of the paramilitary activities as long as it could be demonstrated that they were decreasing, cannot be discarded. Criminal urban patriotism should not be dismissed either.<sup>41</sup> Public events showed that the paramilitary maintained part of their power. For example, when the notorious leader *Don Berna* was transferred from one prison to another by national authorities, a transport strike hit Medellín the next day.<sup>42</sup> Even then, it cannot reasonably be claimed that the hold of the paramilitary on broad sectors of the city has not loosened. Yet it is not clear if a temporary weakening is enough. Recently, there

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<sup>39</sup> Concejo de Medellín. Act 594, 14 April, 1007. UNDP recognised this strategy as a 'good practice'. Accessed at: [http://saliendodelcallejon.pnud.org.co/buenas\\_practicas.shtml?x=7051](http://saliendodelcallejon.pnud.org.co/buenas_practicas.shtml?x=7051).

<sup>40</sup> Several researchers of the Universidad de Antioquia reflect about the grim realities of the takeover of the Comuna 13 here: [http://www.elcolombiano.com/proyectos/serieselcolombiano/textos/indexcomuna13\\_2007.htm](http://www.elcolombiano.com/proyectos/serieselcolombiano/textos/indexcomuna13_2007.htm)

<sup>41</sup> This went into the traditions of the Medellín Cartel. A paramilitary-gang leader told one of the authors that, according to the order of one of his paramilitary bosses, 'Medellín has to become an eminent city'. The interviewee was enthused about the idea.

<sup>42</sup> The paramilitary used to control several of the public transport routes.

was a spate of homicides in the city and Salazar promised to take adequate measures. After this, Luis Pérez accused Salazar of having cooperated with a notorious paramilitary leader. As with Bogotá, the sustainability of the miracle is in question.

As we have shown, Cali is conspicuous for having had no miracle. If either the protagonists or critics of the Bogotá and Medellín miracles were right, Cali would not be experiencing its present ordeal. It has tested all of the policies that were successful in Bogotá and Medellín, but to no avail. In fact, as seen above, many of the key ideas that inform the '*cultura ciudadana*' program were invented in Cali. Successive mayors tried similar policies: limiting the functioning of bars to 1 a.m., investing in both policing and the follow up of violence, promoting media campaigns, and trying to transform the urban landscape and improve public transport. The mayor in Cali even went further than his Bogotá and Medellín peers. For example, in 2004 and 2006 a permanent curfew on teenagers was imposed.<sup>43</sup> All of this was conducted to no avail. Homicide and crime rates remain very high, the feeling of insecurity and crisis is widespread and the city is experiencing significant economic problems.

Cali was in a better political condition than Medellín to produce its miracle. From the early 1980s, voting patterns were not as stringently traditional in Cali as in Medellín. Cali was deeply affected by its eponymous cartel, but its strategy was more oriented towards penetration of the national state than towards violent confrontation. Furthermore, though it had militias, as did Bogotá itself, it never experienced open warfare. So why has Cali not made the proverbial qualitative leap?

### **Claim One**

The answer is simple: coalitions. Bogotá and Medellín built coalitions that had several characteristics. Firstly, they were very broad. Critically, they included the main sectors that had had a decisive say in the C91: left wing figures and neoliberal technocrats, united by their hostility to traditional forms of intermediation, their modernising perspective, and their rather odd belief, given their shared ideological convictions, in the importance of building and providing public goods. The bourgeoisie and the NGOs, decisively supported by the media, headed the transformation of the city. As can be seen both in the electoral process and during government, the Chamber of Commerce, critical NGOs, key opinion leaders of specific social sectors, and the media, not only provided support to the municipal governments but also assisted in the crafting and implementation of security policies. When the left won in Bogotá, it was careful to maintain the core economic policy and the emphasis on the recovery of public space. In fact, Samuel Moreno, elected in 2007, chose as his Economy Secretary a young 'yuppie' who had acted as vice-minister in Uribe's government, despite the loud protests of the party leadership.<sup>44</sup> This is clear at the leadership level but also at the level of social and electoral support. When Mockus became an electoral phenomenon in Bogotá, the migration of preferences from traditional to the new style politics was rapid at all levels, but particularly so within the upper middle class and the rich (Gutiérrez 2005). The nature of this coalition was also instrumental in the coordination of the municipal and national levels. As demonstrated earlier, the C91 contained several gaps, which opened the door to institutional conflict in the realm of security. From 2002 onwards, this has become even more problematic, as in none of the big cities does municipal voting coincide with the national majority. While the country is overwhelmingly *uribista*, Bogotá is the stronghold of the

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<sup>43</sup> Decreto 0098/2006.

<sup>44</sup> He was notorious for his self description as a 'heartless neoliberal'.

PDA, and Medellín and Cali have elected 'independent' mayors. The fact that a substantial part of the urban rich are integrated into the municipal governing coalition has helped to dampen, though not to eliminate, national-municipal tensions.

However, as mentioned above, the miracle is not only explained by the 'who' but also by the 'what'. Contrary to processes at the national level, which are more complicated, the two winning urban coalitions have put a strong emphasis on the provision of public goods and taxation. The fact that the division between pro-taxation and public goods coalitions and other type of interest groups is not strictly decided along national ideological lines is illustrated precisely by the practice of several of the larger Colombian cities. In Cali, the (watered down) populism of Apolinar Salcedo resulted in privatisation of tax collection and a consequential huge corruption scandal. In Barranquilla, the fourth biggest city in the country, a leftist mayor and early reformer also subcontracted the collection of taxes to a private firm, which was eventually captured by the paramilitary. By contrast, the heterogeneous Bogotá and Medellín coalitions have been excellent tax gatherers (see Figure 4), which not only provides the material basis for healthy governance (latitude for launching big, transformative programmes) but also provides visible examples of collective action and, in effect, public cues that help citizens to develop routines, skills, and rules to develop cooperation.

How did this happen? The answer may be agglomeration and certain type of homogeneity. Through agglomeration and technological development, coordination of interests is easier and the benefits of mutual cooperation much more discernible. Homogeneity, though much less self explanatory, also plays a very important role. Very simply put, the bourgeoisie discovered that its own interests sat well with the urban modernisation programmes, through public debate. That this was a discovery and not an explicitly coordinated intention can be easily documented.<sup>45</sup> However, the urban bourgeoisie increasingly found that: the costs of undertaking traditional political intermediation, which necessarily involved a certain latitude to transgress legality (Gutiérrez 2007), were eventually prohibitive; that the factionalism of traditional politics made collective action difficult and the costs paid in terms of the need of provision of private security were too high;<sup>46</sup> and that the modernisation proposed by the heterodox transformers was compatible with the stability of property rights – in fact the most compatible solution. The condition and consequence of this, through a positive feedback mechanism, was a bourgeoisie that was much more compact (politically) than the Colombian elites have ever been at the national level<sup>47</sup>. It is interesting to observe how agglomeration and homogeneity interacted. While in social dilemmas monitoring is an essential and frequently unsolved issue, in Bogotá and Medellín the "state of affairs" could be followed by all actors concerned by means of the media, everyday life and through the role of agencies created or strengthened by those behind the miracle. 'Free-riding' was much more difficult. The highly moralistic discourses of Mockus and Fajardo helped to consolidate a state of affairs in which the bourgeoisie was eulogised but free-riders, even if rich, were frowned upon. Since this programme entailed giving up, at least partially, the benefits provided from the patron-client relationship, the only way to establish permanent dialogue with the population was through sustained interaction with the media and the private sector on the one hand, and the strengthening of state activism through the capture of taxes and organisational build-up on the other.

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<sup>45</sup> In fact in Medellín the most staunch supporters of the Fajardo election were left leaning NGOs.

<sup>46</sup> Colombian entrepreneurs pay more than double the international average in private legal provision of security. Including illegal payments would make the difference much higher. SEMANA, April 21, 2000.

<sup>47</sup> On the factionalism of the Colombian economic elites in a comparative perspective, see Mauceri 2001.

Coalitions can also explain the Cali fiasco. As seen above, on the surface Cali possessed all the conditions to produce a similar miracle and carried out all the correct reforms, or nearly so. Independent leaders of different types won several elections. The police and other agencies were promoted. A variant of the '*cultura ciudadana*', a discourse that has deep roots in the history of the city, was promoted. However, a coalition able to incorporate the left, the neoliberal modernisers and the legal bourgeoisie, was never achieved. The Cali coalitions were always too narrow, but also too broad. A good example of this is the outcome of the last Cali elections (Pinto 2007). Before the elections, both national and local Cali newspapers sought solutions for a city that seemed to be desperate. In one opinion poll, forty one percent of the *Caleños* thought that the city was getting worse. As seen above, there were two main candidates for that election: one who represented the traditional city, the other innovative forces. However, the latter included in his coalition a group based on patronage that had links with illegal forces such as the '*Movimiento Convergencia Ciudadana*'. This was not tacit cooperation but open, public support and funding. Exactly the same had happened with Salcedo and his predecessors. The participation of patrimonial and illegal actors weakened the need to search for other ways of interacting with the citizens and decreased the probability of solving collective action problems, since free-riders were able to thrive by providing for themselves the goods that otherwise could only be achieved through public channels (such as security). Contrary to the system in Bogotá and Medellín, Cali suffers chronic problems of corruption and demoralisation, has a privatised and infamous taxation system, and ostensibly weak municipal agencies. This in turn weakens critical monitoring, which should negate free-riding with positive feedback.

### **Claim Two**

It should now be clear why these kind of miracles are likely to occur only in very big cities. First, the Colombian elites are historically severely fractured along the urban-rural divide (Mauceri 2001) and only under special conditions can they cooperate stably with each other. In the previous section we suggested that such cooperation appeared thanks to the confluence of several factors, including agglomeration, homogeneity, and their mutual interaction. Second, and related to this, the war produced the stabilisation of private security in the Colombian countryside. This spilled over into cities as well-equipped paramilitaries had the force to establish control over criminal activities and neighbourhoods (Duncan 2006). In this sense, the Colombian paramilitary operated '*More Maoista*', surrounding the cities with rural forces. However, the economy of the metropolis was much bigger and more complex, and was in reality impossible to control. The same can be said about state organisations, especially but not only in the capital. Furthermore, criminality had been able to politicise itself, in part using anti-subversive methods. The politicisation of crime produced extremely virulent expressions of violence, and was certainly central to Medellín's plight (Gutiérrez and Jaramillo 2004). The exclusion of illegal actors<sup>48</sup> from the governing coalition isolated criminals and took away from them a good part of their political power. Strong middle class public opinion, supported by electronic media, existed in Bogotá but not necessarily elsewhere<sup>49</sup>.

Where economic and organisational complexity, tolerably good monitoring systems, and a middle class sensitive to legal discourses did not exist, the '*cultura ciudadana*' either failed to

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<sup>48</sup> More precisely: the maximum possible exclusion of illegal actors given the context.

<sup>49</sup> The evolution of the conflict demonstrated that the *narcos* and the paramilitary tried to destroy critical media.. They were able to do so in many places, and indeed tried to do it in the big cities but were not successful.

take off, or was taken on board by violent actors. In many small and medium size cities the '*cultura ciudadana*' discourse was adopted with enthusiasm and implemented by the paramilitary, for example in La Dorada and Barranca. This included the rebuttal of traditional politics, a moral discourse, and a defence of 'transparency' (El Tiempo, 26 May, 2000). It was in the very large cities that the main decision makers were relatively insulated from the influence of armed actors and organised crime. Furthermore, in many small and medium size cities the constitutional-legal autonomy offered to the mayors made them military targets because now they could take crucial security and financial decisions. This put them under a brutal pressure that was very difficult to resist.<sup>50</sup>

This discussion can help us understand the specificity of Cali. Though we consider the coalitional explanation to resist careful scrutiny, it begs a further question: why did the correct coalitions not appear in Cali? There seem to be three reasonable conjectures. First, the Cali bourgeoisie is much more rural than those in Bogotá and Medellín. Agro-industrialists do not have the same system of incentives and world view as the urban bourgeoisie. Second, Cali is much more ethnically fractured than the other two cities and in these conditions there cannot be a semblance of that single, unique public space that played such an important role in the success of the '*cultura ciudadana*' elsewhere. The ethnic division in Cali is clear: Cali is the Colombian city with the highest African population, a group that lives in the worst kind of social and economic conditions, defined by urban insecurity, unemployment and inequality. The ethnic fracture matches the economic and social chasm, making it difficult to build a hegemonic universal citizen discourse such as that in Bogotá and Medellín.<sup>51</sup> Third, the explicit strategy of the Cali cartel consisted of penetrating the state and the legal economy. Unlike the Medellín cartel, which had a much sterner approach, the Cali criminals believed in accommodation and bargaining. In Bogotá illegal actors were relatively weak, and in Medellín they were strong but aggressive. This ultimately facilitated a relatively neat separation between illegal and legal actors and practices, something that has proven to be difficult in Cali. The verification of these hypotheses goes beyond our basic claims, and thus beyond the limits of this text.

### **Conclusions: a miracle or a trap?**

In this paper we have described the metropolitan miracles of Bogotá and Medellín, explained the reasons of their success, and shown why they have not take place in Cali or in smaller cities. A very heterogeneous but modernising coalition, inspired by the 1991 Constitution and at the same time able to utilise its institutional battery, devised a series of ideas and policies that solved problems of collective action and brought the functioning of the state closer to the frontier of optimality with huge citizen support and large national and international impact. Where material and organisational conditions for the formation and functioning of such a coalition were absent, processes developed in another direction. We have also suggested that institutional reforms can work very well in some places, and weakly in others. The C91 gave more autonomy to the mayors, and this produced miracles but only where certain conditions applied. Elsewhere the outcome was very different.

These conclusions seem uplifting. Yet in reality the process described above involves several tough and unpleasant trade-offs and questions. Without highlighting these, no analysis of the phenomenon is complete. One problem is the exclusionary character of the winning coalition.

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<sup>50</sup> See Table 4.

<sup>51</sup> This would corroborate the intuition that 'horizontal inequalities' are worse than other ones. For an in depth discussion of the concept, see the CRISE website: <http://www.crise.ox.ac.uk/>.



This remark may seem unjust, as broad sectors of the citizenship felt that they had retrieved public life and space after losing it for decades at the hands of corrupt traditional politicians. In addition, several specific policies, for example towards sexual minorities, were put into motion. However, most of the time socio-economic inclusion was simply banished from public debate by the creators of the miracle and often became worse, even if only symbolically, in one of the most unequal countries in the world. Indeed, if the patron-client relationship is one of the only, highly suboptimal, stable inclusionary mechanisms the Colombian polity had, the miracles dismantled it without offering anything to replace it. In terms of security, and using a venerable Mosca category, the repression together with the social compensation ‘government formula’, which was hegemonic in Colombia’s security thinking until the 1990s, was replaced in the big cities by a pedagogic-legal one.<sup>52</sup> The universal and pro-public goods stance produced a highly inflexible way of dealing with social conflict. Poor claimants were associated with corrupt, particularistic or irresponsible agents and norms, and systematically abused – a trend not so modernising after all and that, on the contrary, sits well with the traditional civilising rhetoric of the Colombian elites.<sup>53</sup> Actions such as the recovery of public space, or the banning of the marketing of fireworks, were inspired by the idea of defending the poor from themselves and involved a very rough, though not repressive, way of dealing with their demands. Peñalosa did voice some concerns about inequality, but only to express his conviction that it should not be dealt with by re-distributional actions but rather by better public transportation, parks, and urban regeneration (Peñalosa 2003: 12-34.). Even the left wing mayors in Bogotá have been quite inert in this respect. Luis Garzón actually confronted part of his own social base, the street vendors, to protect public space. This was very much as part of the ‘*cultura ciudadana*’ programme according to which the mayor should ‘owe nothing to nobody’.<sup>54</sup> He launched a programme for the poorest, ‘*Bogotá sin hambre*’ (Bogota without hunger), which was only weakly re-distributional. Fajardo has paid no more attention to social inclusion than his Bogotá peers. In both cities the preferred punch-bags of the normative campaigns are small people, not ‘big fish’. The counter argument to all of this is that through increased taxation the state can operate much more efficiently and eventually produce a robust re-distributional effect. Until now, this has not been the case, in part because the rich are more influential, better organised, and infinitely better connected with the media. In other words, part of the public goods/public space discourse is ideological, in the pejorative sense: it represents the illusion of the bourgeoisie that the defence of its interests equals the defence of society as a whole. On the other hand, it is indeed the case that the provision of public goods has improved for all, though differentially, as the evolution of security reveals. Is there a mirror illusion in broad sectors of the population, according to which the rich and the powerful are the best defenders of the common good? This cannot be discarded.

We have described two miracles. Yet, applying inverse Hirschmanian optimism, miracles can become traps. At present, the sustainability of the Bogotá and Medellín miracles is in question. There are obvious underlying structural problems: inequality, and the strength of the *narco* economy due to the U.S. prohibition. This strength is obvious in Medellín, and can destabilise the coalition that created the miracle. The overwhelming pro-Uribe national

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<sup>52</sup> This entails another contrast: to have the latitude to providing basic services (like security) and goods privately, or not (which means developing skills to solve collective action problems).

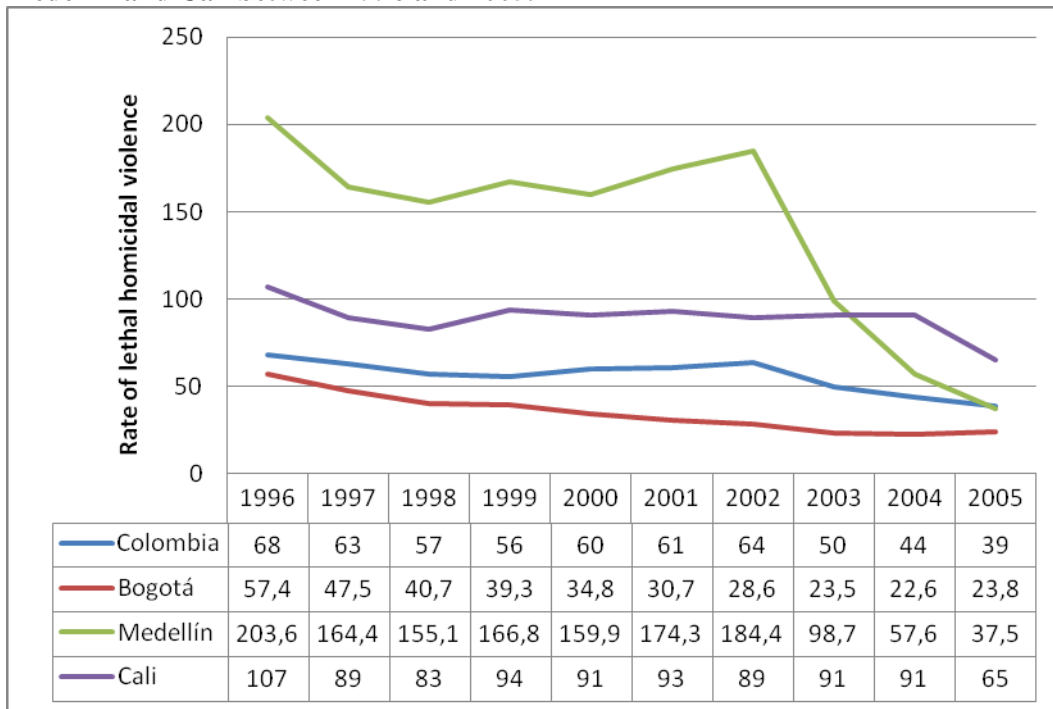
<sup>53</sup> Paul Bromberg, acting mayor after Mockus resigned to run for the presidency, declared during the presentation of the Strategic Plan for Bogotá by the Chamber of Commerce (October 4 1997) that ‘the poor give a damn for the ethical concern of the higher social strata’.

<sup>54</sup> The underlying idea being that if a politician is too linked to a social sector (s)he is does not represent it, but rather is held hostage by it.

majority weakens the autonomy of the mayors, especially in the area of security, a key institutional device without which the successes we have described here cannot be understood. Recently, Uribe's attitude towards the autonomy of big cities in the realm of security became more aggressive, which promises to cause serious problems. In Bogotá and Medellín, organised crime still operates and is waiting for opportunities to increase its range of action. Inequality is too high, and the 'normalized city' (Romero 1976 [1999]) too small, territorially and demographically. Currently, there is no proposal for how to deal with this in the future. The miracle, apparently, has not yet learned how to reinvent itself.

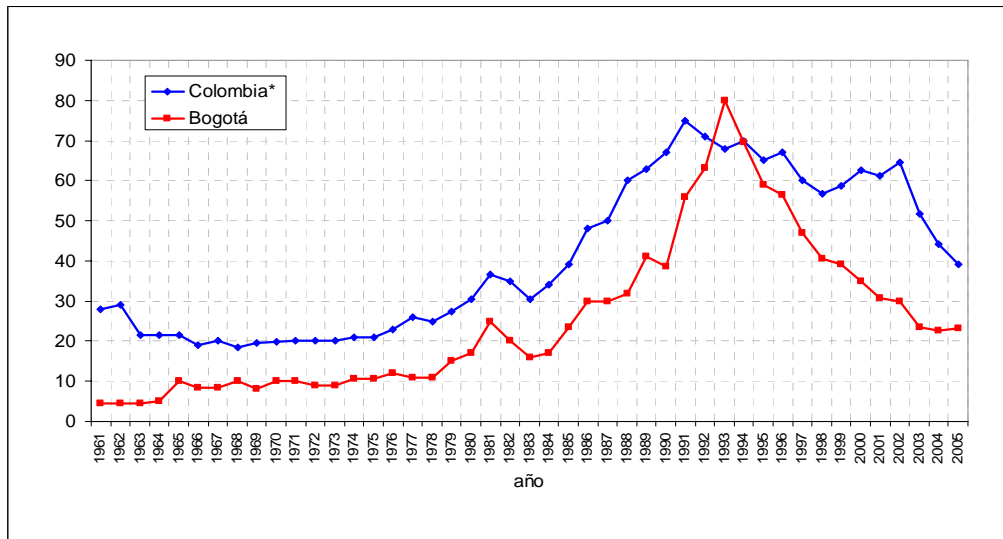
## Tables and Figures

**Figure 1. Rate of lethal homicidal violence per 100.000 inhabitants in Colombia, Bogotá, Medellín and Cali between 1996 and 2005.**



Source: Bogotá: Veeduría Distrital, Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses. Medellín: Alcaldía de Medellín. Cali: Observatorio Social, Secretaría de Gobierno de Cali (1998-2004); cálculos propios con datos del IMLCF y Dane (1996 y 1997); dato del 2005: IMLCF.

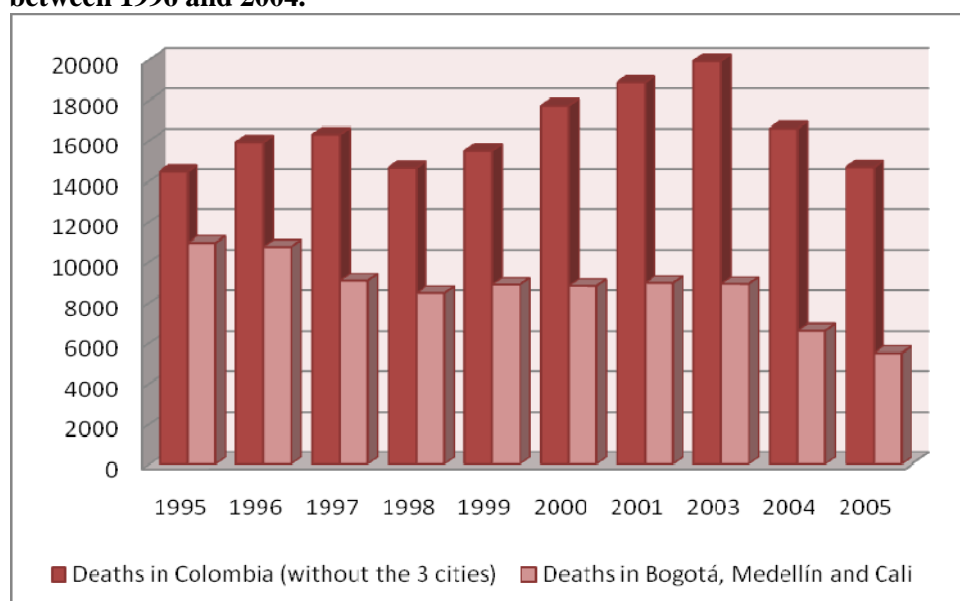
**Figure 2. Rate of homicides Colombia and Bogotá per 100.000 inhabitants.**



Source: Bogotá: Veeduría Distrital, Instituto Nacional de Medicina Legal y Ciencias Forenses. Medellín: Alcaldía de Medellín. Cali: Observatorio Social, Secretaría de Gobierno de Cali (1998-2004); cálculos propios con datos del IMLCF y Dane (1996 y 1997); dato del 2005: IMLCF.

\* Without Bogotá

**Figure 3. Deaths in Bogotá, Medellín and Cali vs. Death in Colombia (without the 3 cities) between 1996 and 2004.**



Source: Made from Figure 1.

**Table 1a. Mayors and their principal plan for security in Bogota 1994-2006**

Mayor	Goals
Antanas Mockus (1994-1997)	Convivencia ciudadana, Resolución pacífica de conflictos, Fortalecimiento de las expresiones culturales dentro de la ciudad, Código de policía y adquisición de parque automotor para la policía
Enrique Peñalosa (1998-2000)	Capacitación y aumento de tecnología para la policía, ampliación de la cárcel distrital, modernización de las inspecciones de policía, creación de los frentes locales de seguridad, talleres de prevención contra el uso de alcohol y drogas, convivencia ciudadana, programas deportivos, ciclovía,
Antanas Mockus (2001-2004)	Plan desarme, aumento de la percepción de seguridad de los ciudadanos.
Luis Eduardo Garzón (2004-2006)	Fortalecimiento de la defensa y justicia y la policía metropolitana, tratamiento para niños contraventores, prevención y control de la violencia.

Source: MARTIN Gerard y CEBALLOS Miguel (2004).

**Table 1b. Mayors and their principal plan for security in Medellin 1994-2006**

Mayor	Goals
Omar Flórez Vélez (1990-1992)	Consejería Presidencial para Medellín y su Área Metropolitana
Luis Alfredo Ramos (1992-1994)	Consejería Presidencial para Medellín y su Área Metropolitana
Sergio Naranjo (1995-1997)	Asesoría de Paz y Convivencia
Juan Gómez Martínez (1998-2000)	Subprograma Procesos de Paz:, Consejo Municipal de Paz.
Luis Pérez Gutiérrez (2001-2003)	Comité de Vigilancia Epidemiológica de Morbilidad Violenta, Cátedra de la No Violencia, Programa de Reincorporación a la Civildad de los Actores Armados,
Sergio Fajardo	Programa de Paz y Reconciliación, Manual de Convivencia Ciudadana, Programa Conciliación y Convivencia Ciudadana, Festival Escolar de la Canción por la Paz y la No Violencia, Plan Desarme, Núcleos Comunales de Convivencia y de Reconciliación – NCCR

Sources: Medellín Competitiva (2001); [http://indh.pnud.org.co/files/rec/goberSintesis\\_Plan\\_Mllin.pdf](http://indh.pnud.org.co/files/rec/goberSintesis_Plan_Mllin.pdf); Plan de desarrollo de Medellín 1998-2000; Plan de desarrollo de Medellín 1998-2000; Plan de desarrollo de Medellín 1995-1997; Plan general de desarrollo para Medellín 1993-1994.

**Table 1c. Mayors and their principal plan for security in Cali 1994-2006**

<b>Mayors</b>	<b>Goals</b>
Germán Villegas Villegas (1990-1991)	Plan desarme, aumento del pie de fuerza de la policía, modernización y mejora de instituciones de seguridad, compañías en contra de la drogadicción, recuperación de las pandillas juveniles.
Rodrigo Guerrero Velasco (1992-1994)	Mejora del sistema judicial, programas de educación, rehabilitación de pandillas juveniles, programa Desepaz.
Mauricio Guzmán Cuevas (1998-2000)	Restricción al porte de armas, resolución de conflictos, prevención de violencia intrafamiliar.
Ricardo Cobo Lloreda (1998-2000)	Plan Municipal de Prevención de la Farmacodependencia, modernización de la tecnología en la policía, divulgación de los derechos y deberes ciudadanos, normas y control sobre establecimientos públicos, detectar focos de inseguridad, prohibición de la movilización en moto en ciertos horarios
John Maro Rodríguez (2001-2003)	Prohibición de parrilleros, distritos de paz, jueces de paz, policía comunitaria y promoción de organizaciones sociales.
Apolinar Salcedo (2004-2007)	Toque de queda para menores, ley seca permanente en 21 barrios, acercamiento de la policía a la comunidad, escuela de seguridad ciudadana.

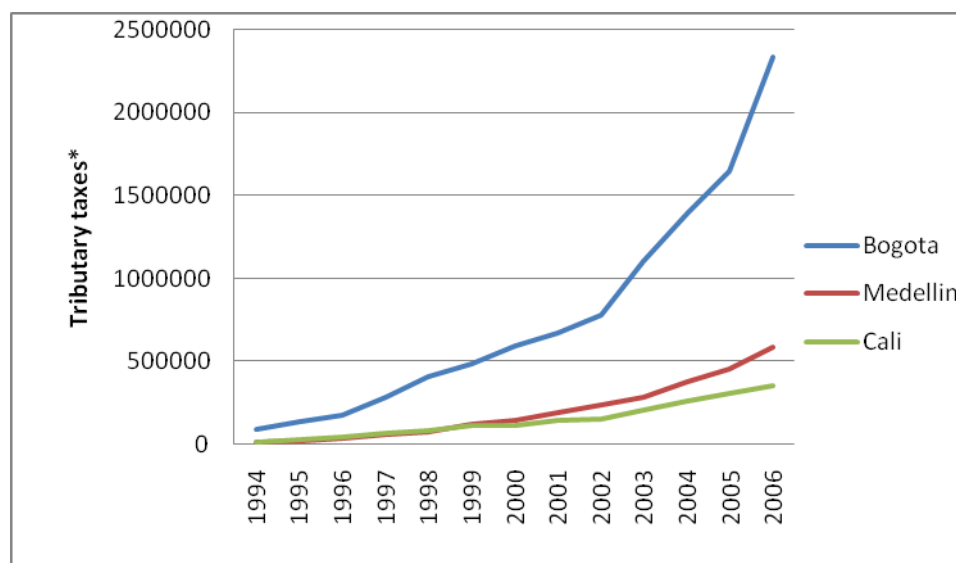
Source: Made from the government Plans of the city available in: <http://www.cali.gov.co/>; <http://www.cali.gov.co/publico2/documentos/plandedesarrollo.pdf>; <http://www.cali.gov.co/corporativo.php?id=2430>.

**Table 2. Presidents of Colombia and mayors of Bogotá, Medellín and Cali 1990 - 2007.**

<b>Period</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Mayors Of Bogotá</b>	<b>Mayors of Medellín</b>	<b>Mayors of Cali</b>
1991-1994	Cesar Gaviria	Juan Martin Caicedo (1990-1992), Jaime Castro (1992-1994)	Omar Flórez (1990-1992); Luis Alfredo Ramos (1992-1994)	Germán Villegas (1990-1992); Rodrigo Guerrero Velasco (1992-1994)
1994-1998	Ernesto Samper Pizano	Antanas Mockus- Paul Blomberg	Sergio Naranjo	Mauricio Guzmán Cuevas
1998-2002	Andrés Pastrana	Enrique Peñalosa	Juan Gómez Martínez	Ricardo Cobo Lloreda
2002-2006	Álvaro Uribe	Antanas Mockus	Luis Pérez Gutiérrez	John Maro Rodríguez
2006-2010	Álvaro Uribe	Luis E. Garzón	Sergio Fajardo	Apolinar Salcedo

Source: MARTIN Gerard y CEBALLOS Miguel (2004).

**Figure 4. Evolution of tributary income in Bogotá, Medellín and Cali, 1994 - 2006**



\*In Constant Prices

Fuente: DNP. Available in <http://www.dnp.gov.co>

**Table 4. Mayors murdered by department and year between 1998 and 2003**

Department	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antioquia	1	2	1			
Arauca		1			2	1
Atlántico			2			
Boyacá					2	
Caldas						1
Caquetá			1	2	2	
Cauca			1			3
Cesar	1		3	1		
Choco	1		1	1		
Cundinamarca			2		1	1
Huila		1			1	
Magdalena	1		2			
Medellín		1				
Meta	1	1	1	1		
Nariño			1			
Norte de Santander	2				1	1
Putumayo			1			
Santander		1			1	
Sucre	1	1	1			1
Tolima			1		1	1
Uraba		1				
Valle	1					
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>

Source: Federación Colombiana de Municipios. Available in <http://www.fcm.org.co>

**Table 5. Metropolitan police force personnel in Bogotá 1991-2003**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number</b>
1991	9000
1992	12000
1993	12500
1994	14500
1995	15800
1996	14500
1997	17000
1998	17000
1999	16400
2000	12000
2001	15800
2002	15800
2003	14500

*Source: MARTIN Gerard y CEBALLOS Miguel (2004).*

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