

HAS *PLAN COLOMBIA* BEEN EFFECTIVE IN THE WAR ON DRUGS?

Introduction

On February 2016, President Obama and Santos gathered in Washington D.C. to celebrate *Plan Colombia's* 15th anniversary. *Plan Colombia* was a joint US-Colombia cooperation initiative launched in 2001 between President Clinton and Pastrana to curb drug smuggling in Colombia while also enforcing the country's institutional development, with a view to restore peace in the country. Its implementation has been controversial, though. Some concerns about *Plan Colombia's* effectiveness on reducing the number of illicit crops in the country still remain, too. Unexpected outcomes have appeared during the fight against illicit drugs –internally displaced population, deforestation, homicides, and terrorist attacks- which also add to the war on drugs.

Has Plan Colombia been effective?

The Project's main goal will be assessing the effectiveness of *Plan Colombia*. Two key indicators were used: 1) number of cocaine hectares by municipality and 2) number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The time frame covers the 2001-2010 period -10 years after implementation of *Plan Colombia*. The goal is to determine whether these variables have improved or not, i.e., whether the **number** of cocaine hectares, IDPs have increased or not and **where** these numbers are higher and lower. This analysis explores variation in time and region by department and municipalities.

Methodology

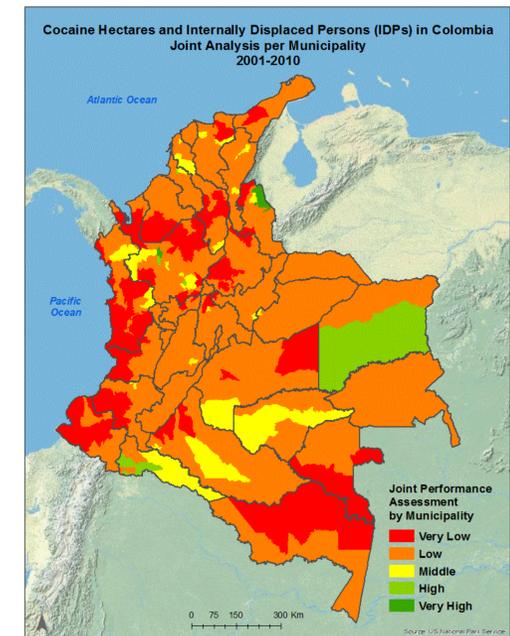
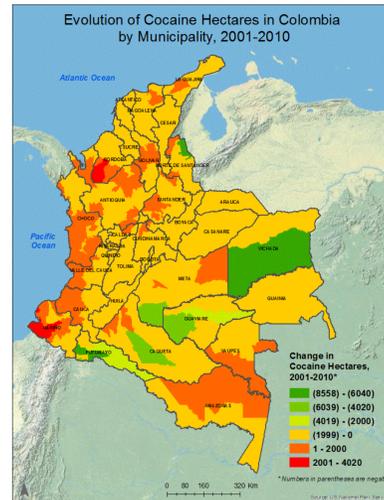
Data on cocaine hectares and IDPs by municipality was obtained for the 2001-2010 period. Also, administrative boundaries data (municipalities) and also population data for each municipality was obtained from Colombia Population Census (2005) and projections of total population by municipality as well. Both cocaine and IDPs datasets were combined to create a joint ranking of these two variables for each municipality. Municipalities with fewer cocaine hectares and number of IDPs were assigned greater scores. This allows to see which regions seem to be more vulnerable and those that have improved during the 2001-2010 period.

Project Results,

The municipalities with the greatest numbers of cocaine hectares in 2001 are located in boundary regions, south, east and south west of Colombia. The most severe cases of cocaine hectares per Municipality were the municipalities of Cumaribo (9,028), Puerto Asis (10,109), Miraflores (12,677) and Orito (8,884). These municipalities represent 30% out of the total number of cocaine hectares in Colombia in 2001 (40,698 out of 144,807 in 2001)

As for 2010, the data shows a decrease in the overall amount of cocaine hectares in the country (the highest number being around 5,500 cocaine hectares per municipality). The municipalities of Cumaribo and Tierralta reported still high numbers, although somewhat fewer than in 2001. The new focus of cocaine production, however, has shifted from the Amazonian and Orinoquian jungle to the pacific coast, in the municipalities of Barbacoas and Tumaco. The total amount of cocaine hectares in Colombia by municipality in 2010 accounted for 61,813.

As for 2010, the data suggests a decrease in number of IDPs, with a total number around 170,000. However, in relative terms, we can see that IDPs report high numbers compared to the total population in the departments of southern Colombia, the same regions with previous high presence of Cocaine hectares. There are also signs of high numbers of IDPs in the pacific coast, the departments of Antioquia and Cordoba, and also at the border with Venezuela. The results suggest then a relative increase in IDPs in most states in Colombia. There have been decreases in the northern parts of Colombia, some parts of the pacific coast and the department of Antioquia, and a high concentration of IDPs in Nariño.



Looking at the variation between 2001 and 2010 of cocaine hectares by municipality in Colombia, we can see that levels have increased in the departments located in the Pacific Ocean, in the Department of Amazonas and some parts of the Departments of Cordoba, Antioquia and Bolivar, who are known for having a strong presence of paramilitary forces. The Departments of Meta, Santander, Magdalena and La Guajira also report increases. The areas that report reduction were those that reported high levels in 2001.

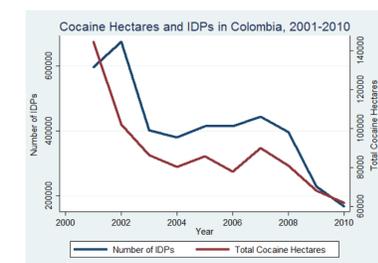
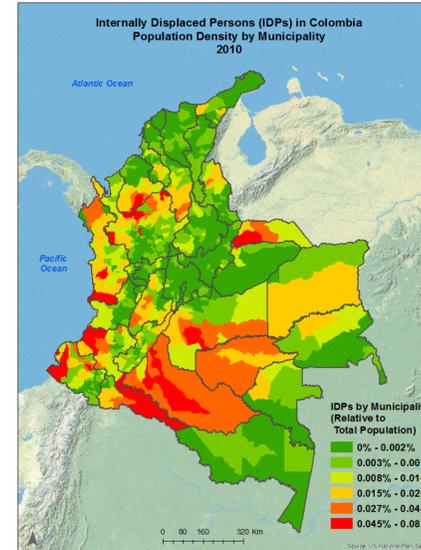
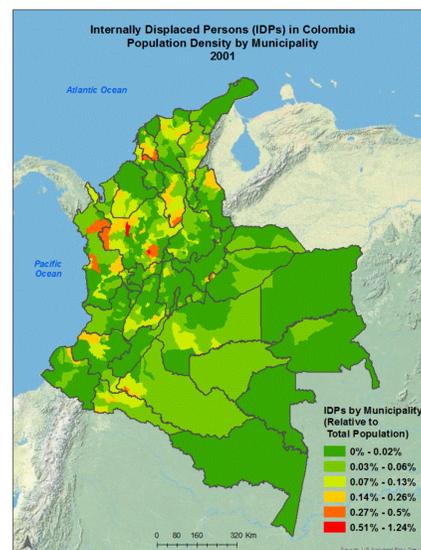
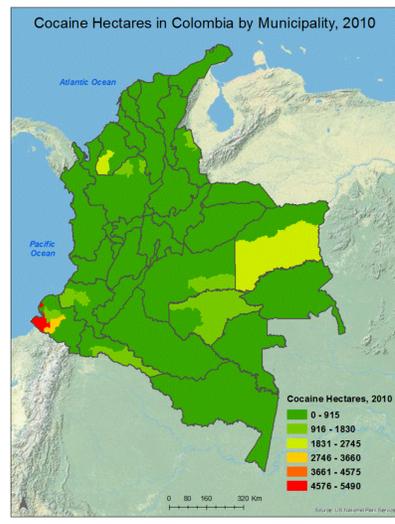
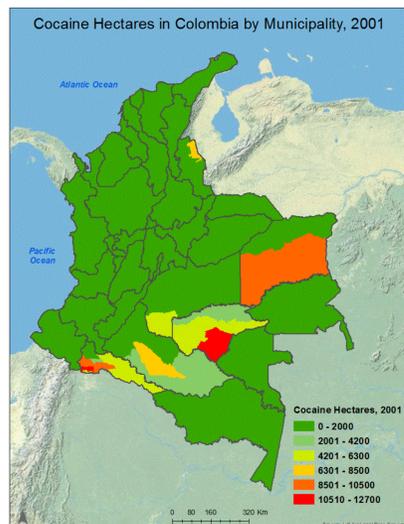
How are IDPS doing?

In terms of IDPs in 2001, we can see that the municipalities with the greater number of IDPs relative to their total population are located in northern Colombia and the pacific. These departments are also said to have strong presence of Paramilitary forces, particularly the department of Antioquia, Bolivar and Choco. The number of IDPs in 2001 accounted for over 600,000.

Conclusions

The final map shows a balance of the two variables (IDPs and Cocaine Hectares) per municipality. The results suggests that municipalities located in the pacific, in north western Colombia (with paramilitary presence) and the Amazonian jungle are the ones that report the greatest degree of vulnerability. The areas with the highest levels of performance are those that reported high reductions in cocaine hectares.

Although both cocaine hectares have been reduced in the last 10 years, this analysis allows to show that most of the municipalities are still reporting warning alarms. In this regard, Plan Colombia has been a great help, but more efforts at the institutional and political level are needed.



Cartographer: Mauricio Cardenas Gonzalez

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Date: May 10 2016

Date Sources: UNODC, Colombia Statistical Department, Census Data, National Registry for Victims, Colombia.

Projection: Transverse_Mercator