

Afrodescendant Resistance to Deracination
in Colombia

Aurora Vergara-Figueroa

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Resistance
to Deracination
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Massacre at Bellavista-Bojayá-Chocó

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*To my loving mother Maria Teresa Figueroa Rojas
To the Women of Bellavista
Afro-Colombian Women Warriors
For their strength, courage, love and wisdom*

PREFACE

This is the hardest story I ever told. I have been doing research at Bellavista for over a decade. I feel that this story needs to be told by those who suffered in this awful event, but because of barriers, that is not possible. I write this book with the utmost respect for the lives, stories and memories of those who allowed me to compose this account of the massacre of Bellavista-Bojayá. On May 2, 2017, fifteen years after this heinous crime, the Bellavista community held a commemoration. Hence, this book pays tribute to those who lost their lives on the morning of May 2, of 2002 and honors the journey of the survivors.

My writing carries out the wishes of the communities' victims of deracination. My reflections would have not been possible if I had not taken dangerous trips to the regions assaulted by violence. Furthermore, I am committed to telling their stories as they wanted them delivered to the world. My commitment will end only when their anguish ends.

Cali, Colombia

Aurora Vergara-Figueroa

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This book is the result of a decade of research at Bellavista-Bojayá-Chocó-Colombia. It is an attempt to deepen my understanding of the historic basis that can explain contemporary economic, political, and social inequalities in Colombia, mainly around the questions of death, dispossession, and resistance.

Since May of 2006 I have engaged in several periods of research at the Atrato region. My greatest debt goes to Father Vicente, “Mayito,” “Coca” and “Lucero,” who allowed me to navigate the community of Bellavista. They helped me to comprehend the struggles for autonomy, ancestral self-determination, identity, freedom, dignity, collective entitlement of the land, non-violence, solidarity, participation, dialogue, and justice for people of African descent in Colombia. In so doing, they helped me to understand my own history, and I am forever indebted to them.

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INTRODUCTION

TERRORIALIZATION, DERACINATION, AND RESISTANCE AT THE COLOMBIAN ATRATO RIVER

On the morning of the of May 2, 2002, 119¹ people were massacred in the Catholic community church of Bellavista-Bojayá-Chocó-Colombia. Approximately 1744 families had to abandon the territory to escape the atrocity of this event. After May 2, 2002 the people who made it out alive and left the community entered into the category of Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs). Through the media, the president and the leaders of the army blamed the illegal armed forces, principally the guerrillas for the deaths, and avoided taking any responsibility for what happened. Nonetheless, a report by the Administrative Court of Quibdó-Chocó, six years after the massacre, declared the nation administratively responsible for the devastating event.² Like the population of Bellavista, more than 65.3 million people in 54 countries have lost their territories, and are also considered as displaced people.³ Among the countries with the largest internally displaced populations are Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Colombia, and Sudan.⁴

This book is an extended case-based study of this massacre.⁵ I present the lessons learned in a decade of research in the Bojayá region. The massacre at Bellavista is a case of paradigmatic significance with which to comprehend contemporary patterns of violence in Colombia, current practices of land dispossession, and a new cycle of diasporization of the Afrodescendent population. The event raised challenging questions

about the nature of what the politicians of the time called “acts of terrorism,”⁶ the abandonment of the state, the corruption in the state of Chocó, racism, marginalization, and the question of deracination.⁷ Fifteen years later, the major questions of what happened, and the goals to repair the damages suffered by the inhabitants still remain unanswered and unmet. This community is still demanding two basic things: first, proper identification of those who were killed so that their burial sites can be marked, and second, to provide adequate health care to those wounded who still have pieces of shrapnel in their bodies.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL SILENCING

In the state of Chocó 82.7% of the population (454,030 inhabitants) self-identified as Afrodescendent in the 2005 census. This state is also known as the Africa of Colombia, which carries with it the implicit blackness, poverty, and marginality of the region. In 2008 this state was declared politically unviable due to the internal corruption and its supposed geographical isolation. One may argue that the statements made to explain the declared crisis condense most of the generalized representations of Chocó, which are historical formations of a marginal/isolated/ignorant otherness within the modern/colonial capitalist world-system. These representations and widespread beliefs erase a long history of colonization and oppression that has taken place in this territory. Therefore, it should not be a major surprise that a significant percentage of the so-called “displaced” population comes from this region, and that the major massacre of the beginning of the twenty-first century occurred there: *the massacre at Bellavista*.⁸

Indeed, this region has been represented as a space of darkness where it is impossible to live, and as a space of extreme poverty and ignorance, which is unable to administrate its own resources. On the other hand, this region is seen as having potential for territorial expansion, as an area open for exploration, and continuing colonialization. Accordingly, these colonial, geopolitical, economic, ideological, and historical representations are commonly used to explain the variety of problems of the state. As a consequence, the impact of what is called forced displacement, mitigated by the government, has not yet been radically eradicated. The legal ownership of the land of those forced to abandon their territories has been, for all practical purposes, almost abolished following the massacre at Bellavista. The history producing the spaces where the massacre took

place is undermined by the epistemological construction of this phenomenon. In this book, I argue that the imagery representing the state of Chocó—that of a wild, isolated territory—plays a significant role in how the rest of the nation perceives the region.

Consequently, this book addresses the question of how the context of place-based ethno-territorial resistance and violence in the territories of the state of Chocó enlighten alternative ways to comprehend experiences of “forced displacement/migration,” and new cycles of diaspora of Afrodescendent populations. Working to disentangle the conceptual, socio-historical, and geographical dimensions of deracination based on an ethnography post-massacre at the community of Bellavista-Bojayá-Chocó-Colombia, the book sets its foundation on one working hypothesis—the constellation of the historical process, which lies behind acts of land dispossession, is revealed in the limitation of concepts associated with forced displacement/migration. The usefulness of these concepts as analytical categories of liberation/transformation is limited due to their lack of historicity and to their ability to reinforce racialization and marginalization.

Building on the proposed case, this book considers that the ideas of marginality and isolation attached to the history of the state of Chocó are foundational to make legitimate the stealing of the territories of Indigenous and Afrodescendent communities and the systematic killing of their populations.

I use the notion of *historical-emptied-spaces* and *the routinization of erasure* as working concepts to explore fundamental questions such as how the epistemic, geopolitical, and historical production of the state of Chocó as a marginal territory lies behind the contemporary deracination of the Chocoan population. Hence, I critically outline some of the sources of production of the ideas of isolation and marginality that have justified the deracination of the population in the Atrato River in Colombia, specifically those of Bojayá. It reveals narratives and practices, which have created the basis for the formation of spaces considered as “blank” or “empty,” where the power of colonialism (violence/extermination/genocide/ethnic cleansing/deracination) takes place. At the same time, it considers the process of mobilization, claiming autonomy, self-determination, justice and reparation as struggles for liberation and decolonization confronting this new cycle of diasporization.

In 2017, the Afro-Colombian community celebrates, approximately, 165 years of the abolition of slavery in Colombia, and 24 years of the law

70 1993 or Law of Black communities. This piece of law legalizes the right that Afro-Colombians have to own the land they have worked since the colonial period, and for which they fought to gain their freedom and have lived freely on for the last two hundred years.

Several articles and books have been published on the political gains that this law produced as well as criticism of its limitations, and to describe its role in current acts of violence and the processes of deracination that these communities are living. It means, that in addition to the killings, kidnappings and disappearances, the Afrodescendent communities of the Colombian Pacific, as victims of a violent practice of land appropriation, ultimately lose the debate of who owns the disputed land.

In the last decade, a massive land dispossession called the attention of the Afrodescendent movements: The Cerro Careperro, Suarez, Jiguamiandó, Curvaradó, Belén de Bajirá, and Bellavista are salient cases. After centuries of portraying the state of Chocó as dark, isolated, extremely difficult to “penetrate,” mysterious, and marginal etc., various countries, several agents of the current Colombian government, foreign oil companies, and NGOs, among others are now clamoring to claim the land where these communities are located as their own. These agents arrive at these communities with the “proper” documentation, and a highly legitimized developmentalist narrative, which they use to claim these lands. Studying the case of Bellavista will surely place more light on the importance of how people fight back against this ongoing colonization and defend their property and autonomy, even in the cases in which they do not have “the proper documentation,” but have lived and worked there for generations.

Therefore, describing, or at least outlining the histories behind the representations of the state of Chocó, suggests an epistemic decolonial turn⁹ needed to disentangle colonial continuities of domination, such as deracination, which it faces today. Accordingly, this book aims to develop an alternative epistemology to comprehend how this state came to be what it is today, and how this history informs its contemporary struggles. This question requires us to identify what we know about this phenomenon. Primarily, what is the capacity of the established concepts to allow social scientists to know how the affected territories came to be and how people started claiming, acquitting, and making the land stolen. These are the major questions I explore in this book.

To this end, I collected, catalogued, and substantively reviewed the major documents about Bellavista to comprehend this phenomenon.

By doing so, I mark the tensions and silences that are preventing the advancement of a more complex understanding of this problem and its implication in today's realities.¹⁰ I also formulate general arguments regarding the implications of *epistemological silence* as analytics for an epistemic and ethical-political project of mobilization in the region today. Following this path, this writing explores some fundamental questions to develop an Afrodiasporic feminist decolonial perspective of deracination. I suggest that there is an insightful analytical and political contribution in: (a) revisiting the main agreements around the sociological study of forced displacement in Colombia, and forced migration as characterized in a more international context, its emergent trends and concepts; (b) differentiating processes of deracination from other sociopolitical and categories within the epistemologies and politics of dislocation such as forced displacement, forced migration, exile, exodus, banishment and extermination; (c) considering contemporary processes of deracination more than just another effect of the armed conflict in Colombia as a continuum in the historical, racial and spatial formations of the nation; and (d) the impact of the colonial narratives and representations of the department of Chocó on today's radiography of its reality, and the lack of historical sense that lie behind the arguments that claim the current problems of this state constitutes another face of its alleged marginal, isolated, and corrupted "nature." Hence, I argue that the Chocó has been converted into a laboratory of death.

ON THE METHODOLOGY: ENGAGED ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography, in contexts of violence, is collaborative, requires the development of long-term relationships, is reflexive, audacious, chameleonic and peremptory. My scrutiny of the massacre and compilation of information on this heinous crime began in May of 2002, when the killings occurred. The first field trip to the community was undertaken in May of 2006. Subsequent ethnographic trips were carried out in December of 2006, May of 2007, May of 2008, September of 2011, and seven field trips in 2016. Every year, in May, I gathered new data produced during the commemoration of the massacre: videos, discourses, declarations, and requests to the government. Using five family interviews (condensing 14 individual voices), 45 translated songs (out of 130), and three of my own journal entries of three different visits to Bellavista, I tell a collective story (see Chap. 3).

The interviews from which I write this book were open conversations on the biographies of the interviewees. Most stories cover a time frame between the 1940s and 2010, wherein 1996, 2000, and 2002 are turning points in all of the stories. The last two years correspond with paramilitary or guerilla incursions in the community. The year 1996 marks the beginning of a cycle of violence in the region of the Bajo Atrato. The interviews took place at secret and safe spaces for the security of both the interviewees and the interviewer: a room in the community parish, or in the church; or a park very close to a group of policemen. These spaces had to be either very visible to the police, so that they could feel they were in control of the situation, or hidden spaces in the cases of community leaders whose lives were in jeopardy. When interviewees were elderly women, I offered to help cook dinner or joined them for a cup of coffee in the front of their houses to talk about life. Most interviews had the structure of a focus group. Anyone in the household started a conversation about the situation of violence in the region and the rest of the members of the family present integrated their thoughts. The conversations were therefore constructed organically.

I found that paramilitary and guerrilla incursions, the army's take over, massacres and massive temporary displacements of the communities served as temporal markers in the history of these communities. As a consequence, they are present in every day conversations. From time to time, I referred to these events as an excuse to prompt people to elaborate on them, what they meant, and how they have shaped life in the community. To create an alternative account of the massacre, and for security reasons, 80% of the interviewees were women between 15 and 86 years old. The men I interviewed were priests, teenagers, members of the community parish groups; and elderly men I was entirely sure had no linkages with any of the armed groups in the area.

Ethnographies in Contexts of Violence: Developing a Chameleonic Persona

Previous to 2016, security restrictions limited my options to conduct a long-term ethnography. To challenge these limitations, I decided to develop a "chameleonic persona" as an ethnographer to protect the interviewees and myself. My visits to Bellavista were under the label of a Catholic missionary (2006), as a peregrine to the commemoration of the mutilated Christ (2008), as a member of the coordinator council of the community fiestas patronales to the Virgen del Carmen (2010), and the last visit as professor and director of the Afro-diasporic Research Center of Icesi University.

I did random visits to places and talked to different people in the community. I talked to the policemen and the military, which had threatened to take me to the police station for investigation during my third visit to the community. By doing so, I felt I could get to know their version of the situation. During my different visits, I was also accompanied—all the time—by professors, priests, and leaders of the community—who made my presence less suspicious to the authorities (legal or illegal). I am deeply thankful to the women and men that were always with me. To overcome these limitations, I used photography and mass songs to capture realities I was forbidden to reveal and, therefore, unable to describe in detail.

Parish and Family Archives: Mass Songs

In my search for alternative sources to learn the stories of the families I was unable to interview, I observed how domination cannot exist without contestation. I looked for sources that would allow me to tell the most compelling story of this community. In the search, I found the song books used in the everyday mass at the parish of Bellavista, and in the houses of the families where I stayed. After reading more than 250 lyrics I discovered that the song books they used were not the traditional books I had seen in other parishes. The songs I read talked about offering to God the “bread of a harsh history” and the “wine of oppression.” The songs asked God for autonomy and self-determination. There were other key words such as black people’s liberation, black bible, marginalization, silenced history, hope, transformation, justice, liberty, and managing the land of the community. I understood that these songs disclose the voice of a community organized to defend their lives and their territory. I realized I could rely on this source as much as I did on the interviews. These songs were collectively written by women in the parish group. These women are housewives, nurses, school teachers, lawyers, accountants, dentists, among others. In 2006, they meet weekly to read the bible, to discuss the needs of the community, to prepare masses, and write songs according to the occasion. Based on these sources, I present different social and historical dimensions of the Atrato River region that constitute milestones to comprehend the complexity of land dispossession in Colombia. Finally, I produced a database of 400 news articles about the municipality of Bojayá, from May 2, 2002 and ending on December 31, 2016 to analyze patterns of violence and resistance in the region.¹¹

A WORKING HYPOTHESIS

A ‘D-T-D²’ cycle: Historicizing the massacre of Bellavista and New Afrodescendant Diasporas

Building on this evidence I propose a working hypothesis to support my argument that the concepts of forced migration and forced displacement are limited in their ability to explain the complexity of the world-historical realities they are expected to capture. Their analytical scope is too narrow to make sense of the isolated facts and observations that were summarized in Table 2.1.

Critical sociological theory will not be possible in the absence of analytical categories capable of comprehending how and why these events are related. They are insufficient to explain how countries and populations with similar histories of racialization, conquest, and domination are the targets of ‘old’ and ‘new’ forms of dislocation, and diasporic deracination. Hence, in this monograph I propose a ‘D-T-D²’ cycle—‘Diaspora-Territorialization-Deracination/Diaspora²’—as a working hypothesis. Historicizing the massacre of Bellavista is a significant analytical tool, allowing comprehension of what could be theorized as a new cycle of Diaspora of the Afrodescendants in Colombia. Such a proposal requires me to unveil how the massacre of Bellavista and the deracination of its population appears in the history of the region.

With this in mind, I historicize the massacre of Bellavista as an event of deracination by conceptualizing and politicizing experiences of deracination as one of the foundations of the contemporary Afrocolombian diaspora. These, along with a long list of violent events, are opening the path towards a new cycle of Afrodescendent diasporas. Hence, I expect that the collected evidence illustrates how this phenomenon ranges from the micro level of agency and interaction to the macro level of systems and social structures, from the local and regional history to the world-history, from the local time, to the world time. By doing this, I locate contemporary forms of deracination in a chain of historical processes: Transatlantic trade, African diaspora, territorial settlement in the Colombian Pacific (territorialization), twenty-first century deracination, a new cycle of diaspora and new territorial settlements. How it occurs, and the nature of socio-historical, epistemological and political importance of this process are the major tasks of this monograph.

The implications drawn from this study both conceptually and historically can be schematically presented as follows (Figs. 1 and 2).

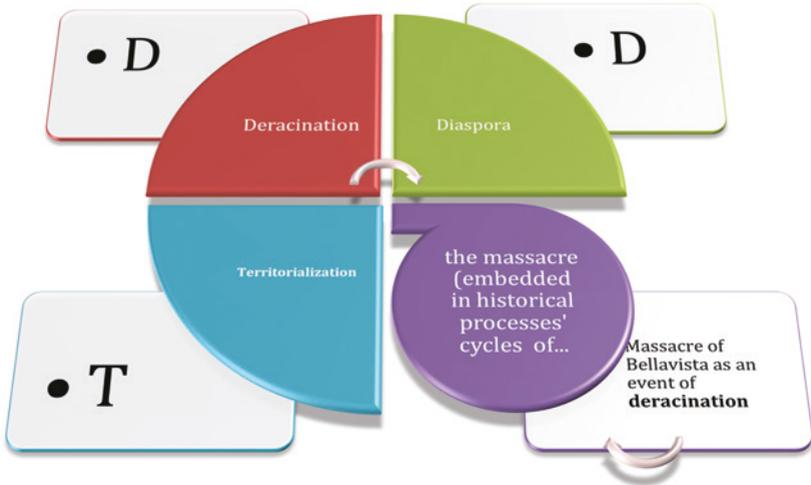


Fig. 1 ‘D-T-D²’ cycle: A working conceptual cycle matrix

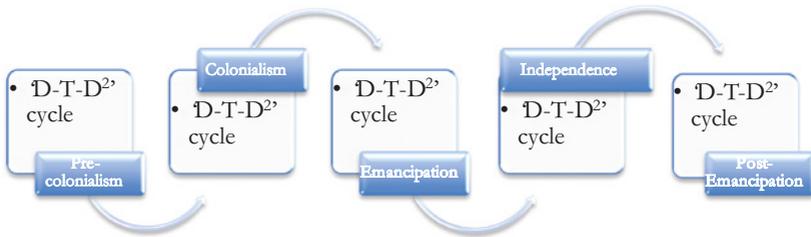


Fig. 2 ‘D-T-D²’ cycle: a working process matrix

Fully aware that history is not a linear process, I aim to graphically represent my argument with this process matrix to suggest that in the progression, moving the transitions from one moment in history to the other, diasporic deracination plays a central role in the socio-economic configuration of states, nations, and empires. I explore how regions such as the Bajo Atrato River area, in which Bellavista is located, appear in the geographies of capitalist exploitation in every historical period. My guiding question is how do the spaces in which land dispossession occurs come into being? My working argument is that conjunctures of world-historical capitalist accumulation could be related to these processes,

which I have assessed in this book. A preliminary conceptual principle I will follow is D. Harvey's argument of accumulation by dispossession.¹² If dispossession is underneath of accumulation then every moment/cycle/conjuncture needs to create the spaces to extract the necessary resources.

D. Harvey says:

Put in language of contemporary postmodern political theory, we must say that capitalism necessarily and always creates its own 'other'.¹³ As in the case of labour supply, capitalism always requires a fund of assets outside of itself if it is to confront and circumvent pressures of over accumulation. If those assets, such as empty land or new raw materials sources, do not lie to hand, then capitalism must somehow produce them.¹⁴

With these elements, I aim to write an alternative account of the massacre of Bellavista.

BOOK STRUCTURE

This book has five chapters. In Chap. 1, *Beyond Sociology of Forced Migration*, I examine the rationales in which the concepts of forced displacement and forced migration are founded and the contributions of their analytics, as well as their shortcomings. With the lenses of the current analytical framework, I study the case of Bellavista to evaluate its effect and pertinence to the region. I discuss how the concepts of forced migration and forced displacement are limited in explaining the complexity of the world-historical realities they are expected to capture. To think through this matter conceptually, I propose a D-T-D² formula (Diaspora, Territorialization-Deracination-Diaspora) as a methodological and conceptual tool of historical and sociological analysis, social mobilization, and policy making to unthink the concept of forced migration in context. In this chapter, I suggest that labeling the victims of Bellavista as IDPs or forced migrants prevents: (a) scholars from comprehending a long history of dispossession preceding the event; (b) the government from understanding how this event deepens their class, gender, racial and regional inequality; and (c) the community members from fully presenting their claims and what they believe about their situation after having been historically uprooted/deracinated over the long term. I build on I. Wallerstein's proposal of unthinking nineteenth-century social sciences.

This theoretical and philosophical strategy, along with the deconstructive scheme of Anibal Quijano's concept of the coloniality of power, and K. Crenshaw's and P. Hill Collins's understanding of intersectionality, constitute the first major set of analytics I aim to follow to propose an Afrodiasporic decolonial critique of the field of forced migration. A second segment of the debate undertaken in this book is founded on the voices of the women of Bellavista narrating their experiences, the concepts of deracination of Afro-Colombian historian Santiago Arboleda, and the concept of diaspora of Puerto Rican sociologist Agustin Lao-Montes, evoked to expose the roots of the history of land dispossession in the Colombian Pacific. In Chap. 2, *The Region: Emptied Spaces and Geographies of Death in Colombia*, I explore the questions that the prevailing models leave under-theorized. As a consequence, I locate the massacre of 2002 in a larger historical context of four centuries of the local history of Bellavista with attempts to link the events from every period with major economic and political processes in other regions of the world-system. As a result, I highlight the need of a geo-historical analysis of deracination. Such analysis requires us to use deracination and diaspora as categories of analysis, implying that previous to an event of land dispossession there is a long process of land acquisition and territory making. I present evidence of events of deracination, similar to the massacre at Bellavista, which uprooted the inhabitants of the territory of contemporary Bellavista in 1996, 1952, 1810, and 1566 to analyze the role of race and colonial exploitation in contemporary processes of deracination and the linkages between contemporary deracinated people and their ancestors. Based on an extended case analysis of the massacre at Bellavista, I look for evidence of the limitations of this concept on the history, social composition, and land tenure changes of the Atrato River region. Thus, one could be able to socio-geo-historically connect the previous events that explain the upsurge of violence and deracination of the period 1996–2010 in the region studied. Hence, this book contributes to the literature on this topic, going beyond the pattern of describing processes of land dispossession—mostly local—not connected to the major historical, political, and economical processes of the region affected, the nation, and the world-system. In Chap. 3, *They Kill Us, Therefore We Exist?* I created a collective voice with the 25 interviews that I conducted to tell an alternative narrative of the event in a post-massacre context. In this story, I link different scenarios and actors that were left out in previous accounts of the massacre. In Chap. 4, *Suffering*

While Black: Resistance amid Displacement, I present how, in the municipality of Bojayá, songs are used as a means of resistance and to channel what seems an impossible mourning. I call this *the politics of spirituality*. This form of resistance placed Bojayá at the center of the peace agreement signed between the Colombian government and FARC. In this process, begun in 2012 and finished in 2016—when forgiveness appeared in the process—was an important factor. The victims of Bojayá became the symbol of reconciliation in their country, even though their demands have not yet been fulfilled. In Chap. 5, *Final Remarks: For an Afrodiasporic Feminist Sociology of Land Dispossession*, I conclude with my reflections on the need for an analytical framework for Afrodiasporic feminist sociology of land dispossession to historicize processes of deracination based on the case study of the 2002 massacre at Bellavista-Bojayá-Chocó-Colombia. I expect to develop this framework in a subsequent book currently under preparation. The deriving analytics of this study suggest a path to overcome the limitation of the prevailing intellectual, legal, and political framework of forced migration. This book is an initiating attempt to demonstrate the need to unthink and deconstruct a conceptual framework that is limited, dubious, and narrow-minded. Such limitations are dangerous in the sense that they contribute to the legitimization of renovated discourses and practices of domination and dispossession.

ON GIVING BACK

When the book was done, I went back to the community with the purpose of socializing and giving back what I had written. I went to each one of their houses. Reading the book with the interviewees was a very powerful experience. They laughed at the sound of their words in English and demanded the translated version as soon as possible. We cried together remembering how much pained they have endured and talked extensively on how much a book can contribute to their well-being. They authorized me to publish their stories and made lots of corrections on my interpretations. I appreciate their willingness to listen to what I had to say about them and for teaching me about the complexity of deracination.

Notes

1. The final number of casualties is still disputed between the community and the Colombian government. After May 2nd of 2017 the victims at the mass grave will be exhumed with the intention of identifying properly each victim and decide the final number of fatal victims.
2. The nation responsible for the massacre of Bojayá: <http://www.semana.com/on-line/articulo/la-nacion-responsable-masacre-bojaya/92973-3>.
3. For further reading consult <https://s3.amazonaws.com/unhcrsharedmedia/2016/2016-06-20-global-trends/2016-06-14-Global-Trends-2015.pdf>.
4. <https://s3.amazonaws.com/unhcrsharedmedia/2016/2016-06-20-global-trends/2016-06-14-Global-Trends-2015.pdf>, page 5.
5. Burawoy, M. (1998). The Extended Case Method. *Sociological Theory*, 16(1), 4–33. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/202212>.
6. See <http://www.periodismosinfronteras.org/la-tragedia-de-bojaya-un-simple-accidente.html>.
7. I am using deracination as a category to name a set of economic, social, political, cultural and ideological process, which involves the violent dispersing of the inhabitants of a territory. It undertakes the effacement of the population and the appropriation of their lands. Many of those stolen territories are owned collectively, those have been worked, fought and politicized (i.e. Colombia) It implicates a break/fracture of the benchmarks with the territory, the community, and the landscape. The conceptual debate around the notion will be addressed in Chap. 1 of this book.
8. This event was popularized as the massacre of Bojayá, which is the municipality. But, where the event occurred was in the capital, Bellavista.
9. See Quijano, Aníbal. 2000. «Colonialidad del poder y clasificación social». *Journal of World-Systems Research* XI, no. 2:342–86. Accesible en <http://jwsr.ucr.edu>.; Quijano, Aníbal. 1997. «Colonialidad del poder, cultura y conocimiento en América Latina». *Anuario Mariateguiano* 9: 113–21, Lao-Montes, Agustín. For an Analytics of the Coloniality of Power. Unpublished manuscript; Maldonado-Torres, Nelson.—Post-continental Philosophy and the Decolonial Turn:

Introduction to Conference Mapping the Decolonial Turn: Post/Trans -Continental Interventions in Philosophy, Theory, and Critique, University of California at Berkeley.

10. It implies to question why in more than 150 years of scholarly research this field has not been able to produce a complete inventory of the existent sources to write a comprehensive history of the state of Chocó, and the explanations for not being able to fully integrate its history to the history of the Colombian society, in what it pertains to land acquisition and territorial settlement. It is necessary to build up a preliminary set of notes to develop a historiography that compiles the major sources of inquiry on the initiating practices of land acquisition and territory-making in the state of Chocó since its origins. I argue that there is a need to look into the achievements, tensions and possibilities of the written history of the territorial settlement and practices of land acquisition of the state of Chocó because it serves as a keystone for a critical analytics of contemporary processes of deracination. The arguments which state that the actual problems of this state constitute another face of its—inherently marginal, isolated, and corrupted—nature.
11. I thank Lina Mosquera, Daniela Gómez and Éricka Paredes for their invaluable work to compile the information required to create this database.
12. (Marx, 1867–1990) (Amin, 1974).
13. D. Harvey 2003. p. 141.
14. *Ibid.*, 143.