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Pensando la ley y la violencia en el posconflicto colombiano con Jean y John Comaroff

¿Seguridad y desarrollo? Una historia sobre los pequeños crímenes, el pequeño Estado y sus pequeñas leyes

Security and Development? A Story about Petty Crime, the Petty State and its Petty Law¹

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Security and Development? A Story about Petty Crime, the Petty State and its Petty Law^{1*}

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ABSTRACT | In this article we engage with the promises and limits of the "Security and Development" discourse. Using Cali (Colombia) as our case study, we show how initiatives associated with this discourse, instead of helping States move beyond insecurity, exclusion and low levels of development by strengthening social relations, official institutions and legal frameworks, end up producing, instead, a particular set of precarious institutional and human arrangements. We characterise this precarity as moving in the realm of "pettiness:" a characterisation that for us suggests both the marginal kinds of solutions that ultimately form the core of Security and Development, and the flimsiness that has come to mark those institutional and human arrangements resulting from it. The result is a resilient liminality across the board and the continuation of insecurity.

KEYWORDS | *Thesaurus:* crime; State. *Author:* citizenship security; insecurity; petty crime; security and development

¿Seguridad y desarrollo? Una historia sobre los pequeños crímenes, el pequeño Estado y sus pequeñas leyes

RESUMEN | En este artículo discutimos las promesas y los límites del discurso de "Seguridad y Desarrollo". Usando Cali (Colombia) como nuestro estudio de caso, mostramos cómo las iniciativas asociadas con este discurso terminan produciendo un conjunto de arreglos institucionales y humanos precarios, en vez de ayudar a los Estados a superar la inseguridad, la exclusión y los bajos niveles de desarrollo. En este artículo caracterizamos esta precariedad en términos de "pequeñez": una caracterización que para nosotros sugiere la limitación de los tipos marginales de soluciones que en última instancia forman el núcleo de la Seguridad y el Desarrollo, así como de la fragilidad que han marcado los arreglos institucionales y humanos que él mismo construye. El resultado final es una permanente liminalidad del Estado y una continuación de la inseguridad.

PALABRAS CLAVE | *Thesaurus:* crimen; Estado. *Autor:* delito menor; inseguridad; seguridad ciudadana; seguridad y desarrollo

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Segurança e desenvolvimento? Uma história sobre os pequenos crimes, o pequeno Estado e suas pequenas leis

RESUMO | Neste artigo, discutimos as promessas e os limites do discurso de “Segurança e Desenvolvimento”. Usando a cidade de Cali (Colômbia) como nosso estudo de caso, mostramos como as iniciativas associadas a esse discurso acabam produzindo um conjunto de acordos institucionais e humanos precários, em vez de ajudar os Estados a superarem a insegurança, a exclusão e os baixos níveis de desenvolvimento. Neste artigo, caracterizamos essa precariedade em termos de “pequenez”: uma caracterização que, para nós, sugere a limitação dos tipos marginais de soluções que, em última instância, formam o núcleo da Segurança e do Desenvolvimento, assim como da fragilidade que vem marcando os acordos institucionais e humanos que ele constrói. O resultado final é uma permanente limitação do Estado e uma continuidade da insegurança.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE | *Thesaurus*: crime; Estado; insegurança. *Autor*: delito menor; segurança cidadã; segurança e desenvolvimento

Ours, after all, is an epoch —if not the first, then certainly the latest— in which law-making, law-breaking and law-enforcement are especially critical registers in which societies construct, contest, and confront truths about themselves.

(Comaroff and Comaroff 2016, xiii)

Introduction

In this article, we explore the dramas underpinning and unleashed by the current encounter between “security” and “development” in the Global South. This is an encounter that has come to be conceptualised under the rubric of “Security and Development”: a powerful and rapidly expanding set of discourses and practices which, borrowing from decades of interpenetration between security concerns and the international development project during the Cold War years and later during the international humanitarian interventions in the 1990s, has come to occupy a crucial place in policy-making debates in our era of seemingly never-ending war on terror. As former World Bank president Robert Zoellick (2007–2012) put it in his foreword to the 2011 *World Development Report: Conflict, Security and Development*, the aim is to bring “security and development together to put down roots deep enough to break the cycles of fragility and conflict” in countries such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Haiti, Southern Sudan, and many “other lands of conflict or broken States” (Zoellick 2011). According to Zoellick, “recurrent cycles of weak governance, poverty, and violence” have “plagued these lands.” Security and Development discussions and policies have aimed, in this context, to replace “fragility and conflict” with stronger State institutions, lasting social inclusion and long-term economic outcomes —in Zoellick’s words, “to move beyond conflict and fragility and secure development.”²

In this article we engage with the tensions that have accompanied this project and show how, instead of “moving beyond” insecurity, exclusion and low development levels by strengthening social relations, official institutions and legal frameworks, discussions and associated technologies of Security and Development produce a particular set of precarious institutional and human arrangements. We characterise this precarity as moving in the realm of “pettiness” —in the sense of “triviality” and “smallness,” rather than of “pickiness” or “nastiness.” Pettiness suggests both the marginal kinds of solutions that ultimately form the core of Security and Development, and the smallness or flimsiness that has come to mark the institutional and human arrangements resulting from it. Pettiness, in other words, signals the manner in which Security and Development has ended up supporting second-class fixes which produce second-class subjects and second-class visions of the State and law. What it does not support are structural solutions to global problems related to human and institutional instability, as expressed, for example, in urban violence. We are deeply concerned about these “petty” arrangements because they are deployed in contexts that have already suffered countless waves of failed developmental interventions (places that have been systematically “underdeveloped” to use the language of Andre Gunter Frank (1966) and Walter Rodney (1972)), and because they are expanding, as a result, a world already organised around the late liberal management of vulnerability. As Povinelli has argued, today vulnerability is not seen as something that necessarily needs to be solved but rather as something to be administered. In this context, social relations are pacified via exercises of inclusion without proper entitlements, and

2 On the merging of “security” and “development,” see Duffield (2014).

social life is securitized without actual security. In this process a particular world is being made, one marked by orchestrated forms of abandonment (Povinelli 2011).

This situation is neatly illustrated by the large amount of attention currently being paid to “petty crime” and “petty criminals” as part of the arrival of the Security and Development agenda in cities in the Global South—the final frontier when it comes to breaking “the cycles of fragility and conflict” mentioned by Zoellick. To fully grasp the implications of this phenomenon and its products—what we call here “petty subjects,” “petty States” and “petty laws”—we need to engage, however, with the ground-level motions of Security and Development. To achieve this, we will take the reader on an ethnographic visit to Cali, a city of around 2.5 million people in south-eastern Colombia. In Cali, as in many other cities in the Global South today, what Jean and John Comaroff would call “law-making, law-breaking and law-enforcement” have become critical registers for witnessing the kind of world resulting from the current international obsession with “security” and “development” (Comaroff & Comaroff 2016, xii).³

In order to organise our analysis, the following sections introduce Cali and our main problem in more detail, and we then describe how cities and their residents have become key spaces within the Security and Development discourse. After that, we examine one of the many programs that are currently targeting petty criminals and vulnerable youth in Cali. This program shares three basic characteristics with many similar exercises taking place in the city and other locales across the Global South: i) it is based on the idea of inclusion through what we define as “neo-developmental punitive technologies,” which combine conditional services and psychosocial strategies to bring young people involved or at risk of getting involved in crime into the city’s official life; ii) it uses public-private associations and normative frameworks to join and strengthen forces in the fight against crime; and iii), its solutions, which operate in a neoliberal context of ongoing budgetary restrictions and late capitalist aspirations, are skewed towards individual “healing,” rather than collective or structural causal factors. Thanks to these characteristics, programmes like the one we examine below give rise to an expansive scenario of intervention, a scenario that saturates the lives of their young “clients”—and their “providers”—with the presence of the State and its laws. But as we will see, the State that transpires and is constituted through these programmes is an entity which, regardless of good will or ideas, is always limited, always “petty.” So what we have is a State, and of course a set of laws, that is never

sufficiently robust to solve the problems at hand, yet that always seems to be present. Security and Development interventions then reproduce arrangements that, despite being second-class in nature, still carry enormous weight in terms of forming a particular kind of social order. Petty criminals and the (petty) State and its (petty) law mutually create and recreate themselves without ever definitively eradicating their liminality or the insecurities that unite them—a point that we expand on in the last section.

Our analysis here does not lead us to suggest that greater “robustness,” for example, or a new, untested structural approach of some kind, might one day make the Security and Development discourse “effective.” These options are often unavailable in the current environment. Worse still, they risk further escalating the violence that already underpins the State and the world that emerges with and through it.⁴ As a result we invite the reader to appreciate, instead, the profound constraints that characterise life in the expanded South today. These constraints, and the agonies unleashed by them, are precisely the predicament of today’s peripheries; they are realities that force us to ask how “insecurity” and “underdevelopment” are produced in the first place.

Our city, our problem

Like many other rapidly globalising cities in the Global South, and despite huge advances in recent years, Cali remains one of the most crime-ridden cities both in Colombia and in the world. According to a recent report by the Citizen Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice (2017), Cali is the world’s 21st most violent city in terms of homicides per capita—even if it moved from 80 homicides per 100,000 people in 2012 to 51 in 2017.⁵ Youth gangs, high numbers of teenage deaths, and the proliferation of so-called *oficinas* (neighborhood-based criminal organizations) are still the common elements of the image Cali presents to Colombia and to the world. Different, positive visions of the city have also come to define Cali, however. Stories of financial success, the eradication of organized crime and extreme violence linked to drug trafficking, an ethnic multiplicity, a dynamic public administration, a philanthropic ethos rooted in local companies, a large young population and a broad range of artistic events⁶ today counterbalance Cali’s stories of violence and disorder.

3 Our approach in this article builds on a rich, diverse body of literature on the anthropology of the State, law and the global order, now intersecting with the question of security. See for example, as overviews of this literature: Goldstein (2010); Pottage and Mundy (2004); Sharma and Gupta (2006).

4 See especially on the limited character of policies associated to “Security and Development,” Chandler (2007; 2015).

5 The Citizen Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice (*Consejo Ciudadano para la Seguridad Pública y la Justicia Penal* - CCSP JP) is a non-governmental organisation established in Mexico in 2002 and dedicated to the monitoring of conflict globally.

6 These include the World Salsa Festival, the Petronio Álvarez Music Festival, and Ajazzgo, among many others.

The result of this combination of positive and negative elements is a city flooded with energy, aspirations and intense contradictions: three elements that characterise its young people and that place them at the center of public attention. Cali's young people are its present and future, but they also engender the problems that the city has not been able to overcome. This situation is comparable to that of many other Latin American cities and beyond, where young people involved in or at risk of engaging in criminal activities have become the protagonists of an urban drama associated with insecurity.⁷ It is a drama that speaks of the effects of late capitalist modernity in the Global South, particularly in countries like Colombia which, despite declaring themselves at "peace" or "post-conflict," always seem stuck in a cycle of economic volatility, unemployment and social and political unrest.

Young people in Cali, and their relationship to this drama of insecurity, are also marked, again as in many other places, by a strong racial element. Cali is two hours away from the impoverished Pacific Coast of Colombia, which has encouraged mass migration —mainly of people of African descent— away from this area to the city. Some 26,5% of Cali's urban population identify as black, and of all Colombian cities it is home to the greatest proportion of Afro-Colombians. Tellingly, some 25% of this population is subject to the effects of extreme spatial and economic exclusion (Rodríguez, Alfonso and Cavellier 2009). The same happens with unemployment, where the highest levels tend to occur in the Afro-Colombian population and their territories (Uribe-Castro, Holguín and Ayala 2016). This is especially evident in Aguablanca —a large area in the city's east that emerged in the 1970s due to internal displacement caused by Colombia's armed conflict (Urrea 1997). Officially encompassing what are called, according to the city's administrative distribution, *Comunas* 13, 14, 15 and 21, Aguablanca is home to the largest proportion of displaced Afro-Colombians in the country. Half of Cali's homicides are committed in this area, most involving males aged between 14 and 21 (Cali cómo vamos 2015).

As mentioned, however, Cali is no longer perceived as a place of great crime. The city used to be the headquarters of one of the big drug cartels operating during the 1980s and 1990s, which is when it was catapulted into the global imaginary, together with Medellín, as one of the main poles of the Colombian mafia —an image that continues to be lucratively recycled in TV series such as Netflix's *Narcos* (2015–ongoing). Today's Cali is seen differently. As Colombia's post-conflict status sets in, Cali is perceived as being on the path to "development,"

7 There are many studies on the association between security and youth violence in Latin America. See in the case of Argentina, Medan (2012; 2014) and Raggio and Sabarots (2012) and in the case of Brazil, Gough and Franch (2006) and Ursin (2012).

if it could only solve the problems of its low-grade yet endemic, racialized, and difficult-to-control insecurity. According to this narrative, it is now a city affected by what has long been known in criminological circles as "petty crime," including mobile-phone theft, micro-trafficking of illegal drugs, micro-extortion, and occasional murders (Figure 1).⁸

Figure 1. Mobile-phone thief captured by local police in Cali



Source: HSBNoticias.com, 24 September, 2015.

In this context, Cali has become a privileged place in which to test the new range of discourses and developmental practices associated with security, which we began to describe in the introduction. Known by the general label of Security and Development, these new practices and discourses are part of a recently formed "know-how" and a new chapter of global governance which aims to achieve public security, or what is also known as "citizenship security."⁹ Interestingly in Cali, as we will see, the decision of the city's administrative

8 According to the Observatory of Childhood Welfare, part of the *Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* (ICBF 2012), the percentage of youths entered into the penal system has increased by an annual rate of about 10% since 2010. Various laws and public policies have been issued in response to this situation, including CONPES Document 173 (2014) and Law 1622 (2013). These laws define "youth" as everyone between 14 and 28 years old.

9 According to the National Policy on Coexistence and Citizen Security, in Spanish, *Política Nacional de Seguridad Ciudadana y Convivencia*, "citizen security" is understood as "the universal protection of citizens from crimes and contraventions that affect their dignity, their personal safety and that of their goods, and in terms of their fear of insecurity. Cohabitation involves the promotion of the citizens' attachment and adhesion to a citizen culture based on a respect for the law, for others, and for basic norms of behaviour and social coexistence" (DNP 2011, 1).

organs to embrace the Security and Development agenda has not been accompanied by the expansion of the typical “firm hand” associated with law-and-order responses to crime.¹⁰ While still present, as evidenced by the large proportion of the city’s resources dedicated to the salaries of police units and the improvement of police infrastructure, such an approach has come to be seen as not only too costly both politically and financially but also as not sufficient to tackle the problem of insecurity.¹¹ So what has emerged in recent years is a range of new policing and surveillance technologies and, perhaps more importantly for us here, a broad array of new developmental practices: practices that aim to create a more robust State presence in the city via more responsive, economically efficient and flexible policies and norms. These new policies and norms have become the platform for implementing social intervention measures which aim to “include” the city’s youth—involvement or at risk of being involved in crime—in the city’s official dynamics. Trying to use the always insufficient public resources to their maximum extent, these more affordable developmental practices strive to generate security *and* development by including the city’s peripheral subjects in its official life, generating that sense of safety which international institutions, local and foreign investors, and residents—both rich and poor—are demanding of the local administration (Figure 2).¹²

These new Security and Development practices rely on what we call “neo-developmental punitive technologies,” which often combine “conditional services” with psychosocial attention offered to vulnerable young people as a tool of crime dissuasion and social inclusion. The conditional services materialize in the form of employment, sport, education and more general care services delivered by public and private institutions and community police officers on condition of behavioural change on the part of their young recipients. They represent a brave attempt to return to pre-neoliberal times in which welfare, in particular full employment, or the aspiration to generate it, constituted the organisational

force behind State action and the construction of citizenship (Esping-Andersen 1999). However, these benefits and employment options are now not only “conditional” but also very limited. This is due to the national and local governments’ financial constraints and, more generally, the larger restrictions—derived from our inequality-producing global order—imposed on any initiative of meaningful social inclusion.¹³

Figure 2. Cali’s mayor, Maurice Armitage, congratulating a young man who benefited from the *Youth without Borders* program (*Jóvenes sin Fronteras*) (discussed in Section III)



Source: Photo from the official brochure of the program (2016).

In this context, the use of “psychosocial” discourses, ideas and interventions have massively proliferated through these programmes. Departing from an understanding that individuals need to be considered products as much as makers of their societies, the psychosocial is brought into these programmes to help young people overcome what is seen as their lack of sociability and self-esteem, and to assimilate the community values required by (formal and legal) city life.¹⁴ Delivered on occasions by professionals, but more generally just employed as the underpinning rationale of these programmes, this approach has come to be considered, therefore, not only as a more efficient avenue to reach out to young people but also as the best avenue to help them rebuild their lives based on their “individual” psychological circumstances and family

10 Cali’s security expenditure has fallen from 60% to 20% of its local budget in 20 years. One of our informants explained this change in the following way: “In the 90s everything was spent on *tomba* [slang for police]” (Interview with public servant, Town Hall, 09/03/2018).

11 In December 2017, Cali had 6500 police officers. With an annual budget close to 3 billion COP (1,000 million USD), the city invests in its police force 21,000 million COP (7.3 million USD). Although much smaller in terms of investment, the youth support programs that we analyse here have started to receive significant resources. In 2017, these programmes received 5,000 million pesos (more than 1.7 million USD)—an amount that was reduced by 30% in 2018 (Interview with public servant, Town Hall, 09/03/2018).

12 On the clamour for “security” by both the rich and the poor, and the connection of this phenomenon to the broader neoliberal turn in the South and the emergence of a “right to security,” see especially: Goldstein (2011). See also on the securitization of social relations: Neocleous (2014).

13 The literature on the difficulties of enacting alternative development models and putting into practice meaningful social inclusion programmes is vast. Three pieces that outline the contours of this problem and its effects both in the North and South, particularly in terms of global structural limits to the peripheries of the world, jobless growth patterns and long patterns of material inequality, are Fischer (2015), Murray Li (2013) and Johnson (2015).

14 See on the assumptions and objectives of psychosocial approaches: Frosh (2003).

backgrounds. In the precarious context that characterises Cali, and in the larger neoliberal environment in which the city exists, however, this psychosocial approach often ends up occupying a large proportion of these neo-developmental punitive technologies, thus emphasising emotional and individual-based solutions more than structural changes. In doing so they have come to replicate, in Cali, issues that have already been identified by larger critiques of this “psychosocial turn” in social policy towards individualization, subjectification, psychologisation and the therapeutic.¹⁵ According to Stenner and Taylor, for example, this new excessive focus on the individual has come to confuse “what might be distinctive about the psychic and the social,” creating an inability “to address the issues of redistribution, equality and inequality, justice and injustice that pertain to societal level structures and processes” (Stenner and Taylor 2008).

Against this backdrop, active petty criminals or those at risk of falling into a life of crime in Cali are actually being produced in particular ways through these neo-developmental punitive technologies. At the same time, the State, in responding to its petty criminals—in its obsession with controlling and helping them, with all of its ambitions and limitations, through these new methods—is reconstructing itself to suit this period of late capitalist modernity.¹⁶ These technologies respond to and create subjects, a State and laws marked then by what we have described as “marginality,” “smallness,” and being “second-class.” For us, this “pettiness” demonstrates how, in precarious contexts of developmental experimentation and in the face of economic imperatives, what ends up being perpetually reproduced are disciplined evanescent bodies: bodies in which battles around security and development—which are in reality battles around small crimes committed by vulnerable, out of school, unemployed and impoverished young people—generate transitional forms of existence. These forms of existence oscillate constantly between macro-visibility and absence, occasional satisfaction of needs and hunger, periods of relative peace and violence. This liminality, or this particular form of “abandonment,” to keep using the conceptual repertoire we have begun to build here, speaks again of a sociality where the lack of structural solutions is repeatedly superseded by sporadic benefits and, most of all, expanding discourses of affection that do not necessarily have material traction in terms of satisfying pressing needs. All this feeds a reality already full of drama, a reality in which young people are the object of public policies yet continue to declare, through

15 These critiques of individualization and subjectification go back to Foucault via Rose (1989) and Beck (1992). See on the turn to individualization, subjectification and behavioural base solutions and approaches: Parker (2007), Madsen (2014). See especially in the development context: Klein (2017).

16 See for example on the State as a social relation, Jessop (2016).

an Adidas trademark shaved on their heads, for example, that only the market effectively includes them (Figure 3); in which civil servants and community actors dedicate their lives to creating State institutions but struggle to the point of weeping when they reflect on the State’s perennial insufficiency (Figure 4); and, more generally, in which a middle class, responding to the popular image of Cali as an unsafe city, screams out for a strong State while putting into operation new and more sophisticated schemes of private security that increasingly confine them to gated communities (Figure 5).¹⁷

Figure 3. *Chico Caleño* (a young person from Cali) with Adidas trademark shaved in his hair



Source: Courtesy of a community leader.

Figure 4. Delivery of staple goods, part of a program of early intervention to prevent petty crime in Cali



Source: Courtesy of a community leader.

17 See: Focas and Rincón (2016).

Figure 5. Private security in action in Cali

Source: Photo by the authors.

A global agenda

Before we get further into the intricacies of petty crime and its management in Cali, we want to flesh out in more detail the centrality of cities in the Security and Development agenda. The starting point of this side of our story concerns the State-building efforts that consistently lie behind attempts to solve the historically assumed precariousness of the postcolonial South. This was initially characterized by the establishment of centralized States, and local elites' drive to control, as much as possible, internal markets and the processes of internal industrialization. This centralism was a clear expression of the developmental energies that accompanied State formation in the South, beginning with the wars of independence in the first half of the 19th century in Latin America, and during the decolonization period from the end of the Second World War to the mid-1970s in Africa, Asia and the Pacific (Eslava 2019). With the advent of neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s, however, the idea of decentralizing Southern States emerged as a new rationale to think about State-building and development. Cities then began to be positioned as the new centers of action, control and management.

The call to decentralize States—which became known as “fragile States” during this time—unleashed a re-reading of cities as the new centers of capital accumulation and as nodes of more flexible and dynamic

governance strategies; in other words, places more able to generate exchanges between the local and the global. Cities, in this process of “petty-ing” the State, surfaced in international and national policies and laws as the ideal jurisdictions in which to make not only the domestic but also the global order more present, intimate, close, intelligent, economically proficient and safe (Eslava 2015).

Cali, again, is a revealing location from which to appreciate the operation and limits of this reallocation of the developmental project, in particular the security project, from national institutions to local municipalities.¹⁸ In Cali the arrival of decentralization has been framed by the city's many achievements but also by its unequal economic growth and a population drastically fragmented in terms of race, employment options, location in the city, and enjoyment of urban infrastructure. In this context small crime has emerged as a form of life, in particular for the city's marginalized youth, and thus as a key local developmental concern. For the local administration, young people involved in this type of activity are, however, slippery subjects trapped by poverty, colour, dialect, chronic unemployment, early desertion from school, teenage pregnancy, addictions and, more often than not, criminal records linked to minor crimes from a very early age (Cisalva 2017). To regulate and help them, however, the city—a city trapped in a neoliberal world, as we have suggested—only has limited resources or, perhaps more precisely, the local government is only politically able to mobilize a small fraction of the city's budget for these matters. The result is that the local administration cannot do much to substantially solve the problems of petty crime yet, due to the strong call to Security and Development, cannot ignore the problem either. What has come out of all of this, therefore, is that the city's government finds itself experimenting with financially-constrained, budget-compliant programmes that try to negotiate the complex realities of the young people involved in petty crime: subjects who continually slip through the net of services offered by the public administration, which continues to insist on reaching and controlling them.¹⁹

This reality reflects more extensive processes related to international efforts to ensure security in a Global South generally characterized by great socio-spatial and economic segregation, fragile economies, and a middle class panicked by the possibility that their goods—their only stronghold—may be stolen, or that in a moment of confusion, during a theft, they may be injured or killed (see Santillán and Varea 2014; Winton 2005). Concerns

¹⁸ On the shift of the security agenda from the national to the urban level, see: Pontes Nogueira (2017).

¹⁹ On experimentalism and the New Developmental State, particularly in the case of Latin America, see: Alviar (2013); Trubek (2013).

for urban crime and safety have become, for these reasons, a powerful argument for advancing new models of governance that combine “hard” and increasingly “softer” —in the sense of affordable and thus experimental— forms of social control in Global South cities. As always, development, this time at the local level, justifies making security concerns, and the application of these new policy prescriptions, a pressing matter.

Evidence of this new face of global governance based on the connection between (in)security and development and on the importance of acting creatively from a local sphere is enormous. For example, at the international level, in 2011 the World Bank published its report *Violence in the City: Understanding and Supporting Community responses to Urban Violence*, which argues that urban violence must be urgently tackled by combining public and community crime prevention strategies with development programs.²⁰ This concern and a need for local developmental actions have been reflected, in the case of Colombia, in a transformation of the entire national criminal law apparatus over the past decade, aiming to expedite criminal processes and make them more responsive to local conditions, and in an extraordinary reallocation of budgetary resources towards local security concerns (CEJ and British Embassy 2011). In 2013, for example, “citizenship security” became the main focus of national expending for the first time in the country’s history (Urna de Cristal 2013). This budgetary commitment reflected, in turn, an even broader shift in the reading of “security” within the country. In 2011, the High Presidential Advisory Office for Coexistence and Citizen Security marked this shift by issuing the National Policy on Coexistence and Citizen Security, with the objective of achieving peace in urban contexts (Alta Consejería Presidencial para la Convivencia y Seguridad Ciudadana 2011).

The turn towards the city as the site for achieving “citizenship security” in Colombia and elsewhere has been accompanied by an important additional transformation. The “citizenry”, rather than the “nation”, has become the center of governmental protection. However, this “citizenry”, or “society” in Foucault’s sense, is far from being an abstract entity. It is imagined instead as a collective of, above all, property holders, ready to contribute to the development of their cities, nations and the world, but paralyzed by the dangers on their streets. This reading of the citizenry is mixed, of course, with middle-class images and imaginaries of why cities are violent, who is violent, and how to solve the urban drama of insecurity (Santillán and Varea 2014). To sort this situation out and, in particular, to respond to the

concerns experienced by this urban citizenry, new security policies are unveiled, combining punitive practices with social intervention programs that aspire to promote security and achieve the development that has been always so elusive in the South (Medan 2014; Raggio and Sabarots 2012).

Cali, as one of the most important and complicated cities in terms of urban violence, has been at the center of the Security and Development initiatives promoted by the World Bank and other international organizations and the Colombian government (OEA 2009; CCSP JP 2017; World Bank 2011). In June 2013, for example, Cali’s local government hosted a high-level regional meeting, coordinated by the World Bank, in which mayors from all over Latin America shared their experiences of programs implemented to counteract the growing phenomena of urban insecurity. The World Bank reported the results of the meeting in the following way:

Twenty years ago, Cali was on the frontline of one of the world’s most dangerous wars. A group of drug traffickers [...] clashed violently with their enemies in Medellin [...] This week, Cali received some 450 guests from around the continent, who came to discuss the problem of crime and violence that devastated this city and that now affects the entire region, from the suburbs of Chicago to the highways of Central America [...] For everyone at the conference, it was clear that citizen insecurity is a multifaceted issue that cannot be addressed solely by public security forces. In other words, a “firm hand” is not enough to resolve the problem. (World Bank 2013, n.p)

As we can see, the meeting concluded by confirming that traditional “firm-hand” approaches to crime should be complimented with smarter strategies, more adapted to local needs and resources. This shift away from “firmness” in the approach to crime and the promotion of safety speaks of the way in which broader international discourses around law —in particular “the rule of law”— and its application have been modulated by developmental imperatives and their more malleable approach to social administration, a phenomenon expressed by the recent inclusion of “justice” as a measurable target in the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2015).²¹

The possibility of these new security approaches succeeding, however, is very small. One reason for this is the macro-economic figures of countries such as Colombia and their cities, including Cali. In terms of poverty, unemployment and inequality, the numbers are not encouraging. The Cali Chamber of Commerce reports, for example, that the city’s socio-economic figures

20 A key document preceding this report is *Youth Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: Costs, Causes, and Interventions*, published in 1999 by the World Bank (Moser and van Bronkhorst 1999). See also: Chioda (2017); World Bank (2005; 2014).

21 On the rule of law and development, see: Kennedy (2006); Trubek (2006).

improved rapidly at the beginning of the 2000s but that between 2010 and 2016 inequality and unemployment increased by almost 20% (CCC 2017). Meanwhile Cali continues to be, as mentioned in the introduction, one of the world's most unsafe cities according to homicides per capita—a figure *The Economist* recently turned into world news (“The World’s Most” 2017). Poverty, unemployment, inequality and insecurity go hand in hand. Faced with this reality, however, the local administration has been strengthening its commitments to citizen security and experimenting with newer policies.

Closely following the World Bank’s suggestion for more flexible approaches, the new policies Cali has been implementing are organised not around law’s usual rigidity, but through flexible, cost-effective exercises of integration. This social approach as a security strategy has had concrete effects on the construction of State-society relations. As we shall see in the next section, it has implied a counter-intuitive political economic rationale: doing more while spending less. As such, the State is currently presented as an entity able to do more than it has always done, but with fewer resources. This contradiction can only be resolved by leaving a large part of its operation in the hands of third parties, or of the very communities and individuals its plans are designed to benefit.

This devolution is done through a complex system of incentives and externalization mechanisms that take the form, for example, of social philanthropy, co-responsibility frameworks and, as we have suggested, individual training.²² The net effect is a State deeply involved in the life of the city, particularly in those sections that are vulnerable. This involvement is effectuated, however, by local civil servants or lay community actors, who serve as bridges to services or who are directly engaged in providing emotional care. But regardless of their important work, the services these actors can offer to their “clients” are generally unable to solve the root causes of the problems faced. For the young people at the center of these programs, the State therefore ends up being always there, in their lives, neighbourhoods and houses, but with a presence always marked by a spirit of experimentation, and most importantly, by financial constraints. Frustrations, half-built “life projects” and entrenchment in defiant ways of life are these young people’s response to a State that promises more with less.

A neo-developmental punitive program

The *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* (“Youth without Borders”) programme illustrates the repertoire of efforts that are

22 For an analysis of public-private co-responsibility in security programs, and the link between development and psychological/psychosocial exercises, see: Akhtar (2015); Haapasalo (2000); Siennick (2011); Tufro (2010).

being put into operation in Cali to include young people “at risk” of entering, or already involved in, petty criminal networks and integrate them into the city’s official life.²³ As we show in this section, this programme manifests the kind of expansionism, saturation and final lack of robustness that we argue has accompanied the co-constitution of “petty criminals,” a “petty State” and “petty laws” in Cali in recent years under the banner of Security and Development.

Jóvenes sin Fronteras was one of the initiatives brought by Mayor Maurice Armitage into the city during his tenure (2016–2019). A well-known industrialist from the region, with a long history of philanthropic involvement in social projects, and a newcomer to official politics in his senior years, Armitage made a broad commitment to “human development” in his Government Plan, which he understood in terms of increasing local productivity and ameliorating unemployment, inequality, poverty and (key for our discussion here) insecurity (Armitage 2016).²⁴ In Armitage’s words, one of his main priorities as mayor was to break what he identified as the “vicious circle of poverty, violence and insecurity” existing in the city (Armitage 2016, 4). In order to tackle the problem of crime, in particular criminal activities involving youth, Armitage proposed an approach heavily grounded in combining the modernization of the local police force with the social, economic and affective inclusion of this young population with the help of community and private actors. He described this approach to security as “Proposals for a Safe, Pacific and Reconciled Cali” (Armitage 2016, 23–26).

Following the broad turn towards Security and Development, Armitage generated a series of programmes during his three years in government combining classic concerns linked to employment, recreation, education and care with conditional and pedagogical exercises geared towards generating what came to be called the “socio-productive reintegration” of petty criminals (Armitage 2016, 24). The objective was, in the language of Armitage’s Government Plan:

To halt the cycle of criminal renewal in the city whereby the gang leadership is replenished by climbing younger members, by offering these aspiring leaders waiting in the queue opportunities to rebuild their life projects based on the generation of formal income and the unlearning [*desaprendizaje*] of violence, their emotional healing [*sanación emocional*],

23 We reviewed seven programs in depth and chose to focus on *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* because it shows, with particular sharpness, some of the key features of “security and development” initiatives in regards to youth. The abundance of these programs can be seen as a further evidence in support of our argument.

24 Armitage’s Government Plan became Cali’s Local Development Plan (*Cali progresa contigo* – Acuerdo 0396/2016).

and the restoration of their family, neighbourhood and community connections. (Armitage 2016, 24)

Working within these parameters, the local administration created the *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* programme—a name that makes reference to the “borders” (*fronteras*) set up by criminal gangs within neighbourhoods to mark their territories. Administered by *Cisalva*, a multiple-award-winning research center dedicated to the study of urban crime and violence that belongs to Universidad del Valle (the most important university in the city), and run in partnership with the Integrated Management of Gangs Scheme which operates under the Preventative Policing Unit of Cali’s Metropolitan Police Department (Policía Metropolitana de Cali 2016), this programme works through “*educadores*” (docents) and “*enlaces*” (links) living in neighbourhoods identified on the basis of their criminal profile. Through these *educadores*, who are often professional social workers, and *enlaces*, former members of gangs from these areas, the local administration’s objective is to get into contact with vulnerable young people in order to provide conditional opportunities in education, sport and work, as well as psychosocial help. The idea behind working with *educadores* and *enlaces* living and interacting directly with young people on their territory and on a sustained basis, is to establish the needed rapport with vulnerable youths, and thanks to the professional skills of *educadores* or the backgrounds of *enlaces*, transform their life patterns.²⁵ According to *Cisalva*’s official description, this is a strategy of “social intervention” that enables young people “to have a new horizon in life.” In this way, “it is a project to set in motion the restitution of rights to these young people, involving psychosocial attention and health services, re-inclusion in the formal education system, work options, job training, and a selection of cultural and sport programmes” (Cisalva 2016a, 1).

With this larger objective as a background, what each *educador* and *enlace* does on a daily basis is to work closely with a group of around 10 to 25 young people from the area where they are located, overseeing their individual and collective development while helping them gain access to the education, sport and employment opportunities offered by *Jóvenes sin Fronteras*. *Educadores* and *enlaces* also try to ensure that the young people under their supervision are enrolled in the public health system and that their official documents are in order—for example, that they have an official ID, which in Colombia is required for all kinds of transactions, including applying for jobs.

The educational options offered through *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* are aimed at helping young people finish primary and secondary school and then access technical

training. The sport options are focused on helping those with relevant talents get into one of the professional sports training centers run by the local administration. In terms of employment options, on the other hand, the programme works a bit differently. Under the direct control of the mayor’s office, the city created 1.500 jobs exclusively dedicated to this and other security-related programmes. To gain access to one of these jobs, young people must complete a basic training; if they do so successfully, they can apply for a position.²⁶ So far the jobs created by the local administration for the programme have been primarily manual in nature (for example, working in recycling or solid-waste management projects or eradicating invasive species like African snails and cutter ants); or directing crowds and regulating queues at the stations of the local public transport system (known as *MIO*). As compensation for this work, young people receive a salary of around \$250 USD per month. Crucially for our analysis, this idea of offering actual jobs as part of the *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* programme responds to both an emerging consensus within the local administration on the limitations of only offering abstract “instruction” on how to reconstruct personal and productive lives, and to the message that consistently comes from the young people targeted by the programme: “what we need is work.”²⁷

Education, sports and work opportunities are not, however, the sole avenue through which young people are steered into new lifestyles. As the above description of the programme makes clear, these paths for including young people in the city’s official dynamics are always accompanied by psychosocial support. This takes the form of workshops provided by professionals (psychologists and counsellors) linked to the programme, who use, for example, craftwork to help young people work through their emotional gaps, in particular in terms of lack of positive role models, family support or peer support. At the same time, a psychosocial approach more generally underpins the actions of all the actors administering services to young people, aiming at their reconstruction from the inside out.

The *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* programme’s combination of conditional services and a psychosocial approach is personified by Capitán Gómez: the police commander in charge of the Local Anti-Gangs Scheme, and thus of juvenile violence in the city. Gómez coordinates *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* on the side of the Metropolitan Police Department. As coordinator, Gómez is in charge of allocating, through the *educadores* and *enlaces* and after discussions that take place within an inter-departmental

25 Interview with civil servant 2, 19/04/2017.

26 *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* targets young people from 12 to 28 years old. When beneficiaries are younger than 16 years old, the local administration enables a family member to take up the employment options offered through the programme.

27 Beneficiary of program 1, 30/05/2017.

security committee that operates under the mayor's office, the jobs created by the local administration for the programme. This facet of Gómez's role, as the administrator of these "conditional" jobs and everything that implies in terms of assigning, not assigning or withdrawing these positions depending on young people's behaviour, is closely entangled with his persona and approach to young people and their communities. In our interviews and fieldwork outings with him and police officers under his command, it was clear how this committed, charismatic man with a canny knowledge of the city's ins and outs radiated both admiration and compassion, and how he used this as a platform to invite young people to change their life patterns. Responding to this, young people from working-class neighbourhoods in Cali, admired and trusted Gómez, and many called him *papá* (dad). He is, in this sense, a model of community policing: resourceful, close to the population, knowledgeable about people's struggles and always ready to create paths for communities to live within the boundaries of the law, regardless of the adversities that mine their daily existence and territories. This combination of factors and feelings mark all interactions that take place under the *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* programme.

In the context just described, police officers, *educadores*, *enlaces* and the young people under their supervision reach such a high degree of closeness within the spaces opened by *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* that the interactions and conversations between them easily transcend its core objectives, reaching many other aspects of their lives. For example, everyone knows who is engaged in petty crime; who consumes drugs, which ones, when and where; what young people are going to do in the afternoon or over the weekend; their family history (often a history of intense violence); who has not eaten that day; who is in love with whom; who has a mental health problem; who is pregnant, who has been pregnant or has made someone pregnant; who has a death sentence over their head; what each young person's dreams are; and, what young people need to say or do in order to obtain things: a lunch to share or one of those education, sport or work opportunities offered by the local administration.

Within this intimate setting, and through the process of combining conditional exchanges with affective instruction, the State expands and ends up covering, even saturating, the young people's lives through the *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* programme.²⁸ According to the Town Hall and its officers, this expansion—this entrance of the State into the lives of young people—is a positive effect of the programme; an effect evidenced by the reduction in offences committed by those linked to it. *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* thus shows, as made clear by

Town Hall officers, that working with small groups of young people and focusing on changing their collective dynamics and individual sense of themselves has a clear positive impact. According to one of the programme's administrators, this face-to-face approach, accompanied by a strong psychosocial component, enables the administration to communicate other ethical patterns to young people.²⁹

Jóvenes sin Fronteras speaks strongly then of the syncretism between conditional services and psychosocial approaches that we started to analyse in the previous sections. The programme operates through a plurality of actors delivering services and provisions in exchange for young people moving away from criminal activities, all accompanied by systematic affective interventions. As we have just shown, this latter strategy is reinforced by the close proximity to and assumed positive role of *enlaces*, *educadores* and others involved in the programme. All these actors are conceptualised and present themselves as role models to young people, and all participate in offering a narrative about the benefits of embracing a new future by working through one's emotions and taking advantage of the work, sport and education services offered by the local administration.

Holistic in its intentions and powerful in scope and reach, this mixture of conditional services and a psychosocial approach works, however, within a context profoundly shaped by financial constraints. The different actors involved in *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* come together through often very tenuous inter-administrative labour agreements and, although generous in comparison to previous administrations, still with very exiguous and short-term budgetary allocations in terms of the problems they are meant to solve.

In one of our collective interviews with an *enlace*, ten of the young people under his supervision, and three police officers overseeing his work, for example, the high, almost unbelievable, degree of intimacy and cross-support both within the group and among them, the *enlace* and the police officers was palpable. Also clear was the respect the group had for "their" *enlace*, their non-confrontational, even amicable approach towards the police officers, and the way they rejoiced at the possibility of securing a job or taking advantage of the educational or sport opportunities they could now access through *Jóvenes sin Fronteras*. All this was a remarkable achievement given that this *enlace* and his group were located in one of Cali's most violent neighbourhoods, where all of them, including the *enlace* himself, had grown up. We perceived these strong signs of success, however, during an interview in the front room of the *enlace*'s house—a humble construction, with bare floor and walls and almost no furniture except from some plastic chairs, but

28 Interview with civil servant, Town Hall, 09/03/2018.

29 Interview with civil servant 2, 19/04/2017.

which served as the main venue for the group to meet and hang out on a daily basis. The *enlace* and the group were also struggling that day to obtain something for lunch, a problem only resolved when the police officers present decided to buy a roast chicken for everyone to share, which the *enlace* would complement by cooking some rice that he had secured as a donation, a few weeks before, from a non-governmental organisation.

During our conversation with this group it also slowly became clear that although they could access some of the 1,500 jobs that the local administration has created for security programmes, these are all short-term positions, they are not enough to fulfil the existing demand, and each opportunity is very limited —as mentioned above they consist in manual labour of some kind or in helping run the city’s transport system.³⁰ Many young people involved in the programme are also unable to access these jobs or give them up quickly due to addictions or behavioural problems, and the same is true for the education and sport options. Finally, we learnt in our conversation with the group that, again, although the programme is very ambitious, much better articulated with other local programmes compared to previous initiatives, and does in fact reach young criminals and youth at risk in their own neighbourhoods, what it offers does not necessarily correspond with the complex needs of the young people themselves. For example, it does not cover sexual and reproductive health or education directly, or mental health services, access to the official transportation system or, more importantly, basic issues like daily meals or housing. This last problem in particular, the issue of homelessness, was so serious that the *enlace* we were interviewing was himself hosting one of the young people under his supervision, in order to shield him from further violence on the streets or back at his family’s house.

Jóvenes sin Fronteras thus embodies several features that characterise the turn towards neo-punitive developmental practices that have accompanied Security and Development discussions. The programme works through malleable managerial combinations and legal obligations which have the capacity to expand the State’s reach and thus its perception as omnipresent. This process has been accompanied, however, by shifting the fight against crime from courts and public offices to the very spaces in which “criminals” live, and to the “criminals” or “potential criminals” themselves and the people who work with them. This subtle but significant re-arrangement of the security map has brought not only the dispersion of the State and its interests and logics throughout the social body, but also generated a particular kind of saturation of these spaces and people’s lives —one in which the essence of the State and its laws, as well as the subjective formations that come

from it, are marked by high expectations that are constantly thwarted by the material limits that have come to shape the Global South.

The psychosocial dimension that accompanies *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* and similar programmes deepens these problems. *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* aspires to create “good people” who know the value of studying in order to one day be well-versed citizens, who practise sports in order to generate both self-worth and collective pride, and who embrace the disciplines of work to secure a stable economic life. The seductive power of this vision makes *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* and similar programmes ideal vehicles for promoting the State and its ideas of security in violent urban spaces. The problem is that the scope of these programmes, in terms of what they actually cover is limited. Instead, then, they tend to focus more on disseminating the idea that young people must develop “life projects” in order to become successful than they do on delivering the services necessary to realize such a promise (for example, in terms of lasting employment, housing, or a radical redistribution of power and resources).

The combination of factors just described, then, reproduces young subjects who are often increasingly frustrated by waiting for their turn to receive the support needed to materialise the benefits of living within the boundaries of the official. The idea of “life projects” is very alluring and, as confirmed during our interviews, people embrace it keenly. Yet “life projects” generate a “projection” of the self that is hard to fulfil. They operate, therefore, as moving targets: the more people commit to them, the more frustrated they get. The result is young people who are conversant in the language and aspirations offered through these neo-developmental programmes, but who entrench themselves in what is already available to them: for example, gangsterish styles and defiant manners materialised in (as witnessed during our interviews) heavily pierced ears, large items of jewellery, bleached eyelashes or vividly dyed hair, the latter a sign that they are still “in the war” (*en la guerra*), that is, engaged in gang violence. These fashion choices, this excessive attention to the body and “*la percha*” or clothes, offer these young people, as they do in many other contemporary youth subcultures, a degree of control of themselves and a connection with peers and the city which official narratives and other more cognitively defined goals are unable to (Sweetman 2001). These young people are subjects, therefore, who, while “included” within the circuit of official discourses, remain in a liminal space between the promises of what “should” come from this inclusion and the violence that continues to mar their lives. They are petty constructions that reflect a petty State, with its petty laws, which promises but does not deliver. Subjects who remain vulnerable. Subjects whose abandonment is now managed through a well-intentioned, but never quite sufficient, matrix of services and discourses linked to the city’s “security” and “development.”

30 Interview with civil servant, Town Hall, 09/03/2018.

The predicament of peripheries: Towards a conclusion

The precarity that characterises the young people just described is also shared by the *educadores* and *enlaces* who work for *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* and who (as mentioned above) tend to be hired through very tenuous contractual arrangements with the city and its partners. These contracts, referred to as *prestación de servicios*, involve a labour relationship that starts and finishes within a defined period of time and that does not involve any extra charges to the local administration, apart from those explicitly stated. But this is not the only aspect of their relationship with the city and the State that makes their situation precarious. As representatives of the city's administration and the State, and as direct witnesses of the limitations of the programme they help to deliver, *educadores* and *enlaces* also continually agonise alongside the young people under their supervision.

During our observations and interviews, we often saw *enlaces* and *educadores*, as well as public servants and private actors involved in the delivery of other similar programmes, break down into tears when describing the gap between the needs of young people and what the State promises but does not deliver.³¹ In this act of crying, and in their tenuous labour relationships with the local administration and the State as a whole, *educadores* and *enlaces* further attest to that particular kind of pettiness —of marginality and flimsiness— that has become a key feature of the world unleashed by Security and Development in Cali. Their tears and tenuous labour contracts, like the hairstyles, jewellery and other fashion choices of the young people who work with them, also denounce a world where the State, its law and subjects cannot be defined by the logics of European modernity, governmental rigidity or emotionless rationality. What we have instead, in this South scenario, is a world in which the State, its law and subjects are defined by partial forms of abandonment, challenging clothes or accessories, and tears running down the faces of bureaucrats. Importantly, this “fragility” that we can see accompanying the State here is not an anomaly and is not external to the State itself, as the World Bank, for example, suggests in the 2011 *World Development Report* discussed in the introduction. Instead, this fragility, or pettiness as we term it here, is part of the very essence of the State in the Global South: a unit that has been structurally adjusted in such a way that second-class quality has become its essence and operative ethos.

Our reading of *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* and more generally of the discourse of Security and Development contradicts, in this way, traditional Eurocentric theories of the formation and functioning of the State. According to these theories, States should enjoy a number of features

in order to confirm their existence and their presence across their territories and populations: they should control violence, centralise governmental apparatuses, provide services and construct long-lasting human and institutional structures (Weber 1976; Tilly 1990). These are indeed objectives present in international agendas directed to the Global South and embraced by its governments: this is so much the case that the UNDP has even devised a name for the aspiration of making the State constantly and evenly present across territories and populations —the search for “State density” (UNDP 2005; 2009). According to the UNDP, this concept can help international and domestic policy makers define whether “States” are present or not across their geographies and societies, and whether governments are doing a good job or not in this regard. The normative assumption underpinning this and similar initiatives is that the more present the State is, the more legitimate it is, the more “security” and “development” it fosters. According to the analysis presented here, however, even when the State makes itself present in the South, even when it expands and saturates the lives of its subjects and territories with the best of intentions, it ends up as a thin and low-calibre reality.

Our discussion therefore complicates Weberian assumptions about the State, conceived as a solid, rational structure, organized on the basis of a sharp, all-encompassing, fully-functional universal logic. In the context of the operation of Security and Development discourse in Cali today, however, the State chases vulnerable young people and petty criminals in order to include them, but once “included” their expectations and needs either go unheard or, worse, are found to be impossible to fulfil. In response, petty criminals and those at risk of falling into criminal networks entrench themselves in affective manoeuvrings linked to consumption and popular criminal narratives that are already available to them. They cling onto that individuality, which, as their psychosocial counselling has confirmed, is the space they have, maybe the only thing they have. Distraught by the realities of the young people they work with, precariously employed by public and private institutions, and always short of resources to run the programmes under their command, the direct representatives of the State who accompany these young people weep in despair as response to a set of structural realities they cannot change or challenge. In all these acts, young people, *educadores* and *enlaces* embody a State that expands and saturates but remains “fragile.”

This reverting back to individual affections and emotions is important if we bear in mind the types of service provided by Security and Development programmes. These services always entail an element —often a very substantive element— focused on emotive support and services: it is important to listen, understand, love and support young people's visualisation of their “life project” in order to overcome insecurity in the city and promote

31 Field diary, 18/05/2017.

development. In this way the rationality of public action becomes geared towards questions of affection, with insufficient attention to larger social processes. In this turn of events, as Parker has put it, the question of “personal improvement takes the place of social transformation, and the psychologisation of social life ... encourages people to think that the only possible change they could ever make would be in the way they dress and present themselves to others.” (2007, 2)

The State that comes into being in this context is not, for these reasons, a rational entity, interested purely in solving problems and attaining goals. It is instead an affective sounding board, yet one constrained by market logics, and so unable to ensure long-lasting forms of political affiliation (Chatterjee 2004). The banalisation of the politics involved in this turn of events omits the density and cohesion required by social transformation, or of the services and provisions that used to connect people with the State (Marshall 1992). Smallness, marginality and flimsiness do not create a suitable ground on which to build either the present or possible different futures. Importantly, as these agonies expand to the (South of the) North and global inequality hits even harder in (the South of the) South, this marginality and flimsiness are becoming the predicaments of peripheries right across the world.

Labour opportunities, as in the *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* programme, are therefore extremely important. They are a way to connect people to the “world,” changing their lives in a fundamental way. Sadly, however, not only are the jobs offered by *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* limited and dependent on the existence of the programme, but labour as such is disappearing at an astonishing rate (Ferguson 2015). On the other hand, affective attention is both financially savvy and it plays an important function in ensuring that young people value themselves. It also helps those working with them, for example *educadores* and *enlaces*, to establish the rapport needed to get in contact with them. However, in some ways it also depoliticizes everyone involved. The young people we engaged with in Cali, in particular those still waiting for one of the *Jóvenes sin Fronteras* job opportunities, spend their days waiting for the State to bring the effective entitlements they need. They hang around on neighbourhood corners passing time, disconnected in sport facilities, bored in training sessions, perhaps still engaged or thinking to engage in crime. The “petty criminal” and young people at risk who are involved in Security and Development programmes can be seen, in this sense, as post-citizens of a certain kind: individuals who should be cared for but whose needs cannot be fully taken into account (Lefranc 2017, 140-144). Meanwhile, *educadores* and *enlaces* agonise about the situation of the young people under their supervision, and the city residents continue to panic given Cali’s ongoing insecurity. All of this occurs, of course, as life becomes yet more intensively securitized by the significant amount of resources that continue to be spent by companies, residents and the

local administration on new surveillance technologies and police salaries and infrastructure. In this complex interaction between petty subjects, the petty State and its petty laws, vulnerability is managed in such a way that abandonment becomes sustainable.

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