

War economies in peacetime: the Colombian context after The Havana peace agreement

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Nadia Alejandra Guío Pérez

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Members of the Examining Committee:

Dr Shyamika Jayasundara

Dr Helen Hintjens

The Hague, The Netherlands

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Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

Inquiries:

Postal address:

Institute of Social Studies
P.O. Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
The Netherlands

Location:

Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 426 0460

Fax: +31 70 426 0799

Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	5
<i>List of Figures</i>	5
<i>List of Maps</i>	5
<i>List of Appendices</i>	5
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	6
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	7
<i>Abstract</i>	7
Chapter 1 Introduction	9
Chapter 2 Contextualising the research problem	14
2.1. Ethical and political choices, and personal involvements	14
2.2. Justification of the study	15
2.3. Methodology, data collection, generation, and analysis	16
2.4. Scope and limitations	17
Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework	19
3.1. War economies in peace	19
3.2. Economic analysis of conflicts or civil wars: rational choice	21
3.3. Peacebuilding	23
3.4. Analytical framework	24
Chapter 4 Conflict background	26
4.1. Map of actors	26
The State	26
Guerrillas	27
Paramilitaries	27
International community	28
Private sector	29
4.2. The Havana peace negotiation and agreement	29
The Havana peace process	29
Agreed points	30
Chapter 5 War economies: a non-stop business	32
5.1. Drugs business: beneficial in peacetime?	32
5.2. Gold mining as part of a criminal cluster	36
5.3. A criminal cluster around war economies in the post-agreement context	40
Chapter 6 Socio-political factors	42

6.1. Parallel authority: guerrillas' dynamics	42
6.2. Breaches with the ex-combatants and local people	44
6.3. War economies as a livelihood option	45
Chapter 7 Conclusions	49
	<i>51</i>
<i>References</i>	<i>52</i>

List of Tables

Table 1 Number of coca crops hectares by departments. 2015 - 2016	34
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List of Figures

Figure 1 National Homicide Rate 2007 - 2017	10
Figure 2 Analytical framework diagram	24
Figure 3 Colombian conflict map 2012	26
Figure 4 Coca crops by hectares 2006 - 2016	33
Figure 5 Level of gold production in Choco 2006 - 2016	39
Figure 6 Relationship between coca crops and gold production. 2006 - 2016	40
Figure 7 Colombian conflict map 2017	51

List of Maps

Map 1 Collective displacements (2015-2016), homicide rate 2015, coca crops and alluvial gold exploitation 2014.	12
Map 2 Coca crops 2015 and 2016	34
Map 3 Alluvial gold exploitation 2015 and forces displacement by expulsion 2016.	39

List of Appendices

Appendix 3	61
Appendix 4	61

List of Acronyms

ACC	Peasant Self-Defense of Cordoba and Urabá
ACM	Colombian Mining Association
ACNUR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
AGC	Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia
Ascamcad	Peasant Association of Catatumbo
AUC	United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia
Bacrim	Criminal gangs
CI-MM&V	International Component of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism
CNMH	National Centre for Historical Memory
Coccam	Coca, Poppy, and Marihuana Growers' National Organization
DNP	National Planning Department
ELN	National Liberation Army of Colombia
EPL	Liberation Popular Army
FARC-EP	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia- People's Army
His	Horizontal Inequalities
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
Ingeominas	Colombian Geological Survey
ISS	International Institute of Social Studies
MM&V	Monitoring and Verification Mechanism
OACP	Office of the High Commissioner for Peace
OCHA	United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
Pisda	Comprehensive Substitution and Alternative Development Plans
PNIS	National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Crops Used for Illicit Purposes
SIADDHH	Information System on Aggression against Human Rights Defenders
SIMCI	Integrated Monitor System of Illicit Crops
SJP	Social Justice Perspective
UN	United Nation Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
ZVTN	Transitional Local Zones for Normalization

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Abstract

The Colombian armed conflict, characterised by the involvement of several actors, guerrillas, paramilitary groups, state military forces, and criminal organisations, has had differentiated regional impacts and dynamics over the national territory. For more than five decades, all non-state armed groups have financed their actions, stability, and political discourse (if there is any) through diverse illegal economic activities, from drugs' trafficking to gold mining, kidnapping, smuggling and timber exploitation and trafficking, among others. The influence of the international community, especially regarding the war against drugs, as well as of the illegal global markets and the immersion of the private sector, has also shaped the conflict.

Currently, Colombia is living a transition stage towards peace with the signed, in November 2016, of the 'Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace' after four years of peace talks between the national government and the FARC-EP guerrilla, the major non-state armed group. The transition scenario after ten months of implementation is not promising, the expected changes were not clear-cut, while difficulties were. This study aims to explore the problematic nature of the peace, now that the major non-state actor is out of the play, and its uneasy relationship with localised and resource-related increases in violence and resource extraction involved in criminalised war economies in drugs and gold.

This study combined quantitative and qualitative data to understand the current context in the major gold and coca producer areas. The theoretical framework used to analyse the findings was the transformational peacebuilding approach, and the rational choice theory, focused on the war economy literature.

A key finding of this research is that the economic benefit of the criminalised war economies of drugs and gold keeps the non-state armed groups active and incentives alliances and disputes between them, in the local and regional scenarios. This parallel extra-legal economy also has generated fragmentations within non-state armed actors, constituting a kind of anarchical insurgent and criminal map and projecting a new conflict stage rather than peace. Parallel, the perpetuated horizontal inequalities between national, urban, and regional elites, and rural marginalised and minority populations are used to explore other than economic explanations of the persistence of non-state armed actors, high and localised violence and war economies in peacetime.

Relevance to Development Studies

Inasmuch a war economy can emerge, continue and thrive not only from a conflict context (Hintjens and Zarkov 2015), peacebuilding measures are fundamental to transform not only the economic but also the socio-political structures that fuelled conflict, and achieve a positive peace and development.

Keywords

Conflict, war economy, peace, peacebuilding, greed, grievance, crime

Chapter 1 Introduction

Colombia has been the location of the America's largest and longest-running violent conflict – or war. For more than 50 years the country has gone through several stages of violent upheaval and civil war. According to Sanchez, the causes of this conflict were inequalities in property access, political and citizen participation and income maldistribution, as well as a lack of social investment by the government. Nonetheless, the perpetuation of the conflict does not simply arise from causes; the conflict can be rather perpetuated by the profitability of the specific economies that provide the financial resources to non-state armed groups and allow them to continue operating (Sánchez and del Mar Palau 2006).

Several attempts to reach peace have been made in different stages of the conflict, some have delivered better results than others. On December 2012 the Colombian national government and the FARC-EP -the major guerrilla group in Colombia- started a public phase of a peace negotiation process in Havana, Cuba. For four years, the chief negotiators of both parties kept the peace talks around six major issues: i) comprehensive rule reform; ii) political participation; iii) end of the conflict (bilateral ceasefire and laying down of weapons); iv) solution to the illicit drugs problem; v) agreement regarding the victims of the conflict (justice, truth, reparation, and non-repetition guarantees); and vi) implementation, verification, and public endorsement mechanisms of the agreement. On the 24th of November 2016 and approved by the Congress of the Republic on the 29th of November 2016, giving rise to the beginning of the implementation process. According to Juan Manuel Santos, president of Colombia and 2016 Nobel Peace Prize winner, with the new agreement:

“We managed to stop the bleeding and...there are no more victims. We get those who lost their lands, who had to leave everything behind to save their lives, can come back and recover them. We succeeded in giving our peasants opportunities to have better and more realistic options for progress” (Juan Manuel Santos 2016)

However, after the beginning of the demobilisation of the FARC-EP members and the subsequent clearance of the areas FARC-EP used to control, the situation in some regions is not the one described by the president.

Regarding the wider context, there is a need for special attention to the changes in violence indices and urban criminal dynamics, following some post-war experiences. Examples of the expression of these forms of post-war violence are the homicide rates and insecurity perception Central-America, increased after conflict due to the activity of local gangs (Shifter et al. 2012: 6). It is now being recognized, that after a period of war, an increase in many violence indicators can be expected, not only homicide but also domestic violence. The perception is of rising insecurity and an increase in the occurrence of crimes against property and people, a phenomenon that has been largely studied in post-conflict situations in Latin-American (Bello Montes 2009, Wielandt 2006).

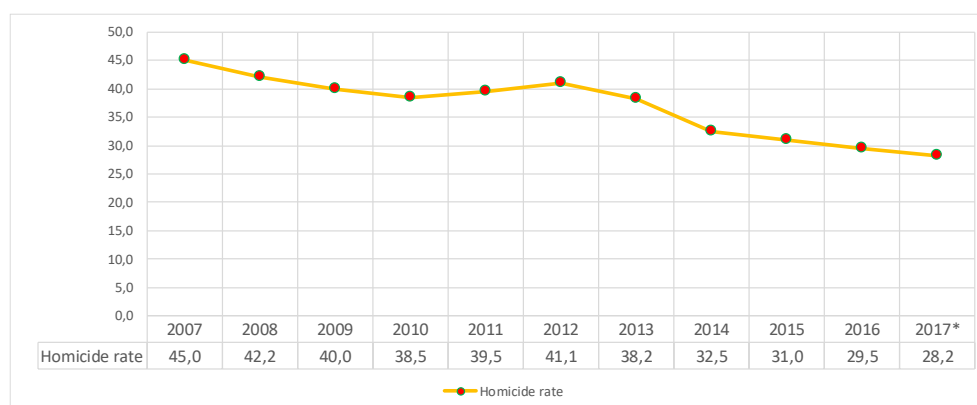
These kinds of manifestations of violence in post-war situations are often related to the presence of illicit markets and criminal groups (Andreas and Wallman 2009: 2), highlighting one of the most violent illicit markets which are the global production, trafficking, and commercialisation of illegal drugs.

The traditional expression of illicit economies in the Colombian conflict has been a high homicide rate, concentrated around areas of illicit drug production and transportation. However, it is difficult to separate the homicides produced by illicit market dynamics from those produced by violent political conflicts, not only because of the difficulties on identifying the unique characteristics of each category of violence but also because of the close connections that have emerged over time between conflict and crime. Even if there are some patterns and tendencies in homicide rates locally, it is fundamental to notice that the absence of homicide or its reduction does not always mean the pacification of a specific territory. Indeed, sometimes it reflects absolute or hegemonic control by one of the armed parties in a dispute over resources, land, and profits. As mentioned by De Boer and Bossetti:

“conflicts sustained and connected to organised crime are not necessarily more violent and indiscriminate. [Under] certain circumstances, the involvement of conflict parties in illicit markets might increase the risk of civilian casualties, while in other contexts it might provide some sense of security to local populations. Similarly, organised crime does not always use violent means to attain its ends” (De Boer and Bosetti 2015: 9)

In the Colombian case, during the last decade, the national homicide rate has diminished, from 2012 in particular, with the start of the Havana peace process, as the figure 1 shows. This decrease can be understood as resulting from political conflict de-escalations due to peace talks and disarmament efforts. The number of armed confrontations between the national armed forces and FARC-EP diminished too, reducing the deaths in combat, as well as civilian victims of FARC-EP’s actions.

Figure 1 National Homicide Rate 2007 - 2017



Source: National Police Homicide database. Calculations and graph made by the author

*the information for 2017 includes the homicides from the 1st of January to the 30th of June. To make the data comparable, the rate reflected in the graphic is an estimation based on the homicide behaviour during the first semester of the year

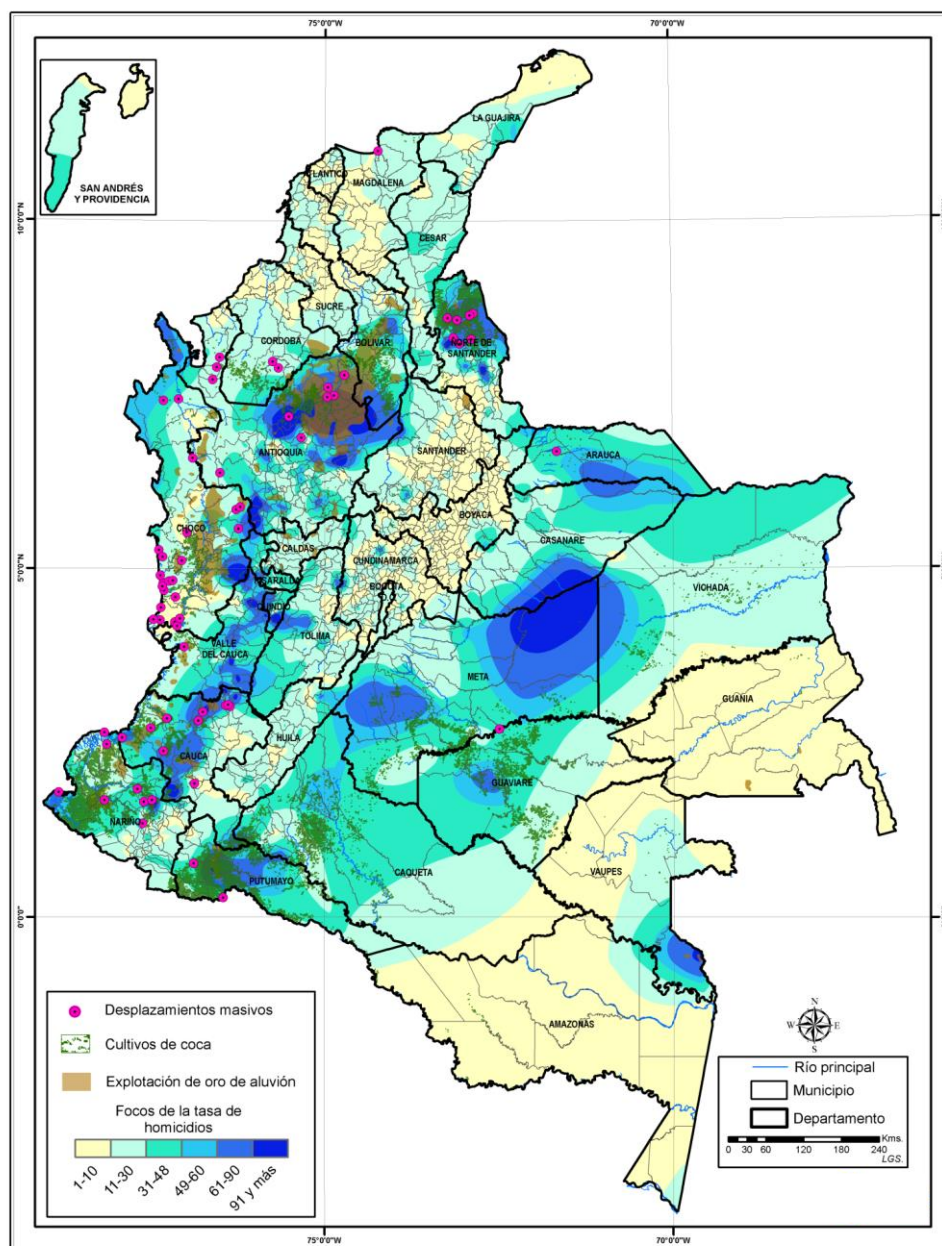
Nonetheless, in some localised regions and municipalities, the homicide rate shows an opposite trend. As the **map 1** shows, some of these homicide hotspots are located very close to centres of the dynamic criminal economies. This study will explore some of the local data on homicides, later on, to expose these contradictions between national-level and local-level recorded violent crime.

Another worrying violence behaviour change in recent years is the dramatic increase of assassinations of social leaders and human right defenders in some local areas of Colombia, where conflict continues between non-state armed actors (Defensoría del Pueblo 2017b). Their activities around sources of funding, especially drugs business, and the intention of several social groups to substitute coca crops with other forms of agricultural production, in response to the governmental call for livelihood substitution and local development programs as part of the peace process, seems to be main factors behind many of these assassinations. According to the Information System on Aggression against Human Rights Defenders (SIADDHH), in the first semester of 2017, this form of violent, targeted crime increased by 31% in comparison to the same period in 2016. This dramatic rise represents the assassination of 51 social leaders and human right defenders across Colombia in six months (Herrera 2017, Somos defensores 2017).

It is also important for the present study, to note the inconsistencies involved in methodology for the data collection around this phenomenon. There is now no single database or report that unifies these figures at the national level in Colombia. All the organisations, either governmental or not, produce slightly different estimates, because of the different ways of collecting the data on assassinations and homicides. The lack of consolidated data has made the characterisation of the phenomenon much more difficult for social scientists and policymakers alike. According to SIADDHH data (collected through the networks of a big social organisation), no specific suspects are held responsible overall for these recorded crimes, most of the records simply register the assailants as ‘unknown’ (Somos defensores 2017).

There is a third warning sign from the regional territories in Colombia, the increase in levels of collective displacement. According to the United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in Colombia, from the 1st of January to the 31st of August 2017, 9,623 people were displaced in a massive exodus, making up 88% of all IDPs officially registered in 2016 (OCHA 2017). Those displacements were attributed mainly to non-state armed actors’ actions and armed confrontations between them, as well as their clashes with the national armed forces. As the **map 1** shows, the most affected region is the Pacific coast, composed of Choco, Valle del Cauca, Cauca and Nariño departments (OCHA 2017). That region has traditionally been very important to the non-state armed actors regarding war economies, especially gold and illicit drugs.

Map 1 Collective displacements (2015-2016), homicide rate 2015, coca crops and alluvial gold exploitation 2014.



Source: provided by Rodolfo Escobedo, elaborated by Luis Gabriel Salas within the framework of the Colombian monitoring conflict ¹.

Before the Havana peace process started the behaviour of those indicators was considered an expected fluctuation in crimes explained by the conflict and the influence of illicit markets. Nonetheless, it attracts the attention and constitutes a call, the fact that violence indicators in some specific regions and municipalities do not seem to have been positively impacted by the ‘peace’. In light of this, the main question that guides this research is as follows: To what extent the current post-Havana agreement scenario alludes to peace at the local and regional levels?

¹ Conventions’ translation: Desplazamientos masivos: collective displacements; Cultivos de coca: coca crops; Explotación de oro de aluvión: alluvial gold exploitation; focos de tasa de homicidios: focalized homicide rates.

This question will be addressed through the answer to two secondary questions: i) How continuation of war economies in the post-agreement period constitute a barrier to achieving peace in the local and regional levels? and ii) What factors, other than greed, motivate the continuity of war economies and non-state armed actors in the context of post-Havana agreement?

The present paper is organized in seven chapters: i) introduction; ii) a detail contextualization of the research problem, methodology, and justification and limitations of the study; iii) theoretical framework; iv) background of the Colombian conflict; v) an analysis of the current war economies of drugs and gold in the local and regional levels; vi) an analysis of the possible causes, different to greed, that keeps the war economies and non-state armed actor active after the Havana peace agreement; and, vii) conclusions.

Chapter 2 Contextualising the research problem

This research is concerned with the transformation or continuation of war economies and non-state armed groups' presence and actions in Colombia, after four years of peace negotiation with the FARC-EP guerrillas (2012-2016). The aim is to understand the current post-agreement² context by looking at the local and regional dynamics around war economies. The two economic sectors that will be studied are illegal gold and drugs (cocaine), long-standing sectors bounded by the conflict in Colombia. The availability of data and the experience of the author conducting research previously on these two sectors (Escobedo and Guío-Pérez 2015a, Escobedo and Guío-Pérez 2015b, Velez and Guío-Pérez 2016) and their interrelationship with violent crimes (Rettberg A. and Ortiz-Riomalo J.F. 2016), also constitute an advantage for the proper development of the research.

2.1. Ethical and political choices, and personal involvements

I decided to work on this topic because of my background. I grew up in a small town in the centre of Colombia, during the period when FARC-EP guerrilla's territorial influence was growing and when their violent attacks had a relevant impact on most civilians. The region where I come from was controlled by FARC-EP many years ago, and although I do not consider myself as a victim of the conflict (that would be unfair to real victims), I have stories to tell about the war that people from big cities do not know or understand.

I have worked for five years in a think-tank, based in Bogotá, researching security, conflict, and justice issues, this gave me the opportunity to travel and meet wonderful people who showed me how the conflict took shape during some of the worst periods and in some of the most affected territories. I do believe in peace, but am also a realist and would like to find answers to some questions that policymakers might not have asked about the peace being implemented in outlying regions of the country. I consider the Havana peace agreement a huge step towards the building of a more equitable society, nonetheless I consider irresponsible to give to this event the meaning of end of the conflict, because, from my professional experience and what has been recorded in media, the dynamics in the local level resemble a reconfiguration context rather than peace.

I **am** biased by the way I have researched the Colombian armed conflict. I have worked in many regions consider by the Colombian government as conflict hotspots. I have **participated in** researches on the regional conflict dynamics and its humanitarian impact related with gold mining (Escobedo and Guío-Pérez 2015b), on the rise and decline of one of the major and powerful FARC-EP Bloque (Escobedo and Guío-Pérez 2015a), on the access barriers to justice in red zones (Velez and Guío-Pérez 2016), on criminal dynamics in some cities, and on the role of gold mining in the organized crime activities.

² In this research the term 'post-conflict' is avoided due to, taking the definition made by Junne and Verkoren it refers to a scenario in which "warfare has come to an end" (Junné and Verkoren 2005: 1) and the Colombian case reflects the end of a warfare with one of the non-state armed groups, not with all.

From my background and personal experiences, from the way I see conflict, peace and their implications for human rights and justice, I became passionate about understanding always a little bit more the structures behind the present situation and learning about what tools could make the situation safer and less violent, especially in local areas far from the capital, Bogota, in what are called in Colombia ‘the territories’. Indeed, that was the reason I came to ISS and chose SJP, to find an academic framework for embedding the empirical knowledge that grew with me as I was growing up, living, and working in a country with an on-going armed conflict. By drawing on war economies, I hope to make sense of the paradox of rising killings at local level whilst peace processes appear to be reducing violence nationally in the country.

2.2. Justification of the study

There are several studies that analyse the role of war economies within armed conflicts (Boyle 2014, De Boer and Bosetti 2015, Goodhand 2004, Keen 2012, Le Billon 2001, Murshed and Tadjoeeddin 2009, Naylor 2009, Newman and Keller 2007, Nitzschke and Studdard 2005). The Colombian conflict has been studied in the light of this literature seeking to understand the role of illegal economic production, and local war economies, especially studies on the role of the drugs sector (Idrobo N. et al. 2014, Rettberg A. and Ortiz-Riomalo J.F. 2016, Ballentine and Nitzschke 2003, Gray 2008, Massé 2015, Massé and Le Billon 2017, Mejía and Rico 2010). Others have used the grievance theory to understand the beginning and structural causes of the conflict (Diaz 2015, F. González et al. 2002). This study, however, differs from these previous studies as it will also contribute recent data on homicides at local level, it will also contribute with recent data on homicides at local level, but also contribute to understudied areas of research in Colombia, around localised social and political inequalities, and how the war and peace economies underwent various transformations since the start of peace talks in 2012 up to the time of the peace agreement with FARC-EP guerrillas in 2016-17.

Nowadays, the scenario in most of the resource-rich regions and corridors where FARC-EP used to be strong, is the appearance of new actors and newly armed disputes in the ‘vacuum’ left behind by the demobilization of FARC-EP. Some scholars have noted that this reflects the sheer complexity of negotiating a peace-building process in a context where multiple non-state armed groups remain actively armed in some parts of the territory, as in the Colombian case. The power and control left behind by the end of FARC-EP as a non-state armed actor, seem to have opened up spaces for new disputes between ELN guerrillas, the FARC-EP’s deserters and other criminal groups (Bacrim) that formed following the official disarmament of paramilitary groups in 2005 (Álvarez Llorente et al. 2017, Álvarez Cajiao et al. 2017).

So far, the problem is not as visible at the national level as it could be. Nonetheless, the growing incidence of social leaders’ assassinations is starting to be reported in the media, along with the rise in output of coca crops, and the illegal exploitation of gold in certain localities (Defensoría del Pueblo 2017b, UNODC Colombia 2016, UNODC Colombia 2017). There are rumours of new displacements – and evidence of these – as well as data that shows the rise in homicides and assassinations in certain towns and regions. All of these look like the signs of the (re)emergence of new (old) actors and may constitute yet one

more chapter in the Colombian civil conflict, rather than constituting its end (Álvarez et al. 2017, Nasi and Rettberg 2016, Álvarez et al. 2017).

This risky situation not only complicates the peacebuilding process but distracts the post-conflict development trajectory. In that sense, this research seeks to bring policymakers' attention to the theoretical and analytical framework that can help with diagnostic tools for understanding how some violence and criminal variables pose a challenge to peace. Decision-makers will be informed, through this study, of some fundamental challenges they must consider if the country is facing obstacles to peace.

It is therefore fundamental to analyse changes in localised conflict scenarios in Colombia in the context of post Havana agreement to prevent further Human Rights violations and new waves of violence. National institutions, human right defenders, and civilians need to have a clearer picture of what is happening locally 'on the ground', in order to apprehend what are the main causes of recent changes, so that a resurgence of violence at a larger scale can be prevented.

In terms of conflict analysis and management, this research aims to understand what happens when some of the variables that moved the initial conflict are still present, despite one or two of the key actors no longer being in the business of violence and the war economy. The core theory often used to analyse the economic causes of violence (rational choice theory) can be considered outdated (Keen 2012, Rettberg et al. 2014), however, in this paper, we will engage with this approach in an effort to challenge it, and to see how it can be adapted to illuminate a new stage of the development of violence in Colombia.

Finally, and no less importantly, this research is relevant to the country now that Colombia is facing another peace negotiation process with the second largest guerrilla movement, the ELN. Recently, the largest criminal gang, the AGC, has announced its intention to surrender as well. In that context, it would be very helpful to understand how the possible risks of implementing the Havana peace agreement and future peace talks can be realized and made more material.

2.3. Methodology, data collection, generation, and analysis

The research method used in this study is a mixture of methods, which "involves combining or integration of qualitative and quantitative research and data" (Creswell 2014: 14) to have a better understanding of the current Colombian post-agreement scenario. The value offered by this method is the possibility to neutralize the weaknesses and biases both, quantitative and qualitative, data have by nature (Creswell 2014).

Qualitative primary data was collected in fieldwork during the months of July and August 2017. The procedure used to gather information was informal semi-structured interviews. Informal as a way to "create a more natural environment conducive to [an] open and honest communication" (O'Leary 2004: 164) and semi-structured to have the answer of some fixed questions but pursuing additional information (O'Leary 2004) regarding the personal experiences the interviewees could have in the field.

This procedure to gather data in the fieldwork also let me have access to confidential information. I interviewed experts in Conflict Studies and knowledgeable

about organised crime. These were people who had recently travelled to and worked in the territories where the changes are more visible. Some had worked in several governmental and non-governmental institutions throughout their lives, analysing violent conflict, building datasets on violence and war, and working around the management of such data. I tried to contact people from the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP), the main institution in charge of peace talks, but after an informal talk with one of the staff of this organisation, I noticed he was going to stick closely to the official institutional discourse, and that an interview would reproduce that discourse, which is also available in the reports and on the website of that organisation. **(See appendix 1)**

Other sources of secondary qualitative data used in this paper were documents, academic research papers, reports, reviews and personal e-mails. I did a systematic analysis and review of academic papers, government reports, think tanks outcomes, investigations, humanitarian agencies' information and local and national press. On the one hand, this complements the theoretical framework on war economies. On the other hand, this broad review was vital to understand, how the current localised conflict scenario and violence and humanitarian indices have come, and how it has changed over time in terms of the local, regional and international dynamics behind it. The critical review of academic research has been an important source methodologically since gave me both, academic support for my own findings, and qualitative input that helps interpreting the impact of war economies during a time of peace-building process in Colombia. **(See appendix 2)**

The quantitative component comprises a range of databases, using the municipalities and departments as the unit of analysis to capture the local and regional conflict dynamics. Some of these datasets were of public access, other were gather from the fieldwork and other (regarding the ELN's conflict actions 2016-2017) was built upon the basis of other datasets, official reports, and even data reported in the printed press and online. The technique used to analyse this data was descriptive statistics, visually represented through graphics, tables, and geographical maps. In this way, I was able to develop a better understanding of war economy dynamics in relation to the role of non-state armed groups operating within the country currently. **(See appendix 3)**

2.4. Scope and limitations

A real restriction on my ability to access primary and secondary data was that, because of security risks, I could not travel to the specific regions which were the main focus of my attention. Therefore, I found difficult to talk directly with people from the areas where non-state armed groups, other than FARC-EP, seem to be taking over control of illegal rents and working as guarantors of a new – and seemingly still violent-social order. There were also important limitations regarding data accessibility, which I had to negotiate. Most of the data sources used in this research were secondary sources, but there were also significant amounts of data that were not openly available, especially the database that relates to Human Rights violation risks. Although all the institutions I consulted as sources of information gave me free access to reports and officially available information, microdata used to generate them was not accessible, and therefore

not easily verifiable. To overcome this obstacle, I interviewed and wrote to people working on these topics, who gathered data themselves. By asking them for inputs and working together to build up better data instruments, I was able to piece together the data available about the ELN's presence and the incidence of violence and expansion of local war economy activities, focusing on gold and illegal drugs.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

3.1. War economies in peace

Within the conflict studies, the economic perspective is a fundamental variable to be analyzed. War is expensive for all the actors involved in it and to maintain a war the actors need sources of funding. In the Colombian case, on the one hand, the state has used taxes and international cooperation treatments to equip, train and modernize the national armed forces in order to have a positive balance in the warfare against paramilitary groups and criminal organizations, but in particular against guerrillas. On the other hand, the non-state armed groups have used several sources of funding, from extortion to kidnapping, smuggling, natural resources exploitation and drugs production and trafficking. These are considered war economies since they constitute the financial base to maintain a warfare. However, there is no evidence to affirm that in peacetime, after war, these economies will disappear.

Hence, the challenges of peacebuilding are not only measured in terms of security indicators but involve deep-going structural transformations as well. The functionalist approach claims that peacebuilding is:

“a realignment of political interests and a readjustment of economic strategies rather than a clean break from violence to consent, from theft to production, or from repression to democracy” (Berdal and Keen 1997: 798).

In this sense, most studies of the post-war landscape should be focused on the variation or maintenance of structures constructed during wartime (including economic, social and/or political structures) and which can be shown to have fuelled previous violent confrontations.

As part of the peace and conflict studies, the Colombian case has been researched quite exhaustively by scholars – both Colombian and international - because of its impact on civilians and the huge number of victims and IDPs (Baird et al. 2007, Ibáñez and Moya 2010, Ibáñez and Vélez 2008). Other issues that have been researched in detail include the many attempts to negotiate peace (Nasi and Rettberg 2016), the US intervention in Colombia’s civil violence (Dube and Naidu 2015), the weakness of the Colombian state and the long duration of the violence (Gray 2008).

However, the main topic in many recent studies has been the structural impact on the violent conflict of drug trafficking and conflicts over natural resources in the country (Bannon et al. 2003, Rettberg A. and Ortiz-Riomalo J.F. 2016). On this last point, it is important to underline that the exploitation of natural resources like timber, gold, emeralds and other minerals, as well as coca, poppy and marijuana cropping and processing for exportation, are agreed by researchers to have played a major role in the continuation of the civil conflict in Colombia (Ballentine and Nitzschke 2003). It is also relevant to highlight the transversal role of drug trafficking within this conflict and how it had become embedded in spheres of society, from the political to the social, cultural and economic, and from the informal and illicit to its ties with the formal and legal.

Another aspect fundamental to include when analyzing a conflict with these characteristics is the role of crime. Despite the literature tends to study both

phenomena separately, the link between them is gaining prominence (Rettberg A. and Ortiz-Riomalo J.F. 2016, De Boer and Bosetti 2015, Andreas and Wallman 2009), especially as a tool to understand the length of a conflict and some barriers to ending it. According to de Boer and Bosetti, who conducted a study on the state of evidence around this nexus, there is no evidence to conclude a causal relationship between crime and conflict, but there is evidence to conclude that the coexistence of crime and conflict make the conflict longer and hinder its termination.

“In some cases, profits derived from [criminal activities in conflict settings] provide disincentives for combatants to end the conflict, and the services and goods provided by organized crime in marginalized contexts can actually shore up social and political support from local communities for continued criminal presence and enterprise” (De Boer and Bosetti 2015)

From this perspective, the question that arises is: what would happen if a central player which had looted rents in the past, managed the exploitation of natural resources or minerals, and acted as a social order guarantor institution in certain regions, disappeared as a conflict actor?; would this take the mineral or natural resource economy involved in e.g. gold, out of the conflict arena?; would the violent forms of conflict tend to disappear? Authors like Boyle have already asked themselves same questions, and concluded that, when taking into account the singularity of each conflict, there is no evidence that in the moves from war-time to peace, these deeper structures of the illicit economy will disappear. In his words, there will be changes in the structure, but not the erasure of it:

“The post-conflict period can bring about shifts in their incentives and organizational structures of the chief combatants, leading them to engage in violence for reasons sometimes only peripherally related to the original conflict. The violence reflects their reordered priorities, their new estimation of their own bargaining strength, and the complex partnership and rivalries that motivated their political behaviour before and after the war itself. For all of these reasons, it is qualitatively different -in incidence, magnitude, type, and target- from the organized violence that preceded it” (Boyle 2014: 8)

These changes in incentives and structure are considered by other authors as the key point to connect war economies to post-war crime economies. According to Wood:

“While the marketing of drugs or their illicit ingredients is likely to continue in peacetime conditions, insurgent and paramilitary forces will have less control over illicit production and marketing once their troops are demobilized and ongoing production of such commodities is merely criminal” (Wood 2003: 250)

Nonetheless, the distinction between war economies and crime economies is not totally clear, since both of them have similar characteristics. Taking one of the distinctive features of war economies, they involve “...the destruction or circumvention of the formal economy and the growth of informal and black markets...blurring the lines between the formal, informal, and criminal sectors and activities”(Ballentine and Nitzschke 2005: 2). This argument is easy to exemplify through gold mining in Colombia, which has been criminalized due to the participation of non-state armed actors, who for economic and strategic reasons are likely to remain involved in the sector, regardless of whether there is war or peace at the macro-level.

For the Colombian case (and many others), there is still the question of whether there will be a transition from war economies in a context of 'peace' to post-war economies or whether there is a continuum, with a change in dynamics from war economies to violent crime economies. As already explained, this research will consider the funding sources of some key non-state armed actors through the lens of war economy theories, as operating localized war economies during peacetime, and as the Havana peace agreement progresses towards realizing 'peace'.

3.2. Economic analysis of conflicts or civil wars: rational choice

The rational choice theory will be used as a macro-framework for war economies studies. Although this theory is often considered limited to explore possible underlying causes or issues that fuel conflict once it has begun, one cannot avoid this topic in conflict studies.

The rational choice paradigm, more popular among economists because is based on economic principles, conceives conflict as "a result of choice" (Murshed and Tadjoeeddin 2009: 88). This implies that social groups within a specific society rationally evaluate the benefits and costs of living in peace or taking up arms, and can move to either more violent or more peaceful (and beneficial) positions on the basis of rational considerations. They may reach a Pareto equilibrium in economic terms.

To explain rational choices those parties may take, there are two approaches: greed and grievance. On the one hand, the first one argues that rebel groups have greedy motives to fight against the state. The major exponent of the greed literature is Paul Collier, who "succinctly summarized the main conditions that facilitate the onset of conflicts involving resources in certain countries: high dependence on primary commodity exports, an abundance of unemployed and uneducated young men, and periods of economic downturn" (Rettberg et al. 2014: 4). More specifically, Collier, along with Hoeffler, found a correlation between the exploitation of natural resources and the occurrence of war, within the framework of civil war studies (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). This means that parties in a violent conflict or civil war appeal to loot natural resources to finance their actions and be able to fight a war. In Murshed's words, "greed simply means the 'economic opportunity' to fight, and should be distinguished from socio-political grievances" (Murshed and Tadjoeeddin 2009: 89)

Nonetheless, the positive relationship between natural resources and war depends on the type of resource analyzed. Ross found that countries rich in non-renewable resources were more likely to fall into a civil war, but there are exceptions in the analysis of agricultural commodities, like the ones susceptible of being monopolized and the growing of illegal products, like drugs (Ross 2004). This exception is materialized in the Colombian case with marihuana, poppy and coca crops, as well as with the illegal exploitation of gold.

On the other hand, the grievance approach argues that the pursuit of justice is the motive that rationally moves the parties to go to war. Inasmuch as the meaning of 'justice' can be different, this theory has different lines. These vary from the relative deprivation approach, associated with Ted Gurr, who in 1970, "...defines it as the discrepancy between what people think they deserve, and

what they actually believe they can get; in short the disparity between aspirations and achievements” (Murshed and Tadjoeeddin 2009: 97), to the horizontal inequality developed by Frances Stewart in 2000. Stewart took a step forward talking about inequalities between groups rather than vertical inequality. These groups are relatively homogeneous, share an identity and can be mobilized through war to fight against social, political or economic horizontal inequalities (Stewart 2000). Consequently, “identity and group formation” (Murshed and Tadjoeeddin 2009: 96) are the grievance theory's central driving forces. This is the grievance line use in this research paper.

The current debate between greed and grievance has shown some limitations that both approaches have in explaining the relationship between conflict and economy. Both arguments, greed, and grievance, do not recognize the complexities that are involved in a conflict context by focusing on a single perspective. Collier's argument is extremely focused on the economic agendas around territories at war and disqualifies the grievance argument by concluding the lack of causal relationship between inequality and the occurrence of conflict. Nonetheless, the major critique to this approach is that Collier worked with vertical inequalities, having no result, while Stewart founded a correlation between horizontal inequalities and the outbreak of war (Murshed and Tadjoeeddin 2009, Keen 2012). Despite the grievance's exponent, Stewart, recognized greed as a variable to explain civil wars, it is defined in terms of grievances (Keen 2012) and gave to the economic angle of conflicts a secondary importance.

At the end, the limitations are the restricted understanding of conflicts exclusively through one of the arguments, “critiques of the early “greed” versus “grievance” literature call for overcoming its reductionism, cultural blindness, and lack of historical perspective” (Rettberg et al. 2014: 6).

Inasmuch as the Havana peace agreement means for some the end of the Colombian conflict, but the economic dynamics of the conflict has not significantly changed in the post-war period, in this study the rational choice theory is extending to understand the ‘post-conflict dynamics’. This theory will not be used as a stick to blaming local actors with, as in the classical approach, but to renew thinking about non-violent alternatives in an innovative way. The theoretical challenge to use this theory and no other in this research paper is to combine and balance the two approaches in order to understand the current Colombian context. This is not only as an exemplification but also as an academic output, and a fundamental clue in the puzzle of how to reach a peaceful change in the country.

The approach adopted in this study adds insights from some other perspectives, especially around socio-political analysis. It aims not only to focus on the economical motives that move the non-state armed actor to continue or not their illegal activities around war economies, but also question the local processes that may come out with socio-political claims that persist after the Havana peace agreement and constitute challenges to a peaceful transition. The rational choice theory, in some modified form, also remains a cornerstone of the present research paper, given its concern with war economies.

3.3. Peacebuilding

Together with conflict studies are peace and peacebuilding studies. Johan Galtung, consider the father of peace studies (Hintjens and Zarkov 2015), divides peace in two scenarios. The negative peace, which refers to an “absence of violence” (Diaz 2015: 30) should be the first step to move forward positive peace which is a “form of cooperation for mutual and equal benefit, for harmony and to move toward the reduction and removal of structural and cultural forms of violence” (Diaz 2015: 30), this movement from one scenario to the other implies the peacebuilding process.

In conflict management and governance, liberal peace is the theory universalized and accepted (O. P. Richmond 2006). Liberal peace, briefly, is the combination of “multiparty politics with market reforms to liberalize local markets” (Hintjens and Zarkov 2015: 9). From IR perspective it also implies the moral duty of the international community to look for the international peace, opening the door to international intervention (military or not) in conflict areas (Aaronson et al. 2016).

Post-liberal peace theory emerges to reconcile the global and the local practices around peace and peacebuilding. In this framework “every day local agencies, rights, needs, custom and kinship are recognized as discursive ‘webs of meaning’”. This might herald a more realistic recognition of the possibilities of, and dynamics of, contextual and local peacebuilding agencies within international peacebuilding, development and institutional architecture and policies” (O. Richmond 2010: 668).

It is relevant to highlight that peacebuilding literature has recognized the importance of the connection between local actors and non-governmental sector with local knowledge. “This alliance is to enhance sustainable citizen-based peacebuilding initiatives and to open up participatory public political spaces in order to allow institutions of civil society to flourish” (Miall et al. 2005: 216).

Here, the transformational conflict approach appears, which firstly understands the conflict as a progression and peace-building as a process (Lederach 1997). Within the long journey to reach peace, this focuses neither on agreements or peace talks, nor on policies for implementing those peace agreements, but on the process involved in building social and political structures and transforming violent and nonviolent conflict contexts (understanding conflict as a natural human behaviour). According to Lederach:

“Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interactions and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships” (Lederach 2003: 22)

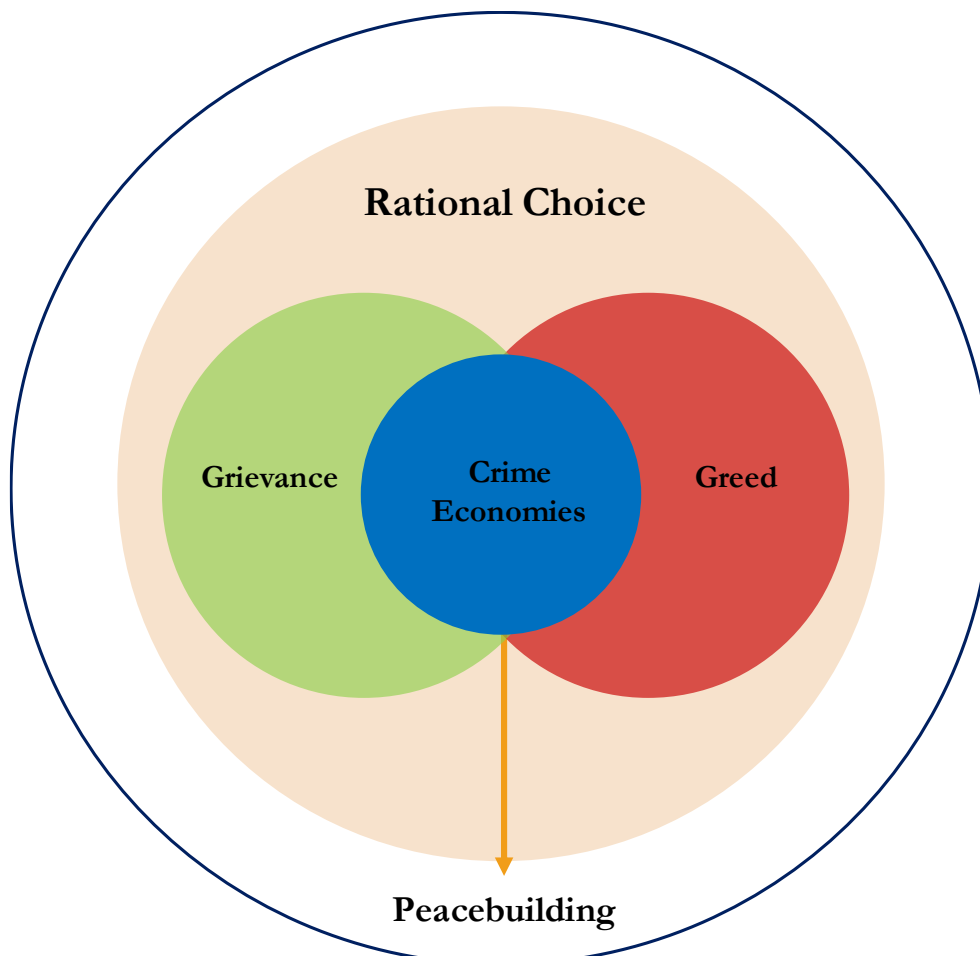
Regarding the current scenario of the Colombian conflict, the journey to peacebuilding has already begun. Nonetheless, the multiparty characteristic of this conflict raises questions and prompts scepticism over any easy answers. The ongoing dynamics of localized war economies and struggles over the illegal rents involved, remain in place, and may not respond directly to the existence or not of non-state armed groups at the national level, and their involvement in ongoing peace processes.

3.4. Analytical framework

The theoretical framework propose in this paper is to understand war economies and their role in a conflict and in its maintenance, through both greed and grievance approaches of the rational choice theory. Despite economic activities around war are often associated with an economic analysis, going back to the critiques of the rational choice theory, this perspective hides fundamental variables connected to the war economies function. The bet on the combined use of the theoretical approaches underlying on offer a more holistic comprehension on the war economies, including socio-political variables, to overcome the challenges these constitute to reach peace. At the end, “resource-based and identity-based approaches to explaining violent conflict are not that far apart, since greed may operate along identity-based lines through ‘ethnic entrepreneurs’”(Hintjens and Zarkov 2015: 11)

The illustration below offers a visual representation of the analytical framework proposed. Peacebuilding understood as a transformation process of the structures that have fuelled the conflict cannot be reached if we give to the war economies a simplified reading, using only the economic motivation involved in them. The consequence of giving to war economies this short-sighted view in a peace-building process is to hide necessary transformations to break the conditions and incentives that keep not only these war economies active in peacetime but also the non-state armed groups who exploit them active.

Figure 2 Analytical framework diagram



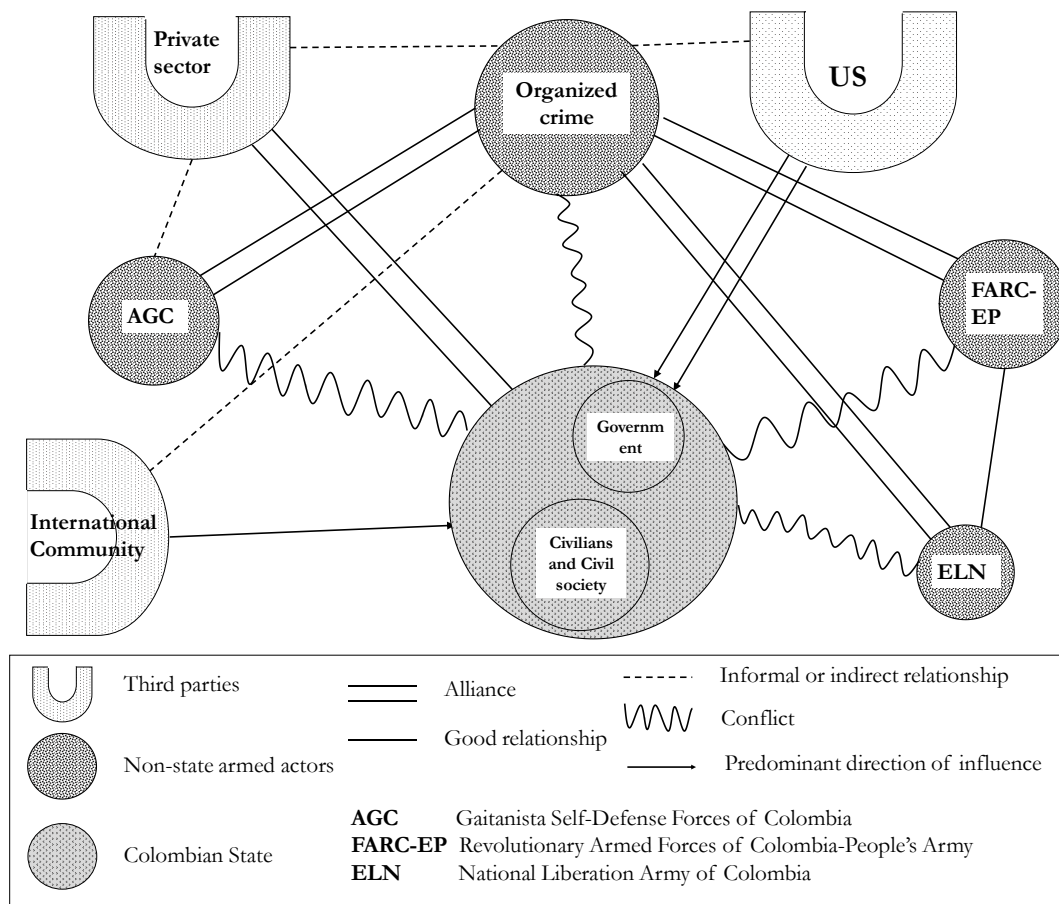
Source: made by the author

Chapter 4 Conflict background

4.1. Map of actors

The Colombian civil war, or conflict, can historically be defined as multiparty, with the participation of the state, guerrilla movements, paramilitary groups, drug traffickers and cartels, together with the positive and negative influence of the international community and private sector have played in it. All these actors have shaped the conflict and its dynamics in different ways. To provide the reader with a better understanding of the Colombian conflict before the peace Havana agreement, hereafter there follows the Colombian conflict map in 2012 (**figure3**) and a short introductory description of the main actors involved. Some of them will be of special relevance in relation to the localized war economies examined in this study.

Figure 3 Colombian conflict map 2012



Source: illustration made by the author

The State

The state's role in the conflict has moved from being passive to actively pursue a military solution and then again withdrawing from direct confrontation

through arms and vice versa. For decades, the conflict has occupied a central stage in the national agenda, leaving social issues falling behind. Some of these problems are associated with the reforms proposed by the ones that have legitimated the guerrilla groups in their platforms and actions. The soft stream treatment of the conflict has had several failures that eroded the civil society's trust on its ideas (CNMH 2016, Gomez-Suarez and Newman 2013). The strong stream has also impacted negatively the state's image. In different stages, the national army, politicians and public servants have been involved in corruption and connivance scandals with non-state armed groups, especially with paramilitary groups. The state has been found guilty of atrocities, because of its actions and omission, including state-perpetrated massacres, enforced disappearance, displacements, land grabbing and impunity of some non-state actors for similar atrocities and crimes (CNMH 2013: 43-46).

Guerrillas

The beginning of the Colombian conflict is often dated to the mid-60s with the origin of the main guerrilla movements. The first to emerge was the FARC-EP, formally created in 1966, a communist guerrilla group with peasant bases and strongly rooted in claims for land. FARC-EP was followed by the ELN, strongly influenced by Che Guevara's revolutionary ideas, and supported mainly by students, professionals and working-class Colombians, especially those working in the oil and mining sectors (Hernández 2006). The next guerrilla movement, the EPL, was started in 1967 and was a guerrilla inspired by the Maoist communist stream, with a solid support base among cattle breeders and banana workers from some (other) regions of the country. The last significant guerrilla movement to appear was the M-19, which can be dated to the mid-70s, and was a mainly urban guerrilla movement. During the 1980s, all these guerrillas expanded their geographical influence and gained growing support from the Colombian population (CNMH 2013: 39-43), especially in rural areas and smaller towns where they operated.

Paramilitaries

The first paramilitary groups can be dated by the 80's. Atomized, these groups operated according to a logic of counterinsurgency, targeting guerrilla groups, and their assumed civilian supporters alike. In fact, for some time the paramilitary worked as armed wings of the drug cartels in Colombia (CNMH 2013: 46-48).

Eventually by the 1990s most paramilitary groups in Colombia were absorbed by one major organization, the Peasant Self-Defense of Cordoba and Uraba (ACC). This organization later merged into the AUC (United Colombian Self-Defense) operated under central but not absolute control of the Castaño Clan. The AUC was structured into multiple micro-organizations denominated 'Bloques', each of which had their own regional leaders. This means the AUC was considered the single main paramilitary group that operated throughout the entire country, but with conflicts among multiple local heads and shared powers, including among drug traffickers. These characteristics made the paramilitaries a fragmented non-state armed group with many violent internal disputes. The AUC gradually came to resemble a mafia-style organization, with several parallel criminal organizations or gangs competing for resources and territory, rather

than a single and organized counterinsurgency force fighting against guerrillas (CNMH 2013: 46-48).

Perhaps because of this fragmentation, in 2003, the AUC and the Colombian government, headed by Álvaro Uribe as President, finally started a peace process by means of a series of negotiations known as the Santafé de Ralito process. This ended in 2005 with the disarmament and demobilization of (most of) the paramilitary structures in the country (CNMH 2016: 165, 183). After implementation of this peace process, however, several other criminal structures inherited the territories the AUC used to control and all the illegal rent they used to exploit started to be the basis for renewed violent conflicts. Just like AUC itself, these bacrim became highly atomized, with several gangs fighting one another over the capture of rents left behind by AUC, and for control over local and international drug trafficking routes, gold mining, land grabbing and extortion among others. Currently, there is one major criminal gang organization in Colombia, the Gaitanista Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AGC).

International community

The international community has also constituted an important actor in the Colombian conflict and resolution. During the Cold War, Latin America was a strategic territory for the US in terms of the communist contention, thus, the political intervention to eradicate any revolution attempt was always present in Colombia. After the end of the Cold War, the Colombian conflict became more visible and so did its relationship with the drugs business. That attracted the attention of the international community, especially of the US. By the end of the 90s and the beginning of the new century, the US intervention in Colombia was more direct thanks to the signature of the Plan Colombia agreement, an aid cooperation package from the US aimed to modernize and train the national military forces to fight against drugs and FARC-EP. The later were considered by that time as the major Colombian drug trafficker and part of the US and EU terrorist list. This cooperation agreement was framed within the war against drugs and later, within the war against terror as well (Dube and Naidu 2015, Gray 2008).

The international community has also been important in terms of the definition and delimitation of the international drugs problems. In the last decade, the Colombian national government has used international scenarios to present this problem as a chain, made not only by the growers and traffickers but also by the consumers, showing it as a business that behaves in respond to the interaction between supply and demand, like any other (Ramírez 2011). In that sense, the drugs problems also respond to the global drugs market, making also evident that this illegal market is a net of several transnational nodes, and therefore the solution should be based on the co-responsibility principle (Lopez and Segura 2015).

More recently, the role of the international community has been materialized through its support to the Havana peace process and agreement. This support was fundamental to push the peace talks and now it is also fundamental to impulse the agreement fulfilment (Havana peace agreement 2017).

Private sector

Despite one cannot generalized the participation of all companies, within the conflict, there are several cases of companies, especially extractive multinationals and companies specialized in intense farming activities that have constituted alliances with the non-state armed groups, both guerrillas and paramilitary groups and criminal gangs (Grajales 2011). Even though the participation of private sector was mostly indirect, some alliances constituted direct participation. Some companies paid extortion to ensure their activities in the territories, as an authorization by the non-state armed group in the region or as a fee to fight against it (Reyes Posada and Duica Amaya 2009). Others created alliances, especially with paramilitary groups, to incentivize massive displacements and devalue land prices to ensure future investment in those territories (Estrada 2015). Others participated with alliances in the minerals exploitation, offering front companies to open the possibilities to the non-state armed groups to exercise direct exploitation activity and laundry money, or paid to these groups to have private security corps (Idrobo N. et al. 2014, Massé and Camargo 2012).

4.2. The Havana peace negotiation and agreement

The Havana peace process

In September 2012 the government of Juan Manuel Santos Calderon (current Colombian president) announced the beginning of the public phase of the Havana peace talks, hosted in Havana, Cuba, and Oslo, Norway. Both countries, Cuba and Norway, participated during the whole negotiation process as the official facilitators or 'guarantor' countries, while Chile and Venezuela took part as observer countries.

The final agreement text was released on 24th August 2016 and was subjected to approval through the ballot boxes by the Colombian people on the 2nd October 2016. As the result gave the victory to 'No' voters, the text of the final agreement had to be modified "to reach a new agreement with a greater consensus" (Havana peace agreement 2017: 2). The new agreement text was launched and signed on 24th November 2016, after the negotiators listened to the concerns of those who voted 'No', and included requests and proposals from some of Colombia's civil society, so that the final text incorporated some of their suggestions.

It is important to highlight that the negotiations tried to build a final agreement coherent with territorial integrity, human right principles and differential and gender-based approaches. This meant, first, that the agreement and its implementation should focus on reaching territorial peace in the country, and should look in the longer-term for the transformation of the structural causes that fuelled the violent conflicts in the first place, especially in the most problematic areas of the country. One of the aims was to expand an effective and efficient institutional infrastructure in the areas most intensively affected by violence in the past. A second aim, and one of the main justifications for starting the peace talks, was to guarantee improved protection to all Colombian citizens of their basic human rights. This would change the situation whereby, for decades, the basic rights of the people were threatened. A third priority was that all actions agreed to recognize the specific economic, social and cultural needs of women

and of minority ethnic communities in the country (Havana peace agreement 2017).

In sum, the whole negotiations process was based on efforts, which seemed sincere, to include the perspectives of society's peace proposals regarding each of the six agreed agenda points. With participation mechanisms that were as open as possible to various inputs around the proposals on the negotiation table, including following the referendum, the peace negotiations also included the voices of victims from all sections of society, all those affected by both state and non-state actors' violence and displacement. Those relatively open characteristics of the peace process made the Havana peace agreement one of the most inclusive and participatory peace accords ever managed (Havana peace agreement 2017).

The final Havana peace agreement is the result of a robust negotiation process. It proposes an integral transformation through the 'territorial peace' (*paz territorial*), which aims to generate transformation from the local, and specially from the most affected territories, giving to local peoples and civil society a key role within the peacebuilding process. It includes the victims' voices, and a human rights and women rights' approaches. By developing a whole chapter regarding the illicit drugs problem, the agreement also considers the role of the war economies in the fuelling of the conflict (Lederech. 2016).

However, there is a historical disconnection and disarticulation between the central and the regional and local governments, which constitute a challenge to the territorial peacebuilding process. The current political polarization also constitutes a challenge. The peace agreement is integral however, it refers to a bureaucratic, political, and complex institutional transformation that needs political will from sectors that may not have it (right wings political parties).

Agreed points

The Havana peace process, as it was expressed in the general agreement issued at the end of the exploratory phase of the talks, aimed to reach agreement on six sets of issues identified as critical for ending the violent conflict in Colombia. These were mentioned in Chapter 1 and can be reiterated as follows: i) comprehensive rule reform; ii) political participation; iii) the end of the conflict (bilateral ceasefire and laying down of weapons); iv) solution to the illicit drugs problem; v) agreement regarding victims of the conflict (justice, truth, reparation, and non-repetition guarantees); and vi) implementation, verification, and public endorsement mechanisms for the final agreement. Each of those points constituted one chapter of the final Havana peace agreement (Havana peace agreement 2017). All of them were viewed as being of equal importance for successful implementation and peace-building. Nonetheless, due to the goal of the present research, I will mainly focus on a deeper explanation of the fourth agreed point: a solution to the illicit drugs problem.

Both negotiation delegations agreed on this topic's great significance for the fight against the war economy, recognizing that the problem of illicit drugs needed to be resolved, not only by ending coca production, for example, but also by addressing in the medium to longer-term, the underlying causes, and dealing with its consequences for various actors. In the final agreement, this problem was framed as a chain of production, running from the planting through the processing and the commercialization to the consumption. The final

agreement proposes differentiated lines of action for each stage of this production chain, recognizing that there are weaker and stronger points for intervention and change along the length of the production chain (Havana peace agreement 2017).

The first line of action is a solution to the problem of illicit crops, treated as one of the weakest and hardest-to-resolve parts of the chain. This line of action aimed to eradicate the planting of the illegal crop, by promoting voluntary substitution through a government-funded program that would be rolled out as one the first point of this part of the agreement, a form of what was termed 'comprehensive rule reform'(Havana peace agreement 2017).

The second provision in relation to the production chain is at the stage of illicit drug use. This is treated as another weak point along the chain from production through supply to consumption. The agreement gives this the official status of a public health problem and proposes a twin-pronged approach to dealing with the problem (Havana peace agreement 2017).

The third and last action point in relation to this fourth agenda item is a strategy to attack both production and commercialization, which are treated as strong components of the chain, with strong structural features. The proposal is to hurt the criminal organizations involved in drugs production and trafficking by strengthening the fight against corruption in general. This should be done by promoting funding of detection agencies that can investigate money laundering, exercise greater controls over importation and exports, and control the purchase and access of individuals and companies to the chemical precursors used both in production and transformation of illegal crops into illegal end-use consumer drugs, ready for sale (Havana peace agreement 2017).

Chapter 5 War economies: a non-stop business

Through several decades, Colombian conflict actors have entered into all kinds of legal and illegal economic activities to capture rents to keep funding their active confrontation against other armed groups, and the national army (Echandía 2006). This section is concerned with two of the multiple sources of funding for non-state armed groups: drugs and gold.

The criteria used to choose these two specific activities was the amount of data available for the analysis from governmental institutions, think tanks, UN agencies, but especially from interviews. Furthermore, the violence exercise around the global drugs' trade is selective and instrumental (Andreas and Wallman 2009), which enables the establishment of less diffuse causal relationships between this activity and violence indicators. Both activities have close relationships and share some characteristics, such as the division of labour within them. This is, the value chain is not in control of a single actor or set of actors. In this way, some of the links may have been responsibility of the guerrillas and some others, in the same chain of supply and marketing, may have been controlled by criminal gangs who are not part of the guerrilla organisations and may eventually be fighting them.

5.1. Drugs business: beneficial in peacetime?

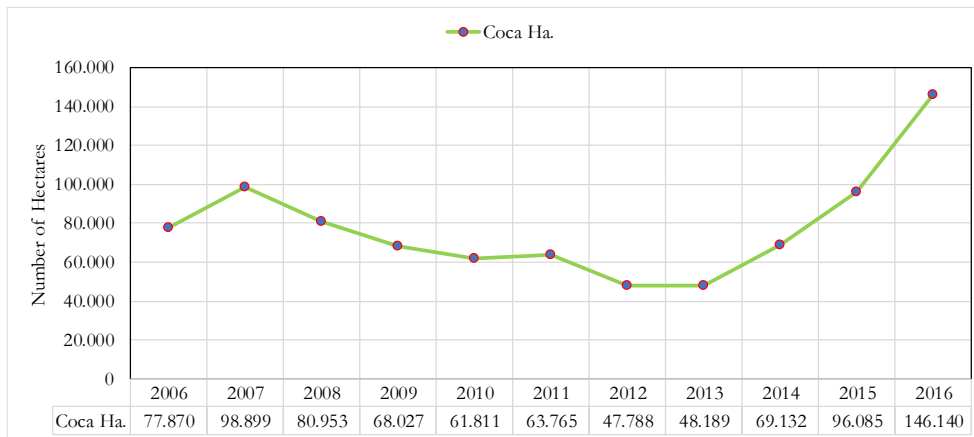
Drugs trafficking gained greater importance in Colombia from the 1980s onwards with the drugs cartels³ active role in this business introducing a model of a very profitable business. Those cartels went on to easily create links between its own production and trafficking operations and other non-state armed groups, including guerrilla organisations. These networks became an important and difficult to break variable in the conflict. The drugs business also evolved from being based mainly on marijuana to lay more emphasis on cocaine and even heroin production. Cocaine remains the major illegal drug exploited by non-state armed groups, gangs and cartels alike.

Since the early 1990s, the national government, pressed by the international community, and especially by the US government, framed their efforts to end the drug trade as a 'war on drugs', in which the state would militarily fight the drug trafficking structures and networks. This fight was to have its violent aspect, with an emphasis on military confrontations and aerial spraying with glyphosates (spraying suspended in May 2015). It would also have a softer side with programs of forced manual eradication of illicit crops mainly based on non-coercive interventions. The coca crops do not appear to have reached the same high level as in 2000 when it covered an estimated 163,359 cultivated hectares; instead, coca production has fluctuated over the years, with an upwards tendency from 2012 onwards, as the **figure 4** shows. This appears to be dangerously increasing year by year and estimated levels of cocaine production remain high (Echandía 2006, Prieto 2012, Álvarez et al. 2017, Velez and Guío-Pérez 2016, CNMH 2016).

³ Medellín, Cali, and Norte del Valle's cartels.

The **figure 4** shows the evolution of coca crops over the last decade, from 2006 to 2016. As noted beforehand, the number of hectares of coca crops instead of declining from 2012 onwards, with the Havana peace talks, seems to increase year by year. The evidence is that coca crops have nearly tripled between 2012 and 2016, increasing by 52% from 2015 to 2016 alone. This alone, before we even consider the localized homicide estimates, suggests the existence of serious problems with the peace process. Only the time will tell if this trend will be reversed following the actual agreement.

Figure 4 Coca crops by hectares 2006 - 2016



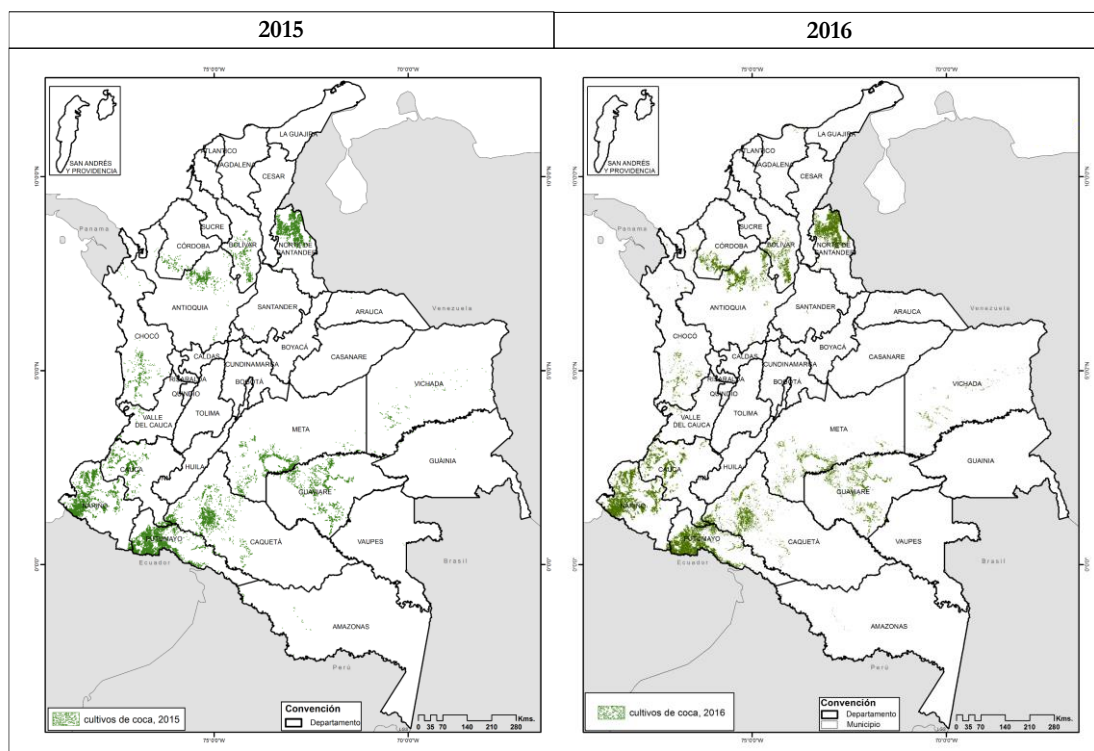
Source: Colombian Ministry of Justice. Graph made by the author.

According to Daniel Rico, the recent and fast increasing of crops appears in response to different factors: (i) a greater international demand, (ii) a diminishing of gold prices and the fact that people that used to exploit gold have moved to work in the coca production, (iii) and the uncertainty regarding the results of sustainable substitution alternatives to the growers, the aerial spraying suspension and the poor manual eradication (Rico. 2017).

Most coca crops grown in Colombia originate from specific areas of the country; their cultivation is not evenly spread throughout, as the **map 2** shows. The territorial distribution of coca plantations has not changed much over the time, and is mainly concentrated in just a few regions and municipalities, a pattern that has continued through to 2016.

Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that, although municipalities and departments that have traditionally had the highest coca crop production remain the highest producers in 2016, the areas that present the most significant increases are relatively new in the production of coca, where the crop was previously less significant. Despite these new coca-growing territories have a marginal product of the national total, this fact attracts the attention since it can constitute a new strategy of the residual FARC-EP's structures, ELN and criminal gangs to colonized new territories and expand its social bases. This strategy also can imply a preventive movement to respond to the future (post-agreement) state actions against coca crops, actions that will start with higher strength on the coca crops focalized areas.

Map 2 Coca crops 2015 and 2016



Source: provided by Rodolfo Escobedo, elaborated by Luis Gabriel Salas within the framework of the Colombian monitoring conflict

Simultaneously, most of the interviewees affirmed that the density and number of hectares have increased due to the suspension of aerial spraying. To have big concentrations of coca crops was an inefficient for the growers due to the aerial spraying strategy identified them faster and not only eradicated coca crops but every other crop around them.

Table 1 shows the top ten coca producing departments in 2016, and the percentage variation compared with 2015. The major coca producer departments are those that historically, during the civil conflict, used to be totally or partly controlled by FARC-EP guerrillas, and in some cases by Cartels.

Table 1 Number of coca crops hectares by departments. 2015 - 2016

Arranged in decreasing	Department	Number of hectares		Variation 2015-2016
		2015	2016	
1	Nariño	29755	42627	43%
2	Putumayo	20068	25162	25%
3	N Santander	11527	24831	115%
4	Cauca	8660	12595	45%
5	Caqueta	7712	9343	21%
6	Antioquia	2403	8855	269%
7	Guaviare	5423	6838	26%
8	Meta	5002	5464	9%
9	Bolivar	1043	4094	293%
10	Cordoba	1363	2668	96%

Source: Colombian Ministry of Justice. Calculations made by the author

At the end of 2016, Nariño, located in the southwest of the country and on the Pacific coast, was the single major coca-producing department. In this department, the municipality of Tumaco contained over half – 54.3% - of all coca crop hectares in the department, making this municipality the major producer of coca in Colombia, with 16% of total national estimated production in 2016. Tumaco, as an example of the current (post)conflict war economies scenario, was one of the FARC-EP's strongholds. In this municipality, the Columna Movil Daniel Aldana held hegemonic control over the local economy and administration, this Columna was one of the most criminalized FARC-EP's structures, which was also part of the FARC-EP's income-generating financial arm. Tumaco is now a municipality with the presence of the AGC and the ELN, as well as at least two FARC-EP deserter groups (Álvarez et al. 2017), who have decided to 'go it alone' because of revenues available from coca production. These non-state armed organisations remain interested in controlling coca crops, the local drugs market and the strategic corridors⁴ needed to take refined drugs, like cocaine, out of the country.

There has been a rapid increase in violent disputes between both known and unknown non-state armed groups in this municipality and this department, which started with the first phase of implementation of the Havana peace agreement. This has unleashed homicides on an alarming scale, with an increase in the homicide rate of 12 percentage points, from 72.1 (per hundred thousand) in 2016 to 84.5 (per hundred thousand) in 2017⁵.

The emergence of disputes, represented in the increasing of the municipality's homicide rate is closely linked with the FARC-EP's internal fragmentation and the clashes of these residual groups with other non-state armed groups that want to appropriate the illegal rents around war economies in Tumaco. In this scenario, the war economies constitute one of the major barriers to consolidate peace after the Havana agreement. One of the consequences of the existence of a crime-conflict nexus is the internal fragmentation of non-state armed groups because the access to a profitable illegal global market makes them self-sufficient and autonomous (De Boer and Bosetti 2015: 8)

Coca crops in Norte de Santander, the third producer department, has also drastically increased. While in 2015 there were 11,527 coca hectares, in 2016 it rose to 24,830, representing an increase of 115%. Tibú is the municipality that concentrated most of this growth. The number of hectares in this municipality went from 4,379 in 2015, to 12,787 in 2016, reaching an increase of 192% from one year to the next. The violence situation in Tibú, in terms of homicide, is even worse than in Tumaco. The Tibú's homicide rate went from 76,7 (per hundred thousand) in 2015, to 114.4 (per thousand) in 2016 and 205.9 (per thousand per hundred thousand) in 2017⁶. Not for nothing "the international drug trade is widely considered to be both the largest and most violent sector of the illicit global economy" (Andreas and Wallman 2009: 3)

⁴ Tumaco is the second most important port of the Colombian, the most important in the pacific coast and has several informal rout accesses to high seas.

⁵ The homicide rate of 2017 is corresponded to an estimation on the homicide data from the 1st of January 2017 to the 30th of June 2017.

⁶ From 1st January to 30th June.

According to Rodolfo Escobedo, after the Havana peace agreement, this area went from being under FARC-EP's control to the ELN's control within an alliance between both non-state armed actors; this alliance can be replicated in several regions of the country. The influence of a war economy and the activity around it "may cause conflict parties to pursue opportunistic alliances between traffickers, non-state armed groups and state actors, constantly shifting and re-configuring. This not only makes conflict increasingly unpredictable but also complicates the efforts to end the conflict"(De Boer and Bosetti 2015: 8)

5.2. Gold mining as part of a criminal cluster

Gold mining has been another source of funding for armed groups in the Colombian conflict, though historically less significant than drug trafficking. This sector has significantly increased in importance since the international financial crisis in 2008, as the international gold price started a steady rise, reaching peak prices in 2011 with a record value of US\$ 1917,90 per ounce (Idrobo N. et al. 2014).

The high profitability of gold on the international commodities market resulted in a gold boom in Colombia since the end of 2000s. The national Colombian government has boosted the mineral and energy sectors as a strategy for attracting international investors and promoting a rapidly growth of this sector in the national economy. Nonetheless, evidence regarding war economies has shown that sudden price increases of a commodity may lead "to a rise in informality in extractive processes. This tends to attract illegal actors, who exploit regulatory vacuums and take advantage of producers' lack of protection to impose licenses to operate and taxes on production"(Rettberg et al. 2014: 8, 9).

In the Colombian case, this gold-boom produced an (unintended) resort to violent modes of extraction, and the rising of incidence of killings and violent attacks in areas with known gold deposit or with active mines (Idrobo N. et al. 2014). The violence produced in this context responded mostly to territorial disputes between non-state armed groups to capture rents from gold.

Unlike drugs trafficking, gold exploitation and commercialization are not illegal activities by nature and are taxed and regulated by government agencies. Illegal gold mining refers to the exploitation without government permission in the form of a license. This categorization is however complex, since there are many different kinds of gold mining, including artisanal (known as *barequeo*) which is a speciality of Afro-Colombian communities in response to their ancestral traditions and connections with gold mining. This form of artisanal mining is generally not considered illegal, but it is informal and difficult to tax and bring under state control. To sum up, the gold mining business is broadly legal, but within the gold sector there are pockets of informality, and for this reason, gold mining, refining and sale represent an economic sector that is relatively easy to criminalize at any point in the supply chain.

As a consequence, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine precisely which percentage of total recorded gold production (1,987,086 ounces in 2016 and 789,192 ounces in the first semester of 2017 (ACM 2017)) and exports are legal, illegal, formal or informal. According to Santiago Ángel, the ACM's (Colombian Mining Association) president, in 2016, 88% of the 50 tons of gold exported by Colombia could be traced to illegal and informal or artisanal mining,

and only an estimated remaining 12% being produced strictly in the legal gold mining sector (Portafolio. 2016).

The scenario becomes even more complex when taking into account the extension of non-state armed groups into the gold sector, both formal and informal. When this is factored into the analysis, the categorization given above becomes less clear, and illegal gold mining becomes not only mining by illegal actors but any mining that is not regulated in terms of output and production through state controls and permissions. The incursion into the gold business of non-state armed actors is relatively independent of the mining category.

Recently, the participation of non-state armed groups in gold business became more active. Non-state armed actors are participating in this business in two different ways: i) direct participation, having total control on the exploitation and commercialization chain, from owning of the suction dredgers, backhoes and machinery needed, to building of a proper exploitation infrastructure, controlling artisanal miners around and providing an armed arm to dispense security and justice; legally constituted companies and multinationals have been involved in corruption scandals due to proven relationships with non-state armed groups around gold mining activities. And ii) indirect participation, with illegal taxation or extortion to miners, artisanal or big companies, even if they are another armed group (Massé and Camargo 2012).

This division of the supply chain shows again a corporative behaviour of the non-state armed groups, and make evident the conflict and crime nexus around war economies. As entrepreneurs, “non-state violent actors employ a variety of strategies that combine different motives, methods, and targets” (De Boer and Bosetti 2015: 3) to make the exploitation of rents more efficient, profitable and less risky. In that sense, it is more beneficial, in greed terms, to create alliances between groups than to sustain a dispute that not only would mean costs but also would attract the state institutions’ attention.

The relationship between the non-state armed groups and gold mining companies and artisanal miners vary locally, with gangs often playing a more direct role in the gold business than guerrillas. The guerrillas’ actions have been limited mainly to extortion of the criminal gangs, miners, artisanal miners or mining companies (Escobedo and Guío-Pérez 2015b). This division of gold production along the extraction and commercialization chain has reduced confrontations between different non-state armed actors. While criminal gangs have been willing to control goldmines, guerrillas have controlled territories and roads, taxing passing goods. In some regions, extortion is collected per dredger or backhoe, and in others, a tax per ounce or permission to work is paid. In the case of artisanal gold miners, both criminal gangs and guerrillas prey on their gold production, but after heavy disputes between criminal gangs and guerrilla groupings, the division of labour between them has reduced previous levels of violence and homicides, with an uneasy truce between them (Eslava Gómez and Giraldo 2014, Idrobo N. et al. 2014, Massé and Camargo 2012).

With the implementation of the Havana peace agreement, in early 2017, the FARC-EP’s cleared their strategic territories. Nonetheless, the relevant areas where gold mining took place came to be controlled by other non-state armed groups. Despite a change of actors having territorial control, the division of labour and previous alliances between non-state armed actors in the mining areas remains. According to Rodolfo Escobedo and Carmenza Vélez, the guerrillas, today only ELN, exercise mostly indirect controls over gold mining activities

through taxes and permissions, while criminal gangs control gold mining in a much more direct way, in the production process and in marketing.

Alliances between actors around illegal markets in conflict contexts are usual and are used as a strategy to make the activity more efficient. Inasmuch these alliances fuelled the conflict, they are highly likely to remain in peacetime (De Boer and Bosetti 2015). The evidence of the Colombian case regarding the maintenance of guerrillas' and criminal gains' roles within the gold supply chain after the FARC-EP's demobilization reveals how a close relationship between criminal and conflict actors, together with a profitable economic activity may constitute a barrier for peace-building.

Illicit markets are also related to violence manifestations. According to Andreas and Wallman, "violence is commonly viewed as one of the defining features of illicit markets that differentiate them from licit markets" (Andreas and Wallman 2009: 2), highlighting that one of the most violent illicit markets is the global drugs production and trafficking. The expression of illicit economies in this terms in the Colombian conflict has been the homicide rate. Despite it is difficult to separate the homicides produced by the conflict dynamics from those produced by illicit market dynamics, not only because of the difficulties to identify unique characteristics for each category, but also because of the connection between conflict and crime, some tendencies in the homicide rate behaviour can be recognize.

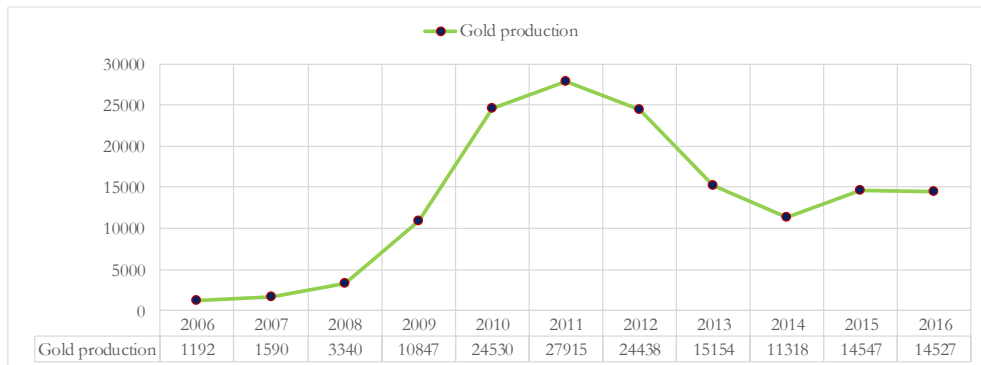
Although the division of gold mining value chain has not changed much, the presence's actors has. Some areas went from being FARC-EP-controlled to being controlled by ELN, in a scenario of political alliance between both guerrilla groups, according to Rodolfo Escobedo. This alliance may reduce the impact on the violence manifestations, because ELN has not had to dispute the territories with any other non-state armed group. Nonetheless, in some departments, like Choco, there were warning indicators of possible disputes taking place over the territory. In this specific case, the confrontation was reported to be between the AGC and ELN, who perhaps were claiming a larger share of revenues around gold.

The **figure 5** shows the level of gold production in Choco, from 2006 to 2016⁷. The level of gold production recorded its greatest change from 2008 to 2010, going from 3,340 kg in 2008 to 24,529 in 2010, a rise in 634%, and reached its peak in 2011 with 27915 kg. This behaviour responds to the international increase of the gold price which also reached its peak in 2011 (Idrobo N. et al. 2014), evidencing the close relationship between global (legal or not) markets and the local war economies (De Boer and Bosetti 2015, Escobedo and Guío-Pérez 2015b, Eslava Gómez and Giraldo 2014, Idrobo N. et al. 2014, Rettberg A. and Ortiz-Riomalo J.F. 2016). It also reflects the economic importance for the non-state armed actors to control this territory, not only because of its gold deposits, but also because of its corridors to export drugs, and it may explain the current disputes between remain actors after the demobilizations of the FARC-EP's frentes⁸ 57, 34, 30, Aurelio Rodríguez and the Columna Movil Libardo García (Álvarez et al. 2017, Álvarez et al. 2017).

⁷ It is important to notice, the gold production data used in this study is regarding the legal gold declared, which means, it is expected a high level of under-reporting.

⁸ Structures inside the FARC-EP.

Figure 5 Level of gold production in Choco 2006 - 2016

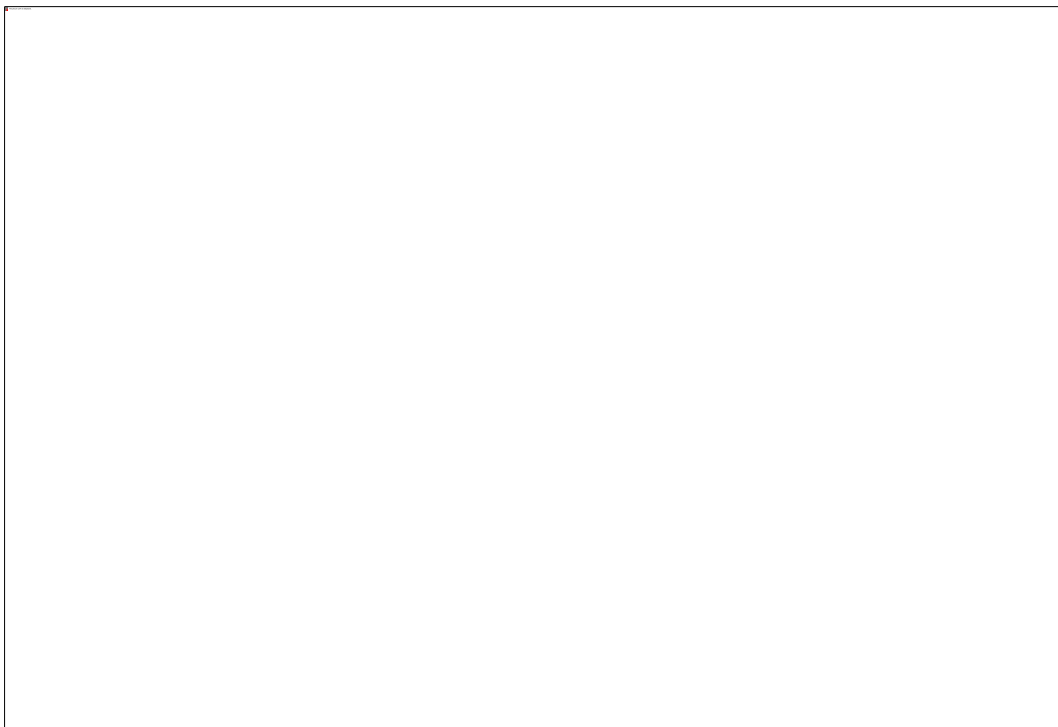


Source: Bank of the Republic, Ministry of Mines and Energy, Minercol, Ingeominas (2004-2011), ANM (2012 hereinafter).

The **map 3** shows how some of the hotspots of gold exploitation and forced displacement are the same. From July 2014 to March 2017, the Ombudsman Office issued 27 alerts of the ELN and AGC movements on the Choco territory and the crimes that they were committed to control those territories. The crossing of high number (200 in one case) of armed men and the selective killings have produced forced displacement (La Silla Vacía. 2017).

This may mean the non-state armed groups use violence to control the territory to capture the illegal rent and increase its exploitation (rise that is only evident after). In that sense violence help the non-state armed groups to generate the right conditions and opportunities for profit, and consequently, the continuation of violence is more beneficial (Newman and Keller 2007: 50), rather than go towards peace.

Map 3 Alluvial gold exploitation 2015 and forces displacement by expulsion 2016.

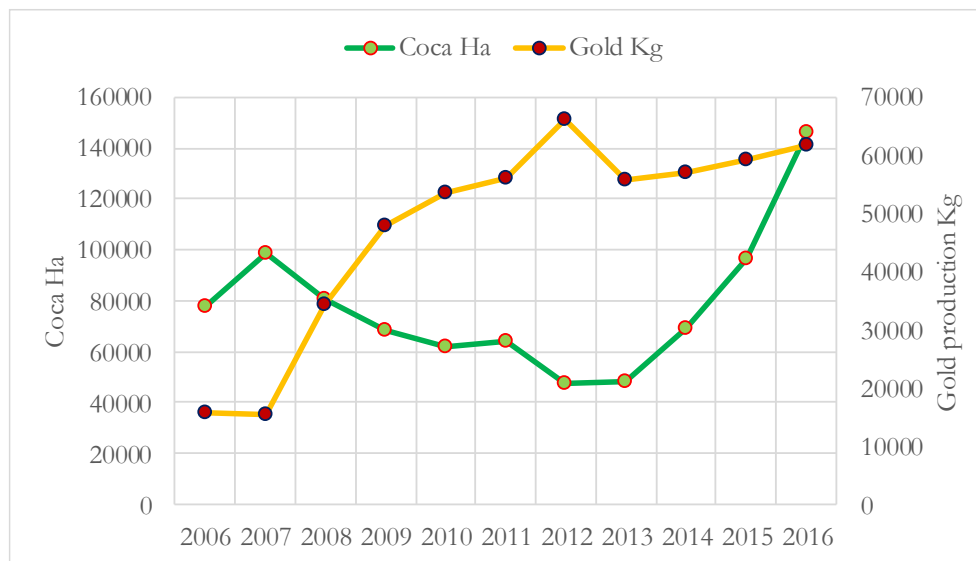


Source: provided by Rodolfo Escobedo, elaborated by Luis Gabriel Salas within the framework of the Colombian monitoring conflict

5.3. A criminal cluster around war economies in the post-agreement context

Apart from the profitability that gold exploitation and exportation offer to non-state armed groups, it also constitutes a method of money-laundry coming from illegal activities, especially from drug trafficking. This is the clearest link between the illicit drug and gold businesses.

Figure 6 Relationship between coca crops and gold production. 2006 - 2016



Source: Colombian Ministry of Justice, Bank of the Republic, Ministry of Mines and Energy, Minercol, Ingeominas (2004-2011), ANM (2012 hereinafter).

According to Daniel Rico, the relationship between drugs production and trafficking and gold exploitation in Colombia, apart from money laundering, is one of substitution goods. As it is shown in the graph 6, the gold exploitation increased from 2007 due to the global commodity market behaviour, as noted before, that caused the change of peoples' activity from coca growing to gold exploitation, resulting in the decreased of coca hectares from 2007 to 2012 and 2013 (Revista Semana. 2017b).

Despite the behaviour of the coca and gold production from 2006 to 2012 supports Daniel Rico's argument, from 2013 to 2016 the relationship between the two war economies changed from being inverted to have the same positive trend. It is important to stress that the Havana peace process started by the end of 2012, hence the political conflict de-escalation may influence this change. Nonetheless, to come up with any conclusive hypothesis of this relationship change it would need more than the coca and gold production data.

In any way, the relationship between drugs and gold war economies responds to the development of a corporate behaviour of the non-state armed actors who diversified their legal and illegal funding sources to diminish the risk and obtain more profit from the activity (Rettberg et al. 2014). In that sense, the influence of the gold and dugs global markets play a fundamental role in the continuation or not of these activities in Colombia, and influences the economic incentives to

the non-state armed groups to keep exploiting these illegal rents. Despite the Havana peace agreement constitutes an important effort to address peace, it is unlikely to end these criminal activities due to the profitability of the international markets (Le Billon 2001, Boyle 2014, Ballentine and Nitzschke 2005).

Chapter 6 Socio-political factors

This chapter aims to explore the socio-political causes that may explain the current persistence of the conflict dynamics and the war economies in local and regional levels in the Colombian post-agreement context. The horizontal inequalities approach will be used to uncover some of these structural causes, which will be analysed focussing on the groups and identity formation, not by ethnicity or religion, but through every day-live experience that peoples from ‘the territories’ (los territorios) share⁹.

6.1. Parallel authority: guerrillas’ dynamics

The non-state armed actors not only have controlled the illegal rents from the territories they have been in, they also have exercised social control over the population who lived in those territories and have administered public services, such as justice and security. This role has been legitimized through the lack of state presence in the regions, developing such as parallel state that has offered better solutions to people (Velez and Guío-Pérez 2016), and at the same time, has vested the non-state armed groups with authority, respect and social status, difficult to give up. That builds up a double way explanation of the presence of others, even new, non-state armed actors in the territories, their members need to maintain that status and the population’s needs to have some sort of public services that the state still does not offer.

The length of conflicts can be explained with several approaches, one of them is the existence of war economies, illegal rents that fuelled the war to keep going, with the greed side of the rational choice theory. Nonetheless, apart from this perspective, the crime and conflict nexus literature has found it is “also related to the political capital that non-state armed groups gain by providing public goods that the state is incapable or unwilling to deliver. The consequence can be the erosion of the state and the development of “dual sovereignties” that compete for allegiance and legitimacy” (De Boer and Bosetti 2015: 15). In that sense, to build peace it is also important to transform the conditions that have fed the conflict.

According to Carmenza Velez, the FARC-EP’s strategy to exercise a consolidated presence over the territory was to include local communities in the war economies’ activities, recruiting minors and administering justice and security to the population. These activities had given them strong social support. Employment as part of the war economies or as combatants has given to local people a source of livelihood. Minors’ recruitment created a sort of ‘Farian families’ phenomenon, meaning most of the families in the FARC-EP’s stronghold territories had at least one their members of the guerrillas. The effective, but not respectful of Human Rights, justice and security they delivered, have kept the social order that peoples from those areas needed due to the absence of state

⁹ The formation of these socio-political causes can be also interpreted through the symbolic interaction theory by analysing how the meaning of the peace expressed in the Havana agreement may change at the implementation moment (Aksan et al. 2009).

there (Velez and Guío-Pérez 2016). This connection between guerrilla movements and the local population has created an identity around them. Despite this identity does not respond to religion or ethnicity, it does around common needs and family network.

The state institutions and civil servants are not prepared to fill the authority vacuums left by FARC-EP after the clearance of the territories they controlled. Apart from the structural problems around inefficiency, corruption and bureaucracy of the justice and security's sectors in Colombia, the administration of it, in the most affected regions by the conflict, has adapted to the parallel state's operation. These services work in a demand logic, meaning the institutions do not approach to the citizens, what constitutes an access barrier, especially to people living far from urban areas, where the civil servants are concentrated, while the non-state armed actors are in the same area. At the same time, and as a consequence of decades of conflict, people do not trust in the formal justice and security because in the regions over the influence of non-state armed groups, there have been generalized corruption and collusion between state authorities and these armed groups, while with the parallel state they have more certainty in about who they are talking with (García and Espinosa 2013).

The administration of justice and security by the non-state armed groups, especially FARC-EP, is more legitimate than the state justice and security services, because it offers visible and fast results. In some regions, the non-state armed groups have created codes of behaviour to control crimes and resolve unrests. Those codes are for obligatory execution for local people, and there is a list of sanctions for those who violate the norm. Their authority to enforce the codes is based on the illegal use of violence and fear. The sanctions can be from an economic payment to displacement and death, actually, it also can be social work, like sweep the town's streets (García et al. 2008).

While it is difficult for the state institution to compete with parallel justice and security in the territories left by FARC-EP, is easy for the remaining non-state armed actors, especially ELN, to exercise social control over those territories after the beginning of the Havana agreement implementation phase. According to Harold Ruíz in Nariño, for example, this strategy can be seen with the increasing of forced minor' recruitment, as well as of their conflict actions, more active participation in the regional war economies, leaflets and flags.

This fragmented and territorial differing institutional offer constitutes a form of horizontal inequality. According to Stewart "HIs may be spatially distributed: that is, particular regions of a country may be deprived (or privileged) compared with other regions" (Stewart 2008). The rural population that has lived under the non-state armed actors' control has received for a second category justice and security services, leaving an open door to the exercise of a parallel institution. Unfortunately, the demobilization of FARC-EP's combatants and the clear of the territories they used to control have not lead to an equal institutional offer across the country. The peoples' needs in terms of public services still remind and non-state armed groups, others than FARC-EP, has entered to fill those institutional vacuums.

6.2. Breaches with the ex-combatants and local people

The third point accorded in the Havana peace agreement established the steps, parameters and measures to end the conflict, including the processes of demobilization, ceasefire and laying down of arms, and the safety guarantees for ex-combatants and the political, social and economic reincorporation of them into the civilian life (Havana peace agreement 2017). Within this goal, the agreement set the creation of 26 Transitional Local Zones for Normalization (ZVTN)¹⁰. Those places, agreed between the chief negotiators of both parties, were used as concentrated areas for FARC-EP's members and to conduct the laying down of arms, process verified by the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, led by the UN. Despite these areas had a transitory nature (180 days), on the 15th of August 2017, they became Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation.

In the implementation of this point of the agreement, there have been several delays and breaches, especially by the government, that have eroded the trust, not only in the state but also in the agreement.

The end of the mobilization and concentration process was expected by the 31st of December 2016, nonetheless, the ZVTN and the legal framework to proceed with the mobilization were not ready, generating a first delay of more than a month. This process ended by February 2017, 6.934 FARC-EP's members were finally grouped in the 26 ZVTN. However, this did not mean the encampments were ready to be inhabited. According to the Fundación Paz y Reconciliación, by the 31st of January 2017 there were no ZVTN fully finished, on the contrary, most of them had not reached the 50% of advance in their construction, even some of them had not basic services like electricity, access to water and sewer system, or had precarious access road, when there is any (Valencia et al. 2017). The bad living conditions offered in these zones, according to Mayra Bonilla, constitutes one of the reasons for FARC-EP's members' desertion.

However, not all of the ZVTN were in bad conditions. According to Sofía León, in some cases they are even better than the nearest urban areas, producing discomfort between local people around the zones that see the fast materialization of the state's investment while they still have the same needs than years before without having any answer from the state. This constitutes another breach in the peace agreement due to the state accorded, not only to deploy the comprehensive rural development (Havana peace agreement first point) but also to answer to some specific claims that people from the municipalities where the ZVTN are have made. Those claims were different in each of the 26 cases, but all represented small state action, like the improvement of the public lighting, or a local road.

The FARC-EP's ex-combatants have also faced difficulties in the use of the financial support delivered by the state as part of the reintegration program, because most of the guerrilla members have never been part of the financial system and the delivery of this support was made through banks. Despite, in the ZVTN the state accompanied the guerrilla members through the process to open a bank account and use of a cash machine, the Ombudsman Office has express concern

¹⁰ There were 19 zones and 7 points. The difference between them is regarding the size, the zones are made by several encampments, while se second just refers to only one encampment (Havana peace agreement 2017).

about the lack of capacity building when it comes to handling the role of household financing (Defensoría del Pueblo 2017a).

Apart from the barriers to the insertion of ex-combatants to the financial system, Sofía León expressed most of the ex-combatants have difficulties to use the financial support gave by the government because the nearest cash machine to the ZVTN was in the urban areas. The ex-combatants gave all their belongings to start their demobilization process, including vans, cars and motorcycles, hence now they do not have any transportation facility to go to the nearest town to take their money out. The Ombudsman Office supports this statement, coupled with the safety risks most of the ex-combatants have manifested to feel, when they leave the ZVTN (Defensoría del Pueblo 2017a).

The last difficult found in the reintegration process according to the interviews is the clash ex-combatants faced with the institutional offer of public services, such as the healthcare system. The former combatants became part of one of the health service providers, one that was already collapsed and with the entry of almost 7000 more people, the service became worst. According to Sofía León, ex-combatants have manifested they had a better health care within the guerrilla than out of it. Additionally, the birth control they received now is based on the use of condoms while the guerrilla used to provide birth control pills to women combatants. This change has produced discontent within ex-combatants, as they manifested to men do not want to use a condom.

All in all, it is important to highlight that when there is not a plausible institutional alternative to crime and violence, the nexus between crime and conflict tend to be bigger (De Boer and Bosetti 2015). Thus, as a consequence of the inconsistencies, delays and breaches to the Havana peace agreement implementation, there is not an institutional alternative to violence and crime yet. It is still more beneficial to FARC-EP's ex-combatants and to the non-state armed groups' members to keep the conflict conditions and keep exploiting illegal rents, but it is also beneficial to local peoples who never have had a proper public services delivery and who have lived from growing and transforming illegal crops for decades.

6.3. War economies as a livelihood option

The last but not less important reason to explore is related to the coca crops. As it has been showed beforehand, these crops have been increasing from 2012, the beginning year of the Havana peace talks. Moving away from the greed side of the conflict analysis, the historical marginalization of the same groups (rural population and minority groups), expressed in social, economic and political exclusion, land dispossession, forced displacement, and the lack of road infrastructure and investment on the countryside and the agricultural sector development, constituting a perpetuated horizontal inequality between national, urban and regional elites and rural, indigenous and afro-descendants populations that have pushed peasants, afro-descendants and indigenous people to cultivate coca rather than any other product.

This trend is not exclusive of the Colombian case, but it can be of the conflicts with the influence of illegal markets related to agricultural production, like coca, poppy and marihuana. Taking the Afghan case, Goodhand argued that, despite there is a tendency to point the growers as business people moved through the

illegal markets because of the profitability of the production and their greedy participation within the economy, the reality of most of them is that this economic activity is a way of “coping or survival” (Goodhand 2004: 163).

Historically, the peasants, and in some cases indigenous and Afro-descendant people, have been tasked to grow coca. With some exceptions, the control over the territories cultivated, the transformation of the leaves into coca paste and base has been in control of the guerrillas, who sell them to the criminal gangs, who transform it into the cocaine hydrochloride and to export. In this chain, the guerrilla groups have bought the leaves, or the coca paste and base, to the growers, offering a fixed purchase and stable prices, despite the money they receive is not proportional to the rentability of the final product. Actually, when the state has destroyed coca crops, the growers expressed that the only alternative they had was to be part of any non-state armed group (Carmenza Velez and Nataly García. 2016)

According to Rodolfo Escobedo and Carmenza Vélez, these peasants are organized firstly as families, families that have grown over the years and have a different number of hectares with coca crops and located in different places, most of the time close each other. They grow different agricultural products, but always have coca crops as a fix means of livelihood. The diversification of the coca crops location strategy by each member of the family responds to the different eradication programs the government has implemented through the years, due to if they lose the coca production, they do not lose all of it and remain their means of survival.

FARC-EP has interacted with the coca growers families by giving them the land and the seeds to manage the crop, or by according the purchase of the crop, and the families have increased their participation in the transformation of the coca leaves into coca base or paste, because it requires small budget to invest and less risk in the transportation (Carmenza Velez and Nataly García. 2016).

They have diversified the products they grow, alternating coca with any other agricultural product, with the same aim, ensure any livelihood. Despite most of them have tried or wish to take a step aside of the illegal economy, with legal products there is more market uncertainty with unstable prices, difficult means of transportation to the nearest urban area, risks of crop failures, longer times of harvest and bad prices that do not represent a competitive rate of return.

Secondly, these families are grouped in communitarian organizations who, due to the lack of state institutions and public good and services, have worked as a community authority, together with the non-state armed groups in some cases, to guaranty a sort of cohabitation rules. Likewise, this arena has worked as a decision-making space regarding community issues, in the case of coca growers, for example, decisions around substitution. Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples are also well organized into their constitutional autonomy framework, in addition, these peoples own, by the constitution as well, collective territories where they exercise their authority. These organizational structures around the coca-growing activity seem to be a historical configuration of an identity character between coca growers.

To sum up, peasants, indigenous and afro-descendant peoples are well organized, and there are several regional and national entities that grouped some smaller ones, like the Coca, Poppy and Marihuana Growers' National Organiza-

tion (Coccam) in Nariño, Cauca and Guaviare departments, or Peasant Association of Catatumbo (Ascamcad) in Norte de Santander department, both coca regions.

Having this war economy map as complete as possible, the chief negotiators of both parties discussed the solution of the problem of illicit drugs, treating it as a key point to build peace. The fourth chapter of the final agreement develops the strategy in this regard. The agreement proposes the creation and articulation of several policies, programs and laws to address the problem, giving different treatment to people involved in the whole chain, depending on which part of the chain they are.

The growers are treated as one of the weakest parts of the illicit drugs' chain. To attack the growing of coca, the government has started the implementation of the National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Crops Used for Illicit Purposes (PNIS). This program, led by the Presidency, aims to contribute to the structural transformation of the rural territories affected by coca crops and integrate them to the country's dynamics, together with the implementation of the Comprehensive Rural Development (first peace agreement's point) and boosting the community participation in the whole process, by asking and giving them space in the decision-making arena, especially at local. This participation will be expressed in the creation of the Comprehensive Substitution and Alternative Development Plans (Pisda), a bottom-up planning of the substitution and development strategies at local to effectively tackle the territorial needs and claims the community find as a priority (Havana peace agreement 2017).

The voluntary substitution programs are based on accords between the coca growers and the government, in which, the coca growers commit to substitute the illegal crop for any other legal crop, not to replant and not to join any link of the illegal drugs chain again. By the other side, the government commits to deploy food assistance through the Immediate Response Plan. However, the Havana peace agreement includes an exception to the voluntary restitution strategy, establishing the possibility to eradicate illicit crops by force when the voluntary restitution is not possible or when there is a breach of the voluntary accords by the growers (Havana peace agreement 2017). The goal that the government plans to achieve is to eradicate 100.000 coca hectares in one year, one half through voluntary substitution and the other through forced eradication (C. González 2017).

Today, the implementation of this ambitious strategy is slow and full of difficulties. The voluntary substitution programs have started in the prioritized areas, selected because of its levels of affectation by coca crops. From May to the end of September 2017, the government has signed collective substitution accords that include 115.214 families and have reached the 5% of the annual goal (Álvarez and Garzón 2017).

Nonetheless, parallel to this program, and in the same areas, the government has also initiated the forced eradication. In January 2017 the government launched the 'Victory Plan' (Plan Victoria) to the stabilization of the regions through the increase of the military forces in the territories FARC-EP used to control. One of the axes of this plan is the implementation of the forced eradication's plan with terrestrial fumigation and manual eradication (C. González 2017). However, the institutional effort apart from the huge economic investment to advance in the substitution program has made the government progress faster and with better results in the forced eradication program, eradicating 40.000 coca

hectares by the end of September 2017 (Álvarez and Garzón 2017). According to Daniel Rico, the strategy to substitute 50.000 coca hectares is not viable in terms of budget and the government announcement will generate expectations within the growers and peasants close to illegal crops that possibly result in protests (Revista Semana. 2017b).

The whole strategy to transform the territories is not only made by the substitution or eradication programs, but by the investment in the territorial development and state presence. The territorial transformation, as is understood in the agreement, is a long-term commitment, as well as the stable and lasting peace that the government has announced, but the community's needs are not, and the consequences of the delays and inconsistencies in the implementation of forced and voluntary eradication programs at the same time and in the same places have already appeared and made evident other unrests than armed confrontation and FARC-EP's presence.

As Daniel Rico predicted, the inconsistencies in the application's strategy have brought uncertainty and mistrust to the coca grower communities regarding the agreement's fulfilment. Recently, there have been social mobilizations that had dramatic results. In Tumaco, the national major coca producer municipality and where the substitution pilot program was implemented, in unclear facts, on the 5th of October 2017, six peasants were killed in the middle of social protests the coca growers did against the forced eradication. According to Coccoam, the military forces were who killed the peasants, while the government assures that a FARC-EP's deserter group took advantage of the situation and attacked civilians and military forces' members (Revista Semana. 2017a).

Here, it is important to highlight that “a top-down political solution to an armed conflict will not necessarily address the underlying social and economic processes of the war economy, even after a ‘peace agreement’ has been achieved” (Newman and Keller 2007: 51). Despite the Havana peace agreement proposes a ‘territorial peace’, reflecting a bottom-up peacebuilding approach, the top-down perspective underscore in this first stage of the agreement implementation with numerous difficulties in the central level to set the accord in motion.

The peace agreement has been pointed as a historical moment to begin with structural transformations (Lederech. 2016) the country needs. However, the maintenance of a gap between the centre and periphery areas, with differentiated public services offer

Chapter 7 Conclusions

In this study, I presented evidence to conclude that the local and regional context after the beginning of the Havana peace agreement's implementation is not peaceful due to violence and conflict dynamics has persisted. Finding of this study suggest that the Havana peace agreement constitutes an important step to end the Colombian conflict not only through FARC-EP's demobilizing but also through the establishment of the structural transformations bases the country needs to build an equal society. Nonetheless, the existence of war economies that are embedded within all society's spheres (economic, political, social, and cultural), comprises an obstacle to achieve peace.

The consequence of several decades of conflict fuelled by war economies in Colombia is the existence of deep-rooted illegal markets, improved year by year and through the accumulation of the non-state armed groups' know-how and expertise. It is important to highlight that the profitability of both economic sectors, gold and drugs, is directly related to the global market dynamic, making more difficult to implement effective measures to control them and its impact in the conflict.

Therefore, the demobilization of one of many non-state armed actors who has specialized in the illegal exploitation of (legal and illegal) goods does not imply the elimination of the illegal activity. Rather it triggers local and regional scenarios of ownerless profitable businesses surrounded by several groups willing to take the activity's control over.

“Economic crimes which characterise the war economy during civil war develop a self-serving momentum and continue to thrive after the political conflict has been ‘resolved’. The ideological façade often employed by the commanders of war economies and their networks may fall away, but the war economy continues, subverting peaceful transition in less overt but still pernicious ways”(Newman and Keller 2007: 51)

At this point, the greed approach of the rational choice theory gains importance. Despite conflict cannot be defined as a fixed interaction of variables around economic motivation of the actors involved in it (Lederach 1997), one cannot ignore this motivation as a key factor, not only to the emergence of conflict but also to the continuation of it, even in a context of transition towards peace.

Hence, the link between the increase in coca crops and gold production from 2013 and the recent localized rise of homicide rates in Colombia, evidence that greed remains a central motivation to non-state armed groups to maintain the conflict, perhaps in a more criminal way, rather than move to peace.

However, to construct a more accurate understanding of war economies and its continuation in peacetime, one must include social variables. In the analysis of the Colombian context after the beginning of the Havana peace agreement implementation, three main factors, other than greed, were identified as possible conditions that motivate the permanence of non-state armed actors and the continuation of war economies in the local and regional levels.

These three factors are the existence and deep-rooted parallel authority exercised by the non-state armed actors; breaches of the Havana peace agreement regarding the demobilization and reintegration process; and lack of opportunities to

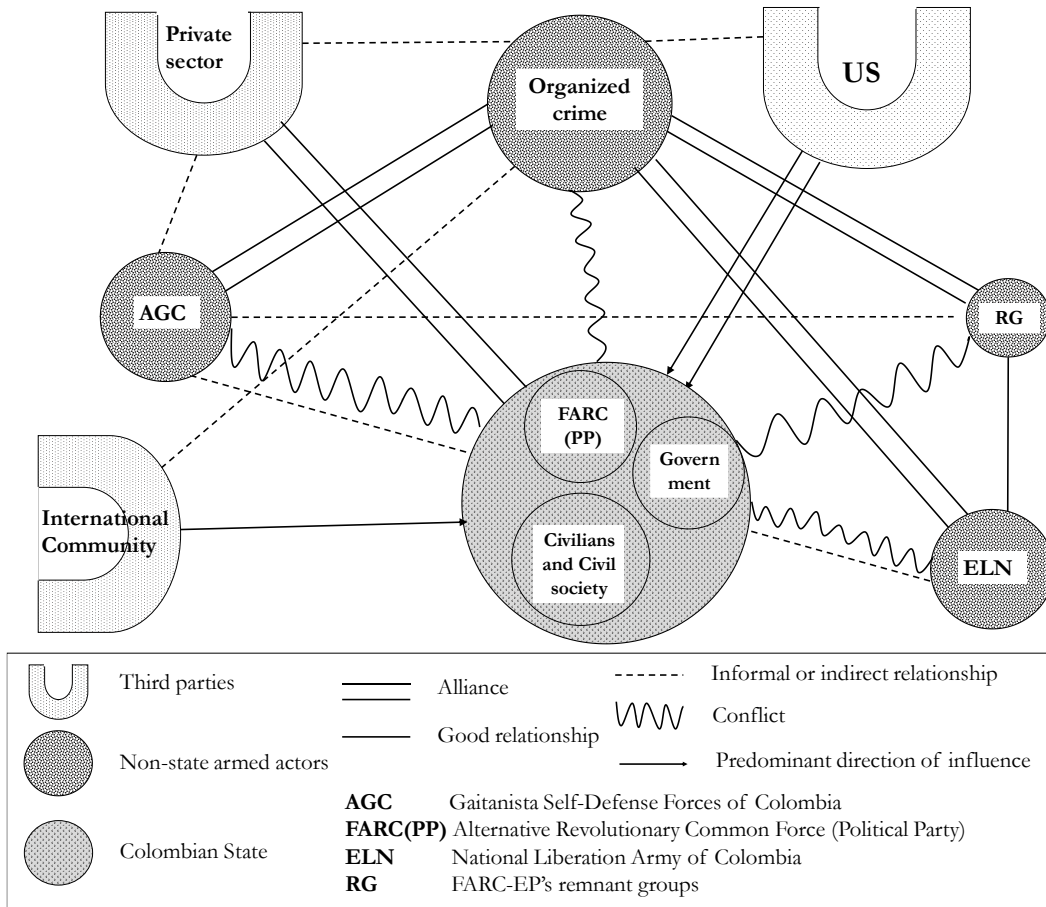
coca growers and gold miners to stop the war economy activity. Exploring these factors, war economies become beneficial not only in economic terms, they also “can bring some benefits to societies when state institutions are weak or corrupt and unable to provide basic public services” (Newman and Keller 2007: 57)

These three factors are grouped into grievance motivations, understood as horizontal inequalities. Despite the Colombian conflict has not been categorized into an ethnic or religious conflict, identities around centre and periphery regions, coca growers and gold miners, and non-state armed groups’ members can be identified. In that sense, without a change of this segregation system, non-state armed groups and war economies will remain active and focalized in the Colombian territory.

“The issue of persistent HIs only arises where group boundaries also persist over time, that is, where a group themselves remain a salient category. There may be some circularity here, as the persistence of the salience of an identity may itself be partly dependent on the persistence of HIs -since sharp HIs tend to stimulate group consciousness” (Stewart 2008: 55)

Despite it is too early to see results of the peacebuilding process taking place in Colombia, the current scenario falls short expectations, the maintenance of both, greed and grievance, motivations question the peace idea sold by the national government and the FARC-EP’s leaders with the sign of the Havana peace agreement. The **figure 7** shows the actors map of the Colombian conflict after the beginning of the Havana peace agreement implementation. Not bigger changes can be notice due to the networks and the socio-political struggles that fuel war economies remain almost the same.

Figure 7 Colombian conflict map 2017



Source: illustration made by the author

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Appendix 1

Interviewees	
Name	Position
Rodolfo Escobedo	Conflict and crime expert. Associated researcher of the Fundación Ideas para la Paz
Sofía León	Conflict and crime expert. Consultant. Ombudsman Office
Harold Ruíz	Nariño's departamental government civil servant
Carmenza Vélez	Conflict and justice expert. Resercher in postconflict and justice. USAID
Mayra Bonilla	Conflict expert. Context analyst. Attorney General of The Nation

Appendix 2

Qualitative secondary data	
Governmental reports	potential risks of humanitarian crisis
	Victims Unit about the most recently internal displacement
	National Mining Agency about the mining permits given to the private sector the last four years to exploit gold
Think Thanks and NGO's	Fundación Ideas para la Paz (Ideas for Peace Foundation) researches about the current situation of war economies, crime economies and changes on leaderships of armed groups in Colombia
	Fundación Paz y Reconciliación (Peace and Reconciliation Foundation) research about the co-optation of territories left behind the FARC-EP by other armed groups
Humanitarian organization and UN agencies	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
	United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
	International Organization for Migration
	International Committee of the Red Cross
Local and national press	Diario El Espectador
	Periódico El Tiempo
	Revista SEMANA
	La silla vacía
	Verdad abierta

Appendix 1

Quantitative secondary data	
Data Base	Description
Conflict data base of the Fundación Ideas para la Paz	Monitor conflict actions made by non-state armed groups and the Colombian military forces. Using municipalities as the unit of analysis, this source let one have a proxy of the presence of each non-state armed group in the territory, and see its movement over time.
Homicide data base of the National institute of legal medicine	To analyse the behaviour of homicide per municipality and identify alarms of sudden changes
Single victim records	To analyse the behaviour of displacement.
SIMCI (integrated monitor system of illicit crops) from UNODC Colombia	Looking for significant changes in coca crops and alluvial gold exploitation during the last year in comparison with the previous ones.
ELN's territorial presence	Using the town as the unit of analysis I debugged and consolidated a database of ELN's conflict actions around the country, from the 1st of January 2016 to 31st of May 2017. This database is the union of five datasets from governmental institutions, think tanks and day to day press review. The importance to consolidate this data was to have the clearest picture possible of the ELN's movements and presence on the national territory and its possible relation with the increasing of the coca crops and gold exploitation.

Appendix 2

Historical background of the Colombian conflict

To give to the reader a brief but comprehensive background of the Colombian civil war or conflict, I will use the General Report made by the Historical Memory Group¹¹, titled BASTA YA! Colombia: Memories of War and Dignity (CNMH 2016). According with this report, the Colombian conflict can be divided in four major periods, starting from the early political violence and ending with the beginning of The Habana peace process on December 2012.

In this regard, the conflict is framed in the following stages of violence:

¹¹ This was an interagency group led by the National Center for Historical Memory, the national governmental agency commissioned to reconstructing the historical memory of the conflict.

- A. From bipartisan to subversive violence (1958-1982): The beginning of the recent Colombian violence is based on political, ideological and social historical claims. The liberal and conservative parties fought over political power control at the polls. However, the radicalization of the country became enormous with the assassination of the liberal leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán on the 9th of April 1948. That fact triggered a huge violent stage, starting with a mobilization denominated 'El Bogotazo'. Those were the background facts that were followed by the formation of the first rebel movements, made up agrarian, working-class, peasants and popular groups dissatisfied with the repression of the conservatives' government policies. Combining this with severe inequalities in land access and political participation, physical violence coercion and the involvement of the catholic church as a supporting part of the conservative party, erupted in the apparition of formal guerrillas and contra insurgent movements, that later fueled the armed confrontation (CNMH 2016: 118-141).
- B. Expansion of armed groups and peace negotiation attempts (1982-1996): This period is characterized by the Historical Memory Group as the one in which the guerrillas flourished in terms of territorial control, political influence and number of combatants. Simultaneously, it was a period to approach to peace. The national government "signed La Uribe agreements with the Secretariat of the FARC (March 28, 1984) and invited the M-19, EPL and the Workers Self-Defense movement (Auto Defensas Obreras – ADO) to join in the talks known as the "National Dialogue"" (CNMH 2016: 141). Nonetheless, the offensive FARC policy (who, as the other guerrillas, took advantage of the truce with the government to increase his influence), its political power supported by the emergent political party Patriotic Union (UP) and the discomfort of local elites, provoked the creation of paramilitary groups, covered by the Law 48 of 1968, which allowed fighting the insurgency by privates, often very close to the national military forces. Those facts coupled with a blow to the state institutions with the takeover of the Palace of Justice¹² made by the M-19 guerrilla, the systematic killing of the UP militants, and the increasing power of drug traffickers across the country, eroded the peace attempts. In terms of governance, Colombia went through some administrative changes. From different attempts to have a solid agrarian reform (trying to tackle some of the guerrillas' claims), to implement the decentralization policy that gave fiscal autonomy to the territories, the creation of a new political constitution (1991), the beginning of the neoliberal era, and the sign of an extradition treatment with the US (CNMH 2016: 141-162). All of these events were frame within the end of the Cold War, what made the Colombian conflict more complex. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, this conflict was not understood aligned with any power within the

¹² The takeover of the Palace of Justice was an event on 1985, when the M-19 guerrilla "kidnapped the entire Colombian Supreme Court and exchanged heavy fire with the Colombian army. In the end, more than 100 people were left dead, including most of the justices" (Pardo 2000: 69).

global geopolitics anymore, but became part of what Mary Kaldor denominated “New Wars” (Kaldor 2013)

- C. Escalation of the armed conflict and humanitarian crisis (1996-2005): This period is characterized by the direct dispute between the actors and the occurrence of systematic violence and human rights and international humanitarian law violations by the armed groups, sometimes in association with national armed forces and political local powers.

The intensification of the conflict became evident with the impacts on civilians. This one was the period of highest number of massacres, internal displacement and land grabbing.

Simultaneously, the armed groups became closer to the local political arena, the corruption levels increased and as well as the polarization and the fear within the population. The confrontation transformed itself from actions directed to a specific actor of the conflict, to indiscriminate actions affecting civilian population. The insurgence and contra-insurgence war logic targeted the civil bases support. The paramilitary groups went chased and threatened anyone that could be related with any guerrilla, even if they had been forced to help them, and despite the guerrillas did the same in a smaller scale, they also implement the same strategy.

During these years there was also an attempt to peace. The Caguan the peace talks between the FARC and the national government, in head of the president Andrés Pastrana, formally begun on 1999, but broke down on February 2002 because of the continuous FARC actions during the whole process, including the kidnapping of a congressman.

In this period also started the Plan Colombia (1999), a cooperation international treatment sign between the Colombian and American governments to reinforce tactical and operationally the Colombian military to fight against the armed groups. This treatment had framed within the war on drugs and, after 9/11, the war on terror. The US government invested about 10 billion dollars on the Plan Colombia during 15 years of implementation (Rojas 2016), “The military emphasis of the Plan Colombia was seen in the assignation of 74% of its budget to strengthening the military (60%) and the police (14%), while only 26% was assigned to social investment, of which 8% went on alternative development” (CNMH 2016: 175). This huge investment on the defense sector made the conflict balance of the conflict go from a negative to a positive for the State. Nonetheless, the implication for the civilians were negative. This period is known as the one of the most bloody, violent and corrupt in the Colombian history (CNMH 2016)

- D. AUC demobilization and offensive against guerrillas (2005-2012): Within this period started a peace process negotiation between the Colombian national government led by the president Álvaro Uribe and the self-defense group AUC, ending with the known as the Santa Fé de Ralito agreement. This process created a judicial framework for demobilization of AUC combatants (that was extended to all armed groups but in as individuals, not collective). By 2007 the AUC was partially demobilized and the process of reintegration to the society started. However,

this agreement has been strongly criticized because of its lack in terms of restorative justice and victims' reparations. This process has also considered failed because by 2008 several structures were rearmed. All of them recycled the ex-combatants, not only from AUC, but from all armed groups. These new gangs, known as Bacrim, inherited the crime business and territories the AUC controlled before. Despite the violence associated with the conflict dropped, the disputes for local territorial control between these atomized groups and the guerrillas came with another stage of violence and internal displacement (CNMH 2016: 178-193).

Simultaneously, the state reinforced the offensive against the guerrillas, especially against FARC. This offensive caused the FARC troop withdrawals to their traditional strongholds. The military triumphs went from the assassination and captured of several guerrilla leaders, to heavy blows struck against their financial apparatus (Escobedo and Guío-Pérez 2015a, Escobedo and Guío-Pérez 2015b, CNMH 2016).

Current situation

Since the Colombian government and the FARC guerrillas started peace negotiations in December 2012, the conflict dynamics in the territories historically controlled by guerrilla had a significant change with a drastically drop of the conflict intensity that ended with the ceasefire between the national forces and the FARC guerrilla. Since December 2016, and as a result of the approval of the signing of the Habana Peace Agreement, the sign of it and the official beginning of its implementation phase, the FARC's combatants of all levels started to mobilize from their former geographical strongholds to the transitory normalization areas (accorded places to start the disarmament process). Although many people believed the peace process will end the conflict, with meaningful conflict transformation, but the evidence points to transformation in a negative sense, where guerillas moving from their former territories to new ones and adding new dynamics in these areas (Nasi and Rettberg 2016, Álvarez et al. 2017)