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# **Coca eradication programs and environmental detriment in Colombia**

## **Abstract**

Conceived as U.S. assistance to Bogotá in combating Colombian drug cartels, Plan Colombia imposed the eradication of coca plants mainly through the fumigation with glyphosate. In the accusations against the Plan, human health issues largely surpassed discourses over environmental preservation. This thesis argued that the protection of biodiversity-rich Colombian ecosystems should be prioritized, hypothesizing harmful effects of Plan's implementation on flora and fauna. Building on the securitization theory, Colombian environmental detriment was proved to constitute a security issue. First, indeed, critical review of main toxicologists' studies on the matter revealed that the mixture used in fumigations deeply affects the ecosystems. Notably, a case study on Putumayo department emphasized damages on non-target vegetation and animals, which reduced to poverty the locals. Secondly, elaborating the data collected by the Integrated Illicit Crops Monitoring System (SIMCI) between 2001 and 2015, a comparative analysis between Putumayo and the Pacific region detected major crops displacement along the years, and, therefore, more and more forests cleared to grow coca. Finally, the last chapter described how, in the same period, the Plan was not redefined by environmental concerns, with political interests continuing to be sole drivers of Colombian antidrug policy till the halt of fumigations in 2015.

## **Keywords**

Environmental Security, Securitization, Plan Colombia, Coca, Glyphosate, Displacement.