The London School of Economics and Political Science

Transnational networks of insurgency and crime: explaining the spread of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia beyond national borders.

Oscar Palma

A thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations of the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London, March, 2013

Declaration

I declare that my thesis consists of 99,662 words.

Acknowledgments

Abstract

Through official and academic circles a particular understanding of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) had spread: an almost devastated terrorist group whose interests in profiting from drug trafficking clouded its political objectives. Its transnational networks were either underestimated, perceiving they didn't offer much to the organization; or overestimated, believing that every Latin American agent on the Left of the political spectrum was part of a conspiracy against the Colombian state.

The dissertation proposes a different narrative to explain the importance of transnational networks and structures, especially how they may serve as a base for FARC to survive. The Colombian insurgency is here addressed as a typical case of a kind of organization in which political and criminal interests are blended. It further develops the concept of 'commercial insurgencies', opposing a vision of the insurgency as a monolithic entity, to explain it as a system of interconnected individuals with diverse functions and interests who constitute its three dimensions: political, military and criminal.

It is here argued that commercial insurgencies exploit specific elements through the environment to embed its nodes beyond the borders of a single state. These include sympathy from individuals, support from national governments, connections with political and social organizations, alliances with armed actors, the exploitation of empty spaces, and the secretive placement of nodes. Common single-variable explanations to the embedment of insurgents, such as support from a foreign allied government, are insufficient as an objective account of this phenomenon. Furthermore, given certain environmental processes, survival of insurgency elements may contribute to the reconstitution and re-emergence of the organization.

In this sense the challenge of the counterinsurgent is two-fold: the insurgency is multidimensional, and it tends to be transnational. Consequently, for an offensive to be successful it needs to address all the dimensions simultaneously and to control the effects of elements existing beyond borders.

Table of Contents

Introduction

During the Cold War, and especially after the triumph of the Cuban revolution, socialist and communist insurgencies flourished through Central and South America with an idea of revolutionary transformation. With the end of the bipolar confrontation it was believed that Marxist-Leninist and Maoist insurgencies would disappear, not only through the Western hemisphere but throughout the developing world. To a certain extent this was true. In most Latin American countries insurgencies disappeared: peace agreements were signed; rebels demobilized and political parties were formed. In El Salvador and Nicaragua parties created by former insurgents even won presidential elections.

But this was not always the case. Insurgencies such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) continued to exist, challenging security and order, adapting to new strategic contexts, and profiting from illicit drug markets. This circumstance has invited formulations about the nature of insurgencies and the reasons of their persistence. In the case of FARC a dominant narrative became widespread through official circles, and even through the nation. It explains the organization basically as a criminalized entity whose interest in profiting from the drug market corrupted its original political interest, motivating its continued participation in war. Given the profound damages that the Colombian state managed to inflict on the insurgency during the decade of the 2000s, it became widely accepted that this criminalized group was close to its defeat and elimination.

A brief observation of the discourse of Colombian leaders during the presidential period of Alvaro Uribe (2002-2010) would exemplify the idea. Military Forces Joint Commander Freddy Padilla popularized the vision that FARC was right at the 'end of the end' of its existence, while the President himself and several of his Ministers would agree. Former Defence Minister Martha Lucia Ramirez said that "we [were] in the middle of the end of FARC" (Caracol Radio, 2008, March 7). Political leaders managed to convince the nation that the insurgency was only a problem of criminality and terrorism. The discourse penetrated society so deeply that those who explained the organization beyond the spectre of pure terrorism, or its motivations as political, were rejected and even disqualified as collaborators or supporters of the insurgency.

This perception of criminalization and near-defeat coexisted with two contrasting narratives regarding the insurgency's participation in regional processes, and its alliances with foreign

actors. They provide differentiated perspectives about FARC's strategic opportunities through the region. They give contrasting explanations about the effects that support from regional actors including foreign presidents, political parties, armed organizations, and social movements might have on the insurgency's activities, stability, growth and survival.

On the one hand there are 'sceptics' who believe that although international connections and networks have been constructed through time, they are not instrumental for the insurgency to achieve its goals in Colombia. They do not offer any opportunities for FARC to advance in its agenda, and given the insurgency's state of disarray, they do not represent any chance for its recovery or survival. From their perspective, linkages with Presidents Hugo Chavez and Ariel Ortega are not necessarily denied, but seen as irrelevant. Some might even believe such connections are of no interest for FARC's counterparts, and of high priority only to the insurgency.

By contrast, there are 'alarmists' who believe that FARC cannot only be understood as an insurgency fighting in Colombia, but also as part of a wider process of regional upheaval in which all actors on the political Left in Latin America convened. A so called "turn to the left" which brought several bolivarianist and socialists parties to power including Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Lula da Silva in Brazil, Michelle Bachelet in Chile, and the Kirchners in Argentina was interpreted as the greatest regional moment for FARC to advance in its struggle. It was argued that all of these agents were motivated by the achievement of a single common interest: implementing a revolutionary form of bolivarianism and socialism through the continent. It was believed that they acted as conspirators and not as agents with particular national agendas. The Sao Paulo Forum, a regional conference which brings together socialist and communist parties and personalities, including FARC, was considered the heart of this enterprise. There, it was believed, the agenda for regional revolution was set.[1]

For alarmists, although FARC was at a point of criminalization and near disintegration, foreign actors did matter. This 'super-structure' in which FARC is understood only as a node in a network of nodes, acted in favour of the organization. Chavez and Correa, it was argued, as members of the Sao Paulo Forum would provide a safe-haven for insurgents to escape intense counterinsurgency operations in Colombia. This type of actions, they argue, has

---

[1] Examples of this vision can be observed through the work of former Colonel Luis Villamarin (2005; 2007) and Alejandro Peña (2011).

actually kept the insurgency alive. In similar terms, given its criminal nature, transnational trafficking networks spreading through the region also contribute to its survival.

For several years I have been a student and a practitioner of International Security in Colombia. As a former Professional Commissioned Officer of the Military Forces, working as an External Intelligence Analyst at the General Joint Command, I had the opportunity to learn more about regional security processes, bilateral and multilateral institutions, and the relations between the Colombian conflict and the region. But more importantly, I got familiarized with mainstream discourses, observing how deeply they penetrated the understanding of insurgency through official circles and through the nation.

The more I learned about the dominant postures, the more I grew dissatisfied with their capacity to explain the real nature of the organization and of its relation with agents through the region. The idea of categorizing FARC through simplistic concepts that create a monolithic image of the insurgency was never appealing for me. Defining FARC as a purely criminal organization implied ignoring all of its political motivations, actions, and goals, and even probably its history. It wouldn't easily explain support provided by certain social sectors like student groups at public universities or peasants in marginalized regions.

In similar terms, depicting FARC as a terrorist agent might derive into positive results for the counterinsurgent, as the pejorative character of the word delegitimizes its actions, increasing its rejection through the nation. But as an explanation of the phenomenon itself, it becomes fairly limited. Can actions of combat between the guerrilla and the regular state forces be qualified solely as terrorism? How would a protracted guerrilla warfare campaign fit into this concept?

Furthermore, explanations on how processes and events in the region affect the insurgency, and the significance of its interactions with regional agents, were constructed mainly through political prejudices. Those perspectives have been built without a rigorous systematic observation of the elements that have allowed the insurgency to spread through the continent, and to determine its implications. There has been little concern to build a more 'scientific' explanation beyond politically-motivated judgements and beliefs. It is commonly argued, for example, that FARC has managed to expand within Venezuela because Hugo Chavez, a Bolivarian whose goals are aligned with those of FARC, is a close ally. But this explanation largely ignores historical processes of FARC's penetration in the country and the

importance of other agents. Extremist positions and conspiracy-like understandings have clouded the possibility to build a more rigorous and objective approach to the subject.

It was my dissatisfaction with such explanations which motivated me to engage with this investigation. My interest inspired me to propose a particular explanation of FARC's relation and interaction with its region; of its connections with other agents in different countries; and of the implications this may bear on insurgency's conditions. It seeks to go beyond politically-motivated narratives to construct a more academically rigorous and sound approach to the construction of FARC's networks

In essence, and in more specific terms, the puzzle of this thesis, its objective, is to determine which elements allow the insurgency to build transnational networks and what do they mean for the organization. Rather than explaining the significance of the region for the insurgency through judgements based on ideological affinity; and either magnifying or rejecting the meaning of events in Latin America for the organization, this thesis proposes a more structured and rigorous framework of analysis to objectively determine what allows the construction of transnational networks, and what do they mean for FARC.

I believe there is much more on the interaction between the insurgency and its region that hasn't been explored, and that deepening its study would open new avenues of understanding on the importance of regional processes and actors for insurgency in Colombia. Dismissing the region as a space without any value for the insurgency might be as grave a mistake as it could be to believe in monolithic region-wide conspiracies in its favour. This is why the thesis is set to explore systemic dynamics of interaction between the insurgency and its region, assessing differentiated levels of importance according to activities and tasks developed by its militants.

In that sense, my argument is that FARC has exploited specific elements within the environment to embed militants and construct networks beyond Colombian borders, creating a base to survive a strong counterinsurgency offensive. Those elements include sympathy from individuals, support from national governments, connections with political and social organizations, alliances with armed actors, the exploitation of empty spaces, and the creation of conditions for the secretive placement of nodes. Furthermore given the existence of certain environmental processes such as the preservation of the ideology and the mobility of criminal economies through the region, the survival of insurgency elements may lead into the reconstitution and re-emergence of the organization.

This argument challenges single-variable explanations to the construction of FARC's networks, which are common through dominant narratives. It goes beyond the idea that the insurgency has managed to expand simply because there are alliances with leftist presidents who welcome the organization in their territories. All of the elements mentioned above contribute in a differentiated manner to the embedment of insurgents, according to the type of functions they perform, as it will be explained through the dissertation.

For this explanation an appropriate understanding of the organization becomes relevant. To assess the spread of networks it is necessary to have a clear idea of insurgents' functions, and to understand those functions, it is imperative to interpret the nature of the organization correctly.

This brings us back to the dilemma of insurgency, terrorism and criminality. It has been explained that a narrative which became dominant during the 2000s portrayed the insurgency mostly as a criminal or a terrorist group. I have argued that such concepts do not sufficiently explain the insurgency. They are used to categorize organizations in an almost a random fashion, and with an obvious political objective. Al Qaeda, for instance, is referred to by several authors as a globalized insurgency, while western governments brand it fully as a terrorist organization. In similar terms, FARC has been described as a *hypercartel* (Guzman & Muñoz, 2004)

Insurgencies, in general terms, are by definition political. They are violent and armed upheavals conducted systematically over time to achieve political change: the creation of a new nation, the transformation of a political system, the expulsion of a foreign intervening power, separation from an existing country, etc.[2] Militants are profoundly convinced and motivated by the achievement of its goal, to the point that they are willing to risk their own lives in its pursuit. They have varied strategies to achieve their political objectives, including guerrilla warfare, terrorism and even conventional warfare. These do not define their objectives; they only describe its methods. The organization may well recur to terrorist actions, but even when such is the case, categorizing it entirely as a terrorist group might not be sufficient to describe its nature. This can be explained through Michel Wieworka's differentiation between violence as a method and as logic of action, which has been used to

---

[2] Definitions of insurgency will be discussed in the second chapter. However, Bard O'Neill introduces the following definition: "a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the former consciously employs political resources (organizational skills, propaganda, and/or demonstrations) and instruments of violence to establish legitimacy for some aspect of the political system it considers illegitimate. Legitimacy and illegitimacy refer to whether or not existing aspects of politics are considered moral or immoral (or, to simplify, right or wrong) by the population or selected elements therein." (O'Neill, 1980, p.1)

analyse the concept of terrorism. An organization may use terrorism as a method to achieve its political objective, but that does not mean that its entire nature, its logic, is to perform terrorist acts (Griset & Mahan; 2002, p.10). In this sense, not all insurgents are terrorists as not all terrorists are insurgents. Terrorism, as guerrilla warfare, is as instrumental for rebels as it is for other actors.

The concept of terrorism is itself a contested one. There is no agreed definition on what constitutes terrorism and who is or isn't a terrorist. More than being scientifically rigorous, the designation of an organization as a terrorist entity responds to politically-motivated interests. Discussing concepts and definitions of terrorism goes beyond the scope of this thesis; it is only of interest to explain the decision to conceptualize FARC as a commercial insurgency.

A similar confusion is brought about by the blurry line that separates insurgents and terrorists from criminals. In general terms insurgents use violence to achieve a political goal, while the criminal does it for personal gain, lacking an ideology. Bruce Hoffman argues that criminals are not concerned with influencing or affecting public opinion, simply desiring to gain money or to accomplish its mercenary task in the quickest and easiest possible way. By contrast, the fundamental aim of a terrorist (and by extension, an insurgent) is ultimately to change the political system, about which the criminal couldn't care less (Hoffman, 2006, p. 36-37).

A similar difference is established by Schmitt when he argues that "a further touchstone that imposes itself on us in present times is the intense political commitment which sets the partisan apart from other fighters. The intensely political character of partisan is crucial since he has to be distinguished from the common thief and criminal whose motives aim at private enrichment." (Schmitt, 2004, p. 10)

Depicting FARC through only one of these concepts, excluding the others, would not suffice as an appropriate explanation to understand its nature. FARC has recurred to terrorist actions as much as to guerrilla warfare, targeting military units and conducting military-like operations. Similarly, just as there are commanders and combatants who are fully convinced of the need to wage war in order to achieve their objective, there are also those more motivated by profit. This may be the case in every organization, but it has been extensively

demonstrated that certain sources (timber, diamonds, oil, emeralds, and more importantly narcotics) stimulate criminal interests within rebel groups, increasing the length of conflict.[3]

In the quest for a more appropriate concept, it is possible to recur to literature developed by Criminologists. They have already analysed the many ways in which criminality and political violence interact, changing the nature of entities, or creating different types of hybrids.[4]

Concepts such as *hybrid entities* or *commercial insurgencies* describe agents which cannot be strictly defined in political or criminal terms, but as a merger in which the political struggle meets the profiting interests of members or groups within the organization. Whereas the first concept is concerned about non-state actors in general, the latter emerges from discussions about insurgency and warfare. The concept of commercial insurgencies then is here developed as a base to explain the nature and character of FARC, since it carries considerable explanatory power for its description.

Steven Metz, a Strategic Studies Scholar at the US Military College in Carlisle, introduced the concept of commercial insurgencies back in the early 1990s (Metz, 1993). This thesis contributes developing the concept further in its interest to explain FARCs construction of networks. It elaborates a particular proposition regarding the structure of commercial insurgencies (the system), and the ways in which it interacts with the region or regions where they operate (the environment).

It proposes that commercial insurgencies display a triadic character composed of complementing and interrelated political, military and criminal dimensions, in motivational and functional terms. For each of the dimensions, particular functional structures or networks are developed, composed by insurgents (nodes, in terms of network theory) who carry out their activities and duties. Through the exploitation of environmental elements, as described before, such nodes can be embedded beyond borders challenging the counterinsurgent state. The interrelation of these dimensions implies that from remaining nodes or structures of one or two dimensions, the commercial insurgency can be reconstructed. This might be the case because environmental processes such as the preservation of the insurgent's ideology and discourse, and the mobility of elements of the

---

[3] This idea has been presented by many authors including David Keen (1998), Mats Berdal (2000), Paul Collier and Nicholas Sambanis (2005), and Cynthia Arnson (2005)

[4] This has been developed through works by Louise Shelley (2002; 2005), Tamara Makarenko (2004), John Picarelly (2005), Chris Dishman (2001) and Phil Williams (2008).

criminal economy allow remaining militants to re-engage with the activities of other dimensions.

It is evident that insurgencies do not exist in a vacuum; they are embedded on their operation environments and to a certain extent depend on them. Understanding this relation is not only vital for the explanation of insurgency and of its strategic opportunities, but for the formulation of appropriate responses. The environment of insurgencies cannot be fully understood through the local and national levels; it is a sort of continuum joining local, national, regional and global levels, in which the division among levels becomes blurry.

Our social and political structures, in global terms, are not those of the Cold War. Today's globalized world is one of extreme interconnectivity. Non-state actors are incrementally exploiting networked forms of organization, or evolving into them, taking advantage of current interconnected information societies, and challenging traditional spaces of action in terms of the territories of individual states.[5] The rise of cyberspace as a theatre of social interaction and political debate, especially social networks as forums of coordinated action, is allowing insurgencies to act as dispersed horizontal entities with interconnected individuals, groups and cells placed in different countries and regions. They are challenging traditional hierarchical notions of organization. More than following Leninist/Castroist paradigms, as witnessed during the Cold War, they are arranged as networked actors.

It is because of this context that I have chosen the complexity paradigm as an approach to explain the characteristics of the insurgency and of the ways in which it relates to its environment. The paradigm bears considerable explanatory power when it comes to deciphering the processes of insurgency, the nature of networks and the relations between system and environment. This is of course not a new approach to the subject. There is a body of literature within Strategic Studies incorporating the paradigm as a base for the study of social action, insurgencies and other non-state actors. For instance, the concept of complex insurgencies introduced by John Mackinlay describes agents that do not follow traditional hierarchical models of organization (Mackinlay, 2009). As it is detailed ahead, the rationale behind the inclusion of the theory is not to determine if FARC is a complex insurgency. Rather, it uses its description of insurgency processes to analyse FARC's activities and structures, and to formulate possible new routes for the organization.

---

[5] This idea has been presented by several authors including John Arquila and David Ronfeld (1997; 2001), Bruce Berkowitz (2003), Robert Bunker (2005), John Sullivan (2005) and Manuel Castells (1996).

I do not intend to argue that it is only now that the international dimension and transnational networks have become relevant for insurgencies, and that my approach is an absolute innovation. As a matter of fact, it is difficult to explain any war as purely national phenomena, and transnational networks have fuelled conflict for decades, both in terms of the provision of materiel and the spread of ideas and discourses. International actions of FARC have already been discussed through media, within official circles and even through the nation. But as I have argued, it is a more rigorous observation of conditions that allow the construction of FARC's networks, beyond political perceptions, which makes a difference.

Now, in terms of the development of literature, this thesis contributes to several debates. First, it presents an alternative narrative for the explanation of FARC beyond reductionist and monolithic concepts such as 'narcoterrorism' which are excessively broad and bear no explanatory power. Similarly, it builds on the literature on the nature, transformation and interactions among non-state actors, including criminals, insurgents and terrorists. It develops the concepts of commercial insurgencies further, introducing a particular proposition of the structure of this type of organization and how it interacts with the environment of operations.

On the other hand, from an International Relations perspective, it contributes to the incorporation of Complexity to the discipline. There are several specific areas of study within International Relations in which this paradigm has been used. One of them is the nature of global networks, including non-state armed actors (Bousquet & Curtis, 2011). Through the analysis of a particular case study, the thesis contributes to this area.

Finally, it builds on the literature of complex and networked insurgencies which has recently grown within International Security and Strategic Studies, as a subfield on International Relations.

Methodological approach

This dissertation is developed as a single case study. FARC constitutes what Martin Barrow, Rod Hague and Breslin Shawn (1998), denominate a *representative* case study. That is, a typical case of the category of commercial insurgencies as it has been pointed out by scholars such as Phil Williams (2008). The purpose of selecting a case study, as opposed to comparative cases, is that a deeper level of detailed analysis is achieved. As it was explained by Audie Klotz, "the analytical usefulness [of a single case study] can outweigh many large n-studies."(Klotz, 2008, p.52) Behind the present study, as it has been explained, there is a

personal interest to achieve a profound analysis of this particular organization. As it will be described, the approach requires observing the insurgency not as a single organization but as a system composed by individuals with diverse interests who perform different tasks. This requires observations in the lowest levels of analysis making it impossible to observe several case studies for a doctoral dissertation.

According to the main argument of the thesis, for the case of FARC, it will be demonstrated that by 2010 networks and structures beyond borders constructed through the exploitation of environmental elements constituted a base for the insurgency to survive. This was the case even when the organization did not constitute a transnational insurgency *per se,* remaining only as a national insurgency with transnational operational networks.

Regarding the time period, the dissertation includes a considerable historical component given the explanation of the configuration of FARC as a commercial insurgency, which requires an observation of the organization's progressive involvement in narcotrafficking. But the emphasis is placed on the administration of President Alvaro Uribe (2002-2010). During these years the insurgency was reduced to its weakest state in its history. Given the increase in guerrilla demobilizations, the killing of several commanders and the seizure of laptops and hard drives from different camps, information about FARC's international strategy became more widely available. The end of the period itself is the limit, in time, of the observation of events and collection of data. Since 2010, there have been significant changes including the killing of two top commanders and the beginning of a new peace process with the government, but these events will not be taken into account.

In that sense, the thesis does not formulate a theory by itself. According to the classification made by George and Bennett (2005), it is an *Atheoretical/configurative idiographic* case study providing descriptions that might be used in subsequent studies for theory building, but not configuring a theory by itself. It is also conceived as a *building block* case study, by analysing a particular subtype of a wider phenomenon. If cocaine is understood as an example of a type of commodity, conclusions can be tested in cases of other commodities to draw more general conclusions for the construction of a theory. In similar terms, if FARC, as a commercial insurgency, is understood as one type of a hybrid entity, results can be compared with those of other type of organizations categorized as hybrid entities in order to raise more general conclusions. In other words, although the thesis is mainly interested in FARC, its conceptual developments and the elements of analysis introduced are instruments for the study of other cases, in the hope of raising wider generalizations.

For the case study, the analysis will be centred on the structures and the networks, both internally and externally, and on how the elements of the environment allow for militants to be embedded beyond borders. Although analysis is not restricted to specific geographical spaces, four countries were selected for the conduction of field research. Colombia was obviously chosen as the primary theatre of operations of FARC, and interviews were conducted as it is detailed ahead. To make observations on the embedment of militants beyond borders, Venezuela, Peru and Chile were selected as countries to conduct interviews. Venezuela is the first and obvious choice being the main haven for insurgents outside Colombia where nodes of the political, criminal and military dimensions are stationed. Although Ecuador had been a second haven, conditions were similar to those in Venezuela: a national government with a similar ideological background, and the embedment of insurgents who perform tasks of the three dimensions. Different scenarios needed to be analysed in order to raise more generalizable conclusions.

Peru was a significant case since the national government had been one of the few allies of the Uribe administration through the region. Ideals of Bolivarianism, which spread through other countries, were not promoted by the government. But as opposed to Venezuela and Ecuador, Peru was far more relevant in terms of cocaine production, and it was widely believed that FARC had alliances with Peruvian armed groups *Sendero Luminoso* and the *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru*. Chile was very different to these cases. Geographically more distant, it doesn't share a border with Colombia. A left-leaning government had been in power, but ideals of Bolivarianism had been foreign to its society. Whereas military and criminal networks of the insurgency were practically non-existent, political nodes had found a relatively positive environment. It was believed that FARC had connections with extremist Mapuche rebel groups operating in this country.

Observations in each of these countries were useful to determine which elements allow the placement of insurgents beyond borders. The similarity of the circumstances of these countries with others in Latin America allowed making wider generalizations for the region. Now, this does not mean that information in other countries was omitted from the analysis, in fact events in Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico, Panama and Nicaragua were very relevant, but interviews were only conducted in the aforementioned countries.

It must be noted that this dissertation is not about the Colombian conflict itself, or about trying to find a solution to the decades-long internal strife that has been experienced in this country. Neither is it a discussion on causal explanations of war and violence in Latin America

or Colombia. It is not about the so-called 'war on drugs' or finding solutions that should be implemented to mitigate drug production and trafficking. It does not pretend to ignore or minimize the role of other actors which have been active and have generated similar or higher levels of destruction as it is the case of paramilitary squads; neither does it argue that a counterinsurgency campaign is more or less ideal than negotiations. The objective is not to suggest recommendations for the Colombian state. Although it does point to several considerations in the conclusion that are of interest for counterinsurgency action, the focus is placed on the insurgency side of the balance.

On the specific use of methods, data was collected from secondary sources (books and journal articles), primary sources (news and reports from research institutions and thinks tanks), and *elite* interviews as it will now be described. The dissertation is mainly analytical-descriptive meaning that qualitative analysis is done from the data collected. Although statistics are relevant in many occasions, there is no general quantitative analysis performed.

On the national level of analysis, it was necessary first to describe the configuration of the commercial insurgency and responses from the counterinsurgent, which demanded a revision of historical sources. For this purpose mainly secondary sources were needed, but the most recent stage required data from primary sources, especially reports from research institutions and think tanks. Information was collected from the Ministry of Defence, the International Crisis Group, *Fundacion Ideas para la Paz* (centre-right of the political spectrum) and *Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris* (centre-left of the political spectrum). On the analysis of structures and networks of the three dimensions within Colombia, sources that have been mentioned were also relevant for data collection, but key interviews were conducted in Bogotá. These included active and retired members of the Military Forces, a former Deputy Minister of Defence, members of research institutions mentioned above, journalists, and most specially, an active member of FARC's political structures. FARC's official documents and websites were also key primary sources for data collection.

Given my background as a former Officer of the Colombian Military Forces, the risk of bias was always considerable. For several years, and for this investigation, I have had access to individuals who provided me with information, or who explained their particular views on the subject. For this reason I have also included a considerable volume of materiel produced by researchers, academics, and members of think tanks who stand on the left of the political spectrum, usually critical of state counterinsurgency action. In most of the cases it was possible to double-check the information provided. For example, a member of an intelligence

organization shared the statutes of the *Partido Comunista Colombiano Clandestino* with me. It was later possible to confirm, through other channels, that the document was indeed original. As a matter of fact, for most of the data regarding the internal (national) conditions of the insurgency, the latter sources proved to me more useful. In general terms, it is possible to observe how I have managed to dodge a possible bias since the perspective from which I explain FARC actually opposes dominant narratives which are common through official circles.

For the collection of data regarding realities in other countries secondary sources were useful, but mainly primary sources and elite interviews were relevant. A key source was the computer of FARC's International Commander, Raul Reyes, which was seized in an operation in Ecuador. It contained a high number of emails and information regarding the international strategy and structures of the organization. Given other governments claims about falsehood of this information, the computers were sent to Interpol for forensic analysis. After a process of evaluation is was proved that information had not been altered and the contents were original. Since then, several academic and official institutions have used this data as a valid source. The International Institute of Strategic Studies published a seminal report regarding linkages between FARC and the governments of Venezuela and Ecuador based on information from the computers, which was also very useful for this dissertation. More than using the report's own vision and perception of the insurgency, the thesis uses the data collected. An online blog and several newspapers and magazines have published data from the computers also becoming sources of data for analysis.

In the countries mentioned elite interviews were held. By *elite* I refer to those conducted with very specific individuals in determined positions, as opposed to mass surveys formulated for wider communities. In each of the countries members of communist, bolivarian or like-minded organizations were interviewed, further avoiding a possible bias based on my background. Members of official or security institutions and 'neutral' parties including journalists and academic researchers were also interviewed.

Dissertation Structure

The structure is designed to construct the necessary arguments for the development of the main thesis. The first chapter begins exploring the paradigm of complexity as a general approach to explain the dynamics of insurgency, and more specifically the interactions of the insurgency, as a system, with its region, as the environment. As it has been said, this

paradigm is chosen not only because of its increasing influence in the current study of security phenomena and social movements and networks, but because it observes organizations as composed by interacting individuals (nodes), emphasising their interrelatedness with the environment of operations.

The chapter discusses several concepts of war and insurgency that are closely related to this approach, particularly complex insurgencies and netwars. The purpose of the inclusion of such concepts is not to advance in their theorisation or conceptualization; rather it is to use their description of insurgencies and non-state actors as a base to explain FARC's characteristics, and to evaluate possible adaptations of the organization into different insurgency models. For example, the description of a networked-complex insurgency paradigm is ideal to discuss a possible direction of several of FARC's institutions beyond the traditional hierarchical structure of the organization.

Similarly, it introduces basic elements of network theory for the analysis of networked structures of FARC. Ideas of topology, network characteristics and failure are useful to think about the insurgency's structural properties and processes.

The second chapter goes deeper into the discussion of the concept of insurgency analysing how the boundaries between insurgency and criminality, as phenomena, are blurry. It discusses several ideas regarding interactions between criminality and political violence, in order to introduce the concepts of hybrid organizations and commercial insurgencies. More importantly, and this is the conceptual core of the dissertation, it further develops the concept of commercial insurgencies with a particular proposition of its characteristics, structure and the interaction with its environment. The idea of the triadic character of commercial insurgencies is introduced along with the description of those dynamics through which the region contributes to its survival and re-emergence.

A third chapter goes into the discussion of counterinsurgency warfare. It is important to note that this is not a thesis on counterinsurgency, and as it was already argued, it does not pretend to formulate counterinsurgency recommendations for the Colombian government. The understanding of FARC's conditions during the period of study would be impossible to determine if the counterinsurgency side of the balance is not incorporated. Insurgent and counterinsurgent are always in a kind of dialogue with actions, reactions and adaptations. They are mutually re-defining its practices. In order to understand how the Colombian state has forced the insurgency to adapt, this chapter describes several counterinsurgency models

as they have been experienced through history. It studies the theory and practice of counterinsurgency through several periods with the objective of observing different models or approaches and their failures. It explains how the practice of counterinsurgency became what it is today.

The fourth chapter jumps into the case study. It explains FARC's formation and its emergence as a commercial insurgency, progressively becoming involved with narcotics. It observes the evolution of state responses to the challenges presented by the insurgency, through the observation of elements of the models introduce in the last chapter. However, it emphasizes on insurgency and counterinsurgency conditions during the Uribe administration (2002-2010) in which FARC experienced its strongest defeats.

The fifth chapter examines and analyses the structures and networks of the political, military, and criminal dimensions within Colombia's internal boundaries, the primary environment as it is defined ahead, discussing elements which allow insurgents to be embedded through different social and geographical spaces. It uses instruments introduced during the first and second chapters to describe the characteristics of FARC's structures and to determine possible directions for the insurgency under the perspective of a network-complex insurgency.

The sixth chapter explores the international dimension, or social-geographical spaces of the environment beyond borders; the secondary environment as it is defined ahead. It describes the construction of FARC's international structures, and it analyses how the insurgency have exploited elements within the environment to embed its combatants beyond borders. As it was the case in the last chapter, elements introduced in the first and second chapters are used to describe the characteristics of such networks.

Finally, the seventh chapter takes this exploration further. Nodes are embedded through different social and geographical spaces, but their implications and opportunities depend on how the insurgency interacts with its region, on how intense this interrelation is. As such, this chapter explains that FARC is a national insurgency with transnational operative functional networks which altogether constitute a base for the insurgency to survive. It uses elements introduced in the first and second chapters for such analysis, and it explores a networked-complex model of insurgencies to formulate a possible future scenario.

Chapter 1: Complexity, networks and warfare

The study of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) through the lens of the Complexity paradigm is framed on the wider and increasing interest in the study of networks within the field of International Security and Strategic Studies; a subfield of International Relations. This paradigm provides an appropriate framework to explain the characteristics and operations of non-state actors, and especially their interaction with the environment. The paradigm has a strong explanatory power to understand how today's strategic environment creates opportunities for this kind of entities to survive beyond the borders of states, challenging their capacity to respond.

Complexity, of course, is not exclusive to the study of war and not even to the study of society in general. It is part of a wider change in the scientific paradigm through which natural and social phenomena have been explained for centuries. The emergence of complexity theory has opened the door to new visions in the explanation of physical, natural and social realities, exploring the interconnected character of agents and their construction of systems, the multidimensional nature of issues, the relevance of linkages among the smallest units, and the symbiotic relations between systems and their environments. In other words, this framework provides the ideal instruments to understand the characteristics of the type of insurgencies explored in this dissertation through FARC as a case study.

The present chapter explains first the premises of the complexity paradigm and its application through the Social Sciences. It then explores the idea of the existence of a networked society, and in particular the propositions of Manuel Castells. Then it discusses the forms of warfare in this 'hyperconnected era', to concentrate more deeply on the characteristics of networked insurgencies. It finally explores social network theory to find instruments of analysis for the case of FARC's structures and networks through the dissertation.

The Linear Paradigm

The emergence of complexity as a model for the explanation of realities is a consequence of a wider shift occurred during the second half of the 20th Century on how humanity observes and understands social, natural and physical phenomena. Thomas Kuhn (1996) explained how scientific disciplines have large periods of stability punctuated by the emergence of new paradigms. Such was the case of the emergence of a period known as the 'enlightment' after

centuries of scientific stagnation during the age of European obscurantism. It is also the case of the rise of complexity after centuries of the construction of a 'linear paradigm'.

This linear paradigm emerged from the ideas of philosophers such as Rene Descartes, Isaac Newton, John Locke and Thomas Hobbes. They believed that in order to decipher natural and social phenomena, processes of experimentation and empirical observation needed to be applied in order to discover their internal rules and to formulate predictions about their ends. In general terms, this vision proposed that every reality could be observed and analysed to discover its processes, allowing the prediction of its consequences and the formulation of laws to explain its nature. It is an understanding of realities as ordered, predictable and with knowledgeable universal laws (Rihani, 2002).

This claim is based on two assumptions: that the chain of causes and consequences is discoverable in every circumstance, and that the universe is deterministic in its nature (Eve, Horsfall & Lee, 1997). The perspective implies an understanding of natural and human realities as systems where processes with specific inputs produce proportional and measurable outputs. It is possible to obtain desirable results according to the knowledge of the input and the process. For example, Newton's fundamental laws, applicable to every single object on earth, constituted an enquiry into the physical world to discover the forces behind body dynamics.

As such, systems display linear behaviours, following determined routines, in which a small change in one of the variables produces a similar and proportional change in the output of system. As a consequence, the system could be understood by the study of its parts. This is why scholars such as Samir Rihani (2002), a Research Fellow at the University of Liverpool, refer to this model as the *linear paradigm*.

With the Industrial Revolution its popularity and acceptance was increased. The application of scientific models resulted in the creation of machinery which generated profound changes in the social and economic structures. It spread through all disciplines from Physics and Chemistry to Economics and the Social Sciences in general, were laws began to be formulated (Rihani, 2002). Typical examples are provided by Adam Smith and David Ricardo, or by Marx's immutable laws of capitalism.

In synthesis, the linear paradigm can be explained through four basic principles:

- Order: Given causes lead into known effects any moment and in any place.

- Reductionism: The system can be understood through the sum of its parts.

- Predictability: When behaviour of the system is defined the future course of events can be predicted.

- Determinism: Processes flow along orderly and predictable paths with clear beginnings and rational ends (Rihani, 2002).

The Complexity paradigm

Further intellectual enquiry into other areas raised doubts about the capacity of the linear paradigm to explain all universal phenomena. Complexity appeared to reject the mechanistic view of society and the universe as predictable, ordered and determined.[6]

Studies conducted by French mathematician, theoretical physicist and philosopher Jules Henri Poincare as early as in the 1890s, began challenging conventional notions of science.[7] Years later, in 1926, Werner Heisenberg proposed his 'uncertainty principle' arguing it was impossible to determine, simultaneously, the position and momentum of any subatomic particle with a great degree of precision (Robertson, 1929). Growing interest on how subatomic physics differed from traditional Newtonian principles motivated further work by prestigious scientists such as Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, Erwin Schrodinger, and Paul Dirac. In general, their discoveries did not necessarily prove linearity was wrong, but at least that not all physical realities followed the logic described by the scientific paradigm. In sum, their observations concluded that:

- Not all bodies in every context follow the rules of physics as presented by Newton.

- The cause and the effects are not necessarily linked and proportional.

- The system is not equivalent to the sum of its parts

- The parts of a system interact in non-predictable ways, generating 'emerging properties' that may change the system's form, direction or output.

- As a consequence, systems are not necessarily directed towards inevitable and distinct ends (Rihani, 2002).

---

[6] These principles were announced by Samir Rihani (2002) as characteristic of the linear paradigm. (p.66)

[7] This was particularly realized by Poincare's study on the *three body problem;* an effort to determine the motions of three bodies from an initial set of data regarding their positions, masses and velocities, demonstrated the emergence of a chaotic system, becoming the cornerstone for the theory of chaos, although the importance of his ideas were not realized until later (Brown, 1996, p. 53)

Although there is no universally agreed definition of complexity, the Santa Fe Group, an organization founded in 1984 in New Mexico under a group of scientists led by John Hooland and Murray Gell-Man with the purpose of studying complexity, offered the following description:

> "Complexity refers to the condition of the universe which is integrated and yet too rich and varied for us to understand in simple common mechanistic or linear ways. We can understand many parts of the universe in these ways but the larger and more intricately related phenomena can only be understood by principles and patterns – not in detail. Complexity deals with the nature of emergence, innovation, learning and adaptation" (Battram, 1988, p.12).

Complexity then believes societies cannot be understood as predictable and ordered systems. Instead it proposes that social, political and economic processes are unpredictable, non-deterministic, and irreducible. It focuses on how interactions between individuals (the parts) generate changes in society itself (the system). The essence, the form, the character and the direction of the latter depends exclusively on how individuals interact in the lowest level; on their conditions, the information they transmit, and the actions they engage in according to specific circumstances in a given moment. In the words of Mary Lee "complexity has to do with the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of components as well as with their freedom to interact, align and organize into related configurations." (Lee, 1997, p.20)

As such, the system is irreducible. It cannot be understood as the addition of its components, since it depends on the conditions of each of its units, on the changes they experience through time, and their interactions with other units. A change in one of its components might trigger a new set of interactions and processes through the system that will ultimately change its configuration. This is also why it is said that the system is non-deterministic, since it is not possible to determine its direction and its ends. This will inevitably depend on the configurations and actions of its elements. As such, causes and effects cannot be understood in linear terms; that is, a specific output cannot be obtained when a proportionate input is provided. Hence **non-linearity** appears as one of complexity's main characteristics**.** Outcomes are not determined by a single but by multiple causes according to the changes they generate through the system. This is known as 'multiple causation' (Byrne, 1998).

According to this explanation, systemic processes depend on the interactions of its units, that is, the system displays bottom-up dynamics instead of top-down coordination. This condition is known as **emergence**. The form, character and direction of the system depend

on the initial conditions of its units, on the interrelation among them (Byrne, 1998). Emergence is defined by Kevin Mihata (1997) as a "process by which patterns or global-level structures arise from interactive local-level processes. This structure or pattern cannot be understood or predicted from the behaviour or properties of the component units alone." (p.31). The key to the study of complexity is to learn about how systems of interacting agents can lead to this 'emergent phenomena' (Byrne, 1998).

This happens because systems produce feedback that alters their internal dynamics according to its relation with the environment. Such feedback is classified as 'negative' when it is absorbed by the system, generating reactions for it to adapt and to return to its initial state. The typical example is body heat. When the temperature in the environment increases, feedback tells the body that it needs to regulate its temperature in order to survive. The hypothalamus then reacts and orders the body to sweat. By contrast, positive feedback comes as information that is not internalized by the system but amplified by it, leading into systemic instability. The generation of new characteristics are 'emergent phenomena'.

This is closely related to the principle of **self-organization**. "Self-organization refers to the process by which the autonomous interaction of individual entities results in the bottom-up emergence of complex systems. In the absence of centralized authority, the spontaneous appearance of patterned order results from the interaction of the parts of the system as they react to the flow of resources through the system."(Bousquet & Curtis, 2011, p.47) This means that units in the lower level will not act according to commands given by a centralized authority but following their own initiative. In that sense, the system will become organized according to unit interactions instead of depending on a determined process or a single source of power who directs it.

By logic, in this type of systems small changes in the initial conditions of its elements do not necessarily produce proportional variations throughout the system. Instead, a small change could generate bigger systemic transformations, but major changes in units may not end generating any variations at all. This is technically known as sensitive **dependence on initial conditions**: "the outcome of the generation of the explanatory variables is sensitive to very small differences in the initial conditions under which the analysis has begun."(Eve et al., 1997, p.xxx) In more common terms this is known as the *butterfly effect*. The analogy describes a butterfly flapping its wings causing a tornado in a geographically distant point. Zygmunt Bauman (2010) describes the butterfly effect as "the capacity for the consequences

of minuscule changes to swell at an exponential rate (...) the rule of the butterfly effect says bluntly that the behaviour of complex systems with a number of mutually independent variables is and will forever remain unpredictable."(p.106)

In complexity, the interaction between the system and its environment is very important. Systems are opened, they have boundaries that are porous and shifting, and they exchange information and energy with their environment (Bousquet & Curtis, 2011). They exist in a process of co-evolution: systems change according to the conditions and input provided by the environment, and at the same time the latter is affected by the output of the former. For this reason **adaptation** is another of the key characteristics. The system will continuously adapt to the conditions provided by the environment and vice versa. In fact, it is sometimes difficult to recognize the line that separates them. "Given a complex system, the environment of the elements constitutes itself through the presence of other elements." (Bousquet & Curtis, 2011, p.47)

Since boundaries are porous and continuously shifting it is difficult to strictly determine where the system ends –which elements belong to it– and where its environment begins. It is sometimes impossible to determine if a node is an exclusive component of the system or if it is only part of the environment. This difficulty is relevant for the analysis of the case study in the present dissertation as it will be detailed in chapters sixth and seventh.

The property of adaptation, together with relations between the system and the environment, has opened the door to the study of a type of system that has been named Complex Adaptive System (CAS). These systems, according to Jon Norber and Graeme Cumming (2008), are made up of interacting components whose interrelations may be complex (non-linear) and display the capacity to learn, generating reactive or proactive adaptive behaviour. They display adaptation, a capacity of the system to change in response to prevailing conditions by means of self-organization, learning and reasoning.

The field of biology offers a wide arrange of examples of this type of systems. In fact, it was through this Discipline that CAS began to be explored more deeply. Chilean biologists Javier Varela and Humberto Maturana were pioneers in the field with their proposition of the concept of *autopoiesis* (self-generation), and their contributions at the Santa Fe Institute. Santa Fe became influential in the fields of Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics and Physics.

Complex adaptive systems can be characterised as follows:

- "They have active internal elements that furnish sufficient local variety to enable the system to survive as it adapts to unforeseen circumstances.

- The systems elements are lightly but not sparsely connected.

- The elements interact locally according to simple rules to provide the energy needed to maintain stable global patterns, as opposed to rigid order or chaos.

- Variations in prevailing conditions result in many minor changes and a few large mutations, but it is not possible to predict the outcome in advance."(Rihani, 2002, p.80).

Examples of complex dynamics can be found in counterinsurgency warfare. In the rush of a military campaign to find and target insurgents, a soldier could end up recurring to excessive force against a civilian in order to obtain information or because he believes there is a connection to the insurgency. The consequences of this act could go far beyond personal injuries. The action can be magnified to create a negative image of counterinsurgent as the enemy acting against people; especially if the insurgency exploits this event to its favour. Taking into account the availability of widespread communication channels, especially through the internet and online social networks, a local isolated event can produce national, or even global, repercussions.

In sum, as explained by Steen Bergendorff (2009), these systems are basically characterised by a "huge amount of interacting particles that, together with energy intake from the environment, produce an overall pattern called 'emergent properties'. These properties differ from the motion of the individual particles and are not reducible to any of them." (p.xii) Shrodinger and Dirge argue that complexity appears when "a system exhibits extreme sensibility to variations in initial conditions. Trivial events could be magnified, through positive feedback, into major upheavals. On the other hand, they might come and go without leaving a trace. A given cause might lead to more than one outcome, and if the process were repeated the results could be, and often are, different."(Rihani, 2002, p.7)

Finally, it is important to note that the study of networks is only natural to the study of complexity. Given the properties that have already been discussed and the interconnectivity of units on the lowest level as the determinant object of the system's nature and form, it is only logical, as it was explained by David Byrne, that the typical structural form of these systems is the network. This explains the development of network theory as a complement to the study of complexity (Byrne, 1998).

The networked society

But, why is complexity relevant in the Social Sciences? Basically, because social worlds are truly complex. Social events, such as stock market crashes, riots, outbreaks of war and peace, the uprising of political movements, and traffic jams, are driven by positive feedback (Byrne, 1998). Insurgency and counterinsurgency are no exceptions. It is possible to think, for example, how the emergence of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, the eradication of coca fields in Peru, or the proliferation of drug-dealing in West Africa generate windows of opportunity for FARC in Colombia, as it will be explored in this dissertation.

Ilya Prigogine and William Allen, two of the most notable scholars of complexity, argued in 1982 that "nonlinearities clearly abound in social phenomena, where a yawn, a desire for an automobile with fins or a lifestyle can spread contagiously throughout a population." (Kiel & Elliott, 1997, p.66) Agents in social systems typically interact in highly non-linear ways. According to Byrne, complexity is an inevitable feature of the nature of social agents as they actively seek connections with one another and alter their behaviour in ways that imply couplings among previously disparate parts of the system (Byrne, 1998). In this sense society is not seen only a system by itself, but the environment in which different systems develop in processes of co-evolution.

This is why complexity theory has permeated the social sciences since the 1950's, especially within Economics.[8] A multiplicity of studies in several fields appeared, explaining natural and social realities from the point of view of complexity or as CAS:

> "For example, the process by which selection among options lead into self-organization and large-scale phenomena is found in such diverse fields as economics (Arthur et al., 1997) stock markets and manufacturing businesses, institutional arrangements (Lansig, 2003), Political Sciences (Ostrom 1998, 2005) and Ecosystems (Levin, 1998, 1999; Holling 1973, 1992)." (Norberg & Cumming, 2008, p.1-2)

Sociologists have embraced complexity as a framework of analysis. Walter Buckley (1998) proposed that complexity is an ideal theoretical framework for sociological studies given its vision of a system as sensitive to both its environment and its internal dynamics, where even

---

[8] Examples in the field are abundant: Benoit Mandelbrot explored the distributions of income over long periods of time; Houtaker, a Harvard Economist, analysed the historic fluctuations in the price of cotton; Gleck proposed that the results of economic analysis could not be modelled on Gaussian terms of average[8]; and Brian Arthur even proposed an entire shift of the science of Economics during the 1970s and 1980s, arguing that increasing returns (positive feedback) explained economic behaviours better than laws. All of these studies are listed by Rihani. (Rihani, 2002, p. 70-72)

slight stimuli may trigger large reactions. Sociology, in his view, must be interested in a system described as "a complex of element components directly or indirectly related in a *network* of interrelationships of various kinds such that it constitutes a dynamic whole with emergent properties." (p.35)

The paradigm has also contributed to the discipline of International Relations. Although its propositions are still marginal, as explained by Antoine Bousquet and Simon Curtis (2011), complexity has invited to reconsider social ontology away from essentialist conceptions of physical and social objects, towards relational and processual ontologies favouring an understanding of phenomena departing from the interaction of agents instead of from the agents themselves. There are three specific areas in which the contribution could be noteworthy: theories of the international system which have been at the centre of the discipline for decades; debates regarding the relations agency/structure given the paradigm's natural linkage between the system and its environment; and the nature of global networks which include the interconnectedness of non-state armed actors (terrorists, insurgents, criminals). The present dissertation is a contribution to this latter field.

However, it was Manuel Castells, a Sociologist and Urbanist at the University of California Berkeley, who formulated a complete theory of a networked society. Castells was influenced by Fritjof Capra, a biologist researching the DNA and a proponent of complexity theory. Capra believed in a networked form of life rejecting the possibility to understand it by reducing it to its constitutive parts. He proposed that life should be understood as a property emerging from the interplay of heterogeneous components of which DNA is only one.

In three volumes, *The Rise of the Network Society*, *End of Millennium* and *The Power of Identity* Castells explores the information revolution as a source of change in the economy, society and culture, including gender relationships, the construction of identity, the participation of social movements, the transformation of political processes, and the crisis of the state. Castells objective is to present "some elements for an exploratory, cross-cultural theory of economy and society in the information age, *as it specifically refers to the emergence of a new social structure*" (Italics in the original text) (Castells, 1996b, p.27). He believes that in all sectors of society a transformation in the organization of processes from hierarchies to networks is being witnessed. He argues that "networks constitute the new social morphology of our societies, and the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power and culture." (Castells, 1996b, p.469)

Felix Stalder (2006), one of the most recognized Scholars on actor-network theory, believes Castell's contribution is "the single most comprehensive framework of a networked society, connecting in an integrated analysis, very diverse phenomena" (p.1). He notes how Castell's propositions are framed on the ideas of complexity since he believes the network society has the ability to deliberately alter its own path of development: the interaction of a widely varied number of individuals and institutions generate emergent dynamics that cannot be understood through the sum of its parts.

Castells argues that as enterprises and multinational companies take advantage of the highly interconnected world, so do actors such as criminals and terrorists. *Hyperconnectivity* creates the opportunity for criminals to increase their cooperation, their ties; their possibility to diversify their operations and their geographical scope; to reach new markets and hide their assets; to ease the difficulties and reduce the costs of their actions, to find escape valves when persecuted by a particular state.

This is what Castells denominates the *Global Criminal Economy*. He argues that while crime has existed since biblical times, the networking of powerful criminal organizations and their associates is essentially a product of the networked society (Castells, 1996a). The Sicilian Cosa Nostra, American Mafia, the Colombian Cartels, the Mexican mafia, Nigerian criminal networks, the Yakuza, the Chinese Triads, the Russian Mafiyas, the Turkish heroin traffickers, and the Jamaican Posses have come together in a global diversified network that has permeated boundaries.

In the past three decades, criminal organizations have established their operations transnationally making the most of the economic globalization and the new communications and transportation technologies. Their strategy is to base management and productions in low risk areas and make their preferential markets where demand is higher. Such is the case of narcotics, both cocaine produced in the Andes, a process in which FARC is deeply involved, and heroin in Southeast and Central Asia.

According to Castells, criminal organizations cooperate and establish arrangements, joint ventures and strategic alliances following the organizational logic of legal networked enterprises. Transnational crime includes an extraordinary diversity of operations making it "an increasingly diversified and interconnected global industry" including weapons trafficking; smuggling nuclear material, illegal immigrants, women and children; and money laundering (Castells, 1996a, p.177). As exemplified by Sicilian and Colombian mafias, their

networking activities include both internal and external linkages (Castells, 1996a). The Sicilians display a wide amount of local connections among groups, clans, landowners, businessmen and families within the island, while extending its connections to groups and individuals, especially family clans, in the United States, Canada and Australia. The Cali Cartel in Colombia was similarly constituted by a complex web of individual connections in Colombia but with linkages to other actors overseas such as individuals in the Unites States or even the Russian and Japanese mafias.

This is a precise description of the networked context in which insurgencies and commercial insurgencies operate, and FARC is no exception. As it will be explored in following chapters, it has internal and external connections with criminal organizations, including paramilitary squads and Mexican cartels. But its connections are not exclusively constructed in function of criminal purposes; this perspective is also valid for its political and military linkages. In general terms, FARC is connected with armed organizations and political and social movements all through Latin America and even Europe.

Castells explains that flexibility becomes strategic for the survival of criminal organizations. When pressure from the state and international forces becomes excessive in a given country, even in a region that has been 'safe' for organized crime, the flexibility of the network allows it to shift its organizational structure, moving supply bases, altering transportation routes, and finding new places of residence for their bosses. Escaping police control through networking and globalization allows organized crime to keep its grip on national bases. This was evident with Sicilian mafias in 1995 and 1996, and Medellin and Cali Cartels in 1994 and 1996 (Castells, 1996a). As it will be seen, **flexibility** is a property of FARC's networks, not only those of the criminal dimension, but also political and military ones, and it is one of the main factors behind its possibility to survive and re-emerge. It is expressed, as it will be analysed through the dissertation, in the differentiated exploitation of particular elements such as sympathy from individuals, support from particular governments, alliances with armed organizations, connections with political and social movements, the exploitation of spaces with no strong institutional dominion of particular states, and the creation of conditions to place secretive nodes in other societies.

Networks in Strategic Studies

Beyond the ideas of Castells, the complexity paradigm and the study of networks have become central to Strategic and Defence studies, not only because of its explanatory power

regarding non-state actors including terrorist organizations, insurgencies, and transnational criminal enterprises, but also to understand the transformation of conventional military forces. The acceptance of this paradigm within War Studies is explained by one of the main principles of warfare: that societies, including non-state actors, fight according to their social and economic conditions. In other words, that the way societies wage war is determined by the realities of their context. Colin Gray (2005), one of the most recognized scholars in the field, has insisted on the importance of the context for warfare: "Warfare is social and cultural, as well as political and strategic, behaviour. As such it must reflect the characteristics of the communities that wage it."(p.25). In that sense, agricultural societies fought for land possession with basic instruments given their lack of technological progress; industrial societies incorporated mechanical and thermonuclear machinery to warfare reaching unprecedented levels of destruction; and today, in a densely hyperconnected world, the network has become essential for waging war. Christopher Coker (2012) summarizes this idea when he argues that "every era fights war differently, in every age war has its own distinctive characteristics."

This premise is shared by numerous scholars who, from different perspectives, have explained how networks and information are central to our understanding of today's war. These include Alvin and Heidi Toffler, Philip Bobbitt, John Sullivan, Steven Metz, Stephen Sloan, Robert Bunker, Bruce Berkowitz, Ronald Deibert and Janice Gross Stein. Several generalizations can be stated from their propositions. The first premise is that the network has become the "dominant form of social organization in the post-industrial society."(Deibert & Gross-Stein, 2003, p.160) We are living in an era of information and interconnection, and since societies fight the way they make profit, information and networks have become central to the ways of warfare (Toffler & Toeffler, 1994). Our states and societies are changing from nationally-based to market-based. Power is increasingly determined by the flow of capitals with low barriers and through borderless spaces. Advances in finances and telecommunications create a disparity between the rapid movement of international capital and the territorially bounded actions of the nation-state. These market societies have their own way of fighting through varied sources of interconnection. However, it hasn't been the state who has adapted more effectively to this reality; terrorist organizations have managed to adapt to network structures better (Sullivan, 2005). "Global networks of terror are enabled by conditions unique to our times, conceivable only in a world that is highly interconnected" (Deibert & Gross-Stein, 2003, p.162). Today,

the interaction between terrorism, crime and private armies describe change on global conflict:

> "Societal changes associated with the accessibility of information technology that stimulate networked organizational forces are changing the nature of conflict and crime. New, increasingly non-state, entities and organizational structures are adapting to these circumstances and altering the global political landscape." (Sullivan, 2005, p.69)

The increase of all sorts of communication channels at societal levels including mobile technologies, online forums, blogs, online social networks such as Facebook, YouTube, and twitter, coupled with the increasing ease to travel and the global reach of powerful news stations, have in the practice created physical and virtual borderless spaces of social interaction.

Events in remote regions are not only known by individuals all around the world, they can also trigger organized political and social responses by communities in more than a single state. The violent reaction of Iranian authorities to the popular mobilization that challenged the results of the national election in 2009, was observed all over the world given citizens own capacity to upload videos and messages through online social networks. The decision of an ultra-conservative Evangelical pastor in a small community in Florida to declare a 'burn-a-Koran day' was known all through the Muslim world triggering a wave of anti-Americanism and protests that further challenged the efforts of coalition troops in Afghanistan. Insurgencies and armed organizations exploit this context. They adapt to it and use it to their advantage. They use these platforms to expand their operations beyond borders. This is why it is constantly argued that these dynamics are a challenge to the national state as an authority since their capacity to act only within its sovereign space is incompatible with the transnational character of the processes that explain these organizations. This is true for several elements in the case of FARC as it will be explored ahead in the dissertation.

For this reason there have been numerous theoretical and conceptual propositions to incorporate networks as central elements in the study of war. Concepts do not exclusively refer to non-state actors, as it was mentioned before, they also explain transformations of conventional military forces in order to adapt to the strategic context of interconnectedness.

For example, the concept of *network-centric warfare* could be understood in a very wide sense as a form of war that brings together different units or agents which act in an

interconnected manner towards the same objective. But in strict sense this concept had been developed by military officials and authors such as Arthur K. Cebrowski, John Gartska, Richard Heyes, David Signori and Frederic Stein as part of US doctrine formulated for conventional forces to assimilate networked forms of organization.[9] Since this dissertation is about insurgencies and criminality, this concept will not be further explored in order to focus on how complexity and networks are valuable to analyse non-state actors. In that sense a vision of networked insurgencies and concepts such as *netwar* and *complex insurgencies* become more useful.

Complexity and networked insurgencies

The information age, this era of hyperconnectivity in which communication technologies allow societies to be more interconnected and to learn and act in respect of events occurring all around the globe, has motivated the growth of networked political and social movements, including insurgencies, which are not strictly restrained to the territories of particular states. Rather, they are fed by the realities of different societies with shared political values and objectives.

John Arquila and David Ronfeldt believe that an era of conflict and crime has risen as highly connected, diffused and dispersed networks of non-state combatants, criminals and terrorists replace hierarchical structures based on the great man leadership model.[10] They have introduced the concept of *netwar,* which they define as:

> "an emergent mode of conflict (and crime) at societal levels, short of traditional
>
> military warfare, in which the protagonist use network forms of organization and
>
> related doctrines, strategies, and technologies attuned to the information age.
>
> These protagonists are likely to consist of dispersed organizations, small groups
>
> and individuals who communicate, coordinate and conduct their campaigns in
>
> an internetted manner, often without a precise central command. Thus, netwar
>
> differs from modes of conflict and crime in which the protagonists prefer to

---

[9] Four books were published in order to develop the concept thoroughly: *Network-Centric Warfare: its origin and future,* by Arthur Cebrowski and John Gartska. *Power to the Edge: Command and Control in the Information Age,* by David Alberts and Richard Hayes, *Understanding Information Age Warfare,* by David Alberts, John J. Gartska, Richard E. Hayes and David Signori, and *Network Centric Warfare, Developing and Leveraging Information Superiority,* by David Alberts, John Garstka and Frederick Stein.

[10] John Arquila and David Ronfeldt presented the concept of 'Netwar' in a series of academic publications beginning with *Cyberwar is Coming in 1993*. A full exposition was made afterwards in a RAND report entitled *The Advent of Netwar* published in 1996, with further development in the book *In Athena's Camp* published in 1997. Later, a revision was made in their article *Netwar Revisited* published in 2002. Other authors have followed in the construction of this concept and its application to case studies. Ian Lesser, on another RAND report entitled *Countering the New Terrorism*, discusses the problem of terrorism from the netwar perspective.

develop formal stand-alone, hierarchical organizations, doctrines and strategies as in past efforts, for example, to build centralized movements along Leninist lines." (Arquila & Ronfeldt, 2001, p.6)

In other words, far from the traditional hierarchical and centralized model of military structure, non-state actors (terrorists, insurgents and criminals) are increasingly becoming organized as a loose set of interconnected organizations, groups, cells and individuals which pursue the same end and coordinate their activities through a wide range of channels offered by modern communication technologies. If the model is taken to the extreme it would be possible to observe, for example, that an insurgency might not even be composed by a single organization but by a group of agents, both legal and in the margins of the law, which are bounded by the same visions, political principles, philosophical background or interests. This explains the possibility of interoperability without centralized command and control. This perspective is useful to analyse FARC's connections with a series of actors, legal and illegal, through the Americas, recognizing if they are part of the same processes of insurrection or if they respond to particular interests.

Antoine Bousquet (2008) described this phenomenon as "systems [that] are composed by many independent parts which are arranged in a non-linear fashion, making centralized control no longer desirable."[11] Metz (2000) describes it as "a web of strategic partnerships, and strategic flexibility based on project teams or group works rather than hierarchies or bureaucracies."(p.viii). Bruce Berkowitz (2003) refers to it, in similar terms, as the *fighting network,* with the following characteristics:

- A structure developed around a series of interconnected autonomous cells of varied sizes.
- Each cell is armed with potential weapons that count on a high level of lethality.
- The cells are linked together by a network of communications, logistics, command and control. (p.16-17)

An interesting feature of the definition of netwar is that the authors describe it as a form of both conflict and crime. This means that the concept, in scope, is applicable to agents who pursue social/political ends or economic self-interests. This is particularly instrumental for the present dissertation since the organizations under analysis, and FARC as a case study, are

---

[11] Bousquet also centres his thesis on complexity theory. He has analysed warfare through historical scientific paradigms. He recognizes four paradigms each of which develops its own particular style of warfare: mechanistic, thermodynamic, cybernetic, and chaoplexic. The name of the latter is derived from chaos and complexity which he recognizes as typical of the current age. (Antoine Bousquet, 2008, p.209-212)

real hybrids mixing political objectives and criminal interests, as it will be detailed in the following chapter. In that sense, the structural propositions of the concept are fully applicable to the organizations.

Since netwar is a type of war that emerges at societal levels, then the structure and characteristics of societies determine its implications, converging with the key premise of warfare introduced earlier. The information era and the context of hyperconnection determine its characteristics which are thoroughly described and understood through the complexity paradigm.

Insurgencies, as well as other political and social movements, may emerge by the initiative of several individuals and organizations without the specific order of a superior authority. Using modern technologies as well as physical spaces and traditional communication channels, agents become organized, make decisions and act in order to achieve their objectives, spread their ideas, and incorporate more actors in the campaign. Their acts might be violent or might be purely political. As a matter of fact the authors described two types of netwar: civil-society activism and violent terrorism or insurgency.

An example can be found in Howard Rheingold's concept of *smart mobs* as explained by Coker (2009). These are waves of violence made up by individuals connected by text messaging. The action which initially does not describe the participation of a considerable amount of individuals, acquires a life of its own as increased participation generates a critical mass. As cases, Coker cites the rioters who derailed the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in 1999 who used swarming tactics, mobile phones, websites, laptops, and hand-held computers; riots in Paris in 2005 which began as a crowd of mainly unemployed Muslims which became quickly contagious as images and reports spread through media. Similar dynamics can also be found in the creation of spontaneous illegal raves where party-goers spread the word through their mobile systems recruiting thousands of partiers.

These examples illustrate principles of complexity such as emergence, in that the process is created by nodes at the lowest level without an instruction from a superior directive; and self-organization since the units, according to their objectives and conditions will determine their own processes and acts without a centralized higher command.

But more importantly, complexity explains the relation between system and environment or agent and structure. The intense interaction between both is a typical feature of the hyperconnected society. Insurgencies in the information era find elements through the

environment that make them increasingly transnational. Communication channels and technologies have the possibility to spread their messages globally, creating a capacity to reach a borderless global community which might act for or against its claims in very diverse ways.

But it is not only the communications dimension which give insurgencies such opportunities. As explained by Castells, the increasing transnational, and even global, character of all social processes create wide opportunities for insurgencies to spread its networks through different regions, exploiting elements within the environment to their favour, challenging the power and capacity of states. John Sullivan has described this phenomenon:

> "as the ability to wage war devolves from hierarchical organizations to internetworked transnational actors we are witnessing the evolution of the new war-making entities capable of challenging the primacy of nation-states."
> (Sullivan, 2005, p.69)

As it will be analysed in the following chapters, insurgencies, and particularly commercial insurgencies, (the system) exploit elements within their regions and the international system (the environment) to place nodes of their military, political and criminal networks beyond the borders of a single state. This ultimately creates the possibility for the insurgency to survive if the state offensive is intense. Survival will always open the door to the possibility for the insurgency to return when conditions are appropriate.

Several of these elements have been gathered by John Mackinlay in a concept that, together with the idea of netwar, becomes useful to understand insurgencies in the information era and in the context of hyperconnectivity. This former British Army Officer and war scholar at Kings College London defines *complex insurgencies* as:

> "A campaign by globally dispersed activists and insurgents who seek to confront the culture and political ideals of a nation or group of nations that are seen to challenge their interests and way of life"(Mackinlay, 2006, p.vii).

This concept directly appropriates the premises of complexity since the dynamics of this kind of insurgencies are explained through the paradigm's principles. When we conceive an insurgency as 'a campaign by globally dispersed activists and insurgents' we inherently accept the conditions of complexity –self-organization, emergence, flexibility and adaptability– that were described before. But it must be noted that this description also implies a blurring between the system and its environment. Since dispersed activists and

insurgents are part of the campaign, they might act in diverse forms and in different scenarios, making it difficult to recognize who is and who isn't a member of the insurgency. This boundary will be constantly changing and evolving as individuals, groups or organizations join or leave the campaign. Since events and ideas exist in a borderless global society, those individuals are not necessarily placed in a single territory; they might be, as the definition states, 'globally dispersed'.

In a similar direction Bruce Berkowitz (2003), a Researcher at Stanford University and the RAND Corporation, has referred to the disappearance of the concept of military front. He argues that "everything and everyone is becoming part of the battle as insurgencies become blended with their societies, as they successfully embed within civilian communities, or even more, when the entire society becomes a potential insurgency." (p.4) Information technology, and more specifically communication capabilities, allows armies to disperse and deploy covertly within their adversaries, elevating the profile of civilians surrounding the combatants.

The difficulty to establish a clear difference between the system and the environment is also related to the impossibility to neatly separate the defence and the offense. Ian Lesser (1999) studied this dilemma by recognizing the *blurring* and the *blending* of the offensive and the defensive. By blurring he refers to the specific difficulty to make a distinction between attacking and defending actions, especially when offense is used in the name of self-defence. He observed this as yet another characteristic of netwar since in this type of warfare the agent "tends to defy and cut across standard boundaries, jurisdictions, and distinctions between state and society, public and private, war and peace, war and crime civilian and military, police and military, and legal and illegal."(p.54)

By *blending* Lesser refers to a mix of the strategic and tactical levels of operations. For example, he notes, "guerrilla on the defensive strategically may go on the offense tactically" (p.53). An ambush against a military convoy is an offensive act tactically, and it might even be presented as a powerful act of strength, but it may happen in a context were the insurgency is weak strategically, without the possibility to recur to a stronger and sustainable type of action to achieve its dominion over specific positions or territory.

On the offensive, this type of insurgencies and netwar combatants operate by swarming. "Swarming occurs when the dispersed nodes of a network of small forces converge on a target from multiple directions. The overall aim is the *sustainable pulsing* of force or fire.

Once in motion, swarm networks must be able to coalesce rapidly and stealthily on a target, then dissever and redisperse, immediately ready to recombine for a new pulse."(Lesser, 1999, p.53) Such units demonstrate more flexibility, a higher capability to adapt and to perform specific functions, working as intercommunicated infestation teams. As a consequence, according to Antoine Bousquet (2008), communication capabilities, information sharing and parallel processing have become extremely relevant.

Robert Bunker and Matt Bergett (2005) describe networks on the offensive as free floating cells and nodes linked via information channels, forming a web-like pattern. They benefit from ease of connectivity, allowing them to be established and terminated as required with little or no effort. Since no middle layers are necessary, there is a flat integration. Such networks are characterized by speed and combat multiplication.

On the defensive, well-constructed networks tend to be redundant and diverse given the relative ease to replace their nodes, making them robust and resilient to adversity. They are difficult to crack and defeat as a whole. They may be able to defy counter-leadership targeting since the elimination of specific nodes does not immediately lead into the collapse of the network. Attackers may be able to find and confront portions of the network, but the possibility of other nodes to survive provides the opportunity for the organization's structure to heal and reconstitute (Lesser, 1999). This is very relevant to discuss FARC's possibilities to survive.

The *hacktivist* group Anonymous, not to mention Al Qaeda, is a common example of this type of organization. As a loose set of hackers (the nodes) they are spread through the world without belonging to a particular national context, but fighting for 'global' causes. In that sense they are de-territorial. But cells in different countries, presumably with local hackers, also wage national campaigns, so they can also be considered as a transnational organization. Some of them should be intercommunicated in order to coordinate their activities, while others might have fewer connections, but they do not follow centralized command and control procedures. Cells in Peru, Spain or Australia are not waiting for a direct order by a commander to operate; they act on their own initiative.

It could be said that Anonymous, although having a core composed by its creators and most important nodes, works more as an idea, a brand or an umbrella, than as an organization. Several *hacktivists* which find the idea attractive could decide to act by themselves. In that sense leadership is symbolical more than operational: if the main nodes are disabled

(captured), the idea and the brand of Anonymous remains, inviting other hackers, cells or groups to continue acting in the same direction.

Terrorism expert, Bruce Hoffman, was one of the first scholars to conceptualize about a *globalized insurgency*. He described it as a unique insurgency with no centre of gravity, no common leadership and no hard-wired organizational structures, only a series of cells linked through the Internet. He describes Al Qaeda as "a de-territorialized, Internet-based movement which uses terrorism as a tactic to subvert the international system." (Coker, 2008, p.83) This terrorist/insurgent organization is not restricted to a particular state, rather to the wider Muslim world. In pursue of its objectives it clashes with agents inside Muslim societies and with external actors including Western societies.

Al Qaeda had been taking over other Islamist insurgencies, co-opting them by spreading a radicalized discourse (Kilcullen, 2005). David Kilcullen (2005) refers to this phenomenon as the creation of accidental guerrillas which are exploited by a transnational movement and fought through dozens of localized countries. He explains that "Al Qaeda moves to remote areas, creates alliances with local traditional communities, and exports violence that prompts western intervention in order to generate support for its agenda."(p.34) This vision is shared by Rebeca Goolsby who argues that "Al Qaeda filled the needs of Islamist insurgencies and then developed into a complex system of networks by co-opting other groups, hijacking their agendas and transforming their ideologies" (Goolsby, 2006, p.7).

In similar terms to Anonymous, Al Qaeda could also be understood as a brand more than as an organization; as a dispersed group of activists, insurgents, cells and organizations which decide to act in their name and in the name of Al Qaeda through different territories. Such agents have mastered the use of communication technologies as channels of coordination, indoctrination, recruitment, and networking for the purpose of attack. Online forums, blogs, websites, mobile phone chats, e-mails, online social networks, cafes, libraries and mosques have been of common use. Militants have perfectly blended with their environments.

As in the case of Anonymous, and as a feature of complex organizations, it is not certain how the elimination of its leader will contribute to the collapse of the organization. Complexity scholars Russ Marion and Mary Uhl-Bien (2003) have studied the role of leaders in complex and hierarchical organizations. Using Al Qaeda as a case study they arrive to the conclusion that the whole system in a networked insurgency does not even depend on its leaders, in this case Osama Bin Laden and his closest collaborators. The insurgency nurtures itself from

ideas, claims and grievances than are not only deeply rooted within societies where they operate, but that have been exacerbated by the discourse to the point where it has become a system by itself without depending on its leaders. As such, leaders turn out to be more motivational symbols than organizational administrators and commanders. In their words:

> "[Osama bin Laden is] a product of a new social structure. A new social feeling in the Muslim world, where you have strong hostility not only against America, but also against many Arab and Muslim regimes who are allying to America (...) And that's why if bin Laden was not there, you would have another bin Laden. You would have another name, with the same character, with the same role, of bin Laden now. That's why we call it a phenomenon not a person." (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2003, p.54).

In the end, authors as Arquila, Ronfeldt and Bunker warn that hierarchies do not constitute the ideal structure to wage war in the context of the information society. Overwhelming force is not only useless but probably even counterproductive. Enemies cannot be defeated by one single blow since there is no unique objective, but multiple objectives and multiple heads (Arquila, 2008). For this reason they believe that whoever manages to exploit the advantages offered by networks structures will have a considerable advantage, hence the premise 'it takes a network to defeat a network'. Sullivan and Bunker (2005), and Mackinlay (2005) speak about multilateral counterinsurgency networks as a viable solution to the dilemmas of netwar.

The following key points summarize the characteristics of networked insurgencies as observed from the complexity paradigm:

- More than being structured as traditional military hierarchies with defined standard operating procedures, non-state actors are organized as a network of organizations, small groups (cells) and individuals.
- They tend to be de-territorial, extending through social communities beyond the borders of a particular state.
- Nodes are interconnected through diverse types of channels in order to coordinate actions, to communicate and to spread their ideas through social communities. They use both opened public channels, such as the internet, mobile technologies, social networks, and private means; even basic ones such as human couriers.
- The expansion of the network is closely related to the capacity of spreading the organization's discourse. Psychological and information operations thus become increasingly relevant, as well as the cohesion and legitimacy of the ideology. As

such, the metaphysical dimension of war becomes as relevant as the physical, while the conduct and outcome of conflicts develop around knowledge and the use 'soft power'.

- In operational terms, more than following the traditional approach of overwhelming the enemy with a concentration of mass in the point of attack, they *swarm* towards the objective. This means that they approach their target from different directions and with smaller units.

- As in complexity, they are opened systems, meaning that there is no clear boundary between the organization and the societies where they operate. Instead, they are embedded in society. A blurry border allows for individuals to become 'members' of the organization in a specific moment.

- This also means, as complexity explains, that the actor is in a process of constant adaptation, depending on the conditions imposed by the environment. (i.e. the spread of political ideas within the nation or a region, the dynamics of attack-defence with state forces, the opportunities offered by the international system, etc.) As such, different actions will depend on the variation of moments and spaces, and their success will be determined by how effectively the organizations is capable of recognizing and exploiting such spaces.

- In that sense, membership to an organization is not necessarily defined in formal terms: militants do not need to live in isolated geographical spaces, marginalized from their societies, wearing uniforms and following military-like routines and procedures. Any individual inspired by a set of ideas may decide to act, and by getting connected through the appropriate communication channels he might find the support he needs. In many cases, violent actions are not the only form of support for the organization. 'Political' actions in the order of spreading the discourses and reaching wider audiences might also constitute group support.

- The virtual dimension of war is thus vital. The war of ideas is as important as the war of force. It is the existence of a common set of ideas and a spreading discourse which allows individuals to be identified with the groups; which gives cohesion to the network as a whole. Symbols, figures, concepts and brands are very relevant to this end. Without a common understanding of the problem, of the legitimate means to achieve the objective, and perception of the enemy, the network is in risk of falling apart. The centrality of ideas and the spread of information are typical symptoms of the information age.

- As a consequence of what has now been stated, centralized command and control is not necessary. Leaders, such as Osama bin Laden, might function more as inspirational symbols than as effective operational commanders making every single decision. This means that the disappearance of a leader might not destroy the organization because the ideas, the objectives and other symbols remain.

- As in complexity, the logic behind the organization is one of emergence. Instead of combatants waiting for commands to be dictated from the top of the hierarchy, they are more autonomous on their decisions to act. In that sense the system's logic is bottom-up instead of top-down.

The Study of Social networks

It is now necessary to look into one of the fields that has developed in close relation to complexity theory, and that has fed the study of non-state actors from the perspective of networks for years. Social network theory provides instruments to understand insurgency's structures, strengths and weaknesses.

This field has grown as an interdisciplinary construction: physicists, mathematicians and computer scientists have contributed in our understanding of the dynamics, topologies, flows and structural characteristics of the networks through advance modelling, testing and computational skills. Social scientists, sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists have contributed to understand the behaviour of communities, societies and individuals in the globalized networked environment.

Through complexity, a particular understanding of networks has been disseminated. The definition of a network proposed by Pierre Musso offers an insight into this change: "an unstable structure of connections composed of interacting elements, whose variability follows certain functional rules" (Stalder, 2006, p.178). This means that networks, instead of being stable and static structures are the result of continuous internal readjustments given the interactions among its elements and with the environment. In his view networks are more flexible and unstable than it was initially conceived, with nodes added and dropped with relative ease. This will be clearly observed, for example, through the dynamics of FARC's international networks in the sixth and seventh chapters.

Duncan J. Watts (2003) provides similar explanations. What used to be a vision of networks as static objects, has given way to a dynamic vision of complexity, change and evolution: they are seen as representations of individuals (or units) that are doing something; they are

dynamic objects not just because things happen within systems but because the networks themselves are evolving, and change is driven by the decisions of the very components. This is a clear reference to the 'sensitivity to initial conditions' explained before.

Stalder (2006) has also explored emergent properties in network configurations. In his view, complexity is evident because there are no formalized procedures for a node to resolve conflicts arising from interaction; no single actor with formal authority to impose its will on other participants. There are no command and control structures making the forms of the network dependant on a continuous inter-definition of their participants.

He believes that social networks today should be understood as an enduring form of social organization, composed of asymmetrical, interacting elements held together by a shared set of values, standards, or functional rules. They are coordinated through an on-going negotiation in which elements re-define not only the network's identity but also their positions within it; and this process of self-definition creates a permanent condition of flexibility. The transformations of the networks are not entirely random deriving into total chaos; they follow the network's own internal logic according to its identity or its functional rules.

The modern scientific study of networks has an origin in the studies of Leonhard Euler, a prolific Swiss mathematician and physicist who made several major contributions in varied fields during the mid-1700s. He began to develop graph theory by studying possible routes to cross a river across seven bridges in the Prussian town of Konigsberg, creating what is considered to be the first analysis of a network. Later studies by mathematicians Couchy, Hamilton, Cayley, Kirchoff and Polya constituted a boom in graph theory. But, as it has been explained by Laszlo Barabasi (2002), a Scientist and Professor at the University of Notre Dame, a more complete body of theory was formed during the 1950's with the contributions of two Hungarian mathematicians, the prolific Paul Erdoz, who holds a record of more than 1500 papers published, and his colleague Alfred Rengi.

A first approach adopted by Erdoz and Rengi was centred on randomness as the organizing principle of networks, especially in social networks: Nodes establishing connections randomly rather than by following determined patterns or criteria of order. The typical example is the cocktail party where several individuals are put together in a single room. As it can be expected, they will start to introduce each other forging several connections between them. The number of connections established will depend on their personality.

Randomness means irregularity: nodes in a network will have a different amount of connections. Very few elements will have either an extremely high or low amount of linkages, while most of the nodes will demonstrate an average number of them. In statistical terms this is known as the Poisson distribution (Figure 1.1)

But the principle of randomness was insufficient to explain all the dynamics and realities of networks, and the need for a more sophisticated approach became evident. Hungarian writer Frigyes Karinthy was the first to raise the issue of social interconnectedness in his novel *Lancszemek* (chains) published in 1929. He suggested that the world was shrinking because of IT and communication technologies which were compressing distances, shortening durations, and connecting people in denser human networks. Characters in this novel believed that any two people in the world would be connected by five acquaintances and proposed and experiment to prove it:

> "One of us suggested performing the following experiment to prove that the population of the Earth is closer together now that they have ever been before. We should select any person from the 1.5 billion inhabitants of the Earth –anyone, anywhere at all. He bet us that, using no more than five individuals, one of whom is a personal acquaintance, he could contact the selected individual using nothing except the network of personal acquaintances."[12]

Stanley Milgram, a Professor of Social Psychology at Harvard University, became intrigued by the possibility of measuring how connected societies were. In 1967 he conducted an experiment determining the number of persons through which any individual would have to go through in order to reach any other individual within the United States. Through a system of procedures and rules that he modelled, he managed to make geographically and socially remote individuals send letters through known contacts to their destination in order to be able to count how many intermediaries were necessary. [13] The result was an average of 5.5 people. The 'distance' between any two individuals within the country was then calculated in six persons. The name of the theory however was not Milgram's invention. That was done, without purpose, by the American Playwright John Guare who created a Broadway play entitled *Six Degrees of Separation*.

Milgram's experiment was later tested on an international level by Duncan Watts, Petter Dodds, and Roby Muhamad using emails instead of letters. The result was surprisingly

---

[12] Fragment of the novel by Frigyes Karinthy. (Rifken, 2009, p. 473)
[13] As individuals to be contacted Milgram selected the wife of a graduate student in Massachusetts and a stock broker in Boston. Starting points were determined to be individuals in Wichita, Kansas and Nebraska, who were assumed to be remote to the former. (Barabasi, 2002)

similar; in average only six individuals separated any two people in the world (Christakis & Fowler, 2009). These results where further tested by computer scientist Jure Leskovec and Microsoft researcher Eric Horvitz in 1997. "Using instant electronic messages of 30 billion conversations among 180 million people all over the world, they corroborated the small world theory that only 6.6 degrees of separation exist between any two strangers." (Rifken, 2009, p.474)

These findings were useful to challenge the image of the world as a series of disconnected, large, unbounded societies; introducing instead a vision of a social network with nodes that are close to each other, and with an elevated number of interconnections. Further studies with other objects such as the internet, molecules in a cell, species in food webs or neurons in the brain, proved that small separations were not only common between humans but also in other networks. Sociologist Mark Granovetter concluded that networks were "many highly connected clusters linked to each other by weak ties" instead of randomly organized nodes (Barabasi, 2002, p.47). This idea was further explored in Watts and Strogatz's *Nature,* in which the idea of *small world* networks was formally introduced. They proposed that society is organized through **clusters**, which are essentially dense groups of highly interconnected nodes within the network. (Figure 1.2) Jeroen Bruggeman (2008) defines a cluster as "a relatively more densely connected subgraph within a sparser graph." (p.134) They do not display defined limits within the networks, if such was the case it would be a **clique** instead of a cluster.
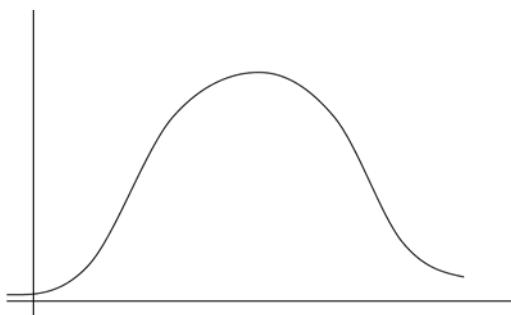
Figure 1.1
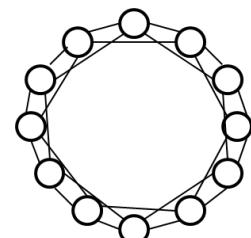
Figure 1.2

Byrne (1998) describes this type of network as one in which each agent is firstly connected to a set of neighbouring agents, which are mostly, but not completely, locally connected. Watts (2003) defines as small world network as:

"a regime in which networks display high local clustering of disconnected enclaves but connected such that any node could be reached from any other in an average of only a few steps" (p.81)

Although small world models constituted a solid theoretical proposition, a number of elements were still missing. Further research conducted during the 1990s was valuable to include an element that is now indispensible for network analysis and for the case study in this dissertation. Barabasi, who conducted extensive research on interconnectedness in the World Wide Web, discovered that in some cases the number of connections of nodes did not follow the Poisson distribution as explained before. This means that not always few nodes display a high amount of connections while most of them are averagely linked. He realized that nodes could follow a *power law distribution*, in which very few nodes have an excessive amount of linkages, while others display fewer connections. (Figure 1.3)

This observation introduced the concept of **hubs**, or nodes with an extremely higher amount of connections in a network compared to the average node. Barabasi proposed that hubs are responsible of holding the network together, since most of the nodes are not really connected to each other.

Examples of hubs can be easily found. In the internet, Google or Yahoo display an extremely higher number of connections than particular websites and allow easier navigation between different points on the network. In the Air France worldwide route map two major hubs are easily identifiable, Paris and Atlanta, followed by several smaller hubs, Amsterdam, Detroit, New York and Seattle, with single nodes all around the world. The world of stock and financial transactions has New York, London and Tokyo as major hubs, followed by Shanghai, Frankfurt, Hong Kong, Toronto, Mumbai and Sao Paulo.

Since the power law distribution abandons the idea of a characteristic node and a peak of average of connections, the idea of 'scale' is discarded. This type of network then became known as a *scale-free network*. Following Barabasi (2002), these are more common in complex webs than small world networks. Watts (2003) argues that this kind of networks "has the property, in contrast to a variety random graph, that most nodes will be relatively poorly connected, while a select of minority hubs will be variably highly connected." (p.107) Byrne (1998) describes power law networks as a set of connections that are more resilient when compared to structures organized around the principle of randomness, but more susceptible to targeted failures, since only few nodes hold most of the connections.

He explains how hubs provide some order within complexity. Nodes follow Barabasi's principle of 'the rich get richer'. When a network is understood as dynamic, with nodes that change or evolve according to their interactions with other nodes and with its environment, then it is possible to see strong structural modifications such as the adherence of new nodes or the alteration of existing connections. When such is the case, nodes will tend to connect with those which display a higher amount of connections rather than with isolated elements. Hubs, as a consequence, grow bigger with the evolution of the network, providing some kind of organizing principle amid chaos.

These evolutions, in Barabasi's view, create two possible developments for a network: on one hand, the survival of the scale free network structure, and in the other, the 'winner taking all' phenomena, in which the hub becomes connected to all the other nodes, creating what is known as a *star model*. (Figure 1.4)
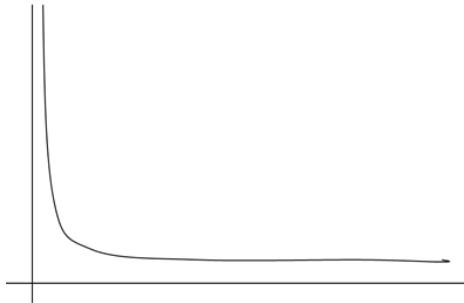
Figure 1.3
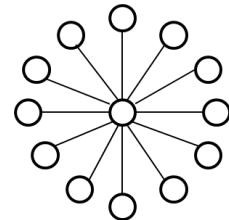
Figure 1.4

Most of the studies on networks are focused on their topology. Several classifications that go beyond *star, small world and scale-free networks* have been proposed, even though sometimes the differences are merely semantic. Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler (2009) have created their own list which includes the bucket brigade, the telephone tree and the military squads. In the first, nodes are placed in a straight line and are connected only to its immediate neighbours. Information flows in one direction. The name recalls the traditional image of a line of individuals passing a bucket of water to put out a fire. (Figure 1.5) The second metaphor recalls a network in which an initial node is connected to a number of nodes each of which is connected to another set of nodes expanding the coverage of the network in a branch-like manner. Information flows from the top (or the centre) to the bottom (or the branches). The image resembles an emergency phone call in which a single person reaches an entire community through an increasing number of individuals (Figure 1.6). The last describes several small groups of nodes displaying high interconnection among the group but weak connections between groups (Christakis & Fowler, 2009). In other words, highly clustered groups are lightly connected among each other. (Figure 1.7)
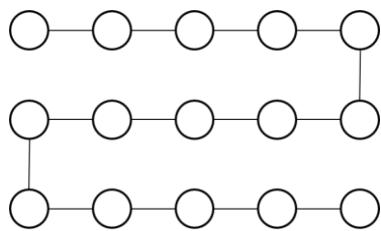
Figure 1.5
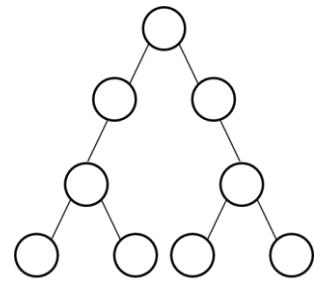
Figure 1.6

Byrne (1998) also proposed his own typology:

- Loop: In which agents live in a circle and are connected to their immediate neighbours in each direction. It is similar to the small world version of Watts and Strogatz without the connections to the node next to its neighbour.

- Grid: In which nodes are placed in a checkerboard-like grid connected to its immediate neighbours, where the edges of the grid wrap around to form a torus. (Figure 1.8)

- Pack: In which nodes are organized in closed groups where connections among all of them exist, and where a single node is connected to elements outside the pack; a description that resembles the 'military squad' concept of Christakis and Fowler.

- 2Loop: Nodes live in two circles and are connected to the nearest neighbours in the two circles (p.155)
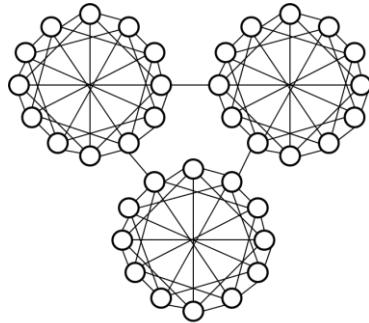
Figure 1.7
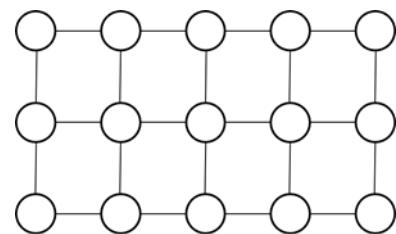
Figure 1.8

In netwar theory, Arquila and Ronfeld included three main types of structures: the chain or line (figure 1.5) which is equivalent to Christakis and Fowler's 'bucket brigade' and that can be appreciated in smuggling operations; the star or hub (figure 1.4) as described by Barabasi, which can be exemplified by the core of a terrorist or criminal organization; and the all

channel network (figure 1.9) which displays an equivalent number of linkages between its nodes, as it can be observed in sectors of several militant groups (Arquila & Ronfeldt, 2001).
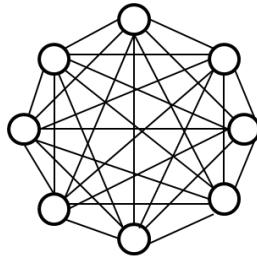
Figure 1.9

According to Arquila and Ronfeldt (1997), an archetypical netwar actor would consist of a dispersed set of interconnected nodes, where the nodes can be individuals, groups or formal or informal organizations. They could perform a specialized task or identical activities to others. Ian Lesser (1999) notes that in practical terms, insurgencies or militant groups are structured as hybrids: a combination of a hierarchy and several networked forms. A node in a network could itself be a hierarchy. More than being structured as a single type of network, they are combinations of all of these forms. A typical case would be an *all channel network* as the core of the structure connecting *stars* and *chains* whose nodes are to conduct tactical operations. This is very important for the analysis of FARC. As it will be demonstrated, whereas military structures remain as hierarchies, criminal and political structures appear to be arranged more as networks, confirming this idea of combination.

This structure could be an acephalous, flat organizational structure without centralized command and decentralized decision making (panarchy), or it could consist of multiple heads (heterarchy). In the first case, due to the absence of a particular actor conducting the processes, the capacity of the network depends almost exclusively on the strength of the ideology and the doctrine (Arquila and Ronfeldt, 1997).

But besides network topology another element is valuable for the present dissertation: network failure or destruction.

It is evident that the strength of a network is guaranteed by the high amount of connections among its elements. Interconnectivity leads into robustness. Following Barabasi, if a particular node fails, it is very likely that a specific fragment of the network will be isolated, but the network itself can be maintained. Removing only a few nodes will not have a significant impact on the integrity of the network.

Generalized node failures can break the network into a set of non-communicated fragments, but if this happens as part of a random attack, it is statistically more likely that the nodes destroyed or removed will be smaller since they are more abundant. But destroying hubs may pose a serious challenge. A particular calculation was made by Shlomo Havlin, a Professor of Physics at Bar-Ilan University in Israel, who determined that random networks fall apart after a number of critical nodes are removed, but scale-free networks collapse only when all nodes are removed. Sceptical of such results Barabasi conducted experiments of his own by removing hubs from networks. He has found that "the removal of the first (and biggest) hub did not break the system, because the rest of the hubs held the network together. After the removal of several hubs, however, the effect of the disruptions was clear. Large chunk of nodes were falling off the network becoming disconnected from the main cluster." (Barabasi, 2002) He calculated that for the network to collapse it was necessary to remove from five to fifteen per cent of the hubs at the same time.

But more elements were included in the discussion. Christakis and Fowler (2009) defined two network properties: *connection,* which explains who the nodes are and how they are connected (structure); and *contagion*, the flows which run through the network, the information that is passed from node to node through all the existing linkages (function). Failure cannot only emerge from the structure, as it was proved by Barabasi, but from the diffusion of information in the form of a cascading event, or through a domino effect, from node to node. This form of failure can only be understood through the particular functions of each network and the nature of its nodes. For example, in human networks a pandemic spreads from person to person increasing the possibility to cause a high number of casualties; or in the economy, fear expands from broker to broker, from company to company, and among stock markets creating worldwide recessions. This is especially evident in *directed networks,* those in which information (or the specific input) flows only in one direction, without any possibility of returning. These elements are also very valuable for the analysis in the case of FARC, specially taking into account that most of them, as it will be observed, are directed networks.

Information technology, particularly the internet, has multiplied connectivity enormously. If societies in the past were linked, it is also true that today they are hyperlinked. Christakis and Fowler use the concept of *hyperconnected*. Following their ideas, a superior level of connectivity has motivated a radical evolution of social networks in four ways: enormity, an increase in the scale of networks and the amount of people who might be reached; communality, broadening the scale in which we can share information and contribute to

collective efforts; specificity, an increase in the particularity of the ties that are formed (interest groups); and virtuality, the ability to assume virtual identities (Christakis & Fowler, 2009).

From the characteristics that have been described through complexity and network theory it is important to point out four key properties of networks that are useful for the analysis. It is clear that given network dynamics, nodes can be lost and replaced with ease. This is known as **redundancy.** This capacity implies that networks change their configuration constantly according to the conditions of its nodes and the way they interact with the environment. This process of perpetual change implies that networks are **adaptable** and **flexible**. As it has been analysed, this conditions make networks difficult to destroy. They are **resilient** given their capacity to recover from attacks through the replacement or re-localization of nodes.

In conclusion, with the objective of determining how the existing military, criminal and political networks of FARC provide an opportunity for the organization to survive and even to re-emerge, the approach introduced in this chapter becomes instrumental. The paradigm of complexity, and the development of network theory, is ideal to understand the opportunities that non-state actors find within the hyper-connected society of the so-called information age. The paradigm's reading on the strong linkages that are constructed between the system and its environment is particularly useful to analyse how elements in the Andean region and through Latin America provide instruments for FARC to become embedded beyond Colombia's borders.

Elements of social network theory will be extremely valuable to think about FARC from a network perspective within its region. It is now necessary to turn into the dilemma of how to characterise an insurgency permeated by criminal interests in the context that has been here described. For this purpose the proposition of the tripartite character will be introduced.

Chapter 2. The triadic character of commercial insurgencies and their environment

According to the context described in the last chapter, non-state actors exist in a world that fosters linkages and connections with all type of agents. As such, their possibility to send their message through societies all around the globe is maximized, as are their chances to obtain resources through the global criminal economy.

Insurgencies are, by definition, organizations which pursue particular political goals. But the opportunity found in the maximization of profits in a globalized economy may divert organizations from their original route and into the road of criminality. Insurgencies such as FARC have managed to survive a 50-year war, even after the fall of the Soviet Union, because of its participation in drug markets. It is not a surprise that in one of the countries with the highest record of cocaine production it is an insurgency that has managed to become one of the main actors in the business. It has been argued that as a result, FARC had become a cartel and had ceased to be an insurgency.

As this case demonstrates, insurgencies can become hybrids of criminality and political insurrection, making it difficult to recognize if the rebels are still following an original political cause or if such a purpose is only a facade to the real objective of profit. The scenarios of insurgency become nothing more than a combination of unattended grievances, interests in profiting, and the impossibility of marginalized communities to find sustainable sources within the licit economy.

Relevant questions emerge. How should we understand the nature and the character of this type of insurgencies? How is this character expressed through its functions and its structures? For several observers including governments, as it will be explained ahead, these insurgencies are explained as criminal entities. For others, such characterisation is rather limited. This debate is relevant to think about our understanding of FARC.

This chapter will then propose a different narrative to understand this type of organizations. It will build on propositions made by criminologists, and particularly, on the concepts of *hybrid organizations* and *commercial insurgencies*. It is here argued that commercial insurgencies display a triadic character composed by complementing dimensions: political, criminal, and military. Given the context analysed in the last chapter, nodes which constitute each of these dimensions are not only placed in the territory of a single state. Rather, they might be naturally embedded through other societies and nations, as the insurgency exploits

environmental conditions to place nodes beyond borders, challenging the idea of the state as the prime counterinsurgent. Nodes and structures in other territories provide the opportunity for the insurgency to survive and to re-emerge as it will be explained ahead.

For this purpose the concept of insurgency is discussed first, followed by an analysis of the blurring boundaries of insurgency and criminality. Then several propositions on how to understand organizations that combine political and criminal interests are explored, detailing the concepts of *hybrid organizations* and *commercial insurgencies.* Finally, the idea of the triadic character is examined, bringing elements of the environment into analysis in order to determine variables that create the possibility for the insurgency to survive and re-emerge.

The concept of insurgency

Insurgency is warfare; it is a form of achieving a political end through the force of arms. It is different to conventional warfare in that it is not waged by regular state military forces which follow determined standardized norms and procedures, but by groups of civilians, communities, and nations which take up arms against the established ruler. They fight for a cause they see as legitimate: a change in the nature of the political system, the creation of a new state, the separation of a portion of the territory, or the independence from a dominating power.

History demonstrates that the weak have fought the strong since unmemorable times. Given its comparative disadvantage, frontal confrontation had not been an option. Rather, they have recurred to tactics which represent lower risks and the possibility to inflict considerable damage to its enemy. Walter Laqueur, a historian at Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Chicago and Georgetown, listed three elements to characterise this type of tactics: the exploitation of the environment in order to wear the enemy down; more than fighting it frontally, fighting it for a long period in order to wear it down instead of defeating it directly; and conducting actions through a sequence of attacks and retreats, using basic instruments instead of advanced technologies (Navias & Moreman, 1994). This tactics are known as *guerrilla tactics*.

A Hittite parchment dating from the fifteenth century BC appears to describe a combat using guerrilla tactics (Beckett, 2001). Similar references can be found in the Bible, such as the revolt of Judahh Maccabee defeating the Syrians in 166 BC by ambushing, seizing weapons, and rallying support of the people. During the Second Punic War, the Romans, under Fabius Maximus, decided to wear down the Carthaginians of Hannibal instead of confronting them

directly; his method became known as *Fabian tactics*. During the Middle Age irregular tactics were also used, especially during the Hundred Years War between France and England (Beckett, 2001).

As explained by Laqueur, "guerrilla warfare is as old as the hills and predates regular warfare. Throughout history guerrilla wars have been fought by weaker peoples against invading or occupying armies, by regular soldiers operating in the enemy's rear, by landless peasants rising against landowners, and by bandits, social and asocial." (Laqueur, 1997, p.1)

But insurgency and guerrilla tactics are not necessarily equivalent. The historic description of the existence of guerrilla warfare is not necessarily the narrative of the origin of insurgencies. It could be argued that insurgencies exist since popular and organized rebellions against established authorities appeared. But the construction of a concept based on the principle of authority leaves out an important element of analysis. The idea of 'civilians' or 'communities' in arms as a phenomenon of warfare can only be considered as exceptional when the separation between regular forces and unarmed masses came into being. Otherwise, more than being the exception, the rule was always to include everyone in the fight, whichever the authority. Then, how to make a difference between insurgencies and regular combatants when there were no regular combatants at all? The construction of the origin of insurgencies, then, must be related to the appearance of 'regularity' and not only of 'authority'. This is the historical narrative presented by military historian Jonathan Gumz based on ideas of Carl Schmitt.

If the thesis of Schmitt is followed, the origin of insurgencies can be found in the national insurrections that flourished against established states only *after a condition of regularity was achieved* in terms of international law and politics, with the emergence of the state and European Public Law in the early modern era. (Schmitt, 2006) "The *Ius Public Europaeum* not only encompassed law, but the norms, philosophical texts, and power constellations that governed war and relations between states." (Gumz, 2009, p.565) According to Gabriella Slump it was only then possible to count on a marked distinction between war and peace, civil and military, enemy and criminal, external and internal (Slump, 2005).

War ceased to be an affair involving the participation of individuals with several aims to become an expression of the interest of states, fought by states and against states, through well-defined and conceived parameters and regulations. Conventional national armies emerged as entities depending entirely on the state and fighting only for the sake of its

interests. Military Forces with organized and hierarchical command and control marginalized civilian populations from warfare. Enmity was re-defined to be restricted exclusively to the Military Forces of the enemy state. As confirmed by Coker

> "Schmitt acknowledged that irregular war has been a feature of conflict for centuries, especially in times of general dissolution such as the Thirty Years War. It also continued to remain a feature of colonial conflicts between indigenous peoples and Western armies throughout the period of European expansion. (...) What distinguishes the modern partisan, Schmitt claimed, is the force and significance of his 'irregularity'. The distinction between regular and irregular is only really appreciable in the modern age, given the modern form of social organization (the nation state) and the modern organization of armies."(Coker, 2008, p.44)

From this perspective the first insurgencies appear at the end of the XVIII and beginning of the XIX Century when civilians raised arms to fight established authorities, and the *Ius Public Europaeum* began to crumble. The French Revolution began to erode the order by calling on the masses to fight the regime. The Jacobin *levee en masse* summoned citizens in arms without being formal part of the military corps, while popular rebellions flourished, not only inspired against the *ancien regime,* but also against the revolution itself. In the Vendee region, for example, counterrevolutionaries fought a bloody war against crown opponents.

Napoleonic occupation of other European societies triggered insurgent movements. Communities and nations raised arms to expel the French invaders. A first and failed insurrection in the Austrian Tyrol in 1809 was followed by the Spanish insurrection, from 1808 to 1813, which contributed to the defeat of Napoleon in the Peninsula. The term *guerrilla*, Spanish word for small war, was firstly used to describe this insurrection. Schmitt cites this case as the first example of insurgency:

> "In this war, for the first time, a people –pre-burgeois, pre-industrial and pre-conventional people– clashed with a modern army. New spaces of/for war emerged in the process, and new concepts of warfare were developed along with a new doctrine of war and politics.
>
> The Partisan fights irregularly. But the distinction between regular and irregular depends on the degree of regularity. Only in modern forms of organization – stemming from the French Revolution– does this distinction find its concrete manifestation and with it also its conception."

In this sense, insurgencies and guerrilla warfare differ considerably. While the later has existed for centuries, the former is a product of the modern era. Following Gumz's explanation the Ius Public Europaeum finally crumbled through the Geneva Conventions, given its final legitimation of non-state combatants:

"The Geneva Conventions expand the circle of parties to be treated as equal to regular fighters' argues Schmitt, 'by equating members of an ''organized resistance movement'' to members of militias and volunteer corps, and conferring on them in this way the rights and privileges of regular combatants."(Gumz, 2009, p.580).

Although insurgencies go back to the XVII Century, it was during the XX Century that they became a systematic phenomenon through wars of national liberation, de-colonization struggles, Marxist-Leninist revolutions, and even anti-fascist occupation in Europe during the Second World War.

Now, this leads into a discussion of the definition of insurgency. Anthony Joes (2004) defines it as "an attempt to overthrow or oppose a state regime by forms of arms." (p.1) This proposition might be too broad, including any form of armed rebellion against a regime. It is better to explore a more restrictive definition.

Bard O'Neill, former Director of insurgency and Middle East Studies at the National War College, defines insurgency as "a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the former consciously employs political resources (organizational skills, propaganda, and/or demonstrations) and instruments of violence to establish legitimacy for some aspect of the political system it considers illegitimate. Legitimacy and illegitimacy refer to whether or not existing aspects of politics are considered moral or immoral (or, to simplify, right or wrong) by the population or selected elements therein." (O'Neill, 1980, p.1) His definition includes both the political nature and the violent character of the use of force. It encompasses the strategic nature of the campaign as it refers to the use of resources, confronting a non-ruling agent against the authority. It positively includes the element of legitimacy explaining the importance of popular support.

Given the impossibility of insurgents to target the enemy frontally, they recur to diverse elements to confront it indirectly: wearing it down, eroding its will to fight, winning its popular base of support, and de-legitimizing its actions. The psychological dimension of war, then, becomes as important as the physical act of combat, and the reason why insurgencies are protracted, lasting not only years but maybe even decades.

Metz (2004) characterizes insurgency as protracted, asymmetric violence, which includes psychological warfare and political mobilization –all design to protect the insurgents and

eventually alter the balance of power in their favour (p.2) In terms of strategy, the campaign may take several forms and paths, but that will be explored in the next chapter.

A simpler but yet valid definition was also introduced by one of the classical authors of counterinsurgency, Lieutenant Colonel Julian Paget. He introduces insurgency as "a form of armed rebellion against the Government, in which the rebels have the support or acquiescence of a substantial part of the populace"[14].

The blurring boundaries of insurgency and crime

In conceptual terms, insurgency (or politically motivated violence) and criminality can be clearly differentiated. Several authors including Carl Schmitt (2006), Bruce Hoffman (2006), Colin Gray (2007), Christopher Coker (2008) and Richard Clutterbuck (1990) have pointed to this difference. An insurgent uses violence to achieve a political goal, while the criminal does it for personal gain, lacking an ideology. "Criminals are not concerned with influencing or affecting public opinion, simply desiring to gain money or accomplishing its mercenary task in the quickest and easiest possible way. By contrast the fundamental aim of terrorist [and by extension, insurgent] violence is ultimately to change the political system, about which the criminal couldn't care less." (Hoffman, 2006, p.36)

> "Schmitt was quick to remind us that partisan warfare is rooted in the sphere of politics. It is his intense political commitment which sets the partisan apart from other combatants. It is politics which distinguishes him from the common thief and criminals whose motives are personal enrichment. The pirate is possessed of what jurisprudence knows as *animal furandi* (felonious intent). The partisan, by contrast, fights on a political front and it is precisely the political character of his actions that throws into stark relief the original sense of the word we apply to comprehend him" (Coker, 2008, p.46)

This discussion unavoidably leads into a definition of what is inherently 'political'. Colin Gray proposes that politics "refers to the process of struggle over the right or authority to govern the 'body politic' and hence decide on the distribution of civic burdens and rewards." (Gray, 1999, p.55) All actions related to the way society is organized and with the access and implementation of power can be considered political acts. If a non-state group demands access to power in order to obtain justice for a specific social sector, then its actions can be

---

[14] Definition by Julian Paget (Benbow, 2008, p. xiii)

considered political, but if an armed agent's unique desire is to profit from activities such as goods smuggling, then its acts are criminal in nature.

But whereas in conceptual terms the difference might be clear, in practice the dimensions tend to merge when specific cases are observed: "In theory, the distinction is crystal clear: to be classified as warfare, violence must be motivated by politics, not profit, as is the case with criminal behaviour. In practice, though, the political and the criminal tend to merge" (Gray, 2007, p.250) Criminal entities sometimes display political interests, for example, when they provide goods and services to a host community either because there are shared feelings of appreciation or as a means to make its job easier. Similarly, criminals might seek to control local political institutions in order to carry on with their activities more easily. As such, they could become a sort of parallel state performing political and social functions in a particular location. On the other hand criminals might challenge certain state acts, as the enactment of extradition laws, and might act to achieve their reversal.

Politically-guided organizations may also become permeated by criminal interests. Non-state organizations need to fund themselves in order to operate. Given their illegal nature, they are more likely to find funds in illicit economic activities. This fact creates the possibility of insurgents, or groups within the insurgency, to become more motivated by profit than by politics. Such is the case of FARC, its participation in the production and traffic of narcotics has clouded the possibility to neatly recognize if it is a political or a criminal phenomenon.

Several authors such as David Keen, Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler and Mats Berdal have explained how conflicts cease to be struggles motivated by political objectives to become a competition for resources. (Arnson, 2005) They have explained how in regions where the exploitation of certain commodities feeds conflicts, the virtual inexistence of state institutions allows for non-state armed actors to obtain control and dominion of geographical and social spaces, guaranteeing stable income and perpetuating war. An economic circle emerges in which local populations find a source of income through commodities that are used by the armed organization to fund their war: "conflicts can create war economies, often in regions controlled by rebels or warlords and linked to international trading networks; members of armed gangs can benefit from looting; and regimes can use violence to deflect opposition, reward supporters or maintain their access to resources." (Keen, 1998, p.11) Collier and Hoeffler have described rebellions as "motivated by a blend of an altruistic desire to rectify the grievances of a group, and a selfish desire to loot the resources of others." (Keen, 2006, p.5)

> "Increasingly, civil wars that appear to have begun with political aims have mutated into conflicts in which short-term economic benefits are paramount. While ideology and identity remain important in understanding conflict, they may not tell the whole story. Portraying civil wars as simply revolutionary struggles between opposing sides obscures the emerging political economy from which the combatants can benefit." (Keen, 1998, p.11)

As such, combatants might be more interested in continuing war instead of winning it[15]: "defeating the enemy or bringing the fighting to an end appears to have become less important for key parties involved than securing the benefits from the continuation of conflict."[16]

For this reason, as it was argued by Mats Berdal, more than understanding political or economic motivations for war separately, a political economy perspective linking agendas and explaining the interdependence of economic and political variables is more appropriate. (Berdal, 2009, p.79-81) It is important to understand that these dimensions are interrelated; economic dilemmas have political implications just as political issues have economic repercussions. Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman agree with this perspective:

> "Conceptualizing explanations of armed conflict in terms of greed and grievance has imposed an unnecessary limiting dichotomy on what is, in reality, a highly diverse, complex set of incentive and opportunity structures that vary across time and location."(Ballentine, 2003, p.8)

These authors proposed an examination of combatants' behaviours without understanding rebel organizations as unitary groups. This is precisely the approach in this dissertation since FARC will not be explored as a monolithic entity but as a set of nodes (individuals) with different interests, objectives and functions.

It is necessary to clarify, however, that participation in war as a means to satisfy individual interests of profit is not only a feature of contemporary warfare. Richard Lewison (1936) demonstrates in *The Profits of War through the Ages* how this was a constant from Julius Caesar to Bismarck, including the *conquistadores* and the condottieri during the Middle Age. But the context of hyperconnectivity described in the last chapter, and the global criminal economy, does create improved opportunities for armed groups to participate in the global

---

[15] This idea has been introduced by several authors including David Keen, Mats Berdal and Paul Collier. (Arnson, 2005)

[16] Quoted in Cynthia Arnson. (Arson, 2005, p.4)

economy through diverse mechanisms, and specially by trading all sort of commodities through smuggling networks. Sources as diamonds, drugs, gold, and coltan, more than others as oil and timber, have proved to be ideal for non-state armed groups because they are both easily lootable and highly profitable[17]. For individual combatants it is easier to handle and join transnational smuggling networks with cocaine, heroin, or diamonds than with oil or timber.

Svante Cornell (2005a), Director at Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at Johns Hopkins University, argued that narcotics and diamonds have a stronger influence on the duration of conflict than oil, gas, timber or minerals. Narcotics, particularly, tend to favour non-state actors disproportionately because of its illegality, allowing them to strengthen their operational capabilities and even to increase their legitimacy with communities connected to the business. Narco-trafficking is in fact the largest source of profit for both criminal groups and terrorism, accounting for 2% of the global economy according to the International Monetary Fund, and 7% of international trade following United Nations statistics (Shelley, 2005, p.312).

The case of narcotics constitutes a good example on how political and economic variables interact. War economies generate political effects which in the end are favourable to insurgencies or other non-state actors. Vanda Felbab-Brown, a researcher at Brookings Institution, demonstrated that legitimacy is not only constructed from an ideological affinity between agents. In the case of narcotics, in those areas where the organization is the *de facto* authority and coca is grown, the insurgency provides the security and stability necessary for inhabitants to have an income. As such, it is the insurgent organization which actually provides some sense of organization, protection, authority and stability in locations where war economies develop. This circumstance guarantees freedom of action, popular support and legitimacy to the organization (Felbab-Brown, 2010). In other words, the organization turns into a sort of parallel state becoming a political agent, transforming a criminally-based enterprise into a political phenomenon.

This is why the state, as the counterinsurgent, is highly unpopular in areas of strong coca or opium cultivation, and why it is usually observed as the enemy. The disruption of the war economy, in this case through the elimination of narcotics, represents a risk of instability for the populations who find the necessary means for living within the illicit economy. Their

---

[17] Ross argues that lootable sources like diamonds and drugs are more likely to lead to war than unlootable sources like oil and timber. (Ross, 2003)

sense of protection, their provision of services, and their security are perceived as being at risk with the end of war and the elimination of the insurgency.

Interests in profit, however, foster fragmentation and the breakdown of centralized leadership, command and control, as it has been witnessed by FARC. In periods of rapid growth and increase or expansion in the number of rebel troops, the ideological formation of new recruits is significantly impeded as they are more motivated by money than by ideas (Cater, 2003).

Understanding interactions between criminality and insurgency

This impossibility to clearly determine if phenomena are strictly political or criminal has motivated a very relevant question: how then to understand or categorize organizations that range between the criminal and the political? During the last decade criminologists have deepened studies on interactions between criminality and political violence. Although most of them refer to 'terrorism' in the case of politically-motivated violence, their analysis is still valid for insurgencies given that the categorization is based on the political nature of the violent actor, as opposed to the economic purpose of the criminal.

Scholars such as Tamara Makarenko (2004), Louis Shelley (2002), Louise Shelly and John Picarelly (2005), Chris Dishman (2001) and Phil Williams (2008) have developed concepts and models to explain processes of interaction and their organizational implications. Their explanations are given in the context of high interconnectivity described by Castells, and introduced in the last chapter, in which a global criminal economy has allowed armed non-state actors to increase their connections with other organizations around the globe: "the network society creates opportunities for criminals to cooperate, create arrangements, joint ventures or strategic alliances." (Castells, 1996a, p.172) Terrorism and organized crime cannot be analysed separately in the contemporary international context, since evidence "suggests that they may be deeply intertwined in ways that go well beyond tactical alliances of convenience." (Lal, 2005, p.293)

The following continuum was proposed by Shelley and Picarelly to explain the interactions that occur between criminality and terrorism (insurgency), and the processes of transformation that organizations might experience. (Figure 2.1) (Shelley & Picarelly, 2005, p.35) Their proposition builds on elements presented by other scholars such as Makarenko and Williams.

It is first necessary to make a distinction between entities and activities. There are terrorist organizations and terrorist methods, as well as criminal organizations and criminal activities. This was a contribution initially proposed by Williams (2008). Logically, terrorist organizations recur to terrorist activities, while criminal entities recur to criminal activities. But an initial step of interaction between crime and terror appears when organizations appropriate activities that are opposed to their nature. Terrorists need to perform criminal activities, for example, to find funds through a wide variety of sources including, counterfeiting, drug-dealing, kidnapping, money laundering, extortion, etc. Criminals might need to engage in specific terrorist attacks to be able to continue their activities without obstacle, for example, disrupting police activities in an area or eliminating local authorities. Examples cited by Makarenko (2004) include the Italian Mafia, the Basque ETA and Hizbullah in Lebanon. The case of Colombian druglord Pablo Escobar is also telling. He mounted a car-bomb terrorist campaign in order for the government to abrogate the extradition law.

Figure 2.1
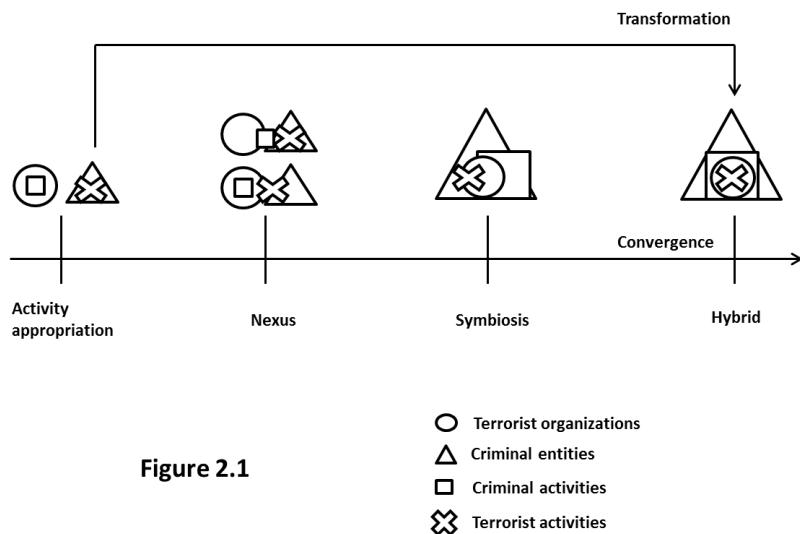
But a subsequent step might follow. Given the continued need of these organizations to engage in activities that are not natural to their original purpose, they might build an alliance with an organization that would provide such services in order for the organization to focus on their key activities; a sort of outsourcing. Examples include FARC and Mexican Cartels, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Afghan Mafia, and Al Qaeda and Bosnian Criminals. (Makarenko, 2004)

A subsequent stage referred to as 'symbiosis' implies a stronger interdependence between both organizations given their impossibility to conduct their operations without its ally. Interestingly, an earlier proposition by Makarenko illustrated similar stages of interaction,

but in her view, alliances were established first and the appropriate of the opposite type of activities followed afterwards; this, since organizations do not count on the know-how to initially develop such activities by their own, and because their elimination of alliances contributes to their security.

A further stage in the interaction model speaks about the creation of a hybrid organization. This type of entity was also introduced by Williams (2008). In this case political motivations and criminal interests, and the execution of criminal and terrorist activities, have merged in a single organization, without the possibility to define it entirely in political or criminal terms. As examples of this type of entities Williams (2008) points towards FARC in Colombia and D-Unit in South Asia. This idea of a hybrid organization is the base for the construction of an understanding of FARC in the present dissertation as it will be explained ahead.

Now, there are two processes in this interaction of crime and political violence. On one hand, convergence, the process just described, speaks about two organizations coming together in a single entity. The authors have been clear in the explanation that the steps in the continuum are not a strict sequence; organizations might skip stages and even return to earlier phases. On the other hand, there is a process of transformation which relates to the change in the nature of a single organization from terrorist to criminal and vice versa, or to a hybrid entity. This happens as their objectives are changed through time with the exploration of different interests and the participation in diverse activities. According to Williams and Dishman, this process of transformation is more common than convergence.

Dishman (2001) focused on this process to discuss how politically motivated groups become transnational criminal organizations. In a continuum, he described groups which remain faithful to its political objective on one side, with the Zapatista insurgency in Mexico as an example; and on the opposite side organizations that have become criminal enterprises, as it is the case of several Burmese groups. Between these two there are different levels in which politically motivated organizations have become permeated by the interest of profiting from criminal activities. Cases include Sendero Luminoso, FARC, the Kurdistan Party of Workers (PKK), the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), and insurgencies in the Golden Triangle (Burma, Thailand and Laos)

Shelley and Makarenko describe another element of this interaction that is relevant for the case of FARC. Shelley linked lawless physical spaces without the authority of state institutions to the processes of convergence between terror and crime. It is argued that "areas with little

government control, weak enforcement, or opened borders" foster the collaboration between criminal and terrorist entities, making their activities easier (Shelley, 2002, p.85-87). Examples are the tri-border area between Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay; the Trans-Dniester in Moldova, the Pamir Mountains in Tajikistan; Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province; the Tamil regions in Sri-Lanka and Chechnya and parts of the Caucasus. Makarenko introduced a similar idea through her concept of the *black hole*, which she described as a space where weak or failed states foster a convergence between transnational organized crime and terrorism; a sort of safe haven for convergent groups. (Makarenko, 2004) As it will be explained ahead, this resembles one the variables that is used by commercial insurgencies to place nodes beyond the borders of a single state, referred to in this dissertation as 'empty spaces'. In the case of FARC, the Western region of Venezuela serves this purpose as is the case with the Federal Administered Areas in Pakistan for the Taliban and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, or the North of Iraq for the Kurdistan Workers Party.

This theoretical construction of interactions between criminality and terrorism opens the spectre of analysis for answers beyond the obvious and traditional dichotomy. Explanations formulated exclusively from either side are insufficient to coherently comprehend all the elements of such a complex phenomenon.

The concept of commercial insurgencies

Williams established a relation between the concepts of hybrid entity and commercial insurgency presented by Metz in 1993. In essence, the concepts describe similar phenomena but Metz's proposition stems directly from the literature on insurgency and counterinsurgency. Whereas Williams is interested in describing a wider range of organizations, Metz's concern is about insurgencies and warfare.

Metz argued that although the United States lost strategic interest in insurgencies, the Post-Cold War era was about to observe the growth of evolved forms of insurgency. Among them he described 'commercial insurgencies' "driven less by the desire of justice than wealth" (Metz, 1993). In his words:

> "Commercial insurgency will be a form of what is becoming known as "grey area phenomena"--powerful criminal organizations with a political veneer and the ability to threaten national security rather than just law and order. In fact, many commercial insurgencies may see an alliance of those for whom political objectives are preeminent and the criminal dimension simply a necessary evil, and those for whom the accumulation of wealth through crime is the primary

objective and politics simply a rhetorical veneer to garner some support that they might not otherwise gain. It is this political component that distinguishes commercial insurgents from traditional organized crime. Most often, though, commercial insurgencies probably will not attempt to rule the state but will seek instead a compliant regime that allows them to pursue criminal activity unimpeded." (Metz, 1995, p.31-37)

In this type of insurgencies, by similarity to Williams's conception of hybrid organization, it would be impossible to determine if the commercial interest constitutes the purpose of the organization, or if the political motivation is still driving combatants' desires. As it can be observed in Metz's definition a monolithic observation of the organization is insufficient, making it necessary to look inside the organization to find dimensions, sectors and individuals with diverse and probably opposing interests. This is the case of FARC, and the reason why this approach is used as a conceptual base to explain the organization. As it was argued by Williams:

"FARC has become what Steven Metz terms a 'commercial insurgency': the group uses its involvement in the drug business to acquire considerable wealth, not all of which is directed towards the political cause."(Williams, 2008, p.132)

Several authors have contributed with explorations of commercial insurgencies from different perspectives and disciplines, without necessarily referring to this concept. In an article published in 2011, John Sullivan and Robert Bunker (2011) refer to Metz's construct to further develop the concept of 'criminal insurgencies', which Ralph Peters firstly introduced in 1995. Sullivan and Bunker use this concept as a base to explain violence in Mexico and Central America. In a similar way, Steven Sloan, a terrorism scholar, proposed the idea of 'apolitical terrorism' in 1999, referring to organizations which lose their original motivation in favour of economic gains (Sullivan and Bunker, 2011). W.G. Thom developed a series of studies on "economic insurgencies" in 1999, while Hal Brands emphasized connections between third generation gangs and insurgencies. Robert Killebrew and Jennifer Bernal, Tom Ricks and Juan Castillo have made several studies analysing de-facto criminal insurgencies and how they challenged state authority. (Sullivan and Bunker, 2011). Chris Martinez (2012), a Major at the US Army, has also used the concept to analyse violent organizations in Mexico.

Although the concept has been used as a base for empirical analysis through several cases, there haven't been deeper developments on how a commercial insurgency is structured, how it operates, and especially how it interacts with its environment (the region). The present dissertation, then, takes forward this concept through the case of FARC to explain

how this organization can be characterised, and how it exploits several elements of the environment which allow the spread of its structures and networks beyond borders. This vision challenges the idea of the state as the counterinsurgent given its impossibility to act in the territories where it is not sovereign.

The advantage of this approach is that it allows understanding the problem from a comprehensive framework, including all the variables that are necessary in the analysis. It observes the case as a problem of insurgency and counterinsurgency, but it includes the element of motivation by profit within the organization. If understood as a criminal entity, political elements are downplayed, and if pictured purely as an insurgency, profits are reduced as a problem of means and not as a motivation. The approach also allows constructing a vision of the organization not as a monolithic entity that can be understood through simplifying adjectives (narco-terrorist, criminal) but, as it was suggested by Ballentine and Sherman, as a system composed by different interacting individuals or sectors with diversified interests that range between the social and political to the selfish and criminal. Williams pointed towards a similar understanding of FARC:

> "In fact, it is arguable that serious divisions now exist within FARC as a result of these distinct agendas. These divisions have manifested themselves over arguments about the FARC's drug business. FARC has multiple fronts or units. Some of these – particularly the 16th Front – are heavily engaged in drug trafficking, while others are willing to tax the farmers and traffickers but are reluctant to become more directly involved, and yet others want nothing to do with the business. Despite the internal discord, FARC has clearly benefited from its involvement in the cocaine industry, if only in enhancing its ability to perpetuate the armed struggle against the Colombian state."(Williams, 2008, 132-133).

This vision opposes and responds to simplistic perspectives that intend to understand the organization through single, monolithic concepts such as *narcoterrorism*. Although it is understandable that in terms of politics, in the competition between insurgent and counterinsurgent, such conceptions render positive results given the de-legitimization of the enemy, in empirical terms it is evident that their explanatory power is minimum. Very different are the aims, character, behaviour and contexts of Pablo Escobar's Medellin Cartel, FARC, Russian mafias, or the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. There is no scientific and analytical rigour in placing "a disparate group (of actors) with widely divergent motives and types of relationships with drugs" as part of the same category (Wardlaw, 1988, p.5).

Grant Wardlaw, a Senior Fellow at the Australian Research Council Centre for Excellence in Policy and Security, strongly opposed the *narcoterrorism* approach. He believes this concept

> "categorizes and combines together a wide range of different sorts of links between drug traffickers and a myriad of different exponents of political violence by treating this disparate group, with widely divergent motives and types of relationships with drugs as a coherent entity. (As a consequence) we have failed to define the nature of the threat posed by the drug/political violence linkages and have often descended into emotive name-calling" (Wardlaw, 1988, p.5).

The triadic character of commercial insurgencies

How then to think about such entities? Evidently a simplistic and generalizing view is insufficient to fully understand commercial insurgencies. As it was explained in the last chapter, systems are composed by a series of units whose conditions at the lowest level determine the system as a whole. As such, and following the logic in Metz's definition, it is necessary to 'open the box' and dig deeper within the insurgency to explore motivations and functions of individuals, groups, sectors or levels, instead of understanding them through the same lens. It is necessary to propose a comprehensive understanding of how these actors operate in the context of hyperconnectivity as it was described in the last chapter.

It is firstly necessary to establish a clear distinction between motivations and functions. The former refers to the reason or purpose behind combatant's will to fight, the latter to the type of activity that as members of the insurgency they must engage in. It is important to have in mind that the first is not necessarily equivalent to the combatant's reason to join the organization. Several factors ranging from prestige and unemployment to coercion explain such decision. But within the insurgency several processes are in place to create organizational cohesion, including political indoctrination. Through time, combatant's motivation to remain in war could change. Some might continue to be interested only as means of income (criminal motivations) while others might be convinced by the political objective (political motivation).

In theory, the nature of an insurgency is political by definition. This means that all individuals, commanders and combatants are motivated by the achievement of a social/political goal. But this does not mean that everyone will be a combatant. As several classic theorists of insurgency such as Mao Tse Tung or Vo Nguyen Giap, have suggested, insurgencies develop political structures which remain independent to those units waging war, for they will spread the discourse to build popular support and to participate through political spaces.

In that sense, whereas all of the members of insurgency have a political motivation, not all of them develop political activities. By definition, using violence is an obvious and necessary

condition for an insurgency to exist. In functional terms, then, the political dimension is joined by a 'military' dimension composed by those rebels performing tasks related to warfare (Figure 2.2).
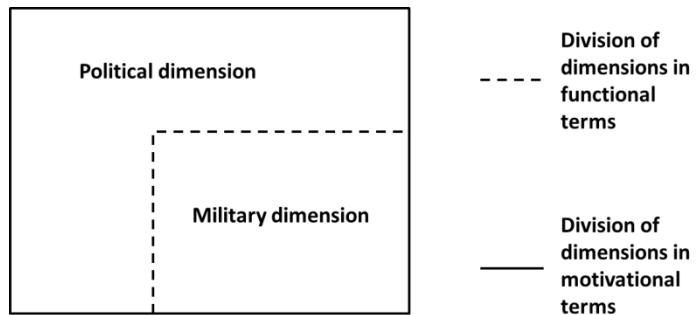
Figure 2.2

In other words, all combatants -those who wage war- have a political motivation and are thus part of the political dimension in motivational terms, but in terms of functionality they only constitute the 'military' dimension since they do not develop specific political tasks. By contrast, those individuals that are only dedicated to the organization's political tasks (i.e. members of the political party) can only be part of the political dimension both in motivational and functional terms.

But in the case of commercial insurgencies yet another dimension must be included. By definition, this type of organization is still political, so the analysis regarding the military/political dimensions is still applicable. However, in this case there are also actors waging war motivated by the revenues of the criminal activity, so a 'criminal' dimension needs to be included in the analysis, both in terms of motivation and functions. Those who perform tasks related to the criminal activity are part of the criminal dimension in functional terms. For example, in the case of narcotics, the criminal dimension expresses interests in profiting from drug-dealing (motivational) and the performance of tasks related to the production and trade of drugs (functional).

It is then here proposed that this type of organization displays a **triadic character** composed of military, political and criminal dimensions, for which particular functional structures are developed, composed by individuals who conduct activities and tasks according to the nature of each of them. Such structures are not mutually exclusive; that is, the organization will not necessarily establish separate units (fronts, columns, companies, cells, blocs, platoons) for each of the dimensions. There is an overlapping; individuals can be part of several

dimensions simultaneously as expressed in figure 2.3. As it will be explored ahead, functional structures extend beyond state borders, exploiting elements in its environment, and challenging the capacity of the state to respond to the threat.

Figure 2.3
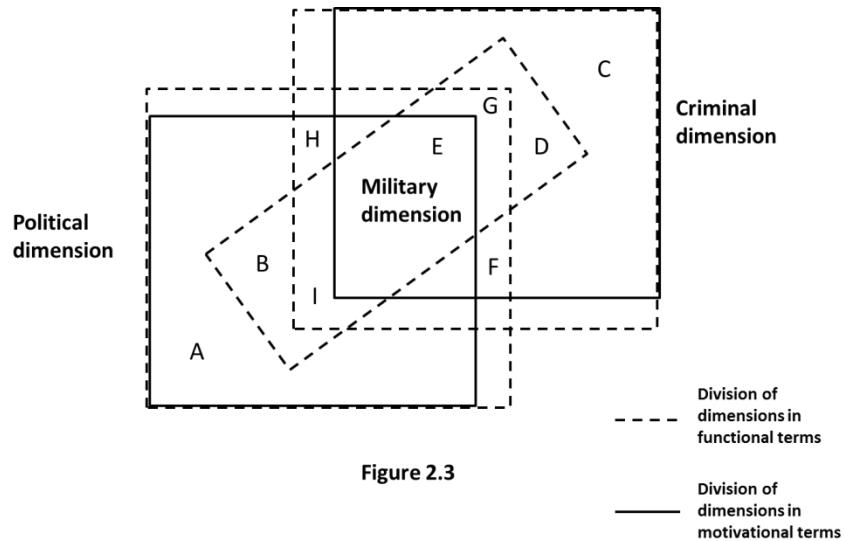
The military dimension, as it can be observed, exists only in functional terms. Militants must have a motivation that can be classified either as political or criminal, but a military motivation by itself does not have a proper logic. There is no fighting for the sake of fighting. Combatants are not waging war because they want to wage war; they are fighting for a purpose. Now, the figure shows that different sorts of overlapping are possible between dimensions. The letters describe the universe of possibilities in which all insurgents can be placed according to their motivations and functions. This does not mean that every commercial insurgency must have individuals in every category; several of them might be non-existent in particular cases.

- **A** describes an individual who is politically motivated and develops political tasks without engaging in combat. For example, those militants of political parties or movements of the insurgency, without including urban militias. It is difficult to trace a defined border between this area and the rest of society.

- **B** refers to those individuals who are politically motivated and participate in armed actions, whether in rural spaces as traditional frontline combatants or in urban areas as militias. In classic theory this is the bulk of the insurgency, and it corresponds to those within the military dimension in figure 2.2.

- **C** describes those individuals who are motivated by the proceeds of criminal activities, and perform tasks related to them, but do not engage in combat. From a strict point of view they might be seen as associates of the organization, but they could be actual insurgency members specifically destined to such tasks. As with the political dimensions, it might also be difficult to trace a dividing line between society and this area.

- **D** refers to insurgents motivated by criminal wealth and performing specific tasks related to criminal activities, but participating in combat.

- **E** describes the point where all the dimensions come together. Combatants in this area are both politically and criminally motivated, and are understood to engage in political, criminal and political activities. It is possible to think about commanders as part of this category. But this space should not be thought as exclusive of commanders, we could probably find mid-ranking combatants also performing varied functions in all dimensions. As it was argued by William Reno, "economic benefit is not the motivation of all individuals in every internal war. Combatants might pursue diverse objectives simultaneously." (Pizarro, 2004, p.16)

- **F** describes an odd condition. Individuals who are criminally motivated but for some reason end up performing only political functions. They shouldn't be a general case within the organization but under strict conditions of command, it could be a possibility. For example, an individual who is part of the organizations because he is interested in wealth, but his commander has placed him in a position where he must indoctrinate communities or coordinate cells of the clandestine political party. Point **G** would explain a similar condition but adding the role of combat.

- **H** refers to the same situation in opposite terms. Individuals who are politically motivated but end up performing tasks related only to the criminal activity. **I** adds its participation in warfare.

But these dimensions are not static. As complexity explains, nodes can change and evolve over time, their motivations and the tasks they perform may vary. Nodes can 'jump' from dimension to dimension, expressing their interdependence. This has a relevant implication

in terms of re-emergence, as it will be detailed ahead, since stimuli from the environment may trigger changes in nodes allowing them to engage with other dimensions. This 'leap' can be produced through a series of processes:

- Node politicization: In motivational terms this means convincing those who pursue a criminal objective to follow the political struggle (indoctrination). In functional terms it means the beginning of the conduct of political activities and tasks.

- Node militarization: It consists in transforming nodes that were developing exclusively political or criminal tasks into active combatants. This can be achieved through military training and the preparation of a reserve force with appropriate capabilities.

- Node criminalization: In motivational terms, this implies a loss of interest regarding the original political reason to fight. A lack of motivation produced by low perspectives on winning the war or the appearance of a stronger interest in profits. In functional terms, this implies that militants will begin to develop tasks related to the organization's criminal activities.

Now, in theory, several organizations might find its military and political dimensions significantly overlapping, even in functional terms. That is, every member of the insurgency is both a political actor performing political tasks and a participant in military actions. Such might be the case not of classic Marxist or Maoist insurgencies, but of a decentralized, networked and loose structure of individuals, very much as described in the last chapter: Individuals who decide to act by themselves without receiving a formal order, who look for support in cells or groups, or come together with others to form their own. Many of Al Qaeda's militants and members of associated organizations have followed this pattern of action as authors such as Mackinlay have explained.[18] Through this example, it is clear how the boundaries between the system (the insurgency) and the environment (its society) are not clearly defined, since any individual might suddenly decide to act as an insurgent.

In practice, however, it is difficult to find an organization with military and political dimensions perfectly overlapping. In the example of Al Qaeda it is possible to find militants that will never act through violence, while being very active on an online campaign. But the

---

[18] Read (Mackinlay, 2009)

size of the dimensions and the overlapping will vary according to the organization, and might even evolve in time.

Which are the tasks that define the dimensions in functional terms? In the military dimension, the tasks resemble those of a proper military institution: recruiting and finding the adequate personnel for each of the tactical demands; developing training routines to guarantee success in operations and, if necessary, the required specialization; executing operations, either offensive or defensive according to the dynamics of conflict; building logistical chains to keep the organization running (e.g. food, weaponry and clothing); securing communication channels to allow the necessary coordination among its command and control structures; establishing routines and practices of internal control and discipline to keep internal cohesion with adequate punishment procedures when necessary; obtaining intelligence information; and organizing urban militias for the conduction of operations, intelligence and logistical support in the cities.

The activities related to the political dimension of an insurgency may be derived from the creation of a political party or movement as the cornerstone of its participation at the national and local levels. In the case of Marxist-Leninist and Maoist insurgencies during the Cold War, communist parties became the political wing of armed rebellions. But according to the political and strategic contexts, the case for a political body acting at the national level might not always be the ideal mechanism. Political structures might be developed in a clandestine manner, and the tasks performed informally within specific local contexts.

In general terms, such tasks are related to spreading the discourse, ideals, philosophy and arguments of the insurgency in search of the sympathy of individuals for their active or passive support. These include popular assemblies, smaller local meetings, indoctrination of specific individuals, dissemination of ideas by word of mouth, and the spread of propaganda through methods such as pamphlets or radio stations. Today, these tasks extend to the cyberspace and include online social networks. If the organization has somehow become the local authority in particular areas, either directly or through third parties, their acts of government are also duties of political nature.

Activities in the criminal dimension are all of those related to the production and commercialization of the commodity, or the performance of those criminal actions which generate the interest in profit within the insurgency. In the case of narcotics, for example, these include providing raw materials, cultivating coca leaf or poppy, recollecting and

processing, refining, charging taxes to peasant and dealers, sales, transporting to shipment points, money laundering and providing security to the infrastructure, among others.

But as it was explained in the last chapter, complexity and networks tell us that such nodes are not necessarily restricted to the territory of a single state. Instead they find elements through their environment which allow them to move through different geographic and social spaces and to build transnational networks. For this reason, it is important to bring 'the environment' into analysis, to determine how environmental elements contribute to the placement and survival of nodes of the three dimensions, and how they are a base for the re-emergence of the organization.

The environment of operations

As complexity explains, systems are part of the environment and they constantly interact with it. Insurgency adapts to the circumstances it imposes, while elements of the environment might change as a result of the acts of insurgents. More interestingly, as mentioned before, there isn't necessarily a defined border between the organization and its society. As the case of FARC will demonstrate in later chapters, it is difficult to make a difference between members of the insurgency and supporting elements in Latin America. Members of the FARC-created *Movimiento Continental Bolivariano,* a Latin American movement bringing together Bolivarian and Communist parties, groups and individuals, could well be considered active part of the insurgency.

The environment is in fact a source of opportunities for the commercial insurgency. As noted in the last chapter, the information age is characterised by highly connected societies where actors as corporations, multinationals or criminals have the possibility to articulate operations and expand beyond borders, to increase their contacts worldwide and to place nodes of operations in more than a single state. If we think about the spaces that constitute the environment of the insurgency we would have to begin with local zones where insurgents operate and where the criminal economy exist, but we would have to go all the way to the global arena where a great variety of agents might act in favour of the rebels. In the case of FARC this is observable, for example, locally in the provinces of Meta, Caquetá or Tolima, which have been historical areas of operations, and globally through Europe where several support groups operate. As such, then, the environment is constituted as a grand continuum connecting the local, national, regional and global theatres of operations where the insurgency finds elements that allow for its nodes to be embedded through different social

and geographical spaces. It is through these elements or variables that the interaction between the system and the environment is possible; through these variables the insurgency is able to embed nodes in geographical and social spaces beyond borders. They include:

- Sympathy of non-organized individuals (individuals not formally enrolled in any organization)
- Connections with political and social movements
- Alliances with armed actors
- Support from national governments
- Exploitation of empty spaces
- Accommodation of secretive nodes

Now, these elements are exploited by the insurgency to expand, to place nodes of all its dimensions through different social and geographical spaces. But they do so in a differentiated manner according to the type of nodes, and to the level in the environment. Not every variable allows the placement of different types of nodes (political, criminal and military) in the same manner, while their effects are also dissimilar in national and external spaces.

In order to have a clear idea of how these variables are to be understood through the present dissertation the environment will be artificially divided between a **primary environment** including the local and national levels, and a **secondary environment** to speak about elements beyond the borders of the main state of operations. It is said that this division is arbitrary because from the perspective introduced in the first chapter, insurgencies could be natural to a region, to certain social and political communities and not necessarily to the realities of a single state. For the counterinsurgent state, however, this division is not only artificial but real and constraining.

Support from national government in the primary environment lacks sense since insurgencies by definition exist as opposed to the government. On the local level it could be understood as support from the local authority. But this is usually a result of the process of insurgency growth. As the movement grows and individuals, organizations and political figures are incorporated into the effort, local power is achieved to be administered directly or through third parties. In other cases, local authority is captured by force and through violence. In that sense, it is not properly the support of a local authority which allows embedding nodes. This is why the dissertation will understand this variable only as that of a

government of a foreign state, while the rest of the variables bear more significance through the primary environment.

On the other hand, sympathy from non-organized individuals must be understood in a particular way. In the primary environment, more than being a variable through which the organization actually places its combatants among communities and new territories, it expresses the incorporation of new individuals into the insurgent system, and as such a valid element of expansion. But when support spreads considerably to incorporate an increased amount of individuals, support is likely to be channelled through different instruments, such as a social movement, or it can be understood as part of the progressive territorial expansion of the insurgency itself. As such, this support can be understood not through this particular variable but, for example, through social movements.

But in the secondary environment, when the insurgency is foreign to a territory, sympathy of non-organized individuals or communities might not be as relevant as it is in the primary environment. When it exists, it is insufficient for the insurgency to accommodate nodes in other territories. It may become a source of recruitment as it is in the case of the primary environment, but this does not guarantee an extension in territorial dominion. More likely, the individual will join the insurgency to fight in Colombia. For nodes to be embedded, sympathy from individuals must be part of other processes such as the creation of a social movement or a political organization. It can also be part of a dynamic of authority building by the insurgency within an 'empty space' as it will now be explained. In that sense, for the secondary environment, this variable can be observed through other variables.

Empty spaces are here understood as those areas or zones of the territory of any country where there is virtually no authority or presence of the security forces, allowing its relative occupation by the insurgency. Social communities in the area might be either non-existent or too scarce to represent a challenge. When they are present, they might be dominated through violence, but there might also be processes in which, in the absence of state institutions, the insurgency becomes a legitimate authority providing some sort of order. In that sense, sympathy from non-organized individuals might exist along with support from other actors.

These spaces might be the result of a government's unwillingness or its incapacity to extend its grip over them. It differs from the conception of safe havens in two ways: the safe haven could suggest that the insurgency is foreign to the territory; it is basically an insurgency of a

neighbouring country that finds a space for survival by acquiescence of the host state. The empty space can be thought for transnational or regional insurgencies which find areas to develop its activities unopposed by authorities, within the territory of a state or beyond borders. More importantly empty spaces are not necessarily the result of a host government's support to the guerrillas; but also the product of its ignorance of rebels' presence, or its incapacity to respond. This is possible, for example, when harsh geographic conditions characterize the area. Lack of confrontation can also be the result of the government's strategic calculation to discretely support the insurgency.

This is another example on how these variables are interrelated: Government support by itself might contribute to node embeddedness in diverse ways, but it might also exist in the form of the creation of an empty space when it is the result of government's unwillingness to fight the insurgents. And the empty space fosters cooperation with social and political organizations, and armed actors, when they exist. These three latter variables do not display a significant difference in terms of their contribution to the embedment of nodes between the primary and secondary environments.

On the other hand, the accommodation of secretive nodes is not in strict sense an element of the environment. Rather it is an objective for which several minor specific logistical elements are exploited (obtaining passports, visas, creating a false profiles, etc.) in order to place nodes that will not depend on its contacts with other actors. They operate within societies without others knowing the roles they perform for the insurgency. As in the case of the variables announced before, there is no significant distinction of its application through the primary and secondary environments, implications and dynamics are similar in both cases. This is evident, for example, in the case of criminal networks or military nodes doing business through the secondary environment. It could also be the case of the first political nodes of the insurgency that are placed in other countries, but since their purpose is likely to gather support and spread their discourse, they might create cells or groups affiliated to social or political organizations.

Now, the level of embeddedness of nodes beyond borders, the blurring of the line that divides primary and secondary environments, and ultimately the flexibility, resilience, and adaptability of its networks, depend on the development of a wider regional or global phenomenon of insurrection, upheaval, and political mobilization. It is possible to observe three different scenarios of insurgency involvement in regional/global processes.

- Transnational networks of a national insurgency
- Insurgency as part of a regional revolution
- Transnational insurgency

In the first case, the organization counts with militants in several countries but they exist in function of an internal conflict. Even when certain operative functions extend beyond borders, the objective is still revolution in a particular state. Given environmental elements listed before, such nodes are perfectly embedded in different societies. There is no regional common agenda and alliances with other organizations express solidarity but not a shared objective.

In the second situation, the insurgency is part of a wider regional or even global uprising in which several actors, movements, organizations and rebel groups pursue the same objective. There is no single theatre of operations since they extend through regions. Extremist parties, movements, and armed rebels come together in a single borderless effort to implement political systems according to their ideals.

In the third case, the insurgency constitutes a regional revolutionary army by itself. There are connections and alliances with other actors but they are either local, operating in national scenarios, or constitute different regional actors pursuing a particular regional agenda. In a similar way to the second scenario, the objective of the organization is not explained exclusively in terms of an internal conflict, but extends through different countries. In the second scenario the insurgency coexists with other actors in the same campaign, in this case the insurgency itself constitutes the structure of regional upheaval.

As it has been said, this understanding of insurgencies challenges the traditional model of competition between a national insurgency and a single counterinsurgent state. The survival of militants beyond borders creates the possibility for the insurgency to re-emerge in case of being reduced to a point of near destruction in the primary theatre. The possibility to find more favourable elements through the secondary environment depends, logically, on the type of scenario according to the classification just introduced. An insurgency that is part of a regional revolution will find elements of support within the secondary environment more easily than a national insurgency.

Although the primary environment is vital to understand the configuration of the structures of the three dimensions, this dissertation prioritizes events in the secondary environment for survival and re-emergence.

Now, **survival** might be expressed in different terms. Nodes and structures might continue to exist beyond borders preserving full organizational conditions, meaning that insurgents will continue to perform their functions according to the dimensions. The geography of operations might change according to the circumstances. The insurgency might consider becoming a transnational organization or directing its efforts in a new national scenario, but it might also remain faithful to its main purpose in its country of origin, thus looking to return. On the other hand, survival might be expressed by scattered and diffused nodes, without any major organizational logic, and without the possibility to interact and to coordinate actions. But they might continue performing their functions in different scenarios, through other organizations or in smaller groups. As explained through network theory, structures can survive unless 5 to 15% of hubs are disabled simultaneously. So if the insurgency has placed hubs (commanders, leaders, operative figures with a high amount of connections within the organization) in other spaces beyond borders, then survival is possible.

Given these circumstances the **re-emergence** of commercial insurgencies can be understood in different ways. In general sense re-emergence refers to the reconfiguration and reappearance of the organization incorporating elements of all of the three dimensions, mainly, but not necessarily, in the original theatre of operations. If remaining sectors of the insurgency persist focused only on criminal activities, such as profiting from drug-dealing, their existence cannot be considered as the re-emergence of the insurgency. Likewise, if members of the organization return as members of a political party, the commercial insurgency has not re-emerged given the lack of the use of violence and the element of profiting from criminal activities.

Re-emergence may happen, according to the circumstances explained before, when the functional structures (military, political and criminal) remaining beyond Colombian borders have the strength, and find the appropriate conditions, to return to the primary theatre of operations. It may also occur when remaining scattered nodes and groups come together to re-engage with all of the dimensions of the insurgency, producing some sort order to act in one or diverse geographical theatres.

There are specific environmental (regional) processes that contribute not only to the embedment and survival of insurgency nodes beyond borders, but to the re-emergence of the organization via the possibility of nodes to re-engage with other dimensions. These processes are the **preservation of the ideology and the discourse**, and the **mobility of**

elements of the criminal economy. They guarantee node redundancy, and the flexibility, adaptability, and resilience of the networks.

The globalization, or regionalization, of particular ideologies, doctrines and discourses that speak about societies in certain political/geographical contexts, contribute to the embeddedness of operatives beyond borders and provides instruments for nodes to re-engage with the political dimension. Trans-nationality generates local expressions of support channelled or materialized through specific political parties, social groups or other armed organizations. Examples are Political Islam or *Islamism* in the case of Al Qaeda and affiliated organizations, and *Bolivarianism-Communism* throughout the Andes and South America.[19]

On the other hand, if criminal interests are derived from a particular commodity, the mobility of elements of the criminal economy through the region also becomes a source of flexibility for networks. For example, the cultivation of coca leaf which has historically moved from country to country, offers opportunities for the insurgency to participate in criminal activities in different geographical spaces, possibly embedding militants in other territories. If one state advances with eradication plans, it is highly likely that cultivation will increase in a different region or in another country, a phenomenon known as 'the balloon effect': if a balloon is squeezed, the air will move to new spaces preserving the original amount of air. In the past, for example, elimination of coca fields in Peru and Bolivia during the 1980s meant an increase in Colombia (Thoumi, 2003), while reduction of crops in this country during the late 2000s led into an increase in the first two (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011a, p.15). This implies a change of scenarios of the criminal economy. In those new areas where the cultivation of coca or poppy increases, the insurgency will have the opportunity to create new economic cycles of dependence which make it strong and legitimate in areas of production. In other words, the lack of states' institutional presence in specific areas becomes an opportunity for the insurgency to build processes to gain legitimacy through popular support.

Drug-dealing requires diverse activities in a long chain of production and trade which spreads through several countries and includes different types of organization. Insurgencies may participate in different ways in the production/trade chain, and may even have different

---

[19] An ill-defined doctrine, Bolivarianism is more a loose set of ideas drawn together. In essence it stems from Simon Bolivar's idea of building a single country from the nations that achieved their independence from the Spanish Empire at the beginning of the 19th Century. It has evolved to emphasize on the rejection of American influence in the continent, and it has joined Marxist-Socialist ideas becoming what has been categorized as the Socialism of the 21st Century.

degrees of participation within a country. Production and trade networks are flexible. For instance, if insurgency participation is strong in the first stages of the chain, its nodes could be relocated to areas where coca or poppy plants are moving. If states increase control in certain areas, they could move into new spaces or even to the border zones in other countries with low state presence.

Trading points and traffic routes are also flexible. If control increases for one corridor and against some specific methods of transportation, then trafficking nodes can be re-accommodated using different routes and means, not only within the territory of a state but throughout the entire region.

The processes introduced earlier, as it was stated, contribute to the re-emergence of the organization given the possibility they provide for nodes to re-engage with dimensions that could have been weakened by the counterinsurgent. This is possible given the mobility of nodes through dimensions as explained earlier. For example:

- Node politicization: remnants of the insurgency may become criminals in the strict sense of the concept. However, through the preservation of the ideology and discourse through the region, and probably through contacts with other regional actors, they might be pushed back into fighting for a political cause (indoctrination). This, especially, if there are nodes of other dimensions, and if some mid-ranking and senior commanders remain. New nodes can be added to the networks given the spread of the ideas and discourse through a wider society.

- Node militarization: when there is an offensive against an insurgency, evidently the military dimensions is severely hit. Remaining nodes may either become tempted to turn entirely into criminals, or to escape to cities and towns to proselytise without actually waging war. The militarization of nodes means the return of such nodes into combat. This may be achieved through the preparation and training of existing non-military nodes of the organization or the preparation of a good reserve force.

- Node criminalization: If military and political nodes continue to exist beyond borders, but eradication policies in Colombia became successful in eliminating war economies, the existence of spaces for cultivation, production and traffic in other areas of the region will invite not only those remaining nodes to engage on activities

related to drug production and trafficking, but also new nodes to participate. As such the criminal dimension is reconstituted by remaining political and military nodes.

This dynamics confirm the inter-dependency of the dimensions of the triadic character of commercial insurgencies. In conceptual terms they must exist together in order for an organization to be considered as a hybrid entity. This must be strictly recognized by the counterinsurgent in order to be successful in its confrontation. It must be understood that given the right environmental conditions, the insurgency may be reconstituted from nodes dedicated to any of the dimensions. In simple words, not addressing all of the dimensions of the commercial insurgency creates the opportunity for its survival and re-emergence. In that sense the dilemma for the counterinsurgent is two-fold: the insurgency is multi-dimensional and trans-national.

Now, the environment and the elements that have been here introduced are ideal for the insurgency to become a complex-networked insurgency more than a strict hierarchy. Given the diffusion of nodes through diverse societies and war theatres, the spread of the ideology through the region, and the mobility of criminal elements, this organizational paradigm would seem to explain more easily such social and political realities. Interconnected individuals, cells, groups and movements operating in different countries would be the base of the insurgency; the nodes on the lowest levels of the system whose interactions create emergent processes of action. Communication channels and social networks allow for the rapid spread of ideas, making it is easier to understand how nodes through different nations become part of the movement.

The traditional model of insurgency, socially and geographically marginalized rural guerrillas dressed in combat fatigues progressively conquering human and territorial spaces, such as Castro's Cuban Revolution, is declining in favour of interconnected horizontal and decentralized structures, as Arquila and Ronfeldt have explained. As worldwide political events during 2010-2011 demonstrate, there is considerable power on social mobilizations and popular movements, for which online social networks have become highly instrumental. The youth, the students, marginalized social sectors, the unemployed, and political activists are an ideal niche for insurgency growth. Organizations would be very obtuse not to exploit these spaces to their favour. However, not all insurgencies are necessarily networked; hierarchies still exist. Organizations such as FARC are very strict in following a military hierarchy. But as it was explained in the last chapter, non-state actors appear to be more a

combination of hierarchies and diverse types of networks, so even when militarily they are clearly hierarchical, in political terms they could exploit the advantages of social hyperconnection. Clandestine parties, the infiltration of other social and political actors, the creation of open mass movements and the participation in multi-party forums are all relevant in this sense. This is evident in the case of FARC.

It is also important to take into account an aspect of the relation between criminal economy and the insurgency. It could be thought that when the criminal economy has been developed around a particular commodity, its elimination or regulation would end the desire for profits within the insurgency. But this is not logical. Organizations such as FARC could be understood as 'bureaucracies in arms'; that is, the consolidation of a highly institutionalized bureaucratic apparatus that will struggle to continue existing whichever the conditions.[20] After all "organizations do not only exist to achieve an objective, but also to be preserved as organizations." (Ferro & Uribe, 2002, p.41) The continuity of the insurgency depends on its acquisition of resources. Combatants will look into new sources of income in order to maintain the status quo and to guarantee their life style. In this sense, the elimination of a particular commodity does not represent the end of the war economy, but the step into the exploration of new elements to keep it alive. In Colombia, for example, the reduction of cocaine trafficking has opened the doors to the exploitation of other sources such as gold, coltan, and in general, to illegal mining.

This would lead into the observation that ultimately the solution to these dilemmas is not on the simple elimination or regulation of particular commodities but on the construction of legal sustainable economies with benefits for peasants and farmers, with a strong participation of state institutions. The objective shouldn't be the destruction of a particular war economy, but to avoid the appearance of any criminal economy. This discussion leads into a deeper observation of the concept of counterinsurgency, in order to understand how it has evolved through the ages, incorporating elements to address criminal economies.

---

[20] This is an idea proposed by Fernando Cubides. (Pizarro, 2011, p. 212)

Chapter 3. The evolution of counterinsurgency warfare

Before going more deeply into the case study it is necessary to discuss another dimension that is relevant to understand the Colombian problem: the concept of counterinsurgency. As it will be explained in the next chapter for the case of FARC, adaptations of the insurgency depend on the conditions imposed by the counterinsurgent. They exist in a 'dialogue' in which actions of the latter forces changes on the former, and changes on the former demands new adaptations of the counterinsurgent. For example, internal pressure of the military forces has pushed insurgents towards the territories of other countries. But this is an adaptation to which the state hasn't been able to respond appropriately. The counterinsurgent, understood in terms of state, has significant problems to act regarding militants, structures and networks beyond the space in which it is sovereign.

The conception of counterinsurgency (COIN) is not rigid and static. Its scope and practice, the actors involved in its application, its areas of action, and everything that it entails, have changed through history. What began as a brutal response aimed at the forceful destruction of the enemy along with its supporting communities, ended up as a practice resembling sustainable development. Understanding the current perspective of COIN, the instruments that are considered to be effective and the elements that are counterproductive and should be excluded from its practice, requires an observation of past models and the ways they evolved.

Such an evolution can be easily appreciated through the analysis of different types of targets from which different kinds of COIN strategies have been developed. Gil Merom (2003), an expert in guerrilla and COIN, cites three targets: The popular base of an insurgency (national annihilation), the social bond between rebels and the populace (Mild and extreme strategies including isolation) and the military and political cadres (Decapitation and eradication).

The indiscriminate and violent perspectives focused on the eradication of insurgents and their popular base, typical of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, gradually gave way to more moderate politically-focused approaches aiming at the destruction of the social bond between insurgents and the population, while focusing on the protection of the community. As it will be explained, whereas extreme strategies for breaking this bond were observed during the 20th century, including isolation and re-concentration, milder strategies seem to be more coherent in the 21st century's context of complexity and hyperconnectivity.

For this purpose, then, the present chapter will analyse the evolution of COIN warfare through history observing how the use of force, the methods, the perception of the population, the institutions involved, and the strategies have varied. The objective, as already stated, is to understand why COIN is conceived as it is today and why particular models and methods are considered valid and effective, while others are counterproductive. This will be useful as a base to understand the concepts and evolution of doctrine and practice in Colombia, and to analyse the effectiveness or pathologies of the methods that had been used.

The chapter explores first the brutal methods practiced during the late 18th and 19th centuries mostly during revolutionary France, the Napoleonic invasion of Europe and the expansion of imperial European powers. It then observes the emergence of more political approaches of COIN and the brutal responses of totalitarian states during the Second World War, followed by the emergence of Maoism and the observation of both positive and negative COIN experiences. It finally explores the current practice of COIN warfare including a discussion of elements to address criminal war economies, and the transnational character of modern insurgencies.

The era of brutality

The insurgencies that rose in Europe as a response to the Napoleonic invasions, and those in Africa and Asia to contest the imperial expansion of European powers, were responded with brutal excesses, indiscriminate force and repressive methods. The counterinsurgents targeted not only the insurgents themselves, but frequently also their popular bases.

As analysed in the second chapter, and following Schmitt's explanation, the Napoleonic expansion through Europe motivated the emergence of the first insurgencies which constituted what Michael Broer denominates 'Napoleon's other war': real national insurrections where nations, not armies, raised in arms.[21] The Spanish insurrection, probably the most significant of all, had a smaller precedent in the Italian region of Calabria from 1806 to 1807 when the Neapolitan dynasty was deposed. It was, however, unsuccessful as the rebels failed to gather support from the community and attract the attention of the Bourbons (Finley, 1976).

---

[21] Read (Broers, 2010)

Charles Esdaile explains the Spanish insurrection through the romantic and religious character of Spaniards: a national uprising in which the image of heroic combatants embellished propaganda, characteristic of the war in which many thousands of Spaniards took part; a cause which made fighters not only bandits but "true defenders of the fatherland... authorized by their government to harass the common enemy." (Esdaile, 2004, p.3) It was an idea of war that became popular through society making it a real national uprising against the French invasion. As explained by Schmitt and observed in the last chapter, it was the first example in which war was not fought by an army but by the nation itself: "The guerrillas were the nation in arms. They fought in the morning and worked in the afternoon. They were both soldiers and citizens... The guerrillas were the champions of [Spanish] independence."[22]

In terms of the counterinsurgent response, in Calabria entire towns were garrisoned while in Spain summary executions were applied to those who were absent from home on the assumption that they were *guerrilleros.* Public meetings were forbidden, holidays suspended and clerics deported. It was decreed that for every Frenchman killed, four insurgents would be hanged, and if there weren't any, civilians would take their place (Beckett, 2001, p.27).

These methods were similar to those experienced during the Jacobin era in France. With the uprising in the Vendee in 1793, which opposed revolutionaries in Paris, the death penalty was ordered for all rebels. The infamous *colonnes infernales* (infernal columns) terrorized civilians throughout the province with killings, deportations, fires, confiscations, abusing of woman and drowning of priests (Beckett, 2001). Reynald Secher (2003) names this the 'French genocide': 815,629 individuals affected by war and 117,257 people who disappeared between 1792 and 1802, a 14.38% of the population (p.208). "All contemporary observers were struck by the monstrous character of the repression that pitilessly exterminated women, children, old men, the infirm, and mature men indiscriminately." (Secher, 2003)

Terrorization of civilians was also the practice during the Franco-Prussian War. During 1870-1871 *franc-tireurs* were intended to fight the Prussians through guerrilla warfare, "to harass the enemy... to obstruct him in his requisitions (...) to capture convoys, cut roads and railways, destroy bridges (...) to disturb him day and night" (Howard, 2001, p.249). They were only seen as murderers and were not to be tolerated. Retaliatory measures such as burning down houses, or the imposition of forced contributions were imposed upon the civilian

---

[22] Enrique Rodriguez Soliz Quoted in (Esdaile,2004, p.8)

communities who harboured them (Howard, 2001). Bismarck himself urged that villages be burned to terrorize the French into rapid submission (Beckett, 2001).

British response to colonial insurgencies was also brutal. There were orders to burn down or blow up all the houses next to railways, bridges or telegraphic lines that were attacked. In the Boer War collective fines were decreed, and civilians were forced to ride the trains as human shields. Martial Law was declared increasing tensions between army and local politicians. The flow of refugees was considerable and the establishment of refugee camps was necessary. By December 1900 the internment system was extended through all the Boer Republics and the population was removed entirely. By 1902, 30,000 farmhouses had been destroyed (Beckett, 2001, p.39). 28000 Boer civilians were concentrated in 40 camps, and from 16000 to 20000 blacks held in 66 camps died. Similar mechanisms of extermination were applied in German COIN campaigns in South and East Africa (1904-1907); there, between 50 to 80 per cent of African tribes were eliminated (Merom, 2003).

The words of British Member of Parliament David Lloyd George capture the essence of the atrocities committed by his country in this campaign against the Boer insurrection:

> "A war of annexation against a proud people must be a war of extermination,
> and that is unfortunately what it seems we are now committing ourselves to
> –burning homesteads and turning women and children out of their homes"
> (Jackson, 1999, p.130)

A similar image can be drawn from the words of Army General Philip Sheridan in a letter written in 1870:

> "The proper strategy consists in inflicting as telling blows as possible on the
> enemy's army, and then in causing the inhabitants so much suffering that
> they must long for peace, and force the government to demand it. The people
> must be left with nothing but their eyes to weep with over the war." (Jackson,
> 1999, p.145).

British expeditions in the northwest frontier were labelled as 'butcher and bolt' by the troops; Germans wiped out 75,000 natives in suppression of the Maji Maji revolt in East Africa, and 60,000 in the Herero Revolt in South West Africa (Jackson, 1999).

These kind of methods were still observed during the interwar period when Italy used mustard gas in Libya in the 1920`s and in Ethiopia in 1935. So did the United States against Sandino, the Soviets against internal opponents, and the British in Iraq, Aden, Sudan, Somaliland and the North West Frontier. The French appealed to indiscriminate violence in Morocco between 1924 and 1926; they popularized the implementation of the *razzia,* a

method with indiscriminate raids involving assassination, plundering and destruction of property and burning crops (Merom, 2003).

During imperial expansion, European powers experimented with strategies aimed at breaking the bond between insurgents and their communities, but methods employed, rather than being mild, were intrusive and disruptive of community's lives. The isolation and re-concentration of civilians was implemented. It consisted on moving entire communities from their original locations to areas where they could be controlled by the counterinsurgent, leaving rebels in spaces where it was possible to search and destroy them. Columns would then be used to pursue guerrilla bands, while food denial programmes were applied in order to starve insurgents. The objective was to avoid rebels from supplying themselves. As described by Anthony Joes:

> "Disrupting the enemy's food supply is of course a venerable stratagem (...) Food denial programmes inevitably suggest population concentration. Concentration generally worked in this way: the military authorities instructed the civilian population in a given region to move with their family members, animals, and foodstuffs into a designated town by a specific date. After that time, any goods or animals found outside the town would be subject to confiscation, and men would be liable to arrest as guerrillas" (Joes, 2008, p.44).

Charles Callwell, a British Major-General with battlefield experience in Afghanistan and South Africa, recognized re-concentration as a common practice at the end of the 19th century: The British in South Africa, the Spaniards in Cuba, the United States in Philippines and the Russians in the Caucasus focused on physically gathering the civilian population in a specific area to avoid contacts, the provision of food or material to the insurgency, through a heavily guarded system of fortified lines of outposts known as *cordon sanitaire* or *trocha*. (Beckett, 2001)

In the Vendée, French General Louis-Lazare Hoche built fortified posts around the region to isolate it, and had mobile columns pushing systematically outwards until new lines of posts could be established after clearing territory. The objective was to reduce the space for the rebels to manoeuvre (Beckett, 2001). The creation of outposts was common later during European colonial expansion. In occasions, such outposts were used as centres for civic-military action, as experienced by the Dutch, but in other cases focus was placed on intensively patrolling against remnants of the resistance.

In most cases however, the appalling conditions of communities were counterproductive. Such was the case for Spaniards in Cuba, Americans in the Philippines, and British in the Boer War in South Africa (Beckett, 2001). In the latter, civilian Boers were moved into structures that resembled 'concentration camps'. Over 8000 blockhouses were erected, with intervals of as little as 185 meters. 6400 kilometres of barbed wire linked the blockhouses through the field. 50,000 troops and 16,000 indigenous auxiliaries garrisoned the posts, while in the outside, farms and crops were destroyed and livestock removed in order for the insurgency not to find any sources of food (Beckett, 2001, p.39-40).

Americans had problems in the Philippines, especially because at home there was a strong reaction to excesses abroad. A demographic disaster was caused by concentration conditions: a malarial epidemic caused by mosquitoes, micro parasites and cattle spread. "About 11,000 Filipinos died as result of poor hygiene levels." (Joes, 2008, p.44) With Indian reservations, however, the experience was different. Elements of a 'civic action' campaign were applied, including sanitation measures and public works; a vision which would later constitute a civic approach of American COIN (Beckett, 2001).

Manpower was reinforced with locally raised gendarmeries or guards. During colonial expansion, Britain mastered the process using locals in Abyssinia, Malaya, Egypt and Sudan. The French included natives in North, West and Central Africa. Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Germany, Portugal and even the United States depended largely on native military and police forces (Beckett, 2001).

Both food denial and locally raised forces were to become central tenets of COIN practice for years and important instruments to break the bond between rebels and population.

Repressive approaches proved to be counterproductive. The terrorization of Spaniards, for instance, only encouraged the guerrillas and attracted more supporters. Rebels used the excesses of the French to fuel the hatred of the locals towards the invaders, while strengthening the legitimacy of their discourse and objectives. Their leader Francisco Espoz y Mina was even able to rebuild his forces after being significantly reduced. Calculations made by Madrid resident Jose Clemente Carnicero on the amount of French losses is telling: "A French commissary general declared they had lost 500 men every week (...) hence we may form some estimate of the enormous waste of French troops in Spain to 700,000 men" (Esdaile, 2004, p.6). Enrique Rodriguez Solis believes Napoleon lost 500,000 men, 200,000 which died in conventional battle, and 300,000 fallen to the guerrillas (Esdaile, 2004, p. 7).

Alternative approaches, although marginal, rejected direct attacks to the popular base (to the community itself) and focused on eroding the bond between insurgency and population by winning the support of the people. As explained by insurgency expert Ian Beckett, the most successful of Napoleon's commanders conducted a conciliatory attitude towards the local population seeking peaceful coexistence. Louis-Gabriel Suchet demanded the respect of religious practices, separated taxation between Spaniards and French, and reduced the plundering of locals by raising soldiers' income. Similar examples were appreciated in the Vendée and Brittany during the Jacobin era. Hoche began tolerating priests, conducted efforts to discipline his troops better, returned confiscated properties, disarmed the population, provided compensation for the excesses of troops, and achieved truces which included religious toleration.

It was only with American expansion after 1898 that a 'civic action' approach aimed at breaking the bond between insurgents and the community popularized. An 'attraction' programme was created in the Philippines combining political and military measures. Policies began to include the construction of schools and the development of projects to improve the standards of communication and health, the establishment of general stores, industrial training stations and a homestead. With this approach the idea of directly targeting the enemy became parallel to the objective of winning people's support.

Hoche's method was later improved into what become known as the *tache d'huile* (oil slick), a model to spread French influence. Political elements were incorporated through the inclusion of civilian administrators in field teams; an idea that could well precede today's human terrain system to be explained ahead. Control would be established, but an attempt to win the population would have to be made by offering protection and expanding services as health coverage, markets, and the respect to traditional authority (Merom, 2003). Soldiers would not only be administrators but "overseers, workshop managers, teachers, gardeners and farmers" (Beckett, 2001, p.40).

Charles Gwynn, an Irish born Major General, proposed four principles to guide COIN efforts after studying wars in West Africa, Sudan, Mahdi, and the Middle East during this period:

1. The primacy of civil power
2. The use of minimum force
3. The need for firm and timely action
4. The need for cooperation between the civil and military authorities (Gwynn, 1939)

However, he validated collective punishments with little need to address the grievances of the population, the use of cordon searches and drives, and the imposition of Martial Law, which in the end could be counterproductive if presented by the insurgency as methods of repression. His ideas would later be re-taken during the Maoist era to formulate more comprehensive theories of COIN.

In sum, at the beginning of the twentieth century the approach to COIN was still far away from placing support of the community at the centre of the strategy and although civic-action models were developed, they were generally perceived by locals as the imposition of a culture over its own.

Brutality meets civic action

The interwar period served as the scenario for the emergence of a vision of COIN focused less on the direct eradication of insurgents and their base of support, and more on breaking the bond between insurgents and the population by winning people's hearts and minds. However, during the Second World War, totalitarian states exploited harsh and excessive methods of repression.

The problem of insurgencies began to be understood more generally as a political one, requiring solutions which included political elements beyond a simple response by force.[23] As such, traditional strong actions of force began to coexist with methods that aimed at responding to the political dimension. The competition between insurgent and counterinsurgent began to be understood as a dialectical contest in which both parties needed to convince the population of why they were the best option; the psychological dimension thus began to be considered.

In that sense, two elements become relevant: propaganda, as the instrument to sell ideas while diminishing those of the enemy; and intelligence, as a mechanism to raise awareness about the realities of the enemy and to discover how to better confront it. But an organizational consequence is also notable, and would remain as part of COIN practice for years to come: the need to count on strategies of coordination between civil, military and police agencies.

---

[23] Hugh Simson identifies the politicization of war in his *British Rule and Rebellion* published in 1937, observing the IRA in Ireland and the revolt in Palestine between 1936 and 1939

British authorities, for instance, began to give more consideration to the political causes of insurgencies and rebellions, and political concessions began to be considered as necessary to counter insurgents' demands. The Arab revolt in Palestine in 1936, for example, was temporarily defused by the promise of the establishment of a Royal Commission on Jewish immigration (Beckett, 2001).

Physical confrontation would begin to coexist with the use of non-violent methods aimed at convincing the population of why the counterinsurgent is right. Propaganda offices were established, but collective punishments and the imposition of Martial Law were still seen as valid.

The Second World War became a scenario for considerable expansion of partisan and guerrilla warfare, mainly in the form of resistance to the German and Japanese occupations. Whereas some of the groups acted by themselves, others fought alongside conventional armies. Military Forces began to explore new forms of irregular operations and developed a variety of especial forces linked to local groups (Beckett, 2001). The British used locals against the Italians in Ethiopia, and allied with the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army and the Karens in Burma. The US in the Far East (USAFFE) incorporated guerrilla groups to fight the Japanese in the Philippines, and coupled with the Kachins in Burma (Beckett, 2001).

The consolidation of air power as a strategic military instrument began to serve a purpose on the fight against insurgents. During the Second World War, British Army Major General Orde Wingate, developed the concept of long-range penetration, which describes the capacity to deploy airborne troops behind enemy lines in the jungles. Such operations were used in Burma and Malaysia against the Japanese. Airpower is today an indispensable tool to bomb insurgent camps, even in remote inaccessible areas, as witnessed against FARC.

Totalitarian states responded with extreme force by extending the decapitation and eradication strategies of insurgents to their societies, both punishing those who supported the insurgency and deterring others from providing aide. The German response "was characterised by harsh countermeasures, not only against the insurgents themselves, but also against the local civilian population." (Lieb, 2008, p.57) Similar treatment was given to the Poles by the Soviets or the Abyssinian rebels by Italians (Merom, 2003).

A directive of the *Wehrmacht* Command suggested executing between 50 and 100 communists for every German soldier killed. Some officials approved the death penalty for those demonstrating the slightest sign of hostility, and summary executions for Communist

Party commissars serving with the Red Army. Germans "tried to uproot the partisans from their living bases: entire regions were transformed into 'desert zones'. Villages were burned down, the local population was evacuated and all cattle and agricultural products were looted. The units sometimes did not waste time on the complicated evacuation process; instead they just shot the civilians on the spot." (Lieb, 2008, p.67) In August 1941, it was determined that to the West of the Berezina river those in uniform were to be considered active *guerrilleros*; that those suspected of sabotage were to be sent to concentration camps; and that ten civilians were to be executed if a member of the German Army was killed by partisans (Beckett, 2001).

The so-called 'cauldron operations' were typical from the Germans. They consisted on three phases: (1) Troops from diverse areas were assembled to create a cauldron around the suspected insurgent area. (2) The cauldron was tightened up through a concentric advance from all sides. Specific targets were allocated to each unit, while villages located within the area were searched for partisans and their supporters. (3) The area was overhauled for several days. Drastic and brutal measures were always part of the operations. After 1943, however, cordon-line operations were preferred (Lieb, 2008). Disrupting policing methods were also included adding new technologies as radio direction and code breaking. Identity cards, restrictions on movement and rationing cards were also used to locate insurgents. To uncover opposition groups the manipulation of criminals and the employment of *agents provocateurs*[24] was common.

The German Command realized that brutal actions were counterproductive. In 1942 a different approach was unsuccessfully tried. Retaliatory measures were ordered to be applied in a more judicious fashion, but in the end, intolerance of the people towards local administrations and the introduction of forced labour undermined German control. Many civilians preferred joining the partisans and risking their lives than being forced to work for the Germans. Such a response was not only observed in the eastern front but also in France.

During this period democracies as Britain and the United States were moving closer to a model of COIN more focused on winning the support of the population, and leaving behind the eradications of insurgents and their national base of support. As it has been explained, the response of totalitarian regimes to insurgency radically opposed that of democracies.

---

[24] Enticing agent

Their strategies were clearly aimed at the eradication of the insurgency including the communities which harboured them through radical and violent means.

The emergence of Maoism

Mao Tse Tung proposed a model for a conservative and parochial vast rural population, and a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society (Beckett, 2001). He developed a theory for a small weaker actor to override a more powerful enemy by the means of will, time, space and propaganda, in the absence of initial fire power capacity. In his theory the political construction of the insurgency is very relevant. The insurrection is only possible through the progressive conquest of social spaces meaning that the growth of the insurgency depends on winning popular support from the masses. From local support of specific communities the insurgency will grow to become a mass movement challenging established powers. His theory of insurgency is generally known as *Popular Protracted Warfare*.

Under this logic, the effort cannot be understood as purely military, but as a political enterprise. For this reason, as it was described in the last chapter, there are political structures besides those waging war. A political party will conduct all of these efforts, while the military objectives are understood as subordinated to the political efforts. The strategy is a three staged process.

In a first stage known as *strategic defensive* the insurgency is still a small armed force which attacks and makes a gradual retreat before a strong retaliation of the enemy's army. Insurgents do not recur to positional warfare; the objective is survival through time. Frustration of the enemy is supposed to increase as significant victories against the guerrillas are denied. In a second stage known as *stalemate*, guerrilla tactics of quick strike and retreat are the mode of military operations. The sense of futility among army troops and its home front continues to grow while its morale decreases. The war reaches a state of equilibrium with insurgents controlling little land but maintaining positions of tactical initiative. A programme of expansion of forces and an increase in operations begin as insurgent morale grows. With the increase in the frequency and spatial scope of insurgent-guerrilla warfare comes the beginning of large-scale mobile warfare and the creation of regular army units. The third stage, known as *strategic offensive* begins when these regular armies grow in size, and positional warfare dominates the mode of conflict. Guerrilla warfare becomes only complementary, and the insurgent army is ready to pursue the successful termination of war and the conquest of the capital city (Pustay, 1965).

Maoism became the main paradigm of insurgency warfare throughout the developing world, and COIN would evolve to respond to such paradigm.

Vo Nguyen Giap, commander of the Viet Minh, restyled the three stages of the Popular Protracted Warfare theory created by Mao (Beckett, 2001). He identified three preconditions to advance from the second to the last stage: superiority of revolutionary forces, a favourable world situation, and a noticeable weakening of the enemy's resolve (Pustay, 1965). He elaborated on the third stage further by including sub phases such as (1) gaining moral superiority over the enemy (2) regularization and modernization of the army (3) the configuration of an international situation that tends to weaken the enemy, and (4) gaining a momentum of more direction of war by the insurgents and a decrease of command and control by the army (Pustay, 1965). He did not consider support of the masses as relevant as Mao did, and proposed relying more on military power (Beckett, 2001).

A different model was proposed by the Argentinean leader of the Cuban Revolution Ernesto 'El Che' Guevara. Through a theory that is now known as the 'insurgent foco', he explains that it is not necessary to count of the support of the masses to move towards the final offensive against the regime. He believed popular support could be a consequence of the revolution more than a necessary condition for victory, and that it could be constructed from small groups (*focos*)(Guevara, 1998). Although the Cuban Revolution was successful, later attempts by Guevara to 'export' the revolutionary model to other countries were an enormous failure. In Angola the revolution never took off while in Bolivia the model failed to raise any interests from Bolivians, and as a consequence he was killed by the counterinsurgent.

As demonstrated by the United States in Philippines and Britain in Malaya, COIN response to Maoism would be something radically opposed to what was experienced during the nineteenth century and the Second World War.

The initial experience of the British in Malaya was far from successful, and many favoured traditional methods such as sweeps and drives (Beckett, 2001). Harsher methods such as compulsory registration of the population, the issue of identity cards, controlling population movement, setting curfews, conducting search without warrant, establishing the death penalty for possession of guns and ammunition, and enforcing collective detentions were still seen as valid (Paget, 1967).

Similar failures were seen during the initial response In the Philippines. The governments of Manuel Roxas and Elpidio Quirino were keen on controlling the peasantry without allowing their participation in government. Roxas response to Maoist insurgency was strong in terms of methods of force and control. Every *barrio* in areas of conflict was assumed to be of Huk influence, so screening operations and the use of special squadrons were authorised. Artillery was widely used without any regard for civilian's lives, and brutality was widespread. Instruments such as the collection of tolls, curfews and road blocks only generated greater resentment. As a consequence, the Huk insurgency spread reaching 11000 to 15000 fighters with about 150000 active supporters and a million passive sympathizers (Beckett, 2001, p.99).

Filipino security forces were rather unprepared for this kind of confrontation. They were basically police units with strength of ninety-eight men armed with clubs, side arms and carabines, without any possibility to engage an armed, organized, hostile group (Valeriano and Bohannan, 1962).

The need for a more appropriate response became evident. COIN strategies which focused directly on the eradication of the rebels and its popular base were counterproductive. Officials realized that it was necessary to win the support of the populace instead of fuelling hatred. In Malaya, Harold Briggs, a British Officer with experience on the Burma revolts during the Second World War, was appointed as director of operations. He formulated a plan, known as the 'Briggs Plan', which aimed at protecting and isolating the populace from insurgents, while identifying the Malayan Communist Party's (MCP) political body, not the fighters in the jungles, as the priority in confrontation.

An organizational structure was created with the Federal War Council on the national level, and district and village level committees. These collegiate bodies constituted assemblies where diverse institutions came together to discuss insurgency matters and to make decisions on the appropriate actions to be taken. Not only security institutions such as the Army and the Police were included, also civil agencies, and representatives of ethnic communities.[25] While in Malaya Intelligence was to be coordinated through a single chief allowing for better interagency coordination, in the Philippines a similar outcome was guaranteed with the creation of a new Military Intelligence Corps.

---

[25] Julian Paget makes a more detailed description of both the objectives of the Briggs Plan, and the components of the structure of the system described (Paget, 1967, p. 56-58).

In the Philippines, a former United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) guerrilla leader, Ramon Magsaysay was appointed as Secretary for National Defence. He recognized that it was necessary to redistribute political and economic power favouring those communities who supported the insurgency, so an approach favourable to win people's hearts and minds was also adopted.

In this country, there was also an increased focus on civil affairs with the creation of a Civil Affairs Office. This bureau was responsible for the resettlement of former Huks and their families within spacious farms. Its existence was a direct response to insurgent's efforts to present settlements as concentration camps. Psychological and information operations were necessary to win the hearts and minds of the Filipinos, so leaflets were distributed and mobile film projection units were deployed spreading the government's messages. Special actions, such as broadcasting speeches of the guerrilla commander Luis Taruc's mother persuading rebels to demobilize, became highly instrumental. Direct and efficient channels of communication between government officials and peasants were established so that the response of the state to society's problems was improved. Free legal advice was even conceded when necessary. New agencies were created including the Agriculture Credit and Co-operative Financing Association and the Social Welfare Administration. A minimum wage was introduced, and free primary education was guaranteed for all citizens.

These adaptations became the first examples of a 'comprehensive approach' to counterinsurgency: the idea that the responsibility to fight an insurgency is not exclusive of security institutions, but of a wider range of state and even societal organizations; and that actions must be conducted in issues beyond security. These principles would later constitute a central tenet of modern COIN, as it has been experienced not only in Colombia but also in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Methods of isolation and food denial were not only valid but effective in Malaya. Entire villages were resettled with the idea of separating communities and insurgents. The existence of cultivated areas beyond the villages not only gave away the location of insurgent camps, but the opportunity to weaken the rebels by destroying their resources. The incorporation of air flights to spot these zones gave the counterinsurgent a significant capacity. Small units of platoons, sections or subsections were deployed, undertaking deep penetration patrols in the jungle, together with the battalions in particular areas.

Clear and hold operations were applied by setting secure bases in the villages from where patrols were deployed into the jungles to progressively dominate the surroundings (Paget, 1967). Deep penetration patrols combined with air attacks kept high pressure in the jungles. The Police became a smaller and more professional organization, and a home guard composed mostly by individuals recruited locally was established to protect the new villages (Paget, 1967).

In the Philippines, the Army was reorganized into self-sufficient all-arms battalion combat teams, deployed on a longer term basis in particular known areas. Operationally, small unit action focused on food denial operations and intensive patrolling, with further guidance provided by reconnaissance aircraft. Civil affairs officers were also attached to each team in order to spread the message of the government. The Police, which evoked hatred among communities, became subordinated to the Army. The use of excessive force ended, and the salaries of policeman were increased to avoid looting. They were meant to carry more food than the regular personal ration in order to provide the population if necessary, especially candy for children.

Political concessions were also vital to defeat the insurgencies. In Malaysia, by 1952, the promise of independence turned Malays against the MCP. With the implementation of successful civic campaigns to win the Chinese population's hearts and minds, the MCP's base of support war further reduced (Paget, 1967). This was possible after the political and military offices were merged and put under the leadership of a single officer, General Sir Gerald Templer, and after information operations and propaganda were given the necessary degree of relevance. For this purpose a Director of Information Services with a psychological warfare section was established. A 'Surrender Enemy Personnel' programme was created with success in encouraging demobilizations, and the establishment of substantial rewards. Leaflets, radio broadcasts and films were produced and distributed. But propaganda did not carry an empty message, the status of the Chinese was elevated within its society and their participation in state affairs was increased. This is an example of a successful strategy aimed at breaking the bond between the population and the insurgency through non-violent means.

These cases have demonstrated that addressing the grievances of the communities that fuel the insurgency's motivations or discourse is not necessarily a sign of state weakness, as extremist in national contexts may tend to describe it, but actually a vital part of an effective counterinsurgency strategy.

It was through this period that counterinsurgents finally rejected approaches to COIN aimed at the direct eradication of insurgency and their national base of support. Instead, they began experimenting with methods to break the bond between insurgents, although relative harsh methods were still considered valid. Instruments of psychological warfare, propaganda, civic action and intelligence would be further exploited in later stages of this development.

As summarised by Ian Beckett, the experience against Maoists demonstrated the importance of six factors:

1. Political action designed to prevent insurgents from gaining popular support should have priority over pure military action.
2. Civil-military cooperation is necessary.
3. Intelligence should be coordinated
4. Insurgents must be separated from the populations through winning their hearts and minds
5. Pacification should be supported with the appropriate use of military force
6. Lasting political reform should be implemented to prevent the recurrence of insurgency (Beckett, 2001, p.107).

Theorisation of counterinsurgency during the Maoist era

Several officers who fought against insurgencies during the 'Maoist era' in diverse scenarios wrote their experiences and recommendations which constitute the base of what is today considered as the classic thought on counterinsurgency. Such authors include David Galula, Julian Paget, Robert Thompson and Frank Kitson. Insurgency began to be understood more widely as having political objectives, although pursued by military means. The idea of fighting them indirectly by making it impossible for them to fight, gained prominence as compared to the idea of seeking its entire destruction (Paget, 1967). As such, methods of national annihilation were practically discarded and strategies focused on breaking the bond between insurgents and their communities gained prominence. Such bond was to be broken by winning the support of the people, by convincing them that the state is a better choice than the insurgents. This is why the analogy of 'winning hearts and minds' describes this type of effort more clearly.

Within this logic, counterinsurgency must follow several principles:

- The objective of the struggle is political and not military. Since insurgency was finally understood as a political construction, military means are insufficient to confront the

rebels. Given the precedence of the organization's political objectives and structures, the response must be understood as political and not only as military.

- COIN is not only a responsibility of the military forces. As a consequence of the last point, the campaign against insurgents is a matter of all state institutions and not only of the security and defence sector. The leadership must be civilian/political, and the military command must be subordinated to it.

- There must be a plan of action. State policy should guide the conduct of the campaign, including of course the role of the military and other security institutions, but also the participation of other organizations and sectors. This implies the existence of a degree of coordination between interacting agencies under a single direction and command.

- Government's actions must comply with the law: the heart of the campaign, as it has been argued, is winning the support of the population and achieving its rejection of the insurgent movement. As such, legitimacy expresses the centre of gravity. The government cannot recur to excesses or actions beyond the law which could be used by the insurgent to present it as an illegitimate actor. Its conducts must follow all norms and rules, guaranteeing the integrity, security and rights of the population.

The five principles announced by Robert Thomson, several of which were just discussed, summarize the essence of counterinsurgency thought from the perspective of the classic authors:

1. "The government must have a clear political aim
2. The government must function within the law
3. The government must have an overall plan
4. The government must give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas.
5. In the guerrilla phase of an insurgency it must secure its base first"[26]

In general terms the authors agree about the structural arrangements of insurgencies. Paget, a former British Army Officer, describes a defined military hierarchy with territorial distributions and a political party with a central committee and territorial branches. Kitson, also a former British Army Officer, emphasises on the creation of a political party at the first stages of the insurgency with branches and cells aimed at capturing support of the masses

---

[26] These principles were proposed by Robert Thompson, a former British Royal Air Force Officer who became one of the most recongnized COIN theorists. His book was published in 1966. (Marston & Malkasian, 2008, p.14)

(Kitson, 1972). These descriptions are coherent with the idea of the tripartite character explained in the last chapter.

Thompson, Galula and Paget all point to the importance of propaganda directed both at insurgents and the community. Under their perspective, given the political character of the struggle, the psychological dimension of COIN warfare is very relevant. Convincing the population of why the state is a better option, or persuading insurgents to demobilize, becomes more important than killing rebels in mass.

Now, winning the hearts and minds of the population can only be achieved if the state counts on the real capacity to both defeat the insurgency and protect the population. For such a purpose the government must respect the feelings and aspirations of the nation, provide a firm and fair government, build up public confidence, and establish a campaign of civic action and propaganda to counter the discourse and propositions of the insurgency. Kitson believes in the importance of 'stability operations' designed to regain and retain the allegiance of the population. They should include: advisory assistance, as means to help build the local force; a civil-military affairs programme to build cooperation between the military and the population; population and resource control; psychological operations; and intelligence (Kitson, 1972).

Regarding troops, Paget argued in favour of increased mobility as opposed to rigidity. Intelligence began to be seen as a central instrument for action against the insurgents, particularly because of their embedment within the community. He considered that attacks to bases should have priority over attacks on individual groups and that mobile reserves should be available to follow up insurgents after contact, instead of spreading numerous static points. Psychological operations, propaganda and incentives for insurgents to defect were instruments to break the insurgents will to win.

However, even when the construction of counterinsurgency in this period differs radically from past experiences, some of the methods validated by the classical authors would seem to be incompatible with the values and norms of today's societies. The isolation of population from the guerrillas and the use of punitive measures to make communities cooperate with authorities could be counterproductive. The use of curfews, collective fines, registration of inhabitants, detention of suspects, and restrictions to individual liberties could have negative effects. Some of Galula's propositions may also be criticized in the current context. Destroying political organizations -even those of the insurgency-, grouping and educating

leaders, testing authorities and setting up self defence units, could very well be actions of authoritarian regimes. They could easily be presented as instruments of oppression and in the context of hyper-communication they could stir new uprisings.

Counterinsurgency failure during the Cold War

As stated before, it is highly relevant for civilians and military to adapt to the efforts required by COIN campaigning; the lack of adaptation is likely to lead into failure. Such was the case of the United States in Vietnam, where the idea of fighting the war through conventional means lead into disaster. "The US entered the Vietnam War with a military trained and equipped to fight a conventional war in Europe, and totally unprepared for the COIN campaign it was about to wage." (Nagl, 2008, p.119)

US participation began in 1963 with the idea of 'fighting the main war' and leaving work in the villages to the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN). US commanders favoured inappropriate large-scale, search and destroy operations using helicopters and relying on firepower as a substitute for permanent occupation. Two campaigns were implemented. A ground war in South Vietnam based on the doctrine of 'search and destroy' and an air war against North Vietnam known as 'Operation Rolling Thunder' (Hess, 2009). The latter killed around 52,000 civilians in North Vietnam between 1965 and 1967 and injured thousands more; the former failed to destroy the enemy but ended up 'destroying' much of the country the US was trying to save (Hess, 2009). Only the Special Forces and the Marine Corps were concentrated on a campaign styled after the objective of winning the hearts and minds of the population, but their efforts, of course, were insufficient.

The search and destroy strategy was failing to act in regards to the strongest points of the insurgency: gaining control of the villages, providing security against communist forces, working with peasants, and introducing reforms to improve their lives (Hess, 2009). The US was not concerned about securing the cleared areas, allowing the Viet-Cong to return, so every territorial gain was later lost (Hess, 2009). On the other hand, attrition would have been impossible to achieve since the enemy had enough manpower to offset losses. An estimate of 220,000 fighters was killed between 1965 and 1967, and yet the Viet Cong continued to recruit young men and women. The number of combatants actually increased despite heavy casualties (Hess, 2009). There was no joint command or any further centralized control of Marine Corps or air power. Furthermore, actions by other US Agencies such as the

US Information Agency, the CIA, and USAID were conducted independently without any coordination.

The programme designed to coordinate intelligence known as the Phoenix Programme was a failure. It was designed by the CIA to collect information about the 'Vietcong infrastructure'; the civilians who supported the guerrillas. Its objective was to neutralize those who were providing aid and comfort to the insurgency (Baritz, 1985). But it became a real campaign of terror with the deployment of paramilitary reconnaissance units to find and detain collaborators and the establishment of interrogation centres. "Official statements that more than 20,000 'eliminations' were achieved by Phoenix raised the image of an indiscriminate CIA-controlled Murder Inc." (Isaacs, 1983, p.108)

The effects of American warfare on South Vietnamese society were devastating and counterproductive. 184,000 soldiers had died by the end of 1965 and the perception of a military power fighting a small country infuriated civilians. Artillery, air power and defoliants practically destroyed the country. About 500,000 civilians were killed and one million were injured. Millions of people were forced to move from rural areas into overcrowded cities and hatred towards the US spread (Hess, 2009).

An emphasis on conventional operations was also an obstacle for the Salvadorian Army against the *Farabundo Marti de Liberacion Nacional*. Their Officers were trained in the United States and could never successfully adapt to small-unit operations. The campaign was also based on attack and interdiction of suspected (instead of known) guerrilla positions; an action that would generate the rejection of locals. Contact with the community was limited (Beckett, 2001). A conventional approach was also dominant in Nicaragua. Heavy artillery, helicopters gunships and the use of defoliants were typical of an indiscriminate campaign, while insurgents went into the cities to conduct urban warfare operations (Beckett, 2001).

In Afghanistan, Russia experienced similar difficulties. There was considerable confusion in the command and control of the Army, under control of Defence Ministry, and troops of Interior Ministry; and there was little coordination among intelligence agencies. The Military Forces were unprepared for the type of operations required for this scenario: mechanized infantry was not trained to fight separately from their vehicles, and they were too heavily equipped to go by foot. They did not have enough helicopters for the transportation of troops, and tanks were ineffective in the terrain (Beckett, 2001). Excesses such as the use of chemical weapons including Sarin, Soman and yellow rain were counterproductive as they

generated rejection from the population. The Soviet strategy of scorched earth was perceived as a migratory genocide. The Afghan Mujahedeen kept control of 75 to 90 per cent of the territory and the demoralization of Soviet Afghan allies contributed to their defeat. By 1989, 13000 Soviet soldiers had perished, 35000 had been wounded in combat and 50,000 more injured on active service (Beckett, 2001, p.210).

In Vietnam, by 1966 it was evident that a different approach was necessary, but the efforts came too late and the political struggle for economic and physical security of the population was already lost. A comprehensive effort was sketched through the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support Programme (CORDS) which unified pacification and other social and economic programmes and incorporated them to the US military command structure. The South Vietnamese Government agreed to allocate more of its army units to the programme, obtaining more troops to provide security in the villages. CORDS established civilian-military pacification teams with around 6500 troops and 1100 civilians. There was even a Revolutionary Division which dispatched teams to provide security and promote economic development at village level. The main problem was South Vietnam's government lack of interest to resolve the most immediate concerns of the peasants (Hess, 2009). In the end, the programme could not compensate for years of mistakes and excesses. Furthermore, when clear and hold operations were encouraged the ARVN was unprepared for such task.

A psychological operations programme known as *Chieu Hoi* (Open Arms) was created with the objective of motivating Viet Cong members to defect. By 1967 approximately 75,000 defections had been recorded, but it is believed that less than 25% of those were genuine (Beckett, 2001, p.198). The resettlement programme was also a failure. By cultural convention, Vietnamese peoples were wedded to its land. The new hamlets were built by locals through labour exploitation, and were generally resisted by the population. Few of these were economically viable; they did not count on any strong defences, while some were too massive to be controllable (Beckett, 2001).

In sum, whereas the theorisation of COIN gained momentum during the Cold War, military cultures impeded its proper application in the field. The United States who was traditionally sceptical to such type of warfare, decided to act in Vietnam through conventional instruments. As a consequence, mistakes allowed for the growth of the insurgency and the spread of hatred towards the counterinsurgent.

Hearts and Minds and the Comprehensive Approach.

After Vietnam, insurgency and COIN were practically marginalized in the strategic international agenda, except for specific cases in which lasting insurgencies prevailed, such as in Colombia. The topic only re-emerged after the West intervened in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a model emerged bringing together elements proposed by theorists during the Cold War and learned during successful campaigns as the one in Malaya. Strategies to break the bond between insurgents and communities by winning the support of the population finally became the main practise, and a comprehensive approach was consolidated including the role of many institutions beyond the military.

In Iraq in 2003, once again the initial approach was conventional, and the efforts focused on eliminating the insurgency by force. An indiscriminate perspective ended up, once again, affecting civilians and increasing the population's support of the insurgency. "When confronted with insurgent attacks the US divisions reacted differently, but with a tendency towards conventional-style operations and heavy-handed tactics. Units conducted raids based on scant intelligence and applied firepower loosely. (...) Instead of trying to secure the population [they] launched large-scale sweeps to roll up insurgents, fired artillery blindly to interdict insurgent activity, purposefully detained innocents to blackmail their insurgent relatives and levelled homes to deter people from supporting the insurgents." (Malkasian, 2008, p. 289)

But different ideas on how to wage such war existed. General David Petraeus, commander in the North of Iraq, "considered the population to be the key to effective counterinsurgency (...) Rather than undertaking large sweeps, his troopers operated out of outposts in the heart of the city and focused on collecting detailed actionable intelligence for raids against insurgency leadership. Meanwhile Petraeus interacted with elements of society, even holding his own local elections." (Malkasian, 2008, p. 290)

With the appointment of General George Casey as head of operations in Iraq, the approach began to evolve into what is now known as the clear-hold-build model, balancing political and military elements better. (Malkasian, 2009) In general terms this model seeks to clear areas of insurgency, maintain a stable presence of security institutions in order to guarantee the insurgency will not return, and build state institutions and the capabilities for the communities to achieve a sustained development. Similarly, Iraqi Security Forces and the democratization process were strengthened.

After a review of the situation was published by the Iraqi Study Group, a series of structural reformations were recommended: a surge of about 20,000 to 25,000 units along with a greater effort in expanding and training the Iraqi Security Forces. Petraeus was appointed as Commander General of the Multinational Force in Iraq (MNF-I) and his approach focusing on the protection of civilians was generalized. His vision is rooted on the propositions of Galula, Paget, Thompson and Kitson. In his own words: "we will not just 'clear' their neighbourhoods of the enemy, we will also stay and help 'hold' the neighbourhoods so that the 'build' phase that many of their communities need can go forward" (Malkasian, 2008, 305).

The strategy was built to follow counterinsurgent principles focusing on winning peoples' support, increasing the legitimacy of both the multinational force and Iraqi central government, instead of perceiving communities as a host of the enemy and fighting guerrillas conventionally. The change in the approach can be evidenced from the evolution on the behaviour of troops following some of what Petraeus refers to as the paradoxes of counterinsurgency:

- The more you protect your force, the less secure you may be: the war can only be won by gaining support of the people; this means that troops need to engage with communities and risk their only lives to guarantee their security. More than being protected in bases they need to live among the population.
- The more force is used, the less effective it is: the use of force, especially if excessive, can always be used by insurgent propaganda to portray military action as brutal and opposed to the people. In this competition to win popular support, collateral damage is extremely costly and highly counterproductive.
- The best weapon of the counterinsurgent is not shooting: popular support is more easily won through other type of actions than through warfare. Sometimes the population might oppose both the insurgent and the counterinsurgent if they are observed as violent.
- Many important decisions are not made by Generals: Since soldiers have a direct relation to the communities, their actions, and the way they relate to the population, will have an effect on the campaign as a whole. This is what Petraeus refers to as 'strategic soldiers'.(Headquarters Department of the Army/Headquarters Department of the Marine Corps, 2006, p. 1.27)

According to Anthony Celso

> "The [approach] endorses clearing, holding and building areas formerly bastions of the insurgency. Placing emphasis on protecting the civilian population allows occupation forces better capabilities to isolate and neutralize insurgents. Greater security in towns and villages create the basis for enhanced economic development, better governance, training of local security forces and national reconciliation" (Celso, 2010, p.187).

Since 2003 in Afghanistan and 2005 in Iraq, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) combining military and civilian officers were deployed "to promote reconstruction, pursue security sector reform, and help extend central government authority." (Amend, 2010, p.216). PRT's had not being flawless and several weaknesses had been observed: they initially answered to their own national governments rather than to a central Afghan government agency, and they had failed to sufficiently involve local leaders in planning and implementing projects (Marston, 2008).

Other specific instruments have been implemented in order to increase the knowledge of the communities where the counterinsurgent operates, and to make the interaction with local populations smoother. This is the idea behind the human terrain systems:

> "Human Terrain Teams (HTTs) are five- to nine-person teams deployed by the Human Terrain System (HTS) to support field commanders by filling their cultural knowledge gap in the current operating environment and providing cultural interpretations of events occurring within their area of operations. The team is composed of individuals with social science and operational backgrounds that are deployed with tactical and operational military units to assist in bringing knowledge about the local population into a coherent analytic framework and build relationships with the local power-brokers in order to provide advice and opportunities to Commanders and staffs in the field." (Finney, 2008, p.2)

The current global social context plays a relevant function in motivating counterinsurgents to adopt this type of approach. As it was argued in the first chapter in a world of hyperconnectivity and complexity, ideas, realities, and actions that happen in a specific place, may not only be known half way around the world, they may also trigger significant consequences for a distant society. Recalling the analogy of the butterfly effect, a small event may generate significant outcomes in distant places. Given that the dynamic of war is a competition between insurgents and counterinsurgents to win the support of the population, any small mistake in the field, any abuse against civilians could be exploited and maximized by its opponent to present the counterinsurgent as an enemy of the population. The case of a soldier hitting an old woman in a particular village might be known throughout the country and through the world, hurting the perception of soldiers and spreading feelings of rejection. It is this sensitivity which forces to create real society-centred strategies of COIN

aimed at guaranteeing the protection of the population and strictly following the principles announced by Thompson.

For this reason, although COIN action was based on the 'hearts and minds' ideas proposed by classical COIN authors, strategies that would seem aggressive with the population, such as re-concentration, curfews or collective fines, were finally abandoned, and actions that would seem disruptive of people's liberties would only be implemented in extreme circumstances. In Baghdad, for example, it was necessary to build walls in order to control certain areas of the city, but results were positive.

On the other hand, the 'build' component of the clear-hold-build approach makes this practice very similar to nation-building. Once the insurgency has been expelled and the presence of security institutions have been guaranteed, the campaign turns into development. Building capabilities for communities to achieve social and economic sustainability within the law, and building the permanent presence of all state institutions is the objective. This is a step beyond civic action campaigns aimed at winning hearts and minds. Whereas medical, educational or other types of civic campaigns might be temporary, providing some benefits for the population in a specific moment, the aim of local development is sustainability through time, reducing dependence on particular state actions and empowering local communities. This is why this type of COIN approach can also be referred to as develop-centred counterinsurgency. It is this particular component of current COIN theorization that makes to the elimination of criminal war economies part of an overall strategy to defeat insurgents. As it will be seen in the case of Colombia, this approach was valuable for the fight against FARC during the administration of Alvaro Uribe.

Counterinsurgency beyond the state: looking to the future

History demonstrates that the practice of counterinsurgency has been almost defined in state-centric parameters. Insurgents have traditionally challenged the government, the regimes and institutional structures of particular states. For instance the Viet-Cong challenged the Vietnam regime, the Mau Mau did the proper in Kenya and the Tupamaros challenged authority in Uruguay. Naturally, the counterinsurgent has always been thought in terms of state. Even in cases where foreign troops have been present, the state-centric paradigm has remained. For example, it could be thought that the presence of American military forces and other allies in Afghanistan and Iraq speak about a form of counterinsurgency beyond state centrality; but in fact, foreign elements are acting with the

logic of strengthening the capacity of a particular state to confront the insurgents. The relation between territoriality and state sovereign authority is still the logic behind the campaigns.

But when the context described in this dissertation is taken into account it is possible to observe that the state-centric paradigm in terms of insurgency is crumbling. Globalization and the spread of communication technologies have created opportunities for insurgencies to extend beyond the boundaries of a single state, as it was described in the last chapter.

Two processes were described. On one hand the globalization of an ideology, or at least its spread through a particular region, creates spaces for insurgency expansion. Examples are offered by Political Islam or Islamism and Bolivarianism. In the first case, authors such as John Mackinlay (2009) have explained how independent individuals in remote or particular places can become an active part of an insurgent organization, including Al Qaeda, as they are convinced by the rebels' arguments which are spread through several communication channels. In the case of 'Bolivarianism', the spread of its ideals through Latin America has fostered linkages between particular governments, such as those in Venezuela, Nicaragua and Ecuador, and several social and political organizations, including armed groups as FARC. A second process motivating insurgency regionalization, in some cases, is the mobility of commodities fuelling the conflict, as it is the case with narcotics.

It must be clear that insurgencies have historically tended to spread beyond the borders of a single state, especially given the opportunity to find safe haven in neighbouring countries, even more if these are sympathetic towards insurgent goals. That is not new. But an entirely different phenomenon is constituted by globalized or globalizing insurgencies which are transnational by stimulation of the environment as it has been described, and which are arranged as networks with cells, nodes and individuals placed in different countries and locations. It logically follows that the act of a single counterinsurgent state in its territory is insufficient to bring the entire network down, and as such, the possibility of insurgency to re-emergence will always remain.

What would COIN have to look like? Who would the counterinsurgent be? These are questions that need further debate within Strategic and International Security Studies. Mackinlay, for example, believes the response to complex insurgencies must not be dictated by single states; rather it needs to be constructed by a network of diverse actors of transnational scope including military coalitions, bilateral donors, the UN system,

international organizations, private security companies and contractors. He proposes five recommendations in order to defeat complex insurgencies:

- "Revitalize or re-forge a more cohesive alliance
- Secure the strategic populations against subversion
- Simplify the operational space
- Developing a universally accepted concept of operations for international COIN operations,
- Encourage the coalition to be more globally minded and less individually state-centred." (Mackinlay, 2005, p. vii-viii).

The case of FARC is exemplifying. As it will now fully be explored, this organization has created a web of linkages through the Americas and Europe, and by 2010 it appeared to have found favourable spaces of action beyond Colombian borders. However, little analysis has been done to determine how such structures could favour FARC in its national struggle, and how this reality should be understood in the context of the environment. Has FARC become a regional or a transnational insurgency? Or is it still a purely Colombian phenomenon? More importantly, the Colombian state has always been understood as the counterinsurgent, and several actors in the region explain it as a problem to be solved by Colombians. Would the national government's actions suffice to defeat FARC? And would it be able to control all factors in order to avoid the re-appearance of the organization?

Chapter 4. The configuration of FARC as a commercial insurgency and the evolution of state responses

---

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia was not created as a commercial insurgency; it progressively evolved into one as the illicit economy fostered change in combatants motivations. What began as a small self-defence movement gradually became a massive insurgent organization and the biggest cocaine producer in the region. In the beginning, FARC's capacity to challenge the state militarily was marginal, and its political dimension was expressed through the motivations of its members. Rebels fought because of real concerns of the peasant communities, especially regarding land possession and income distribution. As they evolved into a guerrilla movement, they created clusters of support in specific regions taking advantage of the sympathy demonstrated by local peasants.

But given the political context of the Cold War, national government did not address the grievances of a population mobilized by communist ideals, and its response to the emergence of guerrillas was military more than political in nature. The lack of development in marginal areas of the country, the inexistence of state institutions, and the peasant colonization of areas motivated by the coca boom created a perfect combination for the growth of a commercial insurgency.

The objective of the present chapter is to explain how FARC emerged as a commercial insurgency with its triadic character clearly expressed by the military, political and criminal dimensions, and how Colombian state responses were insufficient to address all of them. It will be explained that the significant growth of the organization was possible given the sources obtained through narco-trafficking, and that such interaction took the insurgency to its strongest stage by the end of the 1990s. Similarly, it is here argued that it was only by the beginning of the 2000s that a real comprehensive strategy to address all of the dimensions finally came together. The head of state decided then to lead the fight against the insurgency, incorporating all institutions and exploiting instruments which had been developed for several years. These included strong military capabilities and the existence of military commanders with a thorough knowledge of counterinsurgency.

For this purpose, a description of the origin of FARC is made, followed by an account of initial state efforts to build a COIN approach. Then the emergence of the criminal dimension is analysed along with state's responses in terms of local development as a way to fight the

insurgents. Then, the strongest period of FARC is taken into observation together with strong and peaceful responses by Colombian institutions. Finally, the state's effort to regain the strategic initiative is explored to focus more deeply on the strategy implemented by the administration of Alvaro Uribe.

The inception of FARC

The origin of modern insurgencies in Colombia can be traced back to bipartisan violence of the mid-20th century between Liberals and Conservatives. Although the origin of such violence is usually placed in the assassination of the popular Liberal presidential candidate Jorge Eliecer Gaitan in 1948, tensions existed since the 1930s, when security institutions became an instrument of particular political figures and parties (Bushnell, 1996). Bipartisan tensions and rural violence spread with Legislative elections in 1932 and Presidential elections in 1946 which put an end to the 'Liberal Republic'[27] bringing the Conservatives to power. The assassination of Gaitan gave origin to a Liberal insurrection and a Conservative response which became known as the period of *La Violencia* (1949-1953). State violence and repression by the Conservatives nurtured violence by Liberals and Communists. (Bushnell, 1996)

Liberals reacted creating self-defence units which spread through several regions but especially in the Eastern plains. The *Partido Comunista Colombiano* (PCC) joined Liberal rebels by calling the peasantry to self-defence *en masse*. It embraced the 'all forms of struggle' doctrine which validated the use of violence to achieve political objectives. Communist guerrilla groups proliferated in three zones of central Colombia: Southern Tolima, Sumapaz and Viota. Pedro Marin, also known as Manuel Marulanda Velez or *Tirofijo,* created a guerrilla front in Southern Tolima which fought during three years, with thirty badly armed men (Pardo, 2004, p.431). By 1953, they joined other liberal and communist self-defence group leaders to form a unified guerrilla command known as *Comando Unificado del Sur 'El Davis'* with about 5000 fighters (Pardo, 2004, p.434). This would be the base for the creation of FARC.

Communist ideals spread rapidly among the peasant population given the appalling social and economic conditions by the early 1950's: 50% of the land was owned by only 4% of the people in a mainly rural country. 70% of the population was peasant, while only a 30% was composed by artisans, handymen, and livestock ranchers (Rizo, 2002, p.59). These ideals

---

[27] A period of 5 consecutive Liberal Presidents.

expressed the political dimension of groups which were not yet a proper insurgency, and their use of violence speaks about the origin of a military dimension, which wasn't still properly developed as a regular army. It would take decades for FARC to develop a criminal dimension as it is explored ahead.

COIN strategy lacked any doctrinal and systematic order. The state basically reacted with all available means and with excessive force not only against insurgents but also against the communities which hosted them. A tactic of depopulation was implemented in areas of strong insurgency presence: Settlers were expelled, houses were burnt down and the areas were bombarded (Pardo, 2004). In many occasions, anti-guerrilla units fought dressed as civilians or pretending to be guerrilla members.

State forces funded, supported, and operated in conjunction with vigilante groups known as *chulavitas* or *pajaros,* which conducted assassinations and assaults with relative impunity (Bushnell, 1996). Since then, groups of civilians known as 'paramilitary units' have acted alongside state military troops, not only increasing the complexity of Colombia's internal conflict, but motivating strong accusations against security institutions. They would later become a third force in conflict also motivated by drug-dealing profits.

Building a COIN approach

By 1953, after four years of violence, social and political disintegration was evident. Historical accounts speak of 100,000 to 200,000 deaths (Bushnell, 1996, p.282). Political instability led into a *coup d'etat* placing the Commander of the Military Forces, General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, into power. He implemented a policy known as 'pacification' which conceded pardon through an Amnesty Law to those insurgents who decided to disarm. Leaflets explaining the advantages of the process were thrown from the air, and local authorities established contacts with groups. When necessary, military operations were suspended.

As a result, by November 1953, most of the liberal guerrillas in the eastern plains, Antioquia (Northwest) and Santander (Northeast) disbanded. But communists in central Colombia, specifically in the provinces of Cundinamarca and Tolima, did not follow suit (Rizo, 2002). (For location of provinces see map 1) The 'pacification' strategy noted the relevance of the dialectical and psychological dimension of COIN. It became clear that instruments to erode insurgents' will to fight and to convince them about disarming were successful. They were to become usual COIN instruments all the way to the Uribe administration which established several campaigns of this nature. Alfonso Lleras (1958-1962), for example, conceded judicial

benefits to those who abandoned the insurgency. Similar concessions were promoted by Belisario Betancourt (1982-1986) and Virgilio Barco (1982-1986), although during their governments FARC did not disarm. Lleras even proposed a scheme resembling the Human Terrain Teams described in the last chapter; they were called *grupos polivalentes*, composed by persons from diverse disciplines to identify the needs in every particular region (Matta, 1999).

During the 1950's there was an effort to create a formal COIN doctrine with the objective of tailoring better troops for this job (Pardo, 2004). But such construction would be given along the hemispheric tendency to follow the National Security Doctrine. This Doctrine tailored in the United States focused on communism as the main threat against hemispheric stability and security in liberal-democratic societies. The Soviet Union became the main enemy and the reason for all collective defence arrangements in the Americas. After the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 internal enemies, more than external agents, began to be understood as another dimension of the same threat. In that sense, brutal and drastic tactics were validated to confront insurgencies. As it is observed ahead, military regimes which flourished years later throughout the continent elevated to state policy the practice of torture and disappearance.

The *Escuela de Lanceros* was created in 1955 with the specific objective of training in small unit command, the sort of especial forces required to fight insurgents in jungles and mountains. Through the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR), a collective security and defence agreement signed by American nations, cooperation with the US increased, and thus, military hardware and air operations were improved. A specific bilateral military agreement was signed between Colombia and the US allowing more cooperation and the creation of an American permanent mission in Colombia.

Officers began to be trained at the School of the Americas, a controversial academic institution in Panama in which Latin American officers were indoctrinated in National Security and COIN. From then, and through the 60's and 70's, the model of flexible and mobile operation units characterised tactics. Reconnaissance was to be done by small Intelligence and Localization Groups (GIL) and in the event of combat they would be supported by stronger units (Pardo, 2004). Similarly, new military brigades were created in regions of insurgency influence. They were given jurisdiction over particular areas to keep them under control.

The participation of Colombia in the Korean War added value to this process. Officers who participated returned with a modern vision of the conduction of irregular warfare. Their knowledge was spread throughout the Military Forces with the creation of *Tolemaida Fort* in Central Colombia as an education, training and operational hub. Education at the Fort along with continued participation at the School of the Americas became the cornerstone for the application of the National Security Doctrine in Colombia as the main COIN approach.

Following global tendencies, as explained by the classic COIN authors, during the 1960's information gained a central position in COIN. Intelligence and psychological operations were becoming as relevant as military actions. Carlos Lleras Restrepo (1966-1970) created a national intelligence and regional intelligence boards to coordinate actions at the national and local levels.

From self-defence to guerrilla resistance

During the early 1960's, communists organized enclaves of peasant colonization with support of the PCC, after spreading their influence through the population with civic-military actions and propaganda (Matta, 1999). These were agrarian zones which rejected national authority and opted for a socialist order, with their own organizational and self-defence institutions. These zones were known as *republicas independientes* (See Map 2).

In Marquetalia, *Tirofijo* organized its guerrilla group with strong support from the families in the region (Rizo, 2002). He launched an 'agrarian guerrilla programme' demanding the redistribution of lands allowing peasants to own properties. Guerrillas ceased to exist as self-defence movements to become groups of armed resistance. Through the 1960's a different type of insurgency had flourished. It was not based on partisan identities as it was the case during the 1950's but motivated by the ideals of social vindication, subversion against injustice, class struggle, and anti-imperialism (Rizo, 2002). By 1961, the organization that would later become FARC already counted with 43 active squadrons with 471 members, 35 passive squadrons with 2062 members, and 15 communist groups with 912 members. (Pardo, 2004, p.413) The military dimension was considerably developing. (See Appendix 1 to observe the growth of the insurgency through time).

'Tirofijo' began making national-level demands, including participation in the *Frente Nacional* (a power sharing agreement between Liberals and Conservatives which marginalized Communists), a general amnesty for combatants, the liberation of political prisoners, the unionization of peasants and the elimination of military posts in their area. The political

dimension which had been expressed by local demands was evolving to incorporate national-level grievances. Situation with the enclaves was unsustainable and the biggest COIN operation began in 1962.

The main offensive was conducted in 1964, along the lines of the new strategic concept of the American Army: the massive use of infantry with aerial support and mobilization through helicopters. It was formulated along a programme of cooperation between Colombia and the United States known as Latin American Security Operations (LASO). It began with an aerial bombardment, and was followed by an assault of 250 airborne men, followed by troops transported by helicopter. The approach however failed to include instruments to consolidate state presence in the regions were insurgencies were forced to evacuate (Clavijo, 2007).

If the clear-hold-build equation explained in the last chapter is considered, then it was clear that the 'hold' component was weak, and the 'build' stage was non-existent. Tirofijo and a small group of about 350 men survived, and were more eager to continue waging war. By 1965, 48 men had reconvened in Southern Tolima to celebrate the First Guerrilla Conference, a collegiate meeting in which FARC is officially founded, although it was initially named 'Southern Block'. Basic plans of political, military, organizational, and propaganda actions were sketched, mainly with the objective of guaranteeing survival of the group. Since then, the ideals and discourse have followed an orthodox Marxist-Leninist doctrine (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011).

The emergence of a commercial insurgency

From 1996 to 1982, FARC had become a proper military institution although still weak. Through a series of Guerrilla Conferences the organization had acquired a defined structure with proper hierarchical operating procedures, with a political strategy, and training institutions (See Appendix 2). It was in the Seventh Conference in 1982 that FARC adopted a comprehensive strategy as a base to become a powerful commercial insurgency during the 80s and 90s. The organization is projected as a broader popular-based insurgency, promoting ideals such as mass struggle, open democracy with opposition, and popular participation in state decisions. Thus its new name FARC-EP (*Ejercito del Pueblo* or People's Army) (Pizarro, 2004). The objective was to constitute a proper conventional-like revolutionary army with popular support.

A Strategic Plan was sketched during this conference to be further elaborated during the next 17 months. It was later approved by the Plenum of the Central General Staff (the second hierarchical assembly of the organization). It was a flexible eight year plan for taking power: if insurrection was not successful in the first eight-year cycle, strategic withdrawal would be followed by a second attempt. It blended a Maoist three step approach with the Vietnamese concept of Dau tranh (political warfare among enemy forces, enemy society and a group's own civilian support base (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011). The plan required advancing towards major cities to isolate them. The most important was Bogota, the capital, for which the Eastern Bloc was strengthened, deploying troops through the Eastern mountain chain in order to surround it.

A plan of expansion was also established. It consisted in increasing recruitment and to 'unfold' existing fronts in order to create new ones, covering every single province. For this purpose FARC implemented systematic plans for recruitment, indoctrination and training of operatives; the indoctrination and control of civilian population; and the use of propaganda (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011). With its application the number of fronts doubled. Insurgency units achieved better capabilities, elite units were implemented, including urban guerrilla fronts and militias, and a stronger military formation was given to commanders (Pizarro, 2004). Urban units would radicalize urban population intending to aggravate the contradictions of a capitalist society, and would gather intelligence and resources (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011). After the adaptations, FARC managed to advance from guerrilla warfare to the conduction of semi-conventional attacks.

But more interestingly, through the Seventh conference, the criminal dimension of FARC finally emerged, joining the political and military dimensions to complete the tripartite character of the commercial insurgency. The organization formalized its participation in the drug business with the establishment of a tax known as *gramaje*. It was initially a percentage of 10 to 15% from the quantity of the drug produced (International Crisis Group, 2005, p.8) Cocaine appeared in Colombia when Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, one of the founders of the Medellin Cartel, hired Peruvian growers to crop *coca dulce.*[28] The cartel built laboratories in the middle of the jungle conflicting with FARC in its areas of dominion. As such, by 1978 FARC opposed the Medellin Cartel and forbade peasants to cultivate coca. But such position

---

[28] Sweet coca: a variety of the coca plant ideal for the amazon lowlands, as opposed to the regular one which grows at higher altitudes in the mountains.

eroded its support among peasants, given their increase dependence on coca leaf, so two years later cultivation was authorized only if they also cropped licit products. The tax was agreed in negotiations with the drug barons, and it generated a peaceful coexistence between the insurgency and the cartels, especially in the South (Guillermoprieto, 2000).

The tax became ideal for FARC's growth and expansion plans, and indeed provided the necessary resources for its strongest period during the 80s and 90s. The expansion derived from the Strategic Plan was only possible given such resources. The insurgency's participation in the drug business became evident with the discovery of production complexes such as *Tranquilandia* in the jungles of the province of Caquetá, where the bulk of Medellin Cartel's drugs were produced with protection from the insurgency. The joint operation which destroyed the camp in 1984 accounted for 16 labs, 7 airstrips, 7 airplanes and 7000 tanks with chemicals (Lizarazo, 2008, p.50).

From the mid-1980s and on, progressively, the criminal dimension grew. Colombia was experiencing a coca boom which accounted for about 5% of the GDP (Guillermoprieto, 2000, p.30). Territorial expansion was not necessarily developed in function of relations between the insurgency, the needs and beliefs of particular communities, and the absence of state institutions. Rather, it was based on the consolidation of areas of influence in regions with economic value for the control of resources, mainly coca leaf and extortion. In these areas, cycles of an illegal war economy, as explained in the second chapter, would create strong ties between the insurgency and peasants.

FARC became strong in peripheral regions of Colombia, through areas that farmers colonized in order to grow coca leaf. For this reason the insurgency was a peasant-based movement without much participation of professionals or workers (Springer, 2005, p. 298). For example, peasants moved to the provinces of Meta, Putumayo and Caquetá following the coca boom, and FARC went with them (Guillermoprieto, 2000, p.32). The expansion plan carried the insurgency into coca cultivation areas such as Caguan, Guania, La Macarena, Caqueta and Putumayo. (See map 3). By the mid-1980s links with the druglords were disrupted and confrontation with the cartels began. Drug-dealers strengthened paramilitary units to fight the insurgency, while FARC started to take over link after link of the chain of the drug production/trafficking business. Taxation was expanded to cultivators and croppers and it was maintained for smaller drug-dealers and users of landing strips (International Crisis Group, 2005, p.9).

Through the 1990's, and particularly after the operations that ended with the hegemony of the Medellin and Cali cartels, the insurgency began to be observed as a mega-cartel. In fact, it was described as a *hypercartel* by Indira Guzman and Jose Muñoz (Guzman & Muñoz, 2004). According to Eduardo Pizarro, this guaranteed an income of US$ 470 million from 1991 to 1996, a 41% of the total income of the organization (Pizarro, 2004, 193). They evolved from being taxers, to be the first buyers at the lowest stages of the chain, and later to be traders themselves. This was observed in the region of Bajo Caguan (Pizarro, 2004).

From 1996 to 1998 they had gained total control of the local drug trade in Putumayo and Caquetá. They eliminated local drug dealers and introduced fixed prices for the coca paste. They forced farmers to sell only to the local Front of the organization, and began to store and trade large amounts of cocaine with envoys of multiple new micro-cartels (International Crisis Group, 2005). This is how interests in profiting from drug-dealing permeated the organization to create a commercial insurgency. Whereas some individuals continued to be motivated by the political goals of the organization, others became more interested in their own profits. Some could actually display both types of motivations simultaneously (Pizarro, 2004).

This involvement has been exploited by governments and certain authors to present the organization as a narco-terrorist entity as it was explained in the second chapter. But as it was argued, this dissertation explains that such a lens, although productive in political terms, cannot fully explain the organization. As it will be explained in detail in the following chapter, the political dimension was still relevant for the organization by 2010.

Ideas for develop-centred counterinsurgency

Ideas about implementing programmes to achieve development as part of a counterinsurgency strategy had been present for years. Although specific plans have been implemented by diverse governments to eliminate war economies based on cocaine, most of them were unsuccessful. The fight against narcotics and the insurgency had been understood as separate efforts. There was never a comprehensive strategy to eliminate insurgencies, disrupt criminal economies, and generate new sustainable legal economies with presence of state institutions. Programmes were not articulated with social, economic and political processes of the national level, being mere isolated and unsustainable efforts to eradicate coca leaf cultivation. It was only during the Uribe administration that

development gained a central role as part of an integral COIN strategy to defeat FARC and reduce coca trade.

Alfonso Lleras argued in favour of improving social conditions, road infrastructure, and implementing the agrarian reform. He formulated a 'National Rehabilitation Plan' (PNR) to recover areas affected by violence, which included sources provided by the United States through an economic and social cooperation programme known as 'Alliance for progress.'

Years later, Carlos Lleras (1966-1970) implemented the *Plan Andes* incorporating university and school students as soldiers in groups with lawyers, doctors, dentists, engineers, vets, sociologists and economist to spread education in the regions, in a figure that resembled human terrain teams. 1000 soldiers and 328 professionals were incorporated in 10 Brigades for this purpose. Each soldier needed to teach 25 individuals (Torres del Rio, 2000, p.180). The plan was part of a military strategy to isolate insurgent groups, destroy the irreducible groups, and engage on consolidation operations. The idea however was later abandoned given the illegality of recruiting students.

Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) also formulated a PNR which was complemented by his successor Virgilio Barco (1986-1990) whose approach included social programmes in conflict areas combined with strong operations against the guerrillas. Cesar Gaviria (1990-1994) also considered rural development in marginalized regions with his Policy of Alternative Development, while his successor Ernesto Samper (1994-1998) created the *Plante* programme to provide peasants with sources to substitute coca crops with licit products. Gaviria launched the concept of 'integral war'. The intention was to go beyond a simple militaristic approach. A wider "National Strategy Against Violence" intended to distribute responsibilities to other state institutions besides the Military Forces. Efforts included the coordination of social programmes, strengthening the judicial system, protecting the national infrastructure, the implementation of civic-military actions, and delegating more attributions to local authorities. But state institutions were still very weak, and a comprehensive approach was still missing.

As explained through a report of the Center for International Policy, a Washington-based think tank, the failure of development programmes in provinces like Putumayo is explained by the fact that eradication was not joined by a serious alternative option with guaranteed income stability for peasants, creating a humanitarian catastrophe and strengthening the arguments of the insurgency. The result was counterproductive in that peasants increased

their mistrust, even hatred, towards of the state (Camacho, 2003). Peasant social organizations such as the *Coordinadora Nacional de Cultivadores de Coca y Amapola* (COCCA) became a base of support of the insurgency, strongly opposing state action in Putumayo (Pizarro, 2004). Coca leaf continued to be cropped through the country, and as such, it continued to be the main funding source for illegal armed groups. This is an example of how social organizations in the primary environment become an instrument for the spread of insurgency influence through communities.

Several military leaders also believed in the importance of development as a component of COIN. They followed the proposals of classical theorists, seeing the confrontation of the insurgency not as a purely military campaign, but as a matter of state and a responsibility of politicians. They saw state commitment to social reforms as a necessary condition to defeat subversion, and argued that Army action needed to respond to the grievances of peasants while defeating the insurgency militarily. This 'school of thought' was formed in the 1960s, but through the years several Generals spoke in favour of such ideas. General Fernando Landazabal, for example, argued that "the solution to the guerrilla problem is not given, and will never be given, through an armed transformation." (Valencia, 2002, p.179)

A more notorious position was achieved by this school when General Hernando Correa, who commanded operations in Marquetalia, was appointed Defence Minister by President Misael Pastrana (1970-1974). So was the case when General Alvaro Valencia became Army Commander (1974-1975) and Manuel Jose Bonnett was appointed Joint Commander (1997-1998). However, as explained by Leon Valencia, Director of the prestigious left-leaning Bogota-based think tank *Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris*, this approach has never been popular within military circles and those who have claimed for its ideas have been removed from their positions (Valencia, 2002).

Negotiations as a strategic base for growth

The period of rapid growth of the insurgency was possible not only because of the increase of its revenues via drug-dealing, but because of their strategic use of the spaces conceded by governments in times of negotiation. Such spaces have been useful to break the offensive of the Military Forces, to rest and re-group, to gain territorial control, to increase their political profile, and to reach international audiences.

In March 1984, Betancur signed a ceasefire with FARC. The insurgency created a political party, the *Union Patriotica* (UP), but given the opposition of extremist sectors, most of its

members were assassinated (Valencia, 2002). Subsequent governments including those of Barco and Gaviria (1990-1994) continued intermittent peace processes with relative results. Several organizations, including M-19, EPL, EPR and Quintin Lame, disarmed, but FARC and the ELN remained.

Peace was seen by FARC as another strategic instrument for its objectives; an opportunity to grow and to gain political recognition at the national and international levels. Peace itself never seemed to be an ultimate objective, only an instrument for the real strategic objective of winning the war. "In short, despite their public discourse of reformist peacemaking, FARC leaders would remain uncompromisingly maximalist, stating that a truce 'is a form of war and not a form of peace'" (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, p.29).

With the process they not only gained political legitimacy while strengthening their military apparatus, they also increased urban penetration. With a stronger force, FARC proceeded with its strategic plan, occupying the Eastern mountain chain surrounding Bogota. Control wasn't only expressed in terms of military presence, but also municipal control, the expulsion of state forces, the assassination of social leaders or opposing figures, and the dominion over public budgets (Pizarro, 2004). Overall, insurgencies grew 414% from 1981 to 1988 (Gomez, 1993, p.64).

Perspectives for a negotiated solution practically disappeared when President Gaviria attacked the headquarters of FARC's Secretariat known as Casa Verde. It was as a safe haven for guerrilla leaders where they used to meet journalists, politicians and negotiators. Later attempts in Caracas, Venezuela and Tlaxcala, Mexico, were a failure. It would only be until the government of Andres Pastrana (1994-1998) that peace dialogues would again be considered as a solution.

Anti-subversive action was almost exclusively conducted by the Army, with relative political and financial support. As noted before, it was perceived purely as a military task generating a feeling of national alienation within the Military Forces from the rest of society. However, by the end of the 1980s, there was a qualitative change in the composition of the troops with the recruitment of professional soldiers and the creation of an anti-guerrilla company in every Brigade. By 1987 the Barco administration gave a significant impulse to the idea of anti-guerrilla units. Anti-guerrilla battalions had been created within territorial brigades, but they were transformed into a Mobile Brigade with positive results (Pizarro, 2004). Similarly, his successor Cesar Gaviria (1990-1994) prioritized mobile brigades and specialized anti-

guerrilla squadrons. Professional soldiers increased from 2000 in 1990 to 23000 in 1994, but a four-year plan was sketched for the constitution of an Army in which half of its soldiers were professional (Pardo, 2004). A special feature was the creation of a *Soldados campesinos* programme (peasant soldiers) in which conscripts were meant to act directly among their communities. These elements were relevant for a more sophisticated COIN approach during the Uribe administration.

Towards strategic stalemate

During the late 1990s FARC achieved its strongest position in history. The cocaine business had provided a vast amount of resources, and a social base of support had been built in those areas where rebels and the criminal economy were strong, very much in the lines described in the second chapter. Their application of a 'centrifuge strategy', consisting of unfolding and multiplying its fronts, rendered positive results. Strategic areas were occupied, spreading even to the other side of Colombian borders (Villamarin, 2005). The number of blocs increased forcing the Army to de-concentrate and expand to regions were its presence was not significant. M1 rifles were replaced by AK 47s, and their recruiting capacity also increased notoriously.

They had successfully established mobile companies with the capacity to engage on special operations such as sabotage with explosives, penetration of valuable intelligence targets, occupation of isolated military units, and the assassination of selected targets. A highly specialized and threatening elite unit, the *Columna Movil Teofilo Forero,* was created to operate as the reserve force of the Secretariat and the Central Joint Command (Villamarin, 2005).

During the early 2000s this Column perpetrated many of FARC's most notorious attacks including the bomb attack of the prestigious social club *El Nogal* in Bogota; the kidnapping of the Deputies of the Provincial Assembly of Valle del Cauca in the centre of Cali, the third city in Colombia; and the kidnapping of several citizens, including Deputies from the Assembly of the province of Huila, from a residential building in an exclusive neighbourhood of the city of Neiva. Five years later, the *Teofilo Forero* counted on more combatants that any of the fronts in the South and with 250 of the most specialized combatants in irregular warfare, explosives, rural and urban intelligence. They were trained in the *zona de distension* (to be explained ahead), and sometimes even outside Colombia, by foreign experts, including members of the IRA and ETA (Villamarin, 2005).

Until this point, the political dimension of the insurgency had suffered many transformations. As it was explained, FARC emerged from support of the Communist Party, so the guerrillas were understood as its military wing (dimension). FARC depended on the doctrinal orientations of the PCC, while it determined their priorities of action according to the political context. In fact, as it was recognized by the Secretary of the Party, all militants of FARC were considered members of the PCC (Pizarro, 2011). The presence of Jacobo Arenas, a Party intellectual, as a leader of the insurgency evidenced the linkage. As such the overlapping between both dimensions in functional terms was not significant.

But the end of the Cold War motivated a rupture between FARC and the PCC which was formalized in the Eight Guerrilla Conference in 1993. The PCC abandoned the combined forms of struggle doctrine and the insurgency decided to focus on war instead of creating opened and public political institutions given the systematic extermination of the *Union Patriotica* (Pizarro, 2004). At the Eight Guerrilla Conference in 1993, they opted for the creation of a clandestine political party, the *Partido Colombiano Comunista Clandestino* (PC3), to avoid the elimination of its members. The Party became a relevant structure for networked individuals to promote FARC's political platform.

Both the PC3 and the Movimiento Bolivariano were political structures under command of the National Secretariat, a move that analysts have qualified as the organization's abandonment of politics, or the subjugation of politics to the military.[29] Guerrilla leaders became both the military and the political commanders of the organization, and as such, they became part of both dimensions. As explained by Eduardo Pizarro, "FARC, after its break-up with the PCC and the creation of the MB, do not divide the political direction from the military direction, they are integrated in a single team: the National Secretariat" (Pizarro, 2011). Because of their motivations and functions, FARC's commanders are part of the political dimension, since they dictate the orders and commands of what is to be done by the political organizations. PC3 members would be part of the political dimension, unless they are subjects of node militarization as explained in the second chapter.

It could be thought that the political dimension became subordinated to the military, configuring the opposite situation experienced during the years of subordination to the PCC, but this would imply FARC commanders are exclusively military and not political. This is not necessarily accurate since commanders display political motivations and perform political

---

[29] See for example the ideas of Leon Valencia. (Valencia, 2002)

activities. The fact that they wear uniforms, bear arms, participate in combat, remain isolated in camps away from larger social concentrations, does not make them exclusively military.

During the ninth conference FARC also released a ten point social and political programme known as the 'Platform for Government of Reconstruction and Reconciliation' which explains the political objectives of the insurgency and consequently, the motivational logic behind its political dimension:

1- Building a peaceful solution to conflict
2- Adopting a Bolivarian military and defence doctrine
3- Strengthening instruments of popular control of state institutions, and extending elections for other state positions (The courts and the ombudsman)
4- Advancing in development and economic modernization with social justice
5- Destining 50% of the national budget to social welfare, and 10% for scientific research
6- Establishing higher taxes for those with higher income.
7- Creating an agricultural policy with wide access to credit, technical assistance, and market access. Establishing protective policies regarding foreign markets.
8- Exploiting natural resources in a more favourable manner to Colombians than to multinational companies.
9- Prioritizing regional and Latin America integration in terms of Foreign Policy. Revision of all military pacts and re-negotiation of the foreign debt.
10- Providing a solution to drug-dealing from a social perspective and not from a militarized approach (FARC-EP, 1993, April).

In military terms, from 1996 to 1998 they conducted operations which allowed arguing they were reaching the 'stalemate' stage in Mao's theory: units of a considerable size with the capacity to sustain an attack for a long period of time, against well defended Army or Police garrisons. General Carlos Ospina, later a main actor in the recovery of Colombia's strategic initiative, refers to this stage as mobile warfare or manoeuvre warfare, what the Vietnamese call main force warfare, but not the 'war of positions' in which positions seized are held (Ospina, 2006). A series of attacks (see table 4.1) demonstrated that the insurgency was gaining the strategic initiative, at least in South-eastern Colombia. This happened during the worst crisis of state legitimacy, the administration of Ernesto Samper (1994-1998), which was proved to have received sources from the Cali Cartel.

The attacks demonstrated a high level of development, military consistency and the capacity of destruction which FARC had achieved. The possibility to sustain strong attacks with heavy equipment for hours and gathering combatants from different units (blocs and fronts) speaks about advanced logistics, command and control, coordination communications, and training. The intelligence gathered for each of these operations, in most cases during months before the attacks, demonstrated a high level of organization and planning.

In operational terms, FARC recurred to large columns in order to engage military units which had spread out, thinking they were facing small groups (Ospina, 2006). It would make about twenty simultaneous attacks, eroding the ability of the military to discern the dimension of each of them, and in the end only one would have the battalion-strength that ultimately overwhelmed the camp.[30] It was a people's war technique observed in Vietnam and El Salvador. This became known by FARC as the 'new form of operations' which included stages of siege, hit, occupy and retreat.

Through this type of operations the insurgency significantly hit the elite troops of the Military and Police Forces, and captured provisions including rifles, equipment and artillery pieces (Valencia, 2002). In strategic terms, they strengthened their expansion through the South-East consolidating its strategic rear-guard, specifically in the provinces of Meta, Caquetá, Guaviare, Putumayo, and Cundinamarca. The latter surrounds Bogota, becoming a relevant step for their Strategic Plan. The urbanization of war improved with the development of the 'Bolivarian militias' in several cities including the capital.

By 2000, FARC counted with seven blocks and sixty fronts, forty of them involved in drugdealing (Pardo, 2004), and from 15,000 to 20,000 combatants (Springer, 2005, p.298).

---

[30] Interview with Dr. Thomas Marks, Head of the War and Conflict Studies Department at the College of International Security Affairs, National Defense University. Sept 22, 2011.

Location	Target	FARC units (aprox)	Defending Military/Police Units (aprox)	Military/ Police Casualties	Military/ Police Prisoners
Puerres, Nariño	Military Convoy	150		31 deaths	None
Puerto Leguizamo, Putumayo	Army 49th Jungle Batallion "Las Delicias"	600	110	31 deaths 17 injured	60
San Juanito, Meta	Army 2nd Mobile Brigade	150	35	19 deaths	9
Cerro Patascoy, Nariño	Army Communications Station, Infantry Battalion "Battle of Boyacá"	250-300	35	10 deaths	18
El Billar, Caquetá	Army 52nd Counterguerrilla Batallion	700	110	45 deaths 15 injured	60
Miraflores, Guaviare	Police Antinarcotics Base and Army Battalion	500 – 800	200	30 deaths 10 injured 22 lost	100
Mitu, Vaupes	The city	1500	120	40/60 deaths 38 injured	61

Figure 4.1

As former Minister of Defence, Rafael Pardo, explained "the combination produced by resources from coca crops, the training and the close relation with tens of thousands of coca cultivators, gave a territorial, financial, military and social base to this insurgency, which took its political capability to a level never witnessed before." (Pardo, 2004, p.540) This is a clear expression of the triadic character of FARC, and an example of how the dimensions coexist to make the organization stronger.

A turn towards brutality

By the end of the 70's Latin American states became deeply militarized, with highly centralized institutions as a result of the application of the National Security doctrine. Power was concentrated by Presidents while Congresses were closed and the Judicial was kept under control. Insurgencies were contained through the use of brutality, but violence was not restricted to insurgents in arms, it also extended to individuals and groups on the left of the political spectrum. Hundreds of civilians were tortured and abused.

Colombia was not the exception, although not one of the most extreme cases (Torres del Rio, 2000). President Alfonso Lopez (1974-1978) re-enacted the state of emergency and legislation was passed allowing tougher acts by security institutions. Wider attributes were given to the Military Justice System, even over civilians, and during the following years there was opposition to signing the First and Second Protocols of the Geneva Conventions (Torres del Rio, 2000).

Militarization reached a peak with the administration of Julio Cesar Turbay (1978-1982). He enacted the Security Statute, which conceded wider powers to the military to investigate and judge civilians, and more autonomy for the Forces to operate. It was designed to confront insurgencies but also to control popular sectors of society and trade unions. This obeyed to the widening of the conception of enmity into that of an 'undefined and non-localized' enemy, meaning that not only fighters in mountains and jungles were to be considered as such, but also civilians in cities or in certain social or political organizations (Torres del Rio, 2000). In other words the counterinsurgent included a wide number of elements of the environment, not necessarily members of the insurgency, as part of the political or the military dimensions, which needed to be fought accordingly.

New judicial instruments were created, the appellate review for Force Command decisions was eliminated, military courts penalizations were increased, and judicial faculties were given to city mayors and the Police. Media censorship was encouraged. Detention without previous authorization for one year was dictated for those distributing insurgency propaganda or painting graffitties, and 10 days for those merely suspicious of intending to disrupt order (Torres del Rio, 2000).

New paramilitary groups appeared. Such was the case of *Muerte a Secuestradores* (Death to Kidnappers), which was allegedly funded by drug-dealers and linked to Military Intelligence. By 1988 it was believed that they were present in 8 provinces including Antioquia, Boyacá, Caquetá, Córdoba, Cundinamarca, Meta, Putumayo, and Santander (Proyecto Colombia Nunca Mas, 2011).

Torture generated a negative perspective of the government's actions through the nation, and systemic repression of social and political movements, groups of students and unions was perceived as excessive. Militants of left wing parties, organizations and social movements were terrorized. A total of 82000 individuals were arrested (Galindo, 1999, p.170-171). Abuses committed by the military without any rejection from the administration generated a sense of illegitimacy (Torres del Rio, 2000). The Statute was thus widely rejected because of its violations of Human Rights, and especially because of the control and judgement of civilians by the Military. As a result, Turbay revoked the Statute not only because of its criticisms but because results of its application were not positive (Torres del Rio, 2000). By the end of his term a more pacifist approach was promoted with the creation of an Amnesty Law which set the bases for the next administration to focus on negotiations.

Regaining strategic initiative

A strong FARC diametrically opposed a weak military. By the end of the 1990's the Forces were considerably underfunded, not highly specialized, and with limited capabilities. The possibility to deploy a decisive force in a timely and efficient manner was reduced. Cooperation and interoperation of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, not to include the National Police, were lacking, while air support and manned action were limited. The struggles against narcotics and insurgency were still conceived as separate.

The strategic initiative began to be regained when several elements came together: an unprecedented military build-up which began during the Andres Pastrana administration (1998-2002); a well-educated group of Officers with clear organizational and operational conceptions on counterinsurgency; FARC's lack of a strategy to build support of the masses; and the definitive resolve of the political authority to assume counterinsurgency as a matter of state policy, which was only achieved with Alvaro Uribe.

By the beginning of the 1990s Colombia counted on relative support from the United States, which had developed its conception of 'war on drugs', to fight against drug-dealing. During the George H.W. Bush administration an anti-drug plan was produced to give Colombia US\$ 65 million in military aid. Cooperation included four Hercules C-130 transportation airplanes, 20 Bell UH-IM Twin Huey Helicopters, 12 A-37 airplanes for aerial interception, land transportation vehicles, munitions and other equipment. But the bulk of American anti-drug cooperation would only come years later, and it would become a vital component for COIN when both efforts were finally understood as a single one.

Pastrana's approach consisted more on negotiations than confrontation. He granted an area in South-eastern Colombia, roughly the size of Switzerland, without military or state control for the insurgency to convene in safe conditions. The area became known as the *zona de distension.* (See map 4) The idea was strongly opposed by certain political figures and sectors. The Military supported establishing a zone for negotiations, but rejected the removal of all military and police forces in the area.

Negotiations, once again, failed. No ceasefire was contemplated during the process so terrorist attacks, kidnapping, and cocaine production were constant. Furthermore, FARC practically transformed the *zona de distencion* into a sort of parallel state: They enacted decrees imposing taxation, served as judicial authority for disputes between civilians, and built roads and airstrips for cocaine trade. In fact, coca cultivation areas increased (Rizo,

2002). In 2002, the area was re-taken by state forces. FARC argued the state was responsible for the failure of the process given its inability to deal with illegal paramilitaries and the existence of *Plan Colombia*.

This Plan was a comprehensive programme initially tailored as an antinarcotics strategy. It was created in 1998 to channel social and economic aid for rural areas. By 2000, adaptations to the plan made it more coherent with American interests, focusing more on strengthening state capabilities and the Military Forces (Vaicius, 2002). The main objective was to reduce cultivated areas by half in four years, increase the manual eradication of crops and strengthen intelligence to capture drug-dealers and intercept cargo; similarly, to develop social plans for communities which engaged on coca eradication (Valencia, 2002). Originally the Plan consisted on US$ 7.5 billion, for which Colombia was to provide US$ 4 billion and the international community US$ 3.5 billion. The United States provided US $1.3 billion, from which 700 million were destined to military aid, and the rest to crop substitution, public services, and strengthening democracy. In the end military aid increased up to US$ 1 billion. (Pardo, 2004, p.564-565) 90% of the American contribution was destined to fight against narcotics including alternative development projects (Vaicius, 2002, p.22). US$ 70 million more were provided in 2001 covering anti-kidnapping, extradition, prevention of attacks to infrastructure, curbing finances of illicit groups and providing Army equipment (Pardo, 2004, p.564-565).

Initially, the United States believed sources from Plan Colombia should be destined exclusively to the fight against narcotics and never to COIN. But after the attacks of September 11 in the United States, the struggles against narcotics and insurgency were finally understood as complementary in Washington. All of the hardware provided through the Plan couldn't initially be used to fight insurgents, but after both struggles were conceived as the same, they were used against insurgents, maximizing results.

The Plan became the cornerstone of the build-up of the Military Forces and the Police during the 2000s. The amount of professional soldiers increased from 22000 to 55000, regular soldiers did so from 46000 to 73000. Smaller and more flexible, rapidly deployable units began to be implemented and were stationed in the areas of strong insurgency presence. The Rapid Deployment Force (FUDRA) with 5000 soldiers was created as an elite Army COIN unit composed by three Mobile Brigades and a Brigade of Special Forces; it is prepared to act in any geographical setting. A River Brigade was created as part of the Marine Infantry, with 5 River Battalions deployed all along the national territory and a school of river warfare. Five

new Mobile Brigades were installed with 2500 soldiers each. Combat helicopters increased from 18 to 30, and transportation helicopters from 126 to 223, while 5 silent airplanes with night vision were acquired. Rifles increased from 120000 to 180000 (Valencia, 2002, p.177).

Army aviation was repowered with 50 black hawks, 30 Huey II, and 11 UH-1N for a total of 114 helicopters. 83 attack Black Hawks were given to the Air Force and the Police (Santos, 2009, p.180) More aircraft was provided for the Air Force including 25 Super Tucano, 12 Attack Huey II, 4 Casa C-295 for transportation, 4 Beechcraft 350 Super King Air (2 transportation, 2 intelligence platforms), 5 Cessna caravan as intelligence platforms, 25 for basic training, 13 last generation K-fir and the modernization of 11 more (Santos, 2009, p.192). Super Tucanos were ideal for the fight against insurgents in the Colombian topography and terrain.

The Military build-up also produced new elements to fight the criminal dimension of the insurgency. Heavily equipped military units were created specifically to regain control of the cocaine-producing zones. A new antinarcotics brigade (BRACNA) with three battalions was created. The Air Force base of Tres Esquinas, a hub for offensive actions in the South, was modernized.

In general terms, the mobility and offensive capabilities of the Military Forces increased considerably making them operable during day and night. Professionalization was further increased with the incorporation of a group of civilians with academic formation and experience in different areas. National trust in the Military Forces also increased (Valencia, 2002, p. 177).

This build-up was complemented with the leadership and command of a group of Army Generals highly knowledgeable of the conditions of the insurgency and COIN operations. These included Fernando Tapias, Jorge Mora, Carlos Ospina and Freddy Padilla. They correctly assessed their enemies, their strengths and weaknesses, their strategy, operational art and tactics (Ospina, 2006, p.30). They changed military operations: "instead of running around chasing guerrillas, [the Army] and [the Military Forces] got inside FARC's strategic decision-making loop."[31] They realized FARC had two centres of gravity, its finances and its units; the latter since they did not count with a mass base of support. As such, it was

---

[31] Interview with Thomas Marks

134

determined that attacking its bases, mobility corridors and units would yield great results (Ospina, 2006, p.30).

Through their work, the interoperation of the Military Forces was increased and the first joint operations appeared. By the end of the decade three Joint Commands had been created in spite of the protests of several Army Generals: 1st Joint Command for the Caribbean region in the North, 2nd Joint Command for the Pacific region in the West, and the 'Omega' Joint Task Force created specifically to attack FARC's stronghold in the 82000 squared-kilometres region in the Southeast. By the 2000's with Alvaro Uribe and Juan Manuel Santos as his Ministry of Defence, jointness had become the main paradigm of operations.

With the military hardware and the know-how, insurgency became vulnerable to the offensive of the Military Forces, and results would come sooner than later. After the operation in Mitu, and from 1999 to 2001, a series of operations would prove that the Military Forces were gaining the advantage while FARC was losing its initiative. General Ospina has explained such a dynamic with a graph that became known as the 'Ospina Curve', in which he observed the number of casualties of the military forces through time to determine how strong FARC's operations where (See figure 4.1). It is evident that from 1999 the insurgency's capacity decreased progressively.
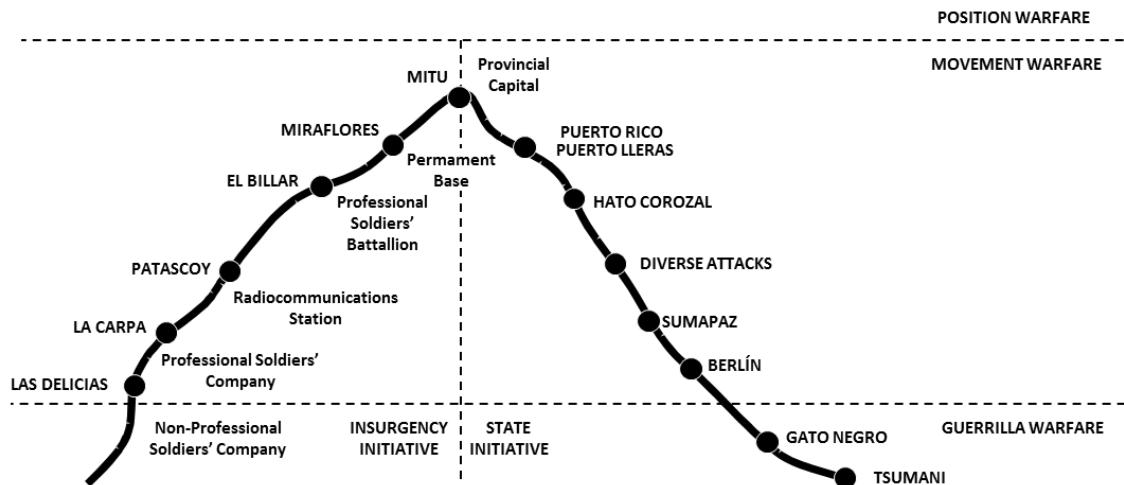
FIGURE 4.1

Democratic Security Policy and widening COIN

As it was argued before, Alvaro Uribe added a very valuable element to the fight against the insurgency: an understanding that such a fight is not an exclusive responsibility of the Military but of all state institutions, and that strong political authority was necessary to conduct a real comprehensive strategy to defeat the insurgency. The strategy was based on a very basic principle: that authority and state institutions should extend to all of the Colombian territory. It became known as the 'Democratic Security Policy' (DSP).

The DSP intended to eliminate the insurgency from all of territory by fighting it in their strongest areas, extending the coverage of the National Police to every municipality, destroying illicit war economies, building state institutions, and guaranteeing processes of sustainable development for the population in remote areas. In COIN terms, it meant the application of a clear-hold-build model in which Military Forces would act to clear areas of insurgents, and many other institutions would contribute with the second and third stages. The Policy set five objectives:

1- Consolidate state control of the territory
2- Protect the population
3- Eliminate illicit drug trafficking
4- Build and maintain a credible deterring capability
5- Efficient and clear accountability

With a clear comprehensive strategy, political will, sources, and knowledgeable commanders, the state was ready to severely damage FARC. In terms of operations there were three action lines: active area control, sustained offensive operations and special operations (Spencer, 2011).

Regarding active area control, the presence of the Police was guaranteed in all of Colombia's municipalities, including those from which they were expelled by armed groups, years before. The Peasant Soldiers programme was strengthened with the formation of 589 new platoons, recruiting almost 20,000 soldiers. It was renamed *Soldados de mi Pueblo[32].* All of these platoons were supported by professional troops when necessary. Active area control was also enhanced with the *Redes de Cooperantes* (Voluntary Networks) composed by

---

[32] The word *Pueblo* may be used to refer to two different concepts at the same time: The people in a community or the municipality or town itself, giving it the double entendre 'Soldiers from my town' or 'Soldiers for my people.' Statistics found in (Spencer, 2011, p.83)

citizens who provided information to the Military Forces about anomalies in their regions. Such structures were different but complimentary to typical intelligence information networks which were paid and more connected to the military. The strategy involved millions of citizens and forced members of illegal armed organizations to abandon populated areas (Spencer, 2011).

In the same direction, seven specialized High Mountain Battalions were created to act in high altitudes and tough climatic conditions to disrupt FARC's mobility corridors between the mountains and the jungles. Similarly The *Plan Meteoro* was created by the Army to patrol and protect national roads. Units for this plan were heavily armoured and counted on the capacity to repel an ambush (Spencer, 2011).

On sustained offensive operations, Mobile Brigades, which had been used since the Gaviria administration, played a central role in eroding FARCs dominance in the most sensitive regions. Uribe increased such units from 8 to 17. The *Plan Patriota* was the strategy devised to attack FARC directly in their areas of historical dominance, especially their strategic rear-guard in the southeast were the strongest blocs, East and South, had been the authority for years. In its first stage it dismounted the network of guerrilla fronts which surrounded Bogota, and in its second stage it attacked FARC's camps in the areas just described.

For this Plan, as it was already mentioned, the Omega Task Force was created. It included the Army's Rapid Deployment Force (FUDRA) with its three Mobile Brigades located in La Macarena, Meta; the 9th Mobile Brigade in San Vicente del Caguan, Caqueta; the 6th Mobile Brigade in Cartagena del Chaira, Caqueta; the 22nd Mobile Brigade in Penas Colaradas, Caqueta; the 10th Mobile Brigade in Miraflores, Guaviare; a River component with headquarters in Tres Esquinas, Caqueta; and an Aerial Component in Larandia. It initially counted on 14000 men, but by 2010 it was already composed by 20000. Later, two Specific Commands were created within Omega: The *Comando Especifico del Caguan* (CAC) and the *Comando Especifico de Oriente* (COE) with the objective of strengthening territorial control in these regions.[33] However, more Joint Commands and specialized units were created for those areas where FARC still counted on a significant amount of combatants: the Decisive Action Force (FUCAD) composed by four Mobile Brigades focused mainly in the Atlantic

---

[33] Specific Commands merge elements from the three Forces, Army, Navy and Air Force, but given the predominance of the Army, such name is preferred instead of Joint Commands.

Coast; the Joint Task Force for Southern Tolima, where top Commander Alfonso Cano operated; and the Joint Task Force for Nudo del Paramillo.

The first stage was achieved through *Operacion Libertad I* and it developed around the principles of secret deployment, dispersed mass and prolonged presence. 11,000 soldiers were dispersed through the territory in platoon-sized units in order to occupy the space held by insurgents. In the event of combat, nearby units would join the efforts. The objective was to stay in the region to avoid the return of insurgents after major combats were held. Operation *Libertad I* was relevant to disrupt FARC's strategic plan, removing insurgents from the region of Sumapaz, South of Bogota, which provided an important strategic corridor to the capital. The militia network which operated in Bogota, the *Red Urbana Antonio Nariño* (RUAN), was entirely disbanded.

The latter stage of the plan was still on-going at the end of the Uribe period, but until then the Omega Force had provided significant blows to FARC's strategic rear-guard, forcing surviving fronts to move deeper into the jungles (Spencer, 2011).

But special operations also rendered significant results, and they were possible after the structure of intelligence was transformed and a command for special operations was created. Before Uribe, intelligence produced by each of the Forces, the Police and the Administrative Department of Security (DAS) was rarely shared with other institutions, even when there was a Joint Intelligence Board. A traditional culture of self-sufficiency and unwillingness to share secrets impeded information sharing. With Juan Manuel Santos as a Minister of Defense, the structure was changed.

The Department of Special Joint Operations (JOEC) was created as an instrument to share information between Military Forces, Police and DAS, specifically on high value targets: the members of FARC's Secretariat. Each of the targets was assigned to one of the institutions which would gather all the intelligence provided. The JOEC did not produce intelligence; it worked as a coordination centre to process intelligence provided by the Forces, and to count on the logistical, human and technical resources necessary to act against such targets in due moment. On the other hand, former guerrilla members who demobilized and decided to cooperate with the government to obtain benefits provided specific detailed information about their units and commanders, generating valuable intelligence for the planning and execution of key operations.

Changes in the intelligence structure along with increased operational capabilities guaranteed military success against the insurgents. According to Santos, it was "the perfect union of joint intelligence, capacity of immediate action and political decision." (Santos, 2009, p.118) Given its success, JOEC was later transformed into an independent command under orders of the Joint Commander of the Military Forces. It was named the Joint Special Operations Command (CCOES).

Special operations were developed with two main purposes, on one hand, applying a beheading strategy to eliminate FARC's leaders; and on the other, to rescue political figures, military and policemen who were kidnapped. With *Operacion Fenix* in Ecuador, Raul Reyes, second in command and head of the international strategy was killed; *Operacion Jaque* brought several 'high value' hostages to liberty including former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, three American citizens and several military and policeman. *Operacion Camaleon* liberated 15 hostages more including a Police General.

The disintegration of FARC became evident with the downfall of Commanders, members of the Secretariat, and the demobilization of insurgents *en masse,* especially middle ranking commanders. Several Fronts disintegrated, while other disappeared. Leaders such as *Negro Acacio*, commander of the 16th front and kingpin of the drug enterprise in the Eastern plains and Martin Caballero, head of the 37th front in the Caribbean Coast were killed. Under military pressure alias Karina, Commander of the 47th front surrendered to authorities, while Ivan Rios, member of the Secretariat and Commander of the Central Bloc was killed by a member of his own staff. It was in this context that Tirofijo died in the jungle in extreme conditions of isolation. In the Pacific region, the Port of Buenaventura was recovered and militias in Cali were disbanded, an objective that required other type of specialized units recently developed, the Special Urban Anti-terrorist Forces Group (AFEUR).

As explained by Michael Shifter: "The government [had] considerably strengthened its military capacity and [was then] on the offensive, as reflected in FARC's sever setbacks, both on the battlefield and in its internal organization. Communications [had] broken down, and defections [were] on the rise (…) [State's] capacities were further enhanced with the death of four members of FARC's seven-man Secretariat." (Shifter, 2011, p.61)

Statistics also speak about positive results. Homicides were reduced from 28,837 in 2002 to 15,817 in 2009. The assassinations of town and city mayors decreased a 67%, city hall councillors in 87%, unionists in 85% and journalists in 90% for the same period. Terrorist

attacks decreased 71% from 1,645 in 2002 to 480 in 2010. Kidnapping went down from 2882 cases in 2002 to 213 in 2009. Mass kidnapping, which FARC usually conducted in inter-municipal roads, literally ceased from 176 cases in 2002 to zero in 2009. Tourism and trade were consequentially boosted. In 2002, 350 city mayors (an equivalent to a 34% of the national total) could not work in their towns because of threats from armed organizations; by 2009, 100% of mayors were conducting their affairs from their towns. For the same period, coca crops were reduced 33% and cocaine production 40%, while drugs seized increased 113%.[34] From 2002 to 2009 there were 12,294 demobilizations of which 1128 were middle rank commanders with over 10 years of experience; an increase from 1 in 27 in 2002, to 1 in 3 in 2008. (Fundación Ideas para la Paz, 2009, p.2)

The demoralization of FARC's combatants became evident through the testimonies of those who defected. It was shocking for guerrilla fighters to see the abysmal differences between commanders, who live in relative luxury, and common troopers whose living conditions were appalling, opposing the ideals of a Marxist organization. Demotivation was also created by the inexistence of a viable project guiding the insurgency, by a sense of nostalgia for family and friends, and by the impossibility of having a family while enrolled.[35]

In 2009, after consecutive counterinsurgency achievements against FARC, a strategic revision known as *Salto Estrategico* (Strategic Leap) was conducted. The objective was to avoid FARC from extending into other areas when its core zones were attacked, and especially to act on border areas where they have long counted with relative advantages. However, border activity, and even their presence in neighbouring countries as it will be analysed in following chapter, was still a challenge at the end of Uribe's administration.

Applying development-centred COIN

The clear-hold-build model which guided state action in Iraq and Afghanistan also became a guideline in Colombia. The historical inexistence of state institutions in isolated regions allowed not only for the growth of armed organizations in such spaces, but also their possibility to act as the unique authority. Areas which had been inhabited began to be colonized with the coca boom creating new spaces for insurgency expansion.

Consequently, COIN could not be limited to the destruction of the insurgency or its expulsion from particular locations. It was necessary to disrupt the war economy based on cocaine

---

[34] All statistics can be found in (Spencer, 2011, p. 81)
[35] These motives are explained in (Santos, 2009, p. 299)

production to replace it with sustainable legal economies with real opportunities for peasants. The strategy needed to guarantee that insurgents would not return and that state institutions would provide services and infrastructure to citizens, legitimizing its role as the unique authority. This is a significant challenge given relations of insurgency support in those areas.

This was the purpose of the *Politica de Consolidacion de la Seguridad Democratica* (PCSD). It categorized three types of regions: zones of control, where insurgency was still strong and action of the Military Forces was required; zones of stabilization or transition, where the military forces already had control but security needed to be enhanced; and consolidation, where security had been achieved and institutions needed be established to increase population welfare (Ministerio de Defenesa Nacional, 2007)

For the latter, the Presidency created the *Centro de Coordinación de Acción Integral* (CCAI) to coordinate more than 20 governmental entities involved. Before the CCAI, state entities acted by themselves, with no coordination or without following any strategic central guidelines. But with the agency, once an area was stabilized and ready for consolidation, a task force with of institutions coordinated by CCAI would evaluate regional needs to design an inter-institutional plan for its development. Initially, there were 9 zones, but at the end of the Uribe period there were 30, including former guerrilla havens such as La Macarena in the Southeast, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in the North and Montes de Maria in the Northwest. Although by 2010 there were considerable advances in these three zones, much was still necessary through the rest of the country.

FARC's conditions by the end of the Uribe era

FARC's response to the strongest offensive in history, in military terms, consisted on a strategic withdrawal and re-concentration in areas of the South, more specifically in the provinces of Putumayo, Caquetá, South of Tolima, North of Cauca and Huila, and taking over the control of specific corridors. This is the area where the Central Joint Command operates under the leadership of FARC's new commander Alfonso Cano. Main activities were displaced to border regions, especially with Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama, to provinces such as Arauca, Norte de Santander and Chocó.

At the end of the period, the conditions and capabilities of FARC were not homogeneous throughout the territory; they varied widely from bloc to bloc and even from front to front within each bloc. The traditionally strongest Blocs, Southern and Eastern, were significantly

weakened. FARC's presence in the centre of Colombia, in most of the Caribbean region, and in Antioquia and Choco in the Northwest was decimated. They were driven out of the Magdalena Medio region (Fundación de Ideas para la Paz, 2009).

In 2009 FARC conducted actions in 206 municipalities, mainly in the provinces of Cauca, Caquetá, Nariño, Huila and Meta. They increased their activity in Arauca, a province neighbouring Venezuela. By that year, they counted on 61 fronts from which about 30 were believed to be active. It also included a mobile front with 15 or 16 mobile columns; among these, the Daniel Aldana and Mariscal Sucre, which are well known for its provision of drug money to the Secretariat. (Fundación de Ideas para la Paz, 2009)

The Southern Bloc, with a strategic value in terms of resources and logistics given coca fields in Putumayo and Nariño, and the border with Ecuador, was beheaded with Raul Reyes's death. However, given the hierarchical order of FARC, a new commander was appointed guaranteeing the continuity of activities. It adapted and created new mobility corridors connecting the West of Caquetá with the south of Cauca and from there to the Pacific coast (Fundación de Ideas para la Paz, 2009). The Teofilo Forero Column continued to be FARC's elite unit engaging in urban terrorism especially in Huila and Caqueta (Fundación de Ideas para la Paz, 2009).

FARC's capacity to launch the style of attacks witnessed during the end of the 1990's disappeared. The insurgency could no longer gather a significant number of rebels from diverse fronts or blocs to sustain an attack for a long time. Vertical coordination between the Secretariat and the fronts, and horizontal between similar units (inter-blocs or inter-fronts) was significantly eroded given the interception of communication systems and the obstruction of strategic corridors. (Fundación de Ideas para la Paz, 2009). In Maoist terms, FARC was forced to return to the strategic defensive stage when it had almost advanced towards strategic stalemate, at least in several regions.

In 2008, Alfonso Cano, a former student of Anthropology at the National University in Bogota, launched a strategy known as the *Plan Renacer Revolucionario de las Masas* in order to adapt to the context imposed by the counterinsurgent. The new commander had always emphasised Gramscian ideas about conceding maximum importance to the political elements of the struggle, the work through masses, urban action and the international front (Mendoza, 2008, October 30). More than remaining as an isolated war-prone army-like guerrilla located in marginalized areas of the country, he believed the insurgency should be

an expression emerging from communities and even from society as a whole, fighting for the grievances of specific social sectors. Correctly interpreting social realities such as the increasing urbanization and the construction of new spaces of political action, he intended to build a more politically-focused insurgency, diffused among Colombians and blending with society, in order to conquer new social and political spaces of participation.

It was evident that the conquest of political and social power could not be achieved in rural areas anymore, and it couldn't be done exclusively through military means. Political and social action became necessary in order to build support of the masses and of specific social sectors; FARC needed to have individuals (nodes) in the cities, spreading its discourse, and acting in their favour. It became necessary to work through all types of social organizations, political movements, NGO's, and local communal boards.

As it will be explained in the next chapter, several of FARC's adaptations under Cano can be better explained through the paradigm of networked insurgency than from the traditional model of insurgency: flexibilization and urbanization of military structures, engaging on swarming more than in frontal combat; increasing the invisibility of forces; and strengthening political networks, especially in major cities.

In military terms, FARC was recurring to guerrilla tactics, harassing Police or Military units in isolated regions. It prioritized the use of landmines as a defensive tenet and as a mechanism to guarantee territorial control. Mined camps of hundreds of squared meters had appeared in the South, East and Southwest, more specifically in Meta, Cauca and the lower valley of the Cauca River in Antioquia (Avila, 2009, p.26). In the offensive, the insurgency decided to avoid frontal confrontations and resort to the use of snipers. Sniper attacks nearly doubled from 87 in 2007 to 177 in 2009 (International Crisis Group, 2010, p.4).

The loss of insurgents had been met through strong recruiting, especially vulnerable youths in rural areas; and financial stability was guaranteed through its continued participation in cocaine markets. For this purpose they created alliances with other armed groups and other criminal organizations, and expanded operations in neighbouring countries, especially Panama, Venezuela, Brazil and Ecuador (International Crisis Group, 2010). It is calculated that by 2010 FARC still counted on 8000 to 10000 combatants, a very low number compared to the 20,000 at their height, but still a sufficient amount to inflict considerable damage (International Crisis Group, 2010, p.1). Appendix 1 describes the amount of remaining combatants per bloc by 2010.

Although the Uribe administration was keen on arguing that FARC's command and control had been entirely eroded, that was not necessarily the case. Insurgents were successfully adapting to the new strategic conditions. FARC was implementing different means of communications, sometimes as rudimentary as sending human messengers.[36]

Through Cano, who was considered a political leader, the political dimension was strengthened and promoted. At the *zona de despeje* Cano launched an ambitious political project, a movement known as *Movimiento Bolivariano por una Nueva Colombia* (MB), which was to become a political platform for the expansion of Bolivarianism as a popular movement of mass support. Since the foundation of this organization, political networks became increasingly relevant for FARC as it will be detailed in the next chapter (Villamarin, 2007).

According to a report by *Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris*, by 2010 most of the objectives of the Plan have been achieved. But the goals of returning to the centre of the country and constructing a real popular base of support were still unfulfilled (Avila, 2011a). By the end of this period, FARC was also returning to several areas where it had existed before and to others in which it had never been present. Urban and rural structures were being reactivated and new fronts were created, for example, in Guaviare and Nariño (Avila, 2011a).

FARC was also recurring to the 'invisibility of its forces'. It opted for blending more strongly with civilian communities by having its combatants wearing civilian clothes and living in towns and municipalities. It was also transforming its strategic rear-guard from jungle areas to social spaces, but this will be analysed in detail in the following chapter (Medina, 2009).

The level of support at the national level was practically non-existent. The organization was perceived as lacking direction and a political motivation, being moved only for economic benefits. Its discourse was observed as incoherent with its actions. While proselytising about being warriors fighting for people's needs, they turned against the people, attacking civilians and communities.[37] Indiscriminate violence, kidnapping, assaulting municipalities, and using landmines were common actions of which most victims are civilians. It had practically lost its international support, while its lack of legitimacy was considerable even among students, unions and NGO's (Baron, 2006).

---

[36] Interview with Official of the Military Forces who asked to keep his name under reserve
[37] This argument has been made by Luis Fernando Baron from one of the most left-leaning think tanks in Colombia known as Centre for Research and Popular Education (CINEP). (Read: Baron, 2006, p. 138)

As summarized by Thomas Marks, "its efforts at armed propaganda had fallen off to nothing after a mid-1980s high, and it was increasingly corrupted by reliance for funding upon criminal activity." (Marks, 2007, p.42)

But FARC's reach, in Cano's view, shouldn't have been limited to Colombian borders. By contrast, it should be inserted in regional political and social processes, especially exploiting the spread of Bolivarianism through Latin America; a perspective from which the border between the primary and secondary environments blurs. By 2010 FARC had managed to build some international networks, but a discussion about their implications and consequences for the organization was far from being deep and conclusive.

Chapter 5. Networks and structures through the primary environment

FARC emerged as a commercial insurgency through its increasing participation in drug production and trade during the 1980s and 1990s. As it was explained in the second chapter this type of insurgencies display a triadic character expressed not only by the political and economic motivations of its combatants, but by structures which perform military, political and criminal tasks. This structures spread through the environment where the system operates, exploiting particular elements which allow the embedment of militants in specific social and geographic spaces. The objective of this chapter is to explain FARC's political, military and criminal structures in what has been denominated the 'primary environment' (Colombian nation and territory), observing the relation of the system with its environment through several variables: exploitation of empty spaces, connections with social and political organizations, sympathy from of non-organized individuals, and the accommodation of secretive non-public nodes.

One of FARC's features has been its historical observance of Marxist-Leninist principles of organization, command and control. The processes and flows of orders and information have followed strict hierarchical patterns. In other words, FARC had functioned as a traditional guerrilla, with its combatants wearing uniforms, organized as platoons and battalions in jungles, mountains or zones where state presence had been weak. This has been clear for the military dimension, but when structures of the political or criminal order are observed, networks more than hierarchies seem to explain their form and logic more appropriately. As it was explained in the first chapter, structures and networks are not static through time, they are evolving and nodes are in constant change. The offensive of the Uribe administration pushed rebels into a series of adaptations that could be explained from a networked model of insurgency.

While in the past it was easy to make a difference between combatants and civilians, and between fighters in the countryside and individuals engaging in political activities in universities, labour unions, and urban communities, by the end of the Uribe administration it was becoming more difficult to make such distinctions. In that sense, the overlapping between the political and military dimensions seemed to be growing, as militias and urban structures became more important for FARC.

Such adaptations include the flexibilization and decentralization of military structures, recurring to smaller, more flexible and mobile groups, applying 'swarming' tactics instead of concentrating big masses to fight 'conventionally'; the increased diffusion of nodes through Colombian societies in order to conquer political and social spaces, mainly expressed through the urbanization and the invisibility of its forces; and the strengthening of political networks through interconnected nodes acting both openly and covertly in specific social and professional spaces in order to create favourable environments for the insurgency.

For these explanations, the present chapter addresses first the transformations of military structures, followed by the analysis of political networks including the *Partido Comunista Colombiano Clandestino* and the *Movimiento Bolivariano*. Then an observation of the criminal networks is made, ending with an analysis of how a networked-complex model of insurgency explains the adaptations implemented by FARC by the end of the Uribe administration.

Military Structures: towards flexibility

In general terms, the organic structure of FARC remained intact, preserving the levels of command and organization that have characterised the insurgency since the formulation of its Statute in the Second Guerrilla Conference: National Secretariat, Central High Command, Blocs, Fronts, Columns (110 men), Companies (54 men), Guerrillas (26 men) and Squadrons (12 men). (See figure 5.1) This is likely to remain intact given FARC's strong reliance on its constitutive documents and its Marxist-Leninist tradition.[38] By 2010 FARC counted on seven blocs distributed territorially: *Comando Conjunto Central (CCC), Comando Conjunto de Occidente (CCO), Bloque Caribe, Bloque Magdalena Medio, Bloque Noroccidental Ivan Rios, Bloque Oriental,* and *Bloque Sur*. (See map 5)

But the flexibilization of military structures by 2010 was undeniable even when the principle of hierarchy remained, as it is demonstrated by the emergence of new types of units, their territorial distribution, and the ways in which insurgents operated. This is not only a consequence of the strong offensive during the Uribe administration; it had been a tendency since the 1990s.

---

[38] Such was the position of Colombian security and conflict analyst Miguel Posada Samper, head of *Federacion Verdad Colombia*, a group of right-wing NGO's. Interview in radio station *Radio Super*, Bogota, Colombia. August, 2010.

As a result of the Eight Guerrilla Conference in 1993, the organization began a slow process of decentralization. Bloc commanders were given a relative autonomy over the structures operating under their jurisdictions, and mobile units, both columns and companies, began to be created (FARC-EP, 2004, May). Mobile Columns are a type of unit composed by about 110 men, while every mobile company is composed of about 45-54 insurgents (Avila, 2008). Whereas a front is constituted as a political-administrative unit with jurisdiction over a specific territory, in which it performs military, political, economic and administrative tasks; mobile companies or columns are rapid reaction and mobilization units, dedicated exclusively to combat, to be sent wherever they are necessary (Avila, 2008). During this lapse 18 mobile companies and 23 mobile columns were created (Avila, 2008). Figure 5.2 explains the evolution of military structures. From a few fronts existing during the first years of FARC, many fronts were created through their unfolding during the 1970s and 1980s. But during the 1990s mobile columns and companies become the priority (Medina, 2011).
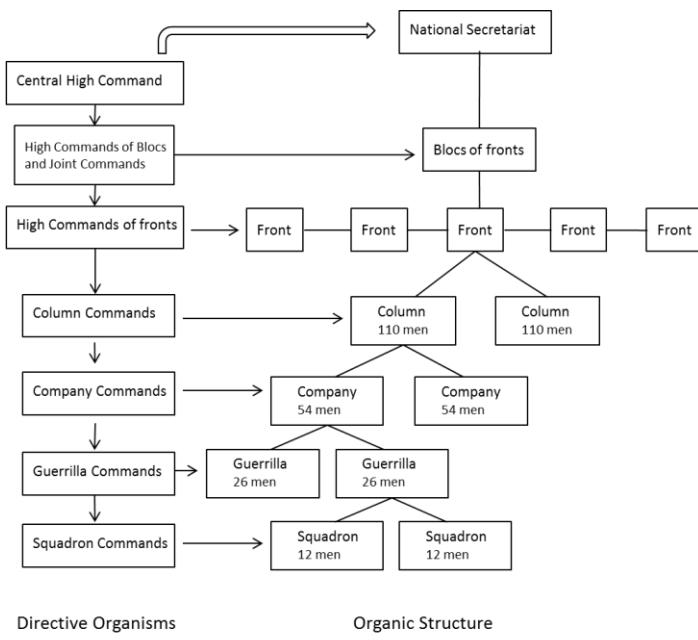
Figure 5.1

Mobile units became very relevant in strategic terms. They significantly contributed with the most important operations against the Military Forces at the end of the 1990s. For example, the *Columna Movil Juan Jose Rondon*, later renamed *Urias Cuellar,* became an elite unit and was crucial for the war in the East since 1996. In its peak it managed to count on 1200 combatants (Avila, 2011b, p.176). On the other hand, they were relevant for the Strategic Plan to take over Bogota. For this specific purpose, besides the determination of placing 50% of FARC troops around the city, FARC created seven mobile columns between 1991 and 1999.

	Initial Fronts	Unfolding and New Units (70s-80s)	Unfolding during the 1990s and mobile structures
Comando Conjunto Central Adan Izquierdo (CCC)	6th, 7th, 9th Fronts	17th, 21st, 22nd, 25th Fronts	Mobile Companies: - *Tulio Varon* - *Aurelio Rodriguez.* Mobile Columns: - *Jacobo Prias Alape* - *Heroes de Marquetalia.* 50th, 66th Fronts
Bloque Magdalena Medio	4th Front	11th, 12th, 20th, 23rd, 24th Fronts	Mobile Columns: - Arturo Ruiz - Resistencia Bari - Alfonso Castellanos - Raul Eduardo Mahecha Mobile Companies: - 29 de Mayo.
Bloque Noroccidental	5th Front	18th, 36th, 9th, 47th, 34th Fronts	Mobile Columns: - Arturo Ruiz - Mario Velez 57th, 58th Fronts
Bloque Oriental	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th Fronts	10th, 17th, 21st, 31st, 25th, 66th, 64th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 26th, 40th, 22nd, 42nd, 28th, 38th, 39th, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 27th, Fronts	53rd, 55th, 51st, 56th, 54th, Policarpa Salvarrieta Fronts Mobile Columns: - Che Guevara - Alfonso Castellanos - Reinel Mendez - Julio Mario Tavera - Urias Cuellar - Juan Jose Rondon - Vladimir Steven - Joaquin Ballen - Hernando Gonzales - Marquetalia - Simon Bolivar - Ciro Trujillo
Comando Conjunto de Occidente	6th, 8th Fronts	13th, 29th, 30th Fronts	60th Front Mobile Columns: - Arturo Ruiz - Manuel Cepeda - Daniel Aldana - Mariscal Sucre - Jacobo Arenas
Bloque Sur	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Fronts	13th, 14th, 15th, 32nd, 48th, 49th Fronts	61st, 63rd, 66th, Fronts Mobile Columns: - Teofilo Forero
Bloque Caribe	4th, 5th Fronts	19th, 35th, 37th, 41st Fronts	No Mobile units

Figure 5.2

In similar terms, they have occupied specific geo-strategic areas of great value, in many occasions related to drug traffic routes, such as the Perija region in the Northeast, not only relevant in terms of coca leaf plantations but also neighbouring Venezuela. In the South the *Daniel Aldana* and *Antonio Jose de Sucre* Mobile Columns remained as some of the most powerful units of the entire organization, militarily and financially, given its strategic location in the border with Ecuador (International Crisis Group, 2010, p.8). It became evident that "the new form of FARC's operations in the entire country signalled that operative actions [were] no longer centred on the Fronts, but that Mobile Columns, as well as Companies, had

gained a relevant role in FARC's blows against the Military Forces in the last decade." (Caicedo, 2011, p. 109)

With the strong offensive of the Uribe period, communications between members of the Secretariat, but especially between FARC Commanders and Blocs and Fronts, were disrupted. The possibility to move freely through the territory was truncated, generating a command and control crisis within the organization.[39](International Crisis Group, 2010) In 2003 a plenary meeting of the High Command sought to reverse the situation. More operative autonomy was given to blocs and fronts, and it was determined that more mobile structures were to be created. In total 18 new mobile companies and columns emerged (Avila, 2011b, p.199).

By 2004, although FARC maintained an operational capability, the Military Forces were pushing insurgents to retreat to rear-guard, more marginal, areas. For such reason, a tactical withdrawal was ordered, including three particular actions: organized withdrawal of armed units towards rural areas away from urban zones; the creation or strengthening of militia units in order to maintain presence in urban spaces; and engaging on active defence-resistance (Avila, 2008). Given the superiority of the Air Force it became disadvantageous to put together a large amount of troops in a small geographical space. Structures needed to be more flexible and more mobile.

Commander Alfonso Cano implemented new measures following the principles announced in 2008 under his *Plan Renacer.* The Plan comprising 14 points proposes dispositions on operations, politics, and its international strategy. Those regarding operational adaptations include:

- Using guerrilla warfare as a response to the Democratic Security Policy
- Increasing mined camps as a means to stop the advance of the Military Forces
- The use of snipers with high precision rifles type VD or Dragunov
- The obligation of new insurgents to carry on terrorist attacks in urban and rural areas.[40]

From these ideas, three specific military strategies were developed:

---

[39] International Crisis Group, Opcit, p. 2
[40] Email sent by Alfono Cano to members of the Secretariat. (August 16, 2008). Provided by an Intelligence Official of the Military Forces.

1- Increasing the process of organizational decentralization, with the creation of new sub-structures, the creation of new commands and new operational forms.

2- Prioritizing mobile guerrilla warfare instead of massive operations.

3- Differentiation and specialization of military units either in combat or for supplies. This included the professionalization of insurgents.

This is how structures such as *Unidades Tacticas de Combate* (Tactical Combat Units -UTC) and *Comandos Conjuntos de Area* (Area Joint Commands-CCA) also known as *interfrentes* or *minibloques,* were implemented (Pizarro, 2011). CCAs are smaller that blocs but bigger than fronts, and thus more efficient in tactical withdrawal to maintain communications and preserve the line of command with fronts (Pizarro, 2011). Their objective was to increase the speed of operations and to control disorganized structures, preventing demobilizations and linking weak structures with stronger ones (Avila, 2008).

Three CCAs were created in areas of jurisdiction of the *Bloque Oriental*: *Yesid Ortiz* in Northwestern Caqueta which grouped the 14th, 15th and 3rd Fronts and part of the Columna Movil Teofilo Forero; the iconic *Fuerzas de Tareas Especiales del Ariari* in Meta, joining and professionalizing the remnants of Fronts from Cundinamarca, the 55th, 51st, 53rd, 41st and 46th Fronts, and the Special Forces of the Bloc; and a final one which was established in Arauca, grouping the 10th, 25th, and 38th fronts, the Columna Alfonso Castellanos and the Compañia Reinel Mendez.

On the other hand UTCs are structures composed by "between four and five members, acting as specialized commandos in war zones, evading direct confrontation with the Military Forces and giving priority to commando type of actions, through snipers, mines, and explosives" (Pizarro, 2011, p.293). It is necessary to note that UTCs are not strictly new since they were created in the Second Guerrilla Conference with the enactment of FARC's Statute (Ferro & Uribe, 2002, p.42). But without any doubt, the return to mobile guerrilla warfare required a stronger implementation of this tactical figure. As noted by the *Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris*, FARC changed its form of operations, transforming guerrilla structures. "They have divided its force into smaller groups, of not more than twelve [men], avoiding the construction of mayor camps and the concentration of troops. They gather forces temporarily to attack smaller units of the Military Forces and Police, and they perform commando operations against specific objectives." (Valencia, 2010, January 12).

The implementation of the Plan changed the strategic scenario for FARC, its operations in smaller, more flexible, capable and professional units led to positive results. Their objective of conducting surprise attacks against stationed units or small military and police patrols had caused an increased number of deaths since 2008. When we observe the evolution of annual actions by FARC, it is possible to note an increase of attacks from 2007 to 2010 (figure 5.3) (Valencia & Avila, 2011). The number of conventional combats decreased from 1998 to 2008, from 634 to 171, while the number of attacks by snipers and mines rose considerably (Avila, 2008, p.14). The number of mine camps increased exponentially from 25 in 1997 to 228 in 2008 (Avila, 2008, p.18), while the number of sniper attacks also increased from 0 in 1998 and even in 2005, to 127 in 2008 (Avila, 2008, p.19). The International Crisis Group (2010) speaks about an increase of 210% of guerrilla warfare related actions from 2008 to 2009 (p.3).
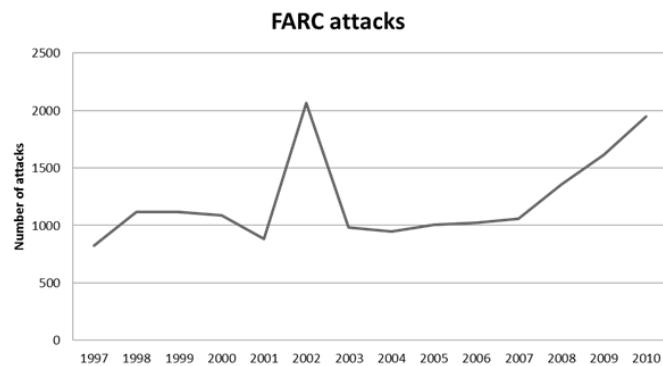
Figure 5.3

As it can be observed in the figure, the tendency begins to increase during the final years of the Uribe administration and not exclusively after his retirement. FARC had been successful in creating the idea of a very active and capable insurgency in terms of operations causing considerable damage to the Military Forces, even when, strategically, such actions do not amass a considerable impact.

As explained by Ariel Avila, a researcher at *Corporacion Nuevo Arco Iris,* this transformation allowed the insurgency to overcome communication problems between bloc commanders, and to absorb the impact of the elimination of FARC's leaders. Command, control and communications worked in these circumstances because instead of having closed and continued procedures, which are typical of military organizations, they were flexible, and discontinued, giving relative operational autonomy to units. FARC's capacity to carry on with

simultaneous operations in diverse geographical spaces is evidence of the adaptation (Fundacion Ideas Para la Paz, 2009).

FARC's blocs that had adapted better to this model of operations became more successful by the end of the decade. Both the CCC and the CCO under close control by Cano, adapted faster to this type of operations, recovering more rapidly, and infringing more damage to the Military Forces. CCC structures, for example, proved to be quite resilient. Its nodes demonstrated considerable flexibility in terms of geographical distribution, reorganization and withdrawal (Moreno, 2011). Cano's organizational reconfiguration, operating through micro-structures, allowed the CCC to re-localize to territories adjacent to those of the *Bloque Sur* and the CCO (Moreno, 2011).

In 2011, according to official data by the Ministry of Defence, 30% of the military actions by the insurgency were conducted in the province of Cauca, an area under control of the CCC (Hincapie & Posada, 2012, February 26). Similarly, the *Magdalena Medio Bloc* was significantly hit during the Uribe period, but structural transformations and the decentralization promoted by the *Plan Renacer*, allowed for the recovery of several units. Such was the case of the 4th Front in Antioquia and the 18th Front in Choco (Caicedo, 2011).

Opposite was the case of the *Bloque Oriental*. Although the CCAs were implemented, the mobilization strategies and the distribution of combatants were still based on large camps and massive concentrations, remaining vulnerable to precision strikes (Valencia & Avila, 2011). However they were successful in the specialization of its forces, and through mined camps, explosives and snipers they were able to stop the advance of the Military Forces. Particularly successful were specialized units such as the *Fuerzas de Tarea Especiales del Ariari* (Special Task Forces of Ariari), and *Fuerzas del Yari* (Yari Forces) (Avila, 2011b).

In similar terms, the progressive fragmentation of operational structures into smaller units allowed the *Bloque Sur* to maintain a significant presence in the Provinces of Putumayo, Caqueta, and Huila by 2010, and to a certain extent, to maintain several areas of control given their constant mobility (Leal, 2011). The most representative example of success is the *Teofilo Forero* Mobile Column, which demonstrated a firm capacity to act in urban spaces, to successfully carry operations on, especially terrorist attacks, and to generate widespread terror among the population. It became a considerable challenge for the state's security institutions.

Now, these processes in which FARC had engaged generated a debate about the impact of decentralization on organizational cohesion. In a personal interview with the Deputy Minister of Defence for the Uribe government, Sergio Jaramillo, he noted that by 2010 the risk of FARC's atomization was considerable. The lack of internal cohesion would push the organization into a process of *node criminalization* in which smaller autonomous groups would focus mainly on profiting from the drug trade. Several fronts would disappear, others would merge and those strongly focused on drug trafficking would survive purely as drug cartels.[41]

But according to reports by the *Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris*, FARC has implemented a strategy to prevent atomization. In essence, it consists on having its structures specialized so that they generate relations of co-dependency. For example, the *Compañia Movil Alfredo Gonzalez* in Tolima specializes in explosives and landmines. This unit, composed by about 50 insurgents, gets its food from the 21st Front and its weapons from the 50th Front. The 16th Front in Vichada patrols and protects coca plantations, while the 39th Front goes to combat and the 1st Front makes the contacts for weapons smuggling (Avila, 2008).

In sum, whereas in the 1990s under the 'new form of operations' devised by Jojoy, military structures resembled those of military conventional organizations, concentrating considerable mass in a specific point in order to overwhelm the enemy, under Cano's model, swarming explains the tactical behaviour of FARC. They no longer fought the Military Forces frontally; instead they approached from different directions and attacked in diversified ways. For example, a coordinated network of five combatants could ambush or destroy an army patrol, combining assault rifles, snipers, basic artillery and explosives. Following the basic premise of guerrilla tactics, they hit and then escape to avoid a deeper confrontation.

Flexibility is also expressed in terms of the geographic re-accommodation of the force as a response to the offensive of the counterinsurgent. Guerrillas abandon an area where the military forces are strong to occupy other zones that haven't been of strong insurgent domination. In the case of FARC, attacks to their historic rear-guard in the South-West, in the provinces of Meta, Caqueta, Guaviare and neighbouring the Capital District implied a withdrawal and re-concentration to specific areas of the South, more specifically in the provinces of Putumayo, Nariño, South of Tolima, North of Cauca and Huila, and taking over the control of specific corridors. Activities were similarly displaced to border regions,

---

[41] Interview with Sergio Jaramillo, Bogota, July 2010.

especially with Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama. This flexibility speaks about two particular variables to which the insurgency recurred in order to embed nodes in new areas: the exploitation of empty spaces and sympathy from of particular individuals and communities. Regions of new expansion had historically been underdeveloped zones with low institutional presence, and low population density. But in those spaces with some concentration of the population sympathy of civilians had been important. Clear examples are the municipalities in the north of Cauca where sectors of indigenous populations (not necessarily organized communities as a whole) display a relative sympathy towards the insurgents. But this will be further explored ahead. In similar terms, military structures can also escape to areas where war economies based on coca were flourishing, as the Catatumbo region in the border with Venezuela, meaning that empty spaces allow a convergence between criminal structures, military structures and communities and individuals who end up seeing the insurgency as a legitimate authority. In deprived areas, this level of legitimacy together with the lack of development and institutional presence may configure patterns of recruitment especially among the impoverished youth population. This means new military nodes for the insurgency.

If we think about the flexibilization of its military structures it could be argued that FARC had implemented several elements of networked warfare. But in order to count as a complex insurgency or to wage a netwar in strict sense, more would be necessary. Is the insurgency blending with its environment more diffusely? Are we dealing with a set of loose interconnected nodes all around the country who act in favourable ways to the rebels? In the cities, the urbanization of FARC's structures brought the military and political functional dimensions closer making this possibility more clear.

Military structures: urbanization and militia networks

FARC had seen the urbanization of war as a strategic goal for several decades. The insurgency would see social spaces as a new kind of strategic rear-guard; as a space to be conquered. For this purpose FARC counted on two instruments of particular importance, urban militias, which are set at the crossroads of the military and political dimensions, and political structures which obviously express the political dimension. Under this logic, FARC needed to exploit two particular variables to embed nodes through the primary environment: connections with social and political organizations and raising its acceptance by non-organized individuals and communities in the cities. As it was explained in the last chapter,

with Cano as commander, the insurgency pushed further the agenda for a more political-urban model of insurrection increasing the importance of urban and political instruments.

During the 20th Century, Colombia had become an urban country. By 2005, 75% of the population lived in cities, while 51% did so in the biggest 13 urban concentrations: Bogota, Medellin, Cali, Barranquilla, Bucaramanga, Manizales, Cartagena, Pereira, Cucuta, Ibague, Villaviencio, Monteria and Pasto (Leivoich, 2009, April 26). With the unfolding of fronts during the 1980s, networks of militias began to spread through urban spaces not only to conquer cities but to cut communication roads between main urban centres (Caicedo, 2011). But it was in 1993, with the Eight Guerrilla Conference, that the insurgency set as a strategic objective to increase its presence in the cities:

> "It turns out that since the eighties and through this last decade [the 1990s], because of different circumstances, most of the population is concentrated in cities, the urban-rural proportions had changed. Now 70% of the population is in the city and 30% in the countryside. This implies that FARC's perspectives must aim there, where most of the population is."[42]

Although FARC had been a rural-based organization since its inception, it was in the cities where social and economic structural contradictions would become evident. It was logical then for the insurgency to exploit marginalized sectors to mobilize them in their favour and against the capitalist society. This is a clear reference to the need to gain the support from individuals and communities from specific social sectors, and to incorporate social and political organizations in their struggle (NGO's, unions, student organizations, communal boards, etc.) As it was clearly stated after a plenary meeting of the High Command in 1989:

> "That's why our strategy has to go in the correct direction, where the contradictions of society are being noted. And these contradictions are not given in the same way or with the same intensity everywhere, but in the big cities and urban centres with the highest population density. (…) There the contradictions are not only given in terms of work-capital but at the same time, all contradictions, and if this is so FARC has to give a fight in the area of stronger social-political conflict"(FARC-EP, n.d.a).

As it was explained, by 2008 FARC was experiencing a strategic withdrawal, moving its forces into marginalized rural areas, especially along the borders with Colombia's neighbours. But Cano's plan intended to change this direction, using instruments of a different nature and with a different type of combatant. President Juan Manuel Santos warned about the

---

[42] Interview with FARC member, Julian Garces. (Ferro, 1999)

changing scenarios of the insurgency. He stated that "we know, because we have intelligence information that they want to urbanize their actions." (El Tiempo, June 3, 2011).

As instruments for the urbanization of FARC there are the militias, which belong to both the political and military dimensions of the organization, and the political networks themselves, which constitute the core of the political dimension. This is another example of how dimensions overlap.

Militias were obviously not new. According to a FARC document dating back to 1989, they were already becoming relevant: "given the increase of the militarist 'dirty war' and terror, we will intensify the construction of Bolivarian Militias, as an organization of the masses for their self-defence" (FARC-EP, 1989, May 10-17). But the importance that Cano placed on them can be evidenced from one of the points of his *Plan Renacer*, in which he proposed:

> "to count on 5-6 million dollars from the Secretariat, to purchase the necessary supplies and war and communications materials to strengthen the capacity of urban guerrillas and militias. The *Bloque Oriental* will be in charge of this money and each bloc will provide around 1-2 million according to its conditions for this end."[43]

Militias are defined as a "mechanism of political and military work; they have their own structure and are directed by the Central High Command and the High Commands of the fronts and blocs. They are armed by FARC but constituted by civilians. [Militia members] have a political and a partisan life, they live from their jobs, in their houses and with their families, and they are not committed to remain in the organization as FARC members do." (Ferro & Uribe, 2002, p.55) They have also been defined as an "armed body with civilian camouflage, who are ruled by the same guerrilla statutes, and as such, every militia member is a potential guerrilla member"[44] FARC officially defines them as "a military organization that welcomes all persons whose physical integrity and interests are threatened by the reactionary repression, the dirty war and its disastrous consequences." (FARC-EP, n.d.b)

There are two types of militias:

- Bolivarian Militias, with a higher degree of commitment to the organization. They receive a stronger political and military formation, and they experience life as guerrillas for a period of time.

---

[43] Letter sent by Alfonso Cano to members of the Secretariat. (August 16, 2008). Provided by an Intelligence Official of the Military Forces.
[44] Definition contained in an Intelligence presentation provided by a member of the Military Forces.

- Popular Militias, have a less formal nexus with the organization and a more temporary character. They are a "mechanism for those who are not in permanent disposition or in physical capability to act as combatants, but can perform surveillance and control tasks." (Ferro and Uribe, 2002, p.56)

In certain circumstances there are strategic units conformed by specialized militias to conduct specific operations.[45]

Bolivarian Militias are clearly more important in terms of a political instrument to conquer urban spaces. Their hierarchical design resembles those of proper military institutions. (Figure 5.4) The basic unit of the militias is a group of five to ten militants, with a first and second in command. Ten militia members constitute a squadron. Three squadrons constitute a 'rhombus' of squadrons and four squadrons a Platoon. Four Platoons form a Company (160 militia members) and four companies a battalion (640 militia members). All of these units have their first and second commanders, and their commands of political-military direction. The commands of the Bolivarian Militias are appointed by the High Commands of the Fronts (FARC-EP, n.d.b). There are also specific commanders for each of the following areas: weapons and munitions, logistics and provisions, quartermaster and administration, combat intelligence, political intelligence and counterespionage (FARC-EP, n.d.c).
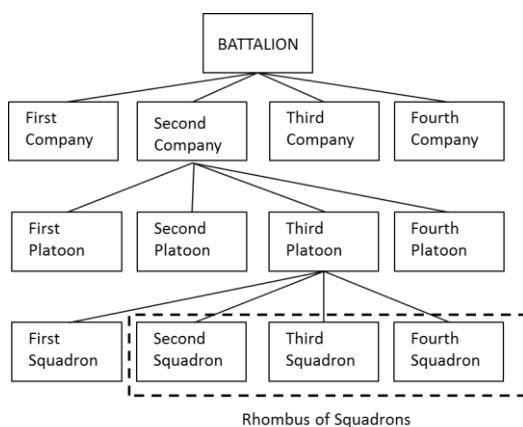
Figure 5.4

It must be understood that the structure, although similar to a proper military organization, does not imply operations through a conventional distribution of forces in the field. The levels of command and flow of information may be consistent with a typical military structure, but in tactical terms, they resemble more a set of interconnected nodes approaching targets in different manners. In that sense, swarming explains their tactical

---

[45] Information contained in a presentation provided by a member of the Military Forces.

behaviour better than conventional operations through battalions and squadrons. Urban militia networks are usually developed in marginalized areas of the cities, and once they gain control, they impose order engaging in murder, extortion and terrorism. They also provide the security for other political structures to operate.[46] But their main tasks are related to intelligence, logistics, finances and security and they are generally under the command of a front, which appoints a militia commander.[47] Given their lack of a uniform and their development of regular lives they blend more easily with civilian communities; they exist in spaces where they are not necessarily known to be members of the insurgency. In this sense, their spread through the primary environment could be understood as the accommodation of secretive nodes among communities since their tasks were not public and others ignored their involvement with the organization.

The dual military/political character of the militias can be demonstrated through their types of meetings: one to study, discuss, and agree on activities and tasks related to the political, economic, cultural and social situation of their area; and another for proper military purposes (FARC-EP, n.d.b). To become a militant an individual must be introduced and referred by a person of the trust in the region, and must go through military training including military operation planning, enemy territory reconnaissance, area mapping, political intelligence and counterespionage, logistics, health and first aid, topography and the use of maps and compasses, fortifications and constructions, military clandestine manoeuvres, and mobile guerrilla warfare (FARC-EP, n.d.c).

Militias also suffered a process of progressive decentralization. Whereas before 1993 urban action depended on the National Direction of City Networks, after this year they were controlled by Blocs. As such, militias in Bogota depended on the High Command of the *Bloque Oriental* and not on a centralized national-level authority (Ferro & Uribe, 2002). According to a FARC insurgent, this change made the job in urban spaces easier because there was a deeper integration with the rural fronts in the area, an ideal step for taking over the cities. Through this model, he argues, it was possible to create militias in every city (Ferro & Uribe, 2002).

It has been impossible to determine how many people are involved in FARC's militias, and speculation has been widespread. But an idea about the number of militias would provide information about the level of FARC's penetration on the population. Former Joint

---

[46] Interview with an Intelligence Official of the Military Forces, Bogota, August 2010.
[47] Information contained in a presentation provided by a member of the Military Forces.

Commander of the Military Forces, Admiral Jose Cely, proposed that by 2010 militias existed on a 1 to 1 ratio with combatants. He explained that "there are too many militias, people helping to pass on information even when only standing in a corner, looking if a policeman moved or didn't move."[48]

The importance of militias and urban networks became so evident that Admiral Cely placed them at the heart of FARC's strategic action: "FARC's new strategy is based on its militias, and there we find the popular and Bolivarian militias, the PC3, the MB, the *Juventudes Bolivarianas*, which is that invisible enemy that hurts the youth, and that is looking at schools and universities." (EFE News Agency, 2011, June 5). Cely's declarations are evidence of the implementation of Cano's model, and of FARC's efforts to increase their sympathy from individuals and to obtain the support from organizations from specific social sectors, who they hope to transform as their base of support.

Other observers, such as Martha Ruiz, security and conflict journalist at *Semana*, a top weekly magazine in Colombia, are more sceptical about the amount of militias, believing FARC is still mainly composed by marginalized elements in the rural periphery of Colombia. She calculates the ratio of combatants to militias in about 3 to 1.[49]

In that sense if there were about 8000 to 10,000 combatants by 2010, and the calculation of militias is on the ratio of 1:1, then we would consider a similar number of militia members. If the ratio is about 3:1 then there would be about 2,666 to 3,333 militia. If such is the case, Appendix 3 represents an approximate structure of FARC's militias.

A prime example of an insurgent urban network was constituted in Bogota with the *Red Urbana Antonio Nariño* (Antonio Nariño Urban Network-RUAN), allegedly composed by 69 individuals (Fiscalia General de la Nacion, 2009, September 2). It was categorized by the then Minister of Defense, Juan Manuel Santos, as one of the elite units of the insurgency, comparable to the *Teofilo Forero Column*, in the perpetration of terrorist attacks (Santos, 2009). The RUAN was severely hit with Operation *Libertad I,* which destroyed the camp of its commander Carlos Antonio Lozada. His computer contained 14,000 files with information about their activities since 2000, and their plans until 2012. It even contained infiltration plans from the PC3 and the MB in Universities, lists of collaborators and sympathisers, instructions for making explosives, blueprints of the Bogota metrobus security system, and

---

[48] Interview in Caracol Radio, Bogota, Colombia. February 18, 2010.
[49] Interview with Martha Ruiz, Bogota, April 2011.

information on possible targets in the city (Santos, 2009). The insurgency made several efforts to reconstitute the urban network. Senior FARC commander Mono Jojoy sent one of his most trusted men, a combatant known as 'Gaitan', who managed to occupy areas of Cundinamarca and even to make a terrorist attack in Bogota in 2009. But later that year the Military Forces destroyed the network killing or capturing the three leaders of this unit with the Operation *Fuerte,* and later those who followed (Santos, 2009).

But also in other major cities such as Medellin, Cali, Barranquilla, Bucaramanga and Cucuta urban cells and militias were placed. Medellin suffered during several years from actions of urban militias placed in impoverished areas of the city such as the *Comuna 13.* Campaigns conducted by the Military Forces during the Uribe administration helped to reduce the presence of such militias. In smaller towns, in areas where they were gaining strength, they would implement a process of municipal control including the expulsion of members of the Police and the Military Forces, the assassination of local political leaders, and the control of municipal budgets (Pizarro, 2004).

Political networks

A more urban and networked model of insurgency would be insufficient if only militias were to conquer the cities. Military structures may perform relevant functions, but in order to gather support of the population much more was necessary. As it was said, FARC needed to increase its sympathy through communities and individuals, and to establish connections with existing social and political organizations in order to become a real mass movement according to its objectives; this, especially, taking into account specific social sectors observed as its potential base for growth. For this purpose, then, political structures more than militarized militias were necessary. But not all political structures were determined to serve as the instrument to build a mass social movement of support for the insurgency. One of the organizations, the *Movimiento Bolivariano por la Nueva Colombia (MB)* was in charge of this mission, thus exploiting the variables that have been mentioned. But the *Partido Comunista Colombiano Clandestino (PC3)* was a clandestine closed organization of infiltrated nodes, spreading across the primary environment not through the support from other actors, but by accommodating secretive nodes in specific scenarios.

During the Uribe government the idea that FARC didn't pursue a political end spread, along with the idea that the insurgency was near its defeat. A former Minister of Defence and then Congresswoman, Martha Lucia Ramirez, argued in 2008 that "we are in the middle of the

end of FARC" (Caracol Radio, 2008, March 7). The Joint Commander of the Military Forces, General Freddy Padilla, popularized the phrase that FARC was at the 'end of the end'. In a similar fashion, president Uribe argued that "the end of FARC is near thanks to the Democratic Security Policy." (Noticias 24, 2008 July 2). This feeling of triumphalism usually came together with an idea that political structures were totally irrelevant, that they do not represent a significant threat, or that they can't do much for insurgency. In an interview with Martha Ruiz, she argued that FARCs political networks were so marginalized and powerless that they were irrelevant and didn't represent any strategic chance for the insurgency.[50]

But there was also a certain feeling of alarmism: a belief that everything on the left of the political spectrum was part of a FARC-directed conspiracy against state institutions and the government of Uribe. Labour unions, student organizations, human rights defenders, NGO's and leftist political parties such as *Polo Democratico* were increasingly perceived as FARC aides. As such, there was no objective recognition of what actually constituted FARC's political space.

This dissertation argues that although by the end of the Uribe administration FARC was severely hit, it was not on the verge of its collapse, and that political structures had become a relevant component of the insurgency in its objective of becoming a more urbanized, political insurgency. This does not necessarily imply that by 2010 FARC had advanced in such an enterprise; quite the opposite. Reaching the cities and gaining support from social and political groups were still complex challenges. As it was explained in the last chapter, by the end of the Uribe administration the *Plan Renacer* was a failure in political terms and in its objective to penetrate cities (Avila, 2011a, p.44).

Files found on Raul Reyes's computer demonstrate that the MB and the PC3 were not the only institutions through which FARC was trying to build support from the masses to become a nation-wide political movement. Particularly, with students, FARC organized the *Federacion de Estudiantes Universitarios FEU*, an association of university students, and *Federacion de Estudiantes Secundarios FES*, for school students.[51] But the former two were the widest and the most relevant.

---

[50] Interview with Martha Ruiz, Bogota, April 2011.
[51] Letter to Raul Reyes from Member of the Secretariat, Ivan Marquez. (Perez, 2008, p.205).

The *Partido Comunista Colombiano Clandestino* (PC3)

There is a significant difference between the PC3 and the MB. Whereas the former is a clandestine organization of networked individuals who infiltrate diverse institutions, the latter is a semi-clandestine wide mass movement that incorporates diverse sorts of individuals, groups, and organizations. For that reason they display a different form of organization and command procedures, and they exploit different elements in the primary environment. Their implementation was ratified in the Plenary of the Central High Command in 1997 (Pizarro, 2011).

Three principles –secrecy, compartmentality and verticality– rule PC3 networks. Secrecy guarantees the existence of its members, giving them "protection towards the outside, making its location unknown to the enemy, but allowing their ideas and claims to be known" (FARC-EP, n.d.d, p.18). Compartmentality is an internal measure that contributes to the secrecy of the organization. "It is the fractioned truth, known to individuals only according to their participation in the conduction of their tasks." (FARC-EP, n.d.d, p.18) Verticality explains the direction of the organization, its hierarchy. Processes follow a top-down logic, not a bottom-up initiative. "Different organisms are directed from the top to the bottom. They work separately from others, and only those responsible establish contacts with staff under their command and with their superiors." (FARC-EP, n.d.d., p.19) In that sense PC3 networks are directed and do not follow an emergence logic that is typical of complexity.

The PC3 is defined by the insurgents as the "most elevated expression of ideological, political and organizational unity of the working class and of all Colombian workers. It is the superior form of organization and its part of the vanguard of the revolutionary and insurrectional struggle for political power and the construction of socialism. (…) It is inspired by the revolutionary thought of *El Libertador* Simon Bolivar, [and his principles of] anti-imperialism, Latin American unity and people's welfare." (FARC-EP, n.d.e) It has also been defined as an "orthodox communist party, of clandestine and compartmented character. It is a pillar for FARC's strategic plan and the urbanization of conflict."[52]

The purpose of its members is to infiltrate diverse organizations in government, security institutions, private companies, media, universities, NGO's, international organizations, unions, social organizations, and to comply with specific requirements in order to contribute

---

[52] Power point presentation provided by a Military Intelligence Officer of the Military Forces of Colombia. Bogota, August 2010.

with FARC's objectives. They carry on with their normal lives, in their offices and their homes, without other individuals, not even their closest family members, noticing they role. This is why, by contrast to militias, members of the PC3 are "mostly professionals or qualified political leaders."[53] In a key personal interview with an active member of this Party, he described his role as being an observer without being observed, and managing to be heard without speaking. He explained how their role in general terms was to control the population, for which they needed to infiltrate every popular demonstration.[54] Besides infiltration, the PC3 must develop strategic intelligence, contribute to the constitution of the Patriotic Council (explained ahead), design FARC's political proposals, and more importantly it must provide direction to the MB.[55] The most remarkable PC3 members are chosen to lead the MB.

The member of the PC3 who was interviewed explained that there are three Party types or branches in order to reach the intended audiences. These are the Agricultural PC3, which spreads through the countryside penetrating peasant organizations and unions to direct them in favour of FARC's causes; the Industrial PC3, determined to 'capture' the labour unions in companies, corporations and enterprises in order to have them acting in favour of the organization; and the University PC3 to recruit students, promote FARC's ideas through younger generations, create cells and penetrate student groups.[56]

The structure of the organization allows for the principles of secrecy, compartmentality and verticality to be strictly followed. Members ignore who other nodes beyond their cells are, even if they are placed in the same organization. They might actually know each other and constantly interact among themselves without knowing they are part of the same clandestine organization. They ignore what other cells are doing. Especially remarkable for the organization's clandestine character is the fact that members of the PC3 can only be introduced by other members (FARC-EP, n.d.e, art.4).

The basic working unit is the clandestine cell composed of three to five militants. In rural areas the cell might be composed by seven individuals. Although these individuals are members by their own will, they are selected by the *Direccion Regional-DR* (see figure 5.6)

---

[53] Power point presentation provided by a Military Intelligence Officer of the Military Forces of Colombia. Bogota, August 2010.
[54] Interview with active member of the PC3. (Unnamed by his request given security risks) Bogota, November 19, 2011
[55] Power point presentation provided by a Military Intelligence Officer of the Military Forces of Colombia. Bogota, August 2010.
[56] Interview with active member of the PC3. (Unnamed by his request given security risks) Bogota, November 19, 2011

together with the High Command of the Front, always with the authorization of the High Command of the Bloc. They appoint a Political Secretary for each of the cells amongst their members (FARC-EP, n.d.e, art.8).

Cells follow a General Plan for action in order to infiltrate different institutions according to the profiles and contexts of its members. Ideal targets of infiltration are state security institutions, the Military Forces, National Police and intelligence agencies; communication media; international cooperation NGO's; and financial institutions. Ideal scenarios of political intervention are schools, universities, labour unions, social organizations and local communal boards.

Figure 5.6 describes all the organisms of the structure of the PC3, and is useful to have an idea of the direction of flows in the networks. Orders and directions from FARC commanders will flow down to the cells through the organisms, while proposals and concerns from the militants will flow up to commanders. Through the structure it is possible to coordinate the execution and assessment of plans and tasks (FARC-EP, n.d.e, art. 9).

The *Grupo Ejecutivo de Radio (GER)* is constituted by the Regional Direction with authorization from the High Command of the Bloc, with the Political Secretaries of three cells (one radio)*.* From the members of the GER, the Regional Direction chooses one Political Secretary of the Radio who will be part of a superior organism. The *Grupo Ejecutivo de Zona (GEZ)* is composed by three Political Secretaries of Radios, which direct the work of three radios. The RD chooses one among them to perform as the Chief of Zone. The RD directs the work of three zones and is composed by their Zone Chiefs. It functions as a collegiate organism and it elaborates the working plans with the delegate or delegates of the High Command of the Bloc, according to its plans and to the national directions. The Executive Director of the RD is directly appointed by the High Command of the Bloc. There are direct linkages between the RD and the High Command of the Bloc with each of the cells, particularly with a member of the cell who is different to the Political Secretary in case problems arise with the regular communication channels through the organisms.
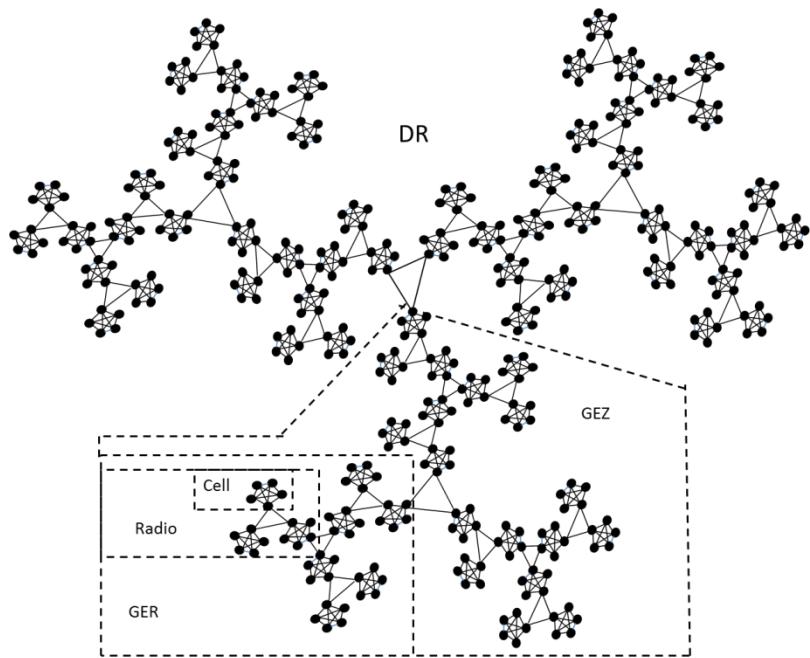
Figure 5.6

Members have a strict training and orientation programme in four cycles including the history of FARC, the statutes of the Party and the MB, the political documents of FARC, Philosophy, Political Economy, Organization of the Masses, Strategy and Tactics, World Insurrections, Marxism and Basic Military Instruction (FARC-EP, n.d.e, Art. 19). In the interview with the active member of the PC3 he explained that, in practice, every member should go through financial, military, political and logistics training. This comprehensive model of training has relevant implications that will be analysed ahead.

Sceptics, who believe that FARC is nearly defeated or that the insurgency is not at all political, minimize the importance of the PC3 for FARC or its role in conflict. They would argue that this institution has no prospects or possibilities. However, the active member of the PC3 who was interviewed argued that in his own opinion, political structures are developing a very relevant role, and they have a high impact in the communities. He believes the organization is solid, following the structural principles determined in its statutes, and it is quite effective. Four Intelligence Commissioned and Non-commissioned officers of the Military Forces, active and retired, interviewed in Bogota agreed with this perception, but they explained their vision was marginal within the Military Forces and that in general terms this issue was ignored to focus only on combat against standing units.[57]

---

[57] Interviews include: An active Army Lieutenant Colonel with whom several meetings were held from October to December 2011; a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel with whom two meetings were held, one in November 2011 and another in April 2012; a retired Army Sergeant Major and an active Army Non-Commissioned officer with whom two meetings were held simultaneously, the first in October 2011, and the second in November 19,

Explaining how the militias and the PC3 interact in their own spaces, the PC3 member compared the militias as being the Police, controlling spaces and providing security, and the PC3 being the social-political power, controlling the Communal Boards of Action, and its Committees for Education, Health, Public Works, Sports, and most importantly the Conciliation Committee, which deals with the resolution of conflicts and conciliations between members of the community. He admits sometimes there are tensions between the militia and PC3 members, especially with the Bolivarian Militias given its political character, but given its nature it is always the PC3 who has precedence.[58]

A case of PC3 operations became publicly known when a group of Party members was dismantled in 2009. 16 members of the organization were captured through a joint operation by the Military Forces, Police and the General Prosecutor's Office in the municipality of Chaparral, province of Tolima. They had infiltrated a hydroelectric mega-project in construction by the engineering multinational company Isagen on the Amoya River, through an NGO known as Asohermosas. This 'association' took political decisions at the municipal level and considerably influenced the labour procedures of the company, to the point in which they determined who could work for the project (Rojas, September 30, 2011).

If network theory is brought into analysis, it is possible to argue that this is a directed network given the flow of information (commands) from the top to the bottom of the chain, and the centralized control by the High Commands. Evidently nodes in the lowest level are not acting freely with other nodes, except for the members of their own cells. In that sense, it relatively follows the logic of Christakis and Fowler's telephone tree model but without the tree spreading arithmetically by two nodes from every node. Rather the spread is limited according to the structural parameters which have been described. Command procedures explain the flow of information through the structure in the form of the tree. A Regional Director gives orders to Zone Chiefs, who replicate the information to Regional Chiefs. They transmit commands to Radio Political Secretaries and these to Cell Political Secretaries. Although not very flexible, given the difficulty to join the network and the lack of linkages at the lowest levels, the network is very resilient in the sense that random attacks will not destroy the network itself, both because of its structure and the principle of compartmentality.

2011 which included the active member of the PC3. Names are withheld by request of those interviewed given the sensitivity of the issue.

[58] Interview with active member of the PC3. (Unnamed by his request given security risks) Bogota, November 19, 2011

Movimiento Bolivariano por la Nueva Colombia (MB)

The MB, along with the militias, is central to Cano's model of insurgency as an instrument to conquer social, political and urban spaces. Clear evidence is found in his *Plan Renacer* in which he prioritizes the need to "train the militias and members of the MB militarily, even when as an invaluable and necessary power, they are only providing intelligence and logistics."[59]

As already explained, by contrast to the PC3, the MB was created as a wide movement, opened to all individuals and groups of diverse tendencies and beliefs, which share the ideals of FARC. It is though as a movement for the masses to create viable political spaces. The idea of this type of movement is not new, and it can be traced back to the Seventh Guerrilla Conference in 1982:

> "We will begin the construction of the BOLIVARIAN GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE, (caps in original text) a wide organization, without statutes or regulations, opened to the participation of those patriots who want to fight for a new Colombia, and in Bolivarian countries, those who share the objectives of liberty for which Bolivar fought." (FARC-EP, 1982, May 4 -14).

It was only with the rupture with the PCC and the creation of FARC's own political institutions that the MB would come into being. In the *Zona de Despeje* in San Vicente del Caguan, in April 29, 2000, it was officially launched. It is described as a "wide movement without statutes, regulations or discriminations, with the exception of the declared enemies of the people. It does not have offices and its headquarters are in any place of Colombia where the unsatisfied live" (FARC-EP, 2000, March 25).

In the Manifest written for its creation, FARC describes the problems against which the party stands, and that, in their view, demand the rise of the masses. They blame the political elites, the Liberal and Conservative Parties, for favouring the rich and fighting for their own personal benefits; for allowing great landowners and drug-dealers to benefit from their governments; and for handing over national sovereignty to the United States. They criticize the monopoly of major communication media, the high levels of corruption, the neoliberal model, the concentration of wealth, the excesses of the Military Forces and their connections with paramilitary organizations.

---

[59] Letter sent by Alfonso Cano to members of the Secretariat. (August 16, 2008). Provided by an Intelligence Official of the Military Forces.

As a response they propose a new regime "sustained in tolerance and respect for others' opinions, guaranteeing a real redistribution of income, ethics in the administration of public affairs, national sovereignty, social justice, and the peaceful solution of controversies." (FARC-EP, n.d.g).For this reason, they

> "…invite the country that longs for a deliberative society respectful of others' ideas, in progress but fair and kind, to construct a new political movement committed to the interests of the majority of Colombians, and which remains alien to intolerance and deceit (…)
>
> We invite all the unsatisfied; the workers who forge economic and social progress, victims of the low wages, exploitation and abuses; the peasants, who with their blood have irrigated the furrows and forests of our nation; the unemployed and the workers of the so-called informal economy; the students; the new professionals and technicians; the women; the intellectuals and artists; the independent journalists; the patriotic members of Military Forces tired of being the executioners of their own brothers; the displaced by landowning violence; the inhabitants of marginal neighbourhoods; the priests who are sensitive to the arrogance of the powerful; the believers of all faiths; the indigenous peoples of all communities; the black communities; the fighters for the respect of Human Rights, defenders of political prisoners and the disappeared. (…) We invite all to organize this new instrument that we will call the MOVIMIENTO BOLIVARIANO POR LA NUEVA COLOMBIA (caps in original text) to build the future based on our historic patriotic values, to join efforts and hopes and conclude what *El Libertador* Simon Bolivar began and it's about to be done: Latin American integration, national independence, and social justice" (FARC-EP, n.d.g).

Determining the structure of the MB is not as easy as with the PC3 given its character as an opened movement. According to FARC's documents, the base of the MB should be constituted by "millions of Colombians members of clandestine groups, of multiple and varied forms such as circles, boards, workshops, *malokas,* families, unions, combos, brotherhoods, *lanzas*, groups, clubs, associations, councils, *galladas, parches, barras*, working groups, *mingas*, guilds, committees, and all the forms that their members want to adopt in order to guarantee their secrecy and compartmentality."[60] This groups, formally

---

[60] The words in italics don't have any translation. They are either the names of indigenous forms of organization or slang words for groups (FARC-EP, 2000).

referred to as *nucleos bolivarianos* are the equivalent to the PC3's cells, the basic structure of operation in the lowest levels.

These cells are supposed to spread through the nation, but especially through the social sectors listed above in the declaration. These sectors constitute the potential space for MB network growth. These individuals, members of diverse organizations and part of specific social sectors, are potential nodes of the organization. This is how the variables of sympathy from non-organized individuals and connections with social and political organizations can be observed as a mechanism for the placement of nodes of the insurgency through Colombian societies, or for the growth of insurgency itself. Through these mechanisms the border between the insurgency and the primary environment becomes blurry.

According to official FARC documents, the Secretariat appoints one of its members to be the head of the organization, which is advised by a *Consejo Patriotico Bolivariano* (Bolivarian Patriotic Council), composed by 100 'notable' Colombians. By 2010, FARC's top commander Alfonso Cano was also the head of the MB. Members of this Council are chosen by the *nucleos bolivarianos*. Each nucleus selects ten candidates and those with the highest results are asked if they want to assume their position (FARC-EP, n.d.g.).

In that sense the network, following Arquila and Ronfeldt's idea, might look as a combination of different types of networks. A general structure could look as a power-law or scale-free network with hubs displaying a higher amount of connections and random linkages among its nodes. Nodes can be individuals, but also, groups, cells, and small organizations. Clusters might be formed around dense organizations and given the secrecy of particular groups or cells, cliques are likely to be common through the network.

The ways in which the PC3 and the MB operated were very different. Whereas the former was a directed vertical network whose nodes were performing very specific functions, the latter operated more as a networked insurgency, and could be more easily explained through the principles of complexity. Activities of the former were never supposed to be known, but the activities of MB's nodes were supposed to be visible and widely known through society. But even when their acts were public, identities of MB militants remained secret; this explains their use of black balaclavas during public events.

The principles of complexity, as it was said, explain the operations of the MB more clearly. Given the wide diversity of groups, and types of members, it would be logical to deduce that acts and events emerge more by the initiative of the cells than by specific orders from the

central command. The emerging bottom-up logic contrasts the directed flows of the PC3 networks. There is, of course, leadership, but the type of leadership is different. As explained by Mary Uhl-Bien, more than being a commander who is sending orders, assessing operations, and receiving specific tactical reports, the leader is a motivational charismatic figure with the power to invite the groups to act, and to maintain a cohesive spirit that binds the group together (Uhl-Bien, 2003, p.55-56). This is why instead of sending internal orders through the networks to the cells, Alfonso Cano used to send opened messages in the form of videos through opened channels such as YouTube or Google videos, and posting them in the Movement's websites.[61] However, the organization is not entirely 'command-free' and there seemed to be some planning and coordination. According to official documents "the MB is being constructed under the direct orientation of each Front in coordination with the Command through the planning and assessments of working plans with each of the clandestine structures" (Movimiento Bolivariano por la Nueva Colombia, n.d.a.).

This dynamic is more evident in some types of processes than in others. According to an official educational document from the MB, several types of operations had been developed through the years:

1- Base organization. Gathering members of the *nucleos bolivarianos* who are not part of another specific organization. The *nucleos* spread propaganda through different channels: leaflets, billboards, graffitties, etc.

2- Action through specific personalities (intellectuals, professionals, etc.) which perform specialized functions or tasks such as teaching, health aid, journalism, etc.

3- Action within existing labour organizations. The mission is to fight for the vindication of local communities organized through unions, councils, boards, committees, cooperatives, etc.

4- Action within political or civic movements with political objectives. Their leaders are activists of the political life of the municipality, the province or the region, and they act in legal and wide movements, but they are organized secretly within their organization as *nucleos*.

5- Individuals with administrative positions at state institutions or entities of popular participation, who share the ideas of the MB and act accordingly (Movimiento Bolivariano por la Nueva Colombia, n.d.a).

---

[61] See for example the videos on the MB's website: http://mbolivariano.blogspot.com/

For some of these tasks emergent processes are clearer. For example, in the dissemination of propaganda, cells might decide autonomously when and how to act. But for other types of operations coordination is only logical to maximize impact. For example, the militant who works for a state institution, the *nucleo* that operates within a political party, will have better results when there is a coordinated strategy with stated objectives through time. Interaction with the High Command of the Front makes sense.

But it must be clear that their activities are very wide and encompass a variety of action areas. As explained by MB militant 'Julian Rincon' from the *Nucleo Francisco Miranda* "we made ourselves known through culture, art, academia, labour unions, gangs, *parches*, groups; in infinity of expressions aimed at the development of an objective, and that is the unity of popular sectors to fight for the points of our platform." (Movimiento Bolivariano Suroccidente, 2011b, December 15)

Now the remaining question will always be: how many militants are involved with the movement? How many *nucleos* are there? Who are the 100 notable Colombians who compose the Consejo Patriotico? The answers are impossible to give, given the semi-clandestine nature of the organization. But it is evident that they exist and they are conducting diverse types of operations. Some are visible others are not. As it can be deduced, those operations based on infiltration in specific organizations should not be known, but those of propaganda are precisely intended to be known. According to an independent analyst who used to work for state intelligence (name withheld by his own request) "the idea of a wide political movement has been interesting for individuals in sectors that have traditionally been distant from FARC, such as academics, bankers, teachers, among others."[62]

Evidence of the MB's actions exists. The *Nucleo Bolivariano Maria Cano*, celebrated 10 years of the MB at a rally at the *Universidad Nacional* in Bogota inviting more students to join the organization, setting posters in University walls, painting a massive mural with the image of Bolivar's hiding face –the symbol of the MB– in the main square, giving out leaflets, and proselytising and making speeches. Although there are no determinations regarding the number of members a *nucleo*, about 50 individuals were present in this event, all dressed in black, with faces covered, and making military-like formations in the University's main square.

---

[62] Interview with civilian analyst, former Intelligence analyst at a state institution. Bogota, July, 2010.

As it can be evidenced from the videos uploaded to their websites, the militants of *nucleos bolivarianos* are always active and present in events of student mobilizations; they repetitively appear in public universities through the country, and they make special activities to commemorate special dates, such as the anniversaries of the foundation of the MB.[63]

The Movement seemed to be strong in south west Colombia where there is a specific chapter of the organization known as *Movimiento Bolivariano Suroccidente de Colombia*, under the coordination of Commander 'Matias Aldecoa' (Movimiento Bolivariano Suroccidente, 2011 November 21). They have their own website with up to date information on current events and political debates. They host writers from the PC3 and from FARC's CCO. The city of Cali, third in size and importance in Colombia, is home to the *Nucleo Jose Maria Vargas Vila*. But other nucleos operate in the region including: *Nucleo Bolivariano Juan de la Cruz Varela, Nucleo Francisco Miranda, Nucleo Manuelita Saenz, Nucleo La Gaitana, Nucleo Simon Rodriguez, and Nucleo Jose Maria Cordoba,* whose members appear in a video giving the 'Bolivarian Lecture' at an unnamed University. (Movimiento Bolivariano Suroccidente, 2011a, December 15)

Now, there is considerable overlapping between the MB and the PC3. But, as it's clear from interviews with several officers of the Colombian Military Forces, there is no idea how big this overlapping is, so the exact level of interaction between the two organizations is not easy to quantify. Nevertheless, It is known that one of the purposes of the PC3 is to direct the MB, and for such a purpose there must be PC3 militants conducting MB activities.[64] As it was explained, it is also known that there are members of the MB that given their notable performance are chosen to be part of the more selective PC3.[65]

Without it being possible to determine with precision the size of political networks, including a clear proportion of MB and PC3 members, known data could produce a closer idea. In a personal conversation with General Javier Florez, former commander of the Omega Joint Force in South-eastern Colombia, he explained that 70% of FARC's members in its areas of operations were not armed guerrillas wearing a uniform, but individuals dressed as civilians living 'normal' lives within communities. They were members of militias, the PC3 and the

---

[63] Watch the videos uploaded in the websites of the Movimiento Bolivariano Suroccidente de Colombia at http://www.mbsuroccidentedecolombia.org/ and the Movimiento Bolivariano por la Nueva Colombia at http://mbolivariano.blogspot.com/
[64] Powerpoint presentation provided by a Military Intelligence Officer of the Military Forces of Colombia.
[65] Interview with active member of the PC3. (Unnamed by his request given security risks) Bogota, November 19, 2011

MB.[66] This number coincides with another one provided by the Ministry of Defence in a group discussion between students and officials of the Ministry, in which it was said that 30% accounted for FARC official members and Bolivarian Militias, while 70% accounted for Popular Militias, PC3, and MB members.[67] According to this data, and if calculations made in the regions of the Omega Force are extended to the country as a whole, then 8000 to 10,000 active combatants being 30% of the organization would speak about 26,666 to 33.333 members of the organization including Bolivarian and popular militias, members of the PC3 and the MB.

Criminal Networks

In the case of FARC's criminal dimension, its nodes have a wide participation in the lower levels of the cocaine production-trade chain, and this is possible given the development of a war economy in particular marginalized regions of Colombia. This was the case since the coca boom motivated peasants to colonize new regions (empty spaces) where state institutions have been absent, allowing the presence of insurgents to control the area. As it was analysed in the second chapter, in this empty spaces the insurgency becomes the authority creating some sort of order, providing security for peasants and allowing basic conditions for this individuals and communities to live; processes that guarantee some level of legitimacy for the insurgency. As such, then, the variables that are particularly useful for the insurgency to place its criminal nodes are the exploitation of empty spaces and the consequential and related sympathy of individuals and communities in the area. Political organizations are not significant for this purpose, and social organizations might only be relevant if they are summoned around the specific issue of coca cultivation, as it was the case of COCCA introduced in the last chapter. Alliances with other armed actors were vital since drug-dealing organizations, including former paramilitary squads, became their clients.

The global chain of narcotics production and trade is set as a borderless network bringing together a wide variety of actors from different countries which constitute the nodes of the networks. Of course, FARC itself did not constitute the entire network; neither did its nodes perform all the tasks of the production and traffic chain. As it was explained in the last

---

[66] Conversation held during the Specialized Course on Terrorism and Counterinsurgency, at the National Defense University-Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies. Washington D.C. September 5-22, 2012. General Florez conducted a Seminar on Counterinsurgency in Colombia.

[67] Discussion organized by the author of this dissertation as a Lecturer of the Universidad del Rosario, held at the Ministry of Defense in Bogota, Colombia. December 3, 2012.

chapter, FARC had a stronger participation in the lower stages, and although it had increased its participation, by the end of 2010 it was unclear if it dominated the entire chain.

Since the disappearance of the Medellin and Cali cartels, the structure of the drug enterprise in Colombia has been composed by hundreds of networked groups (Kenney, 2007). There are many small companies, some even formed by members of the same family, with few operatives. They are "fluid social systems where flexible exchange networks expand and contract according to market opportunities and regulatory constrains" (Kenney, 2007, p.23).

There are several types of nodes through the chain according to their functions, explaining the process itself and the participation of FARC in the business:

- Coca growers and collectors. They include *raspachines* (scratchers) which are generally poor individuals from other regions that move to producing areas in search of some economic stability and who scratch the coca leaf in order to process it.

- Extraction of crude coca paste from the coca leaf, performed by peasants with very basic instruments in makeshift laboratories, usually known as 'paste laboratories.'

- Purification of coca paste to coca base in a different type of laboratory, still very basic in technical terms, referred to as 'base laboratories´ or 'kitchens'. It has been learned, however, that in certain cases the 'paste' and 'base' stages are done in leaf-to-base laboratories (Casale, 1993). FARC taxes peasants that produce coca base.

- During the first years of FARC's participation in the business, coca base was sold to intermediaries (commission agents) in the regions where the base was produced. FARC also taxed commission agents.

- Such intermediaries sold the coca base to agents who would travel to remote areas to take it to 'crystal' laboratories owned by drug-dealers. However, by the end of the 1990s, FARC had eliminated intermediaries assuming sales themselves.

- Coca base is transformed into cocaine hydrochloride, in a technically sophisticated laboratory that requires a certain level of chemical expertise and materials. Usually owned by drug-dealers, laboratories are usually known as *cristalizaderos* or 'crystal' laboratories.

- Once the process is done, cocaine is taken via air, land or river, to consumption centres, where micro-traffic begins or to shipment points for its exportation.[68] FARC taxes not only the coca base producers and agents, but also the traffickers which

---

[68] Stages related to traffic described in (Ricardo Vargas, 2005, p.28).

used land strips in their areas of control. When towns and small municipalities developed around the cocaine economy, FARC also used to tax companies of the services sector (Vargas, 2005).

- Exporters send products to international transhipment points in Mexico, Central America or the Caribbean and West Africa, from Colombia or Venezuela. There, they are distributed to grand consumer markets.

- Distribution groups or cells in overseas markets receive shipments and distribute the product to wholesalers.

- Wholesalers distribute to retailers

- Brokers provide critical linkages between the nodes by introducing participants from different groups (Kenney, 2007).

- Money launderers receive illicit proceeds from wholesale or retail transactions and clear them through the system (Kenney, 2007).

As it can be seen, FARC's involvement had always been restricted to the lowest stages of the chain, but its level of participation differs from region to region (International Crisis Group, 2005). It is unclear how high up it had gone in specific regions. It is believed that they provide security in regions where there are laboratories, but it is doubtful they run sophisticated laboratories themselves. However, it is likely they had established some international trafficking routes of their own, and that they had agreements with major drug-dealing organizations both in Colombia and overseas (International Crisis Group, 2005). These linkages have created the most unexpected alliances with organizations that had historically been FARC enemies, including former paramilitary squads known as 'emergent criminal bands'. As the insurgency became stronger, it began to engage with the activities of a proper cartel: buying coca base, sending it to crystal laboratories and placing them in shipping points, where they are taken by other dealers to their destination (El Tiempo, 2011). International routes, according to the International Crisis Group (2010), extended to Venezuela, Panama and the Pacific.

These activities, however, express the criminal dimension of FARC in terms of functionality. Nodes of those fronts and units of the insurgency which participate in the drug business need to conduct the tasks described in the process: charging taxes, collecting money, setting meetings, selling products, paying peasants, etc. It has been argued that they operate as an armed monopoly imposing the price of coca base on peasants and growers; controlling

routes of precursors, coca, cocaine, guns and ammo; and exchanging drugs for weapons (International Crisis Group, 2005).

By 2005, many of FARC's structures were involved in drug-dealing in differentiated forms. About 65 of 110 fronts participated in some degree. (See figure 5.8) But interestingly, if we are about to find criminal functional nodes within the insurgency, not all of the members of the front were involved in drug-related tasks. Each of the fronts had a commission (small, specialized group) for these particular duties (International Crisis Group, 2005, p.9). In certain provinces such as Caqueta, Guaviare, Putumayo, Nariño, and the Catatumbo region FARC completely controlled cultivation, initial processing, refining (either providing security refining facilities or, according to official sources, running their own laboratories) (International Crisis Group, 2005).

By 2010, the scenario was different. According to Antinarcotics Police, eight fronts were entirely dedicated to narcotics: 30th in Valle del Cauca, 29th in Nariño, 63rd in Caquetá, 15th in Amazonas, 48th in Putumayo, 57th in Choco and Panama, and 33rd in Catatumbo and Venezuela. The Southern and Eastern Blocs were important in terms of major structures participating in drug dealing, and other fronts were relevant in terms of trafficking: 18th and 58th in Cordoba, and the 29th and the Daniel Aldana Column in Nariño. (See Map 5) If we were to find FARC's militants motivated by profit, they are likely to be members of these units. Examples are commanders who demonstrate more interest in making profits than in raising popular support, who act more like gangsters than insurgents. In a personal interview with Sergio Jaramillo, he cited the former finance commander of the 48th front, Oliver Solarte, as an example of this type of insurgent: a proper drug-dealer who controlled all the business in the region and who behaved as a criminal more than an insurgent.[69] A similar example is provided by Gener Garcia Molina (alias John 40) who controlled FARC's drug finances in the province of Guainía, and who was even removed from the Command of the 43rd Front because of his excessive behaviour as a proper drug-dealer (Vox Populi, 2012, December 4).

More importantly, as it was described in the second chapter, FARC's control of production areas generated processes of support from the population towards the insurgency which legitimated FARC as an authority. This was evident, most especially, by the end of the 1990s. The insurgency had a tacit agreement with producers which included the provision of protection and security, and a regulation of the business in terms of amounts cropped,

---

[69] Interview with Sergio Jaramillo, Bogota, July 2010

authorizations of purchase and sell, salaries and 'labour' condition (Vargas, 2005). However, the insurgency did not manage to build on this support to become a legitimate regional political actor, and in many cases the organization was observed more as pursuing territorial control through fear and hatred, than as originally concerned about popular welfare (Vargas, 2005).

Whereas the coca marches of 1996 in Guaviare and Caqueta counted with the participation of over 120,000 peasants, FARC's 'armed strikes' in Putumayo by the mid-2000s were smaller. Farmers were more likely forced to participate than doing so by their own will (International Crisis Group, 2005). However, in those areas where aerial fumigation was used as a method for crop eradication the state remained widely unpopular and FARC counted with some support (International Crisis Group, 2005).

Now, if we bring several premises of complexity and network theory described in the first chapter into analysis, it is possible to describe the cocaine enterprise in the following terms: "Narcs, terrorists and counterterrorists form distinctive social systems characterized by complexity, adaptability and hostility. Trafficking and terrorist systems are complex because they contain large numbers of actors who interact with each other (…) the Colombian trafficking system contains hundreds of smuggling enterprises and law enforcement agencies in the US, Colombia and other countries." (Kenney, 2007, p.15)

There are several advantages that drug dealers find in this type of structures. Their workers are segmented, meaning that they don't have to learn about the entire operations system but only about their specific tasks. If several of them are eliminated, then it is possible to recover the lost segments easily. Members minimize contacts with other operatives increasing security conditions for the entire enterprise. Drug-dealers can also rely on brokers and intermediaries to buffer themselves from direct criminal activity. A very important feature is the decentralization of decision-making, providing a degree of resiliency from targeted attacks. If a particular head of an organization is captured or killed, activities will continue since there will be more heads who will be in capability of making decisions (Kenney, 2007).

But if complexity and network theory tell us something about drug-dealing structures it is that flexibility is their main feature: "the persistence of the drug problem comes from ability of drug organizations to create multiple entryways for every path blocked by the government." (Kenney, 2007, p.3) When routes are blocked, new routes emerge; when

cartels are destroyed, new organizations are formed; when trafficking methods are discovered by the authorities, drug-dealers come up with new creative methods; and when plantations are destroyed, they appear in new area. Such conditions also provide a degree of flexibility to FARC's criminal networks.

Fronts	Area of operations - tasks
SOUTHERN AND EASTERN COLOMBIA	
30th	Valle del Cauca
4th , 6th	South of Cauca. 1400 coca hectares
29th	Nariño. Second largest cultivated area, 18000 hectares
13th, 61th, 17th, 21st,	Nariño, South of Cauca, Huila, South of Tolima. Production of narcotics derived from poppy.
2nd	Putumayo and Cauca, 8000 hectares
Amazonian Front	Amazonas and Southern Putumayo
3rd, 14th, 15th, 49th, 60th	Control coca cultivation zones in Caqueta, 7200 hectares.
7th, 26th, 27th, 44th	Control cultivation areas in Meta, 12814 hectares
43rd	One of the most notorious fronts in drug-dealing, commanded by 'John 40'. Believed to be one of the main coca-revenue producers and involved in refining.
1st, 16th	Guaviare, Vaupes and Guainia. 19,000 hectares. 16th front commanded by *Negro Acacio* with linkages to Brazilian drug-dealer *Fernandinho*.
39th	Vaupes, 4000 hectares
10 mobile companies and colums	Operate in areas of cultivation in the South and East.
NORTHERN COLOMBIA	
57th, 34th, mobile structre	Choco and the Uraba Gulf The 57th front is particularly relevant in terms of drug trafficking into Panama. Booming coca growing region
58th	Northeast Antioquia and Uraba Gulf
5th, 18th	Southern Cordoba
36th, 4th	North Antioquia
31st, 24th, two mobiles structures	Southern Bolivar
33rd, one mobile unit	Catatumbo region in Northern Santander, and border with Venezuela. Local population argued the 33rd front actually forced cultivation in the region.
19th, 59th	Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta
41st	Serrania del Perija. Poppy Cultivation
CENTRAL COLOMBIA	
10th, 28th, 45th,	Eastern Arauca. 500 hectares
47th, 50th	Antioquia and Caldas
22nd	Northern Cundinamarca
23 and 11	Boyaca, near the Magdalena River

Figure 5.8

The fumigation and eradication of coca fields in Colombia triggered two responses. On the one hand, the size of the plantations was reduced and coca began to be cultivated along with other products within the same field in order to make them less vulnerable to aerial fumigations. The average size of the coca leaf plots was reduced from 0.82 hectares in 2007 to 0.66 hectares in 2008; a decrease of 22% (United Nations Office Drugs and Crime, 2009, p.7). On the other hand, plantations moved to other regions. Reductions in the provinces of Meta, Vichada, Caquetá, Antioquia and Bolivar, lead into strong increases in Nariño, Cauca, Cordoba, Norte de Santander and Choco by 2009 (United Nations Office Drugs and Crime, 2009, p.12). Particular examples (in hectares) of such an increase from 2005 to 2008 include:

Nariño from 13,785 to 19,612, Norte de Santander (Catatumbo region in the border with Venezuela) from 844 to 2,886; Valle del Cauca from 28 to 2,089; and Choco from 1025 to 2,794 (United Nations Office Drugs and Crime, 2009, p.13). These zones were, not by coincidence, areas of increased FARC presence and activity.

In terms of topology, drug production/trafficking networks were mainly decentralized and acephalous; a hybrid of different types of network forms instead of a single type of structure, constituting loosely coupled networks. Although in general terms flows followed the logic of a line or 'bucket brigade' in which information (the product) passes in a linear way from node to node until it reaches the final destination, networks were more a combination of chains and stars. Several sectors were arranged as chains, decentralized, without a core and self-organizing. They lacked mechanisms for sharing risks and resolving disputes. Although they were vulnerable to government interdiction and took more time to recover, they were resistant to head hunting (Kenney, 2007). On the other hand, there were also sectors of the networks arranged as hubs or stars, in which a core group managed the entire enterprise, with peripheral nodes for specific tasks. They were vulnerable to headhunting. This was the case of veteran traffickers and of multitasking enterprises which offered different types of services: organizing transactions among different nodes, supplying money, providing security, arranging financing, suborning officials and gathering intelligence (Kenney, 2007). Segmented operations were typical, with cells of not more than twelve individuals performing the day-to-day activities of the enterprise, with differentiated roles through the process (Kenney, 2007).

FARC as a networked insurgency

It is not appropriate to argue that FARC constituted a networked or complex insurgency in a strict sense by the end of the Uribe administration. Evidence is not sufficient to support such a claim; by 2010 the organization was still marginal within Colombian society, and its hierarchical character still determined patterns of organization. However, under Cano, FARC did incorporate several elements more typical of a proper networked-complex insurgency than of a traditional rural isolated guerrilla, further exploiting connections with political and social organizations and elevating the sympathy towards the insurgency by communities and individuals, especially through specific social vulnerable or marginalized sectors as described in the MB's manifest.

Through evidence collected it is not possible to confirm that Cano intended to turn the organization into a more decentralized and loose organization. But he evidently understood the importance of conquering spaces of social and political participation, exploiting all sorts of instruments to build mass support, in order for FARC to become a real popular movement. In that sense, although the organization is not a networked insurgency in strict terms, several of its components can be explained under such a model.

Militias and political structures were intended to clearly blend with society, making the borders between the system and its primary environment blurry. They allowed the embedment of FARC's nodes through communities, in several cases without individuals noticing their affiliation. From within, they could spread FARC's ideas and recruit more militants to be added to the networks. In the end, insurgents had the appearance of normal civilians, but acting against the state and in favour of the insurgency.

As FARC became more urban, as social spaces were transformed into the insurgency's new strategic rear-guard, the 'invisibility' of its forces increased. Combatants were embedded more easily within civilian communities, wearing civilian clothes and living in towns and cities (Medina, 2009). Not only had FARC stopped fighting the Military Forces as a conventional army in the battlefield, they were also hiding and performing their actions from behind a 'wall of civilians', sometimes against their will, but in other circumstances with their support. For example, according to the National Ombudsman Office, in several towns of Caquetá there was growing "coercion from FARC towards the population given the presence and operations of the Military Forces" (El Tiempo, 2010, May 25). But on the other hand, in the North of Cauca, FARC was deeply rooted through indigenous communities making it very difficult to make a difference between insurgents and non-combatants. Nicolas Peña explained that the possibility to act within the community was a reason of FARC's success in this region. It operated through an extensive network of militias that allowed gathering accurate detailed information for operations (Peña, 2011).

Peña described this evolution as "the creation of a new type of combatant, a civilian combatant with sufficient training and cohesion to develop military operations and to return to its daily activities, making recognition by the Military Forces much more complex."(Peña, 2011, p.229) This description is very close to the idea of a combatant in a networked or complex insurgency, as it was explained in the first chapter.

For this purpose the MB, particularly, becomes highly instrumental. This organization, given its wide, opened and inclusive character, gives the insurgency all the potential to become an interconnected insurgency, or at least to increase the number of FARC's interconnected members and supporters –nodes–. Their members can be anywhere, in many organizations, in marginalized communities or they can be part of specific social sectors as described in FARC´s open invitation to join its movement. As already stated, such sectors constitute the potential space for FARC's growth and for a networked, more political, insurgency to be formed. As explained by Julian Rincon, a member of the *Nucleo Bolivariano Francisco Miranda*. "We are parents, sons, mothers, brothers, boyfriends, footballers, workers, students, professionals. We occupy the most common positions, because there is no distance between the masses and us, we are part of them." (Movimiento Bolivariano Suroccidente de Colombia, n.d.) This is clearly another reference to the blurring of the system-environment boundary typical of complex systems.

By the end of 2010, evidence points at a change in the urban/rural balance, as war was returning to the cities, at least in those areas where FARC had become stronger. In Nariño, for example, the number of civilians affected by landmines was higher than those of the Military, and in Cauca, several municipalities such as Caloto, Caldono, Jambalo, Toribio, Mondomo and Siberia, became constant targets of FARC's attacks (Avila, 2009). Declarations of diverse high officials in January 2011 demonstrated that in such cases combatant invisibility was evident. When the Military Forces came into action, insurgents were hiding in civilian houses through the towns, dressing as civilians and randomly shooting military and policemen in their way. The Minister of Defense, Rodrigo Rivera, stated that "insurgents used indigenous communities as human shields and hid in the house of peasants, from where they opened fire against government troops." (El Tiempo, 2012, January 23). For example, In November 22nd, 2010, in a populous commercial area of the town of Puerto Rico, Caqueta, Police agents were attacked from nearby buildings when they were conducting common control and registry operations (El Tiempo, 2010, November 23).

In the opinion of Carlos Medina, a Colombian researcher in conflict, it could be argued that FARC's strategic rear-guard was switching from jungle areas to social spaces, from physical jungle spaces into organizational social spaces (Medina, 2009). This is coherent with the idea that it was an objective for the insurgency to become more urban and political, as it has been analysed through the chapter.

The Military Forces began facing a significant challenge because of their impossibility to make an objective difference between combatants and non-combatants. When they patrol a town or municipality, and they were attacked from civilian's houses, they could not respond with fire without breaking principles of international humanitarian law and without being widely criticized. Such reality was expressed by President Santos in a letter to the main daily newspaper in Colombia:

> "But we cannot ignore that the Military and Police Forces face a complex dilemma as FARC hides in civilian houses and use them to attack the Military and the Police, as we have seen in Cauca. They do not only violate the principle of distinction, which is the base of International Humanitarian Law, but they put the civilian population in risk."
> (El Tiempo, 2011, July 13).

Santos explained this condition, arguing that "the more we advance in security, the stronger the difficulties are to operate, because the enemy becomes diluted and camouflages within the civilian population." (Santos, 2009, p. 311)

As it can be observed, in practical terms, it is difficult to define to which dimension nodes belong to. It was earlier explained that although Bolivarian Militias belong to both dimensions, PC3 and MB nodes are part of the political dimension. But through time, they may end up involved in military tasks, proving the interdependence between the dimensions. Since members of the MB also go through military training, it is possible to think about them as a sort of military reserve, which could become active according to the decline of regular combatants. The case for the PC3 is not different. In the interview with an active member of this organization, he confessed that military instruction and training had increased in recent years, and that they were willing to participate in combat if necessary. He explained not only how they participated in different military courses (intelligence, explosives, urban warfare,) but also that the courses were in high demand.[70] These are clear examples of node militarization as introduced in the second chapter.

Through this kind of processes, as it was also explained, remaining nodes from one dimension might contribute towards the reconstitution of other dimensions that had been eroded through attacks of the counterinsurgent. For example, in this case, if the state focuses on the military dimension and wages strong campaigns against those guerrillas in isolated camps, the political nodes will use its training and know-how to reconstitute the military dimension. In the case of FARC, given the knowledge of political structures and militias, we could see an

---

[70] Interview with active member of the PC3. (Unnamed by his request given security risks) Bogota, November 19, 2011.

even more urbanized version of conflict. If we put together the military training received by members of the MB, their possibility to join war, and the wide and opened character of the organization, then we have to at least consider the possibility, or the potential, of individuals from marginalized social sectors to become combatants. In such case, an image of interconnected nodes acting in their spaces, in their cities, through small groups, resembles the model of complex or networked insurgency.

It must be said, however, that the probability of such a model giving origin to a mass insurrection is very remote. Support for the insurgency was vastly marginal through Colombian societies, even when they counted with some legitimacy in areas of development of the criminal economy. But marginality does not necessarily mean inexistence. Marginal entities might still represent a considerable threat, generating instability, putting people and assets at risk, and causing real havoc in the countries where they operate. Given the right conditions and depending on their actions, they might even grow to incorporate more elements in its environment. It must not be forgotten that, in theory, insurgencies begin as marginal entities and they gain support and legitimacy through the process.

But for this picture to be complete it is necessary to bring into analysis all of the elements in the regional (secondary) environment which fuel such possibilities. As it has been argued, networks extended through the region, exploiting particular environmental elements. It is now necessary to turn into this dynamics for the analysis to be complete.

Chapter 6. Node embeddedness and structures through the secondary environment.

Nodes placed beyond Colombian borders become central to the analysis in the interest of determining to what extent they could offer the opportunity for FARC to survive or to re-emerge when national counterinsurgency operations are offering positive results. The objective of this chapter is to determine which elements or variables allow FARCs nodes of the three dimensions (political, military and criminal) to exist beyond Colombian borders, and how FARC had constructed its transnational networks according to these elements.

The argument of this chapter is that single-variable explanations of FARC's node embeddedness beyond borders (i.e. Chavez's sympathy towards the rebels) fall short as an empirical and objective account of this phenomenon. It is here demonstrated that government support, although very favourable for node placement, is not a necessary variable, and through alliances with armed actors, connections with social and political organizations, exploitation of 'empty spaces', and the accommodation of secretive nodes, insurgents can be safely embedded. On the other hand, it explains that the combination of all the variables, especially through the exploitation of empty spaces, create the right conditions for the placement of hubs and clusters.

For this purpose, first, the institutions through which FARC had organized its external networks, including the International Commission and the Continental Bolivarian Movement, are explored, followed by an analysis of the importance of each of the variables for node embeddedness. The chapter closes with general observations about node embeddedness and network characteristics.

The International Commission and a first configuration of networks

The first explorations to place FARC's operatives abroad demonstrate that governments can be very helpful, a catalyst, for the spread of networks beyond borders. The cases of Mexico and to a certain extent Costa Rica demonstrate so. But further events prove that government support is not vital and that connections with other actors, such as political parties and social movements, served as a better platform for militant's actions. Initial entry to a foreign country was explained through the accommodation of secretive nodes in specific social spaces. But as they began to act politically, interactions with other actors increased. Their permanence in those countries, then, began to be explained through other variables such as their connections with social and political organizations.

In this construction three variables interact: An individual, or several individuals, are embedded as secretive nodes in other societies. In their host country, they identify a number of individuals which display sympathy for the insurgency. Together they create a group, cell, or organization, probably affiliated to others with similar ideological views. They will promote FARC's ideals and struggle to incorporate more militants to their organization.

As explained by Luis Villamarin, a writer and retired Officer of the Colombian Military Forces, FARC´s placement of insurgents in other countries obeys its Strategic Plan devised decades ago.[71] With the Seventh Guerrilla Conference in 1982 the insurgency began looking beyond borders. During the first two years there were efforts to lobby like-minded regimes such as Nicaragua, the Soviet Union, Cuba and North Vietnam to look for support, military training, refuge and advice (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, p.29). But this first attempt, which was led by former Secretariat member Jaime Guaracas did not render any positive results.[72] It was only with the Eight Guerrilla Conference in 1993 that the idea of an International Commission took form as a "linkage between FARC and leftist political parties, social organizations, labour unions, human rights organizations and non-profit foundations", mainly in South America and Europe (Perez, 2008, p.79).

The International Commission (COMINTER) was an idea of Raul Reyes. Together with Rodrigo Granda and Liliana Lopez Palacio (alias Olga Lucia Marin), who joined Reyes at the top level of the Command structure, he defined the mission and objectives of these networks:

1. Contacting government officials, parliamentarians and NGO leaders, to obtain their support and to achieve recognition by relevant political sectors.
2. Interacting, in FARC's name, with national governments such as Venezuela, Cuba, Brazil, Mexico, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.
3. Participating in conferences, forums, gatherings, meetings, political, social and student workshops, on hemispheric and global levels.
4. Establishing support groups in each of the countries where FARC is present according to the political context and the assigned tasks.
5. Creating and managing instruments for the diffusion of information in other countries such as websites, magazines and radio stations.

---

[71] Interview with Luis Villamarin, former Lieutenant Colonel of the Colombian Army.. Bogota, Colombia; July 16, 2010.
[72] Report provided by an Officer at the General Command of the Military Forces of Colombia whose name is kept in secret.

6. Establishing contacts with leftist movements, radical anarchist parties, insurgent groups, and networks of weapons trade.

7. Administration of FARC's goods in other countries.

8. Contacting associations of political refugees and solidarity groups.

9. Engaging in university studies and postgraduate degrees in universities in Europe and the United States in order to achieve their infiltration.

10. Designing ideological campaigns of recruitment and disinformation about the Colombian conflict and the illegality of Colombian institutions (Perez, 2008).

Reyes set as essential objectives to reach "the European Parliament, the US Congress, the Latin-American Parliament, the Central American Parliament, the Amazonian Parliament, the UN, the Sao Paulo Forum, the Bolivarian People's Congress, the Bolivarian Continental Coordinator Committee, the World Social Forum, Universities, Churches, media, journalists, workers associations, agrarian and popular movements, cooperatives, Indians, black communities, women's and youth organizations, and to participate directly and indirectly in gatherings, seminars, meetings and all type of activity where they could promote their project." (Perez, 2008, p.37)

It could initially be thought that given the description of Comintern's role, the networks were developed in function of the political dimension. But that is not the only case. Insurgents were not only conducting political tasks, in practice they also performed military and even criminal duties. They wouldn't participate directly in violent actions, but in general sense they "established contacts with weapons and explosives traffickers and forged links for narcotics trade, infiltrated social organizations or universities to gather support, through NGO's they created linkages for intelligence cooperation, and in the end, they spread insurgency propaganda." (El Espectador, 2012, January 9).

The structure of the Comintern was simple but it evolved through time. It was initially vertical, centralized and tightly controlled by its Commander, Raul Reyes. In Command, he was joined by Granda and Marin, Tirofijo's daughter. In each of the countries there were offices or 'embassies' mainly composed by Colombian refugees, and under the control of another member of the Comintern. They were in charge of the tasks listed before, but also of the creation of support groups composed by nationals of the host country known as *Grupos de Apoyo Internacional a las FARC- GAIF*. In the words of Reyes:

> "The commission must create support nuclei with foreign comrades who display
> a favourable perception of our organization, it must channel economic

resources and establish contacts to guarantee war materiel." (Perez, 2008, p.79)

Every Cominter delegate had several GAIF under his wing. The construction of these groups, in general terms, is explained through the process described before in which three variables interact. But the number of militants varies from country to country. It was known, for example, that in Mexico there were 25 delegates, while in Sweden there were 7 (Perez, 2008, p.81). This structure of 'embassies' was supported by a network of media and communications linkages which included online agencies to spread FARC's news and *communiqués.* Examples are Anncol, the most important source of propaganda, based in Sweden; Kaosenlared; farc-ep.org; resistencia.org; the Bolivarian Press Agency; and even a radio station, Cafe stereo, also based in Sweden.

Cominter nodes overseas were effective in the establishment of contacts with several agents including governments. Olga Marin and Marco Calarca were present in Costa Rica around 1996. They tried to reach former President Rodrigo Carazo and other political figures. Emails demonstrate contacts with an ex-president, a former minister, a Congressman, and a union leader.[73] According to a report by Security Minister, Fernando Berrocal, by invitation of the government there were two meetings in June 1996 between Raul Reyes, Olga Marin, Ovidio Salinas and Guido Sibaja, a President's special envoy (Rojas, 2008). FARC operatives, Salinas and Miguel Castañeda contacted retired political figures that were sympathetic with the anti-imperialist cause (Rojas, 2008). Although FARC intended to establish an official desk in this country through Rodrigo Granda, the government did not allow it. (El Universal, 2008, April 13). But it is notable that even without government approval of an office, FARC's militants in Costa Rica where able to develop different types of contacts, making this country one of the first hubs for international action.

They managed to reach labour unions and human rights and student organizations such as CODEHUR, FEUCR, FEUNA, ANEP and CUT (Rojas, 2008). According to Berrocal, there were two key groups of FARC's nodes, the *Asociacion Centro de Integracion Cultural Colombia-Costa Rica*, established in 1997, and the GAIF established between 1994 and 1998 (Rojas, 2008). But it has also been argued that Costa Rica served as a space where Colombian,

---

[73] Report of the 'Direccion Nacional de Inteligencia y Seguridad Nacional de Costa Rica (DIN)'. Presented in the Colombian TV programme 'La Noche', RCN TV station. Bogota, Colombia. Information online at: http://computadoresderaulreyes.blogspot.com/2008/06/costa-rica-y-las-farc.html. (June 4, 2008).

Mexican and Dominican mafias met, proving that the networks are also relevant for the criminal dimension (Berrocal, 2009).

A second and more important theatre for international action was developed in Mexico. An office was created with government's authorisation and it was led by Olga Lucia Marin and Marco Calarca. They established linkages with organizations such as the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)*, the Mexican Communist Party, the *Ejército Popular Revolucionario (EPR)*, and several media companies. This country became a new hub for FARC's international action. According to research conducted by Jorge Fernandez, the office was not only useful for political purposes, but also to forge ties with drug cartels. He explains that since 1997 there was communication with the Tijuana Cartel, with which a weapons-drugs exchange agreement was reached (Revista Semana, 2008, Octubre 25).

From 1998 to 2001, Reyes led a period of international expansion exploiting peace negotiations with the Pastrana administration. By 1999, the Comintern counted with 17 operatives managing activities in 27 countries (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011). Negotiations were strategic for this purpose since they included mediators from countries such as Canada, Cuba, France, Spain, Mexico, France, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Venezuela and Switzerland. During this process, Raul Reyes and other five guerrilla leaders had the opportunity to visit several countries in Europe for 33 days in 2000, including Spain, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy and the Vatican. They were able to establish contacts with leftist leaders and to gain sympathy from different political and social sectors through the continent (Perez, 2008).

After this period, FARC's networks extended to Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Canada, France, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway and Portugal (Perez, 2008). Its operatives were actively establishing contacts with radical and leftist movements, political parties, and human rights organizations. They were participating in academic spaces, and in general terms they were promoting FARC's vision of the Colombian conflict, gaining support through different social sectors. Media and communication channels became highly instrumental, with the special role of FARC's journal, *Resistencia,* created in 1999, which included articles of leftist Latin American thinkers. It was printed and distributed by the GAIFs and it counted with an online version. Figure 6.1 lists members of former and active members of the Comintern by 2010.

Appendix 4 describes FARC networks developed by the Comintern, but it must be clear that representing it as a static structure might not be rigorous, since they had been in constant evolution through time. Nodes change from place to place, they disappear, they are replaced, and new ones are added to the structure. Delegates are changed from country to country depending on the political conditions, and in other cases they are captured and replaced by others.

The rigid hierarchical structure tightly controlled by Reyes, however, gave way to a more loose set interconnected cells and NGO's spread through diverse countries and mainly composed by Europeans. They were more effective than Colombian expatriates given their knowledge of the environment (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011). Although Colombians continued establishing contacts for military and criminal purposes, NGO's became the front for political actions. Through those NGO's it was possible to reach several social and political spaces and to spread FARC's views more easily. But this structural arrangement does not necessarily mean that the command was unaware of cells' actions. When Reyes moved to the Colombian-Ecuadorian border, he was able to establish direct links with most of these supporters (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011).

As explained by the International Crisis Group, Europe became a priority both in political and military terms, and several Comintern operatives became the base for network expansion (International Crisis Group, 2011). Joaquin Perez Becerra (alias Alberto Martinez) coordinated activities from Sweden, but operated in Germany, Holland, Belgium and Norway. In Sweden he was joined by Hernando Vanegas (alias Salvador). Omar Arturo Zabala Padilla, (alias Lucas Gualdron) was also a central node. He arguably coordinated 80% of the activities in the continent including those in France, Italy and Switzerland. In Spain, Leyla Yolima (alias Manuela) was in charge of the creation of a support group and the recruitment of young activists (El Tiempo, 2011, February 19).

But more nodes in each of the countries would develop specific tasks. In Spain, it was through Remedios Garcia Olmert (alias Irene) that cells become functional. She was relevant for logistics, obtaining visas for guerrilla members, moving funds, but also for political duties as establishing contacts and the diffusion of journal articles (Arrazola, 2008). She had a direct communication with Raul Reyes and other members of the Comintern such as Gualdron, Orlando Higuita (alias Orlando), Ovidio Salinas (alias Juan Antonio) and Rodrigo Granda (Arrazola, 2008). She was captured and judged for allegedly carrying 6000 US dollars sent by

Raul Reyes to Lucas Gualdron, and for promoting terrorism-related activities (El Pais, 2008, July 27).

Raul Reyes	Commander, replaced by Ivan Marquez after his death in 2008.
Rodrigo Granda	Mexico (1998) Costa Rica, Venezuela. Captured in 2004, released in 2007 and in Venezuela since that year.
Olga Lucia Marin (Liliana Lopez Palacios)	Mexico (1998) Cuba (2003)
Ovidio Salinas (Juan Antonio)	Delegate to Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Venezuela. Travelled to Europe in the 2000s. In Nicaragua since 2009.
Cura Camilo (Francisco Cadena Collazos)	Delegate to Paraguay and Brazil. Captured but released and under protection as a refugee in Brazil.
Simon Leguizamon (Hernan Ramirez)	Europe (2009)
Alberto Martinez	Delegate to Sweden and Europe. Head of Anncol News Agency. Captured by Venezuela in 2011
Lucas Gualdron (Omar Arturo Zabala)	Delegate in Switzerland, allegedly increased his importance in the Cominter since Raul Reyes death.
Miguel Castañeda (Miguel Pachi)	Delegate to Costa Rica (2005)
Hernando Vanegas (Fernando Salvador)	Delegate to Costa Rica, replaced Ovidio Salinas as a delegate from 1999 to 2005. In Sweden afterwards.
Nubia Calderon (Esperanza)	Delegate to Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia by 2005. Refugee in Nicaragua by 2010.
Yamile Restrepo (Amparo)	In Switzerland, few information available.
Monica Granda (Camila)	In Switzerland
Amilkar Figueroa (Tino)	In Venezuela, travelled to China, delegate to the Latin American Parliament.
Manuel Olate (Roque)	Delegate to Chile, Captured in Chile in 2011
Alberto Bermudez	Delegate to Cuba and Nicaragua.
Roberto Mono	Denmark
Tania	In charge of communications, likely to be in Venezuela
Marco Calarca	After Mexico, travelled to Venezuela (1998) and Cuba. Arrested in Bolivia in 1998, released and under protection in Cuba since 2005.
Jairo Alfonso Lesmes Bula (Javier Calderon)	Delegate to Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay. Arrested in 2008
Efrain Pablo Trejo (Pablo Trejos)	Delegated to Peru
Jorge Davalos Torres	Former militia member in Cali, delegate to Canada.
Orlay Jurado Palomino (Comandante Hermes)	Venezuela (2009) In charge of social networks, has conducted activities in Cuba.
Julieta Rojas (Susana)	Delegate to Argentina (2009)
Natalia	Belgium
Carlos Mono	Denmark
Carlos Vlaudin	Australia

Figure 6.1

Besides Gualdron, a node well embedded in academic circles in Lausanne, Colombian intelligence had argued about the existence of at least other five members of the Comintern in Swiss cities like Zurich, Lausanne and Geneva (Caracol Noticias, 2008, July 30). It is also believed that two of Granda's sons were living in this country (Arrazola, 2008).

In Italy, information gathered by Italian *carabinieri* indicates there were four FARC nodes identified with the aliases of Fausto, Pablo, Federico and Camila. According to the Italian government, they have created five GAIFs known as *Jacobo Arenas, Francesco Lai, María Cano, Marquetalia and Jaime Pardo*, with three houses in Rome as headquarters (Martinez, 2011). According to a report, two members of the *Partito della Rifondazione Comunista,* Ramon Mantovani and Marco Consolo, who were under investigation, served as representatives for FARC in this country (Ponguta, 2008). The investigation included the organization *Nuova Colombia,* with cells in Turin and Apulo Versilla, coordinated by alias 'Max' who was constantly speaking in favour of FARC, through the website of his organization, Nuovacolombia.com (Pontuga, 2008). Together with the organizations mentioned, the NGO *Colombia Viva* and the *Familiares de Victimas de Sucumbios* Organization, contributed to the spread of FARC's propositions and ideas (Revista Cambio, June 4, 2009).

Several arrest warrants have been issued for European citizens because of their connections with FARC: four Spaniards, two Italians, one Dane, and one Australian (Europa Press, 2008, August 3). It is believed that between 2000 and 2008, the Spaniards acted as coordinators for the Comintern in the Iberian Peninsula and Central Europe, and participated in events in Germany, Switzerland and Spain. The Dane citizen was identified as 'Carlos Mono' who was arguably one of the most effective agents of FARC's networks in Europe, moving around Copenhagen, Oslo and Stockholm. Information indicates he established contacts with at least 10 labour unions in Denmark and others in the United Kingdom. (Europa Press, 2008, August) In Denmark he is joined by another contact identified as 'Roberto' (Perez, 2008)

Ratifying this information, the European international Police cooperation agency, Europol, argued that "Europe is an area of strategic interest for FARC in the ambition to expand its activities of weapons and drugs."(Europol, 2010, p.32) According to Europol, Colombian expats would be in charge of information, training and the creation of clandestine cells to trade weapons and drugs more easily. The Organization believed FARC could have been planning the creation of a delegation office in Brussels, Amsterdam or Paris.

As it can be seen, external networks were not only developing political, but also military and criminal tasks. Although most of the linkages for criminal and military purposes were established by Comintern delegates or Colombian expats, Europeans organized in cells, NGO's, or organizations, contributed with the political activities. In the end, the pattern through which three variables allow for the construction of these networks becomes evident:

members of the Comintern who were secretly placed in each of the countries identify individuals who are able to contribute in the host country, and through the creation of support groups and NGO's political action is maximized. But it was not only in Europe that the implementation of cells and NGO's became a stronger instrument for FARC's international action. Through the creation of the *Movimiento Continental Bolivariano*, the insurgency's networks beyond borders were reinforced, especially, but not uniquely in terms of the political dimension.

Strengthening networks: the *Movimiento Continental Bolivariano*

From 2003 FARC's transnational networks grew, not necessarily extending through more countries but increasing the number of nodes and connections in the Americas and Europe. It is clear that networks developed by Comintern delegates, and their support groups, were political, military, and even criminal in their functions. But the multiplication of connections experienced since 2003 would be mainly, but not uniquely, political. A correct interpretation of the particular political juncture in the region, and the exploitation of powerful symbols (Bolivar's ideals) guaranteed better connections through the continent.

It was through the emergence of the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela in 1999, and the subsequent rise of other leftist governments, that FARC found a favourable environment for a regional projection. The creation of an international organization, the *Movimiento Continental Bolivariano (MCB)* became a platform to spread its discourse, gather support, and strengthen links with different types of actors through Latin America.

The dynamics created by MCB networks ratify the idea previously introduced: governments might play a key role in the placement of nodes within their territories but they are not vital. Other variables, which were listed before, can actually contribute more to the placement and preservation of nodes beyond borders.

The MCB emerged initially as a mechanism to coordinate efforts between Bolivarian and communist organizations, known as the *Coordinadora Continental Bolivariana CCB*. The advantage of this construction was that 'Bolivarianism' as such is not a carefully defined doctrine but a series of basic principles related to South American political reality, so wide that they can be observed by movements or organizations with diverse philosophical backgrounds. Bolivarianism had married Marxism-Leninism, creating a tent for leftist organizations and movements to meet in a similar, yet not identical, doctrinal ground.

In a personal interview with Commander Wilmer Castro Soteldo, Governor of the State of Portuguesa in Venezuela and one of the leaders of the 1992 military coup with Hugo Chavez, he defined Bolivarianism as a broad set of ideas extracted from the discourses and works of Simon Bolivar, from which particular principles can be deduced. These include:

- Anti-imperialism, directed against Spain during Bolivar's campaigns, but applied now to Western world powers and their capitalist system which exploit the Latin American nations and its resources.
- Latin American Union, as it was Bolivar's great dream to constitute a single nation out of all of the provinces that were liberated from the Spanish empire, and today even as counterweight to the United States.
- Equality and welfare, which is interpreted as the justification of socialist ideas.[74]

Rather than being an objective and strictly defined political doctrine, Bolivarianism is more a common background for political action of diverse agents. Hence its famous motto 'in Bolivar we all meet'. This explains why movements, organizations and individuals from varied doctrinal backgrounds on the Left of the political spectrum find a powerful symbol in Bolivar's image.

The CCB was founded in 2003 with a symbolic recreation of the *Campaña Admirable*, a military campaign led by Simon Bolivar from the border of Colombia to Caracas for the independence of Venezuelan Western provinces. The recreation came in the form of a march from Cartagena, Colombia to Caracas. According to an email sent by Ivan Marquez to Raul Reyes on December 7th, 2003, FARC did not only participate in the movement, it was its creator:

> "The CCB is work of FARC and the Movimiento Bolivariano, Bloques Jose Maria Cordova and Caribe. Comrade Alfonso, as head of the movement, has been informed of these steps, as had been the Secretariat. As I informed in a past email, the first plenary of the executive committee was made in one of our camps, which defined specific tasks that are being developed today. Among other tasks we have the creation of the Movimiento Bolivariano, organization of the CCB, in each country. This organization has already led protests in Ecuador and Panama. (…) We must note that in this work of the CCB the International Commission has been

[74] Interview with Commander Wilmer Castro Soteldo, Guanare, Portuguesa, Venezuela. February 16, 2012

present through relevant contacts that had been provided by comrade Ricardo."

(Perez, 2008, p.199)

Marquez defined the CCB as a "space for leaders and promoters of the Latin American left, including insurgent groups, to meet in order to fight neoliberalism and to forge the interaction of the ideological principles of Marxism-bolivarianism." (Perez, 2008, p. 201) But by December 2009 the CCB had evolved into the MCB, becoming a transnational Latin American political movement which brought together several organizations and individuals from the hemisphere which agreed with the ideals and propositions of Bolivarianism. With its headquarters in Caracas it already included "1200 delegates, counting with the representation of 30 countries and a diversity of political, social and cultural organizations." (Agencia Bolivariana de Prensa, 2010)

It had a clear structure: The Executive Committee, later renamed General Secretariat, composed by fifteen Honorary Presidents listed in figure 6.2 who became notable speakers in favour of the insurgency through the hemisphere, most especially Narciso Isa Conde and Carlos Casanueva. A foreign legion named officially the 'International Region' in which individuals from the Basque Country, France, Spain, United States and Canada participated. A Continental Regional Direction composed by five members of the Regional Directions:

- Brazil
- Great Colombia: Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia
- Caribbean: Cuba, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Haiti
- Mexico: Twenty social and political organizations and two FARC support cells.
- South: Argentina, Uruguay and Chile.

According to the MCB's website, each of these countries is a national chapter by itself.[75] In each of them, there were *Nucleos Bolivarianos de Apoyo a las FARC*-NBAF, which are cells styled as the GAIFs, composed by individuals who sympathize with the insurgents. These new cells were not supposed to replace or compete with groups created by Comintern delegates. They complemented each other. In principle, the idea of NBAFs was to reach social and political movements to have them working in favour of FARC's objectives; almost like a job of infiltration and manipulation. Member organizations of the MCB are not in principle FARC's allies working in the insurgency's favour. They might have joined the Movement in

---

[75] Movimiento Continental Bolivariano, Online at www.conbolivar.org.

order to pursue their own particular interests. As such, the insurgency needs to have them acting according to their plans.

In order to articulate FARC cells in different countries with the MCB, Raul Reyes set a common model of organization in 2007 for all groups. It included specific defined positions for individuals to be in charge of specific areas:

1. Political Secretary
2. Education, Security and Documentation Centre
3. Finances
4. Organization and Bolivarian Press Agency
5. Coordinadora Continental Bolivariana (Perez, 2009)

Narciso Isa Conde	Movimiento Caamaño Vive, Dominican Rep. Exeutive Director
Carlos Casanueva	General Secretary of the Executive Direction. Chilean, residing in Caracas.
Patricio Echegaray	Communist Party of Argentina
Jeronimo Carrera	Communist Party of Venezuela
Oscar Figueroa	Communist Party of Venezuela
Victor Polay Campos	Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru, Peru
Pedro Casaldaliga	Bishop of San Felix, Brazil
Felipe Quispe	Movimiento Nalku Aymara, Paraguay
Juvenal Herrera Torres	Colombian historian
Francisco Caamaño Jr.	Dominican Castroist
Suzi Castor	Haitian Marxist ideologist
Iñaki Gil de San Vicente	Ideologist of Herri Batasuna
James Petras	American Marxist Ideologist
Alusio Bevilaqua	Brasilian revolutionary
Oscar Niemeyer	Brasilian Architecture
Alfonso Cano	FARC Commander – Honorary President
Manuel Marulanda Velez	FARC Commander – Honorary President

Figure 6.3

Taking the creation of the MCB into account, and the presence of NBAFs in different countries, Appendix 5 describes FARCs international networks after 2003. After Raul Reyes's death, the Comintern was re-arranged placing Ivan Marquez in Command, together with Rodrigo Granda and Ovidio Salinas, and setting operation centres, or clusters, in Europe. Central America was coordinated from Nicaragua and El Salvador by Esperanza and Ovidio Salinas, with Lucia Morett supporting in Mexico. South America was led by Olga Marin,

Rodrigo Granda, and Hermes in Venezuela and Cuba (Yamhure, 2009). Marquez was involved on MCB's activities since the beginning, given his permanent location in Venezuela. So after Reyes's death, it could be said that he became the head of FARC's international actions.

It is now necessary to turn into the analysis of the elements that have allowed for the establishment of nodes beyond borders. These variables are government support or permissiveness, linkages with social and political organizations, connections or alliances with armed actors and the exploitation of empty spaces. As it has already been analysed the accommodation of secretive nodes was relevant in an initial stage for the construction of support groups in each of the countries. As soon as they begin acting, their existence in the long term is explained through other variables such as their connections with social and political movements. Within these networks, however, some nodes will continue to perform secret functions related to the military dimension (buying weapons and raising funds for operations) and the criminal dimension (setting drug businesses).

As it was stated in the second chapter, sympathy from non-organized individuals, which is relevant for the primary environment, can marginally be observed in the secondary environment, through other variables such as the exploitation of empty spaces and connections with social and political movements.

Government support or permissiveness

Government support is not only the first variable that comes into mind when we think about foreign elements that contribute to the safe placement of insurgents beyond borders. It is also the most valuable source in order for militants to be protected in the medium or long term. In the case of FARC, this was evident in Mexico. Through their public office they were able to establish contacts and spread their discourse more easily.

But this was obviously not the only government FARC intended to contact. Antecedents were positive with Nicaraguan President, Ariel Ortega, after he visited Manuel Marulanda at the *Zona de Despeje* to decorate him in name of the Sandinista party. Ovidio Salinas and Alberto Bermudez reported meetings with Nicaraguan ambassador to Cuba, Luis Cabrera, who suggested FARC should get in contact with Argentinean diplomats and to promote a movement to be headed by Chavez and Ortega. (El Tiempo, 2008, August 27). Bermudez, who was given a Nicaraguan identity, also had a meeting with Miguel D'Escoto, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, who said Nicaragua was 'willing' to cooperate with FARC (El Tiempo, 2008, August 27). In an email signed by Granda, Bermudez and Rojas, they explained

that the Cuban Ambassador believed "[President] Daniel Ortega is in full disposition to help [the insurgency] with whatever possible" (El Tiempo, 2008, August 27). Ortega was even considered as an intermediate with the Libyan government for the purchase of weapons (El Tiempo, 2008, August 27).

There is no evidence of meetings or agreements between Ortega and the insurgents, but it must not be forgotten that Nicaragua granted asylum to three women who were in Raul Reyes's camp in Ecuador when it was attacked. It also granted protection to Esperanza, Comintern delegate to Bolivia and Ecuador, and to Granda's brother Ruben Granda, who was required by Colombian Justice (El Tiempo, 2010, June 6). In that sense, Nicaragua became one of the main spaces for the preservation of nodes. Even when it is not possible to empirically demonstrate FARC and the Sandinistas are allies, it is impossible to deny that this type of actions contributes to the flexibility of its networks.

But the most significant cases of government support, or permissiveness, by 2010, were Venezuela and Ecuador, with Hugo Chavez and Rafael Correa. Their relations became evident when files of the computers of Raul Reyes, which were retrieved in the attack to his campsite, were made public. In the case of Chavez, contacts began in 1992 and increased after he was released from prison in 1994, time when he received 100 million Colombian pesos (US$ 150,000) from the insurgents (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, p.47). By 1996, contacts were revived, and by 1998 Chavez reportedly participated in several meetings of FARC's 10th Front, while several of his aides met with Marco Calarca in Caracas (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011).

Chavez appointed a high official, Ramon Rodriguez Cachin, later to be Minister of Interior and Justice, to be his personal representative to FARC, dealing personally, directly and in secret with the insurgents in all matters. In August 1999, Chacin negotiated a memorandum of understanding with the insurgents, approved by Chavez, which went beyond a clause of non-aggression. It appeared to give FARC and advisory role within the Venezuelan administration; it facilitated the security and development of Venezuelan Border regions; and it opened communication channels between the Secretariat and Venezuela's government and Armed Forces (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011). FARC agreed to

> "provide intelligence on other criminal groups, violently oppose this groups in Colombia, abstain from violent operations in Venezuela, seek authorisation for training of any armed groups. In return, the Venezuelan government would

provide help with health care, safety for operatives on Venezuela soil, unspecified 'special support', and various arrangements to trade energy resources with FARC and to launder money through investments in agriculture, housing and finance." (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, p.60).

But from 2002 to 2004, there was a period of tensions with Chavez given their ideological differences and marked by the lack of progress in their relations. Secretariat member Mono Jojoy called Chavez "a deceitful and divisive president who lacked the resolve to organize himself politically and militarily, he scorned the corruption of Chavez's political associates and dismissed [Chacin] as the worst kind of bandit" (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, p.83). During this period FARC was even attacked by the Venezuelan Military forces (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, p.89). In 2004 FARC made two mistakes which cause a more permanent rupture: On one hand, an attack in the State of Apure killing five Venezuelan soldiers; on the other, when Colombian operatives abducted Rodrigo Granda in Caracas, FARC reacted badly arguing that elements of the government had contributed.

From 2006, however, relations seemed to have improved given Chavez insistence on the reconstitution of the historical linkages and the appointment of a new envoy, Julio Chirino. Comprehensive agreements seemed to have been reached with Generals Cliver Alcala and Hugo Carvajal, and although during that year Chavez was still ambivalent towards FARC (camps were still being attacked) by 2007 the relationship had been restored. According to the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), it was during this period that Chavez began to perceive the insurgency as a strategic ally in his geopolitical agenda, conceding immense territorial benefits, and agreeing to provide the insurgency with US$300millon (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011).

Meetings with Comintern members, including Marquez and Granda, began to happen in Caracas. A stronger commitment from Venezuela was demonstrated by several initiatives: Chavez's attempt to reconcile FARC and the ELN, full support for FARC's quest on the status of belligerence, and the creation of special rest areas in the border. All of these were supposed to be given in return for the training of Venezuelan Military Forces in asymmetric warfare, which became the paradigm of Venezuelan security doctrine (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011). By the time of the attack of Reyes's camp in Ecuador, relations between the insurgency and Chavez seemed to be booming, but there is no information of the relation between both actors after the attack. However, authorized Colombian military

action against the insurgents in Ecuador triggered the worst period of tensions between the governments of Uribe and Chavez.

What is remarkable about the Venezuelan case is that, even when tensions and confrontation between the insurgency and Chavez rose, and even when the Venezuelan forces increased their attacks against the rebels, FARC's operatives still managed to remain in the country, mainly because other variables allowed it, as it will be explored ahead.

In the case of Ecuador, evidence demonstrates that officials from Correa's government established contacts with insurgents. During Correa's political campaign, FARC established communications with one of his aides, Jorge Brito, to whom they provided US$ 100,000. In return, Brito offered "and ideologically appealing programme of government, high level diplomatic relations, 'means of reciprocal assistance', Ecuadorian neutrality in the Colombian conflict, and a reduced armed-forces presence on the border" (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, p.29). According to James Lockhard-Smith, a researcher at the IISS, Correa received the funds and most likely knew about their precedence. He cites a demobilized guerrilla member who was in Ecuador and held conversations with Correa who was apparently aware of negotiations (El Tiempo, September 21, 2011).

But evidence also indicates that the relation didn't prosper. When Correa was inaugurated, his approach to the insurgency changed. Meetings were cancelled, Brito's status on the government was in downward trajectory, and military and police efforts increased in 2007 (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011). In the beginning of 2008, there seemed to have been closer ties through Gustavo Larrea, Minister of Internal and External Security, and his aide Jose Ignacio Chauvin, with whom there were several meetings. However, connections "seemed to be have been driven by short-term political interests" (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, p.199). Although there were genuine signs of permissiveness towards FARC, which allowed the insurgency to place nodes in its country, "the relationship between FARC and Correa had not been consolidated and indeed could be seen as embryonic. Each party sought to manipulate the behaviour of the other to its own advantage, but without displaying the commitment or compromise typical of a real strategic alliance." (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, p.204).

Since *Operación Fenix*, in spite of the rupture with the Colombian government, Correa's administration seemed to have increased the surveillance and patrol of the northern border. By July 2010, authorities said to have discovered and destroyed 60 guerrilla and drug-dealer

outposts. The Minister of Defence, Miguel Carvajal, stated that "although they were small, we cannot allow their existence" (Agencia Efe, 2010, July 14). By the end of 2010 The Ecuadorian government had dismantled 125 FARC camps (El Tiempo, 2011, January 9).

The case of Mexico demonstrates that while government support provides a safe atmosphere for the development of insurgent's activities on the long term, it is not a necessary element. The closure of the Mexico office in 2002, fifteen years after its creation, was a setback for their international strategy, but also a condition for the demonstration of how resilient, flexible and adaptable the networks were. Reyes ordered Comintern operative Marco Calarca to create two support groups in the region of Mexico City, in order to maintain their relations with parties, organizations, universities and movements. As a consequence, the *Ricardo Florez Magon* and *Lucio Cabañas* cells were created, continuing the tasks of the Comintern (Perez, 2008).

According to Jorge Fernandez, who had studied classified Colombian and Mexican intelligence documents, cells used four organizations for the purposes of propaganda and fundraising: the *Nucleo Mexicano de Apoyo a las FARC*, the *Movimiento Mexicano de Solidaridad con las Luchas del Pueblo Colombiano*, the Movimiento Continental Bolivariano, and the *Centro de Documentacion y Difusion LSB.* (Perez, 2008) But openly, they operated through student groups at the *Universidad Autonoma de Mexico (UNAM)* where there were at least 30 cells, mainly from the Simon Bolivar Lecture at the Department of Philosophy and Literature, one of which was led by Lucia Morett, a survivor of the attack on Raul Reyes's camp (El Pais, 2008, May 10). These groups are said to be close to the *Movimiento Francisco Villa* linked to the *Partido de la Revolucion Democratica* (PRD).

As such it is demonstrated that while governments do represent a considerable source of support for FARC's militants to be placed beyond borders, their lack of support and even their opposition might be insufficient for them to disappear. Other variables explain their persistence in different territories.

Connections with Social and Political Organizations

As opposed to linkages with governments, which may vary according to the political context, more permanent relations were established with social and political movements. FARC had made contact with about 400 organizations, including NGO's, revolutionary leftist movements and legally established political parties (Martinez, 2011). Comintern operatives began setting contacts, but through the MCB interactions increased considerably.

Organizations which nurtured the existence of militants in other countries were existing ones, but also those constructed by loose individuals who came together in order to work in favour of FARC's agenda. In that sense it is possible to observe how sympathy from non-organized individuals is in fact useful to embed nodes beyond borders. As it has been explained, there are individuals in several social contexts which, for some reason, agree with FARC's agenda. If they want to take action they can either join an existing organization or create a cell affiliated to the movement. That's how their contribution is more solidly expressed.

In Argentina, Comintern delegate Jairo Alfonso Lesmes (alias Javier Calderon) and Julieta (alias Susana) oversaw the operation of a cell which built ties to the Movimiento Piquetero around 2000-2001. (Revista Cambio, 2009, June 3). Information also points at the existence of at least two GAIFs under the command of and individual known as 'Cesar' (Caracol Radio, 2008, July 27). Chilean *Caribineros* also identified Calderon as responsible for the creation of a GAIF in Chile. He was present in the country from 1999 until 2002, and he spoke with several labour unions and Universities (Carrera & Palomera, 2010).

In similar terms, in Bolivia Comintern delegate Nubia Calderon (Alias Esperanza) seeded the ground for the creation of a 'Solidary Committee' that worked as a front for their actions. According to information from Reyes's computer, an individual known as 'Mallku' was the key node in the expansion of the insurgency through the country (Caracol Noticias, 2008, July 21). However Bolivian Minister of Defense Walker San Miguel concluded that "there was no serious threat of FARC's expansion. At most they had sporadic contacts to obtain some international credibility."(Caracol Noticias, 2008, July 21).

In the case of Brazil, it has been argued that there were considerable connections between FARC and the Workers Party (PT) of President Lula da Silva. Luis Villamarin argues that the insurgency had provided funds for local candidates. He cites a series of meetings in the Region of Mato Grosso and argues that visits by FARC fighters have been happening since 1980 (Villamarin, 2007). It has also been argued that there were connections between the insurgents and officials of the Brazilian Government: five ministers, the Attorney General, a Special Presidential Advisor, a Deputy Minister, Five Congressmen, and a Supreme Judge (Revista Cambio, 2008, November 2). Several Comintern delegates have worked in this country including Oliverio Medina, Hermes and Jose Luis.

In Peru, nodes allegedly forged connections with the *Partido Comunista Peruano*, and the *Partido Comunista del Peru-Patria Roja*. It was learned that Esperanza, who was in the country since 2000, visited the headquarters of *Patria Roja* in central Lima, and that she was hosted in the city by members of this Party (El Comercio, 2009, August 31). According to letters from Alberto Bermudez to FARC Commanders, relations forged by Esperanza in this country were becoming stronger. She also established contacts with members of the MRTA since 2000. It seems that during a specific period contacts were lost, but through channels created through the MCB they were re-established. In a letter sent from Habana on December 18, 2006, Ovidio Salinas and Alberto Martínez told Raul Reyes, that they were able to restore contact with Patria Roja: "I met the Secretary General of the Partido Comunista Patria Roja del Perú. With him there were two comrades: the one in charge of masses, and the one in charge of unions." (Valenzuela, 2009)

In a personal interview with Ramon Diego Abasolo, an independent lawyer who had worked for security institutions in Peru, he argued that there was an affinity between FARC, ALBA groups and the MRTA. He pointed towards the Southern regions of the country, especially the province of Puno, where there was a strong popular feeling about Bolivarian ideas. It is believed that social organizations and leaders in the region were financed by Chavez, and the 'ALBA Houses' provided services to communities, including health consultations with Cuban doctors.[76]

Linkages with the *Farabundo Marti de Liberacion Nacional* FMLN in El Salvador were also uncovered. In an email Reyes stated that "from the FMLN our comrades Hector and Roman have arrived. They are Members of Parliament. They offer political relations, provide information, and distribute our documents. They speak about the cost of the political campaign of about five million of which they already have 1.5, but they are asking us for support" (Revista Semana, 2008, June 14). According to an email sent by a militant named Miguel Urbano to Raul Reyes, a GAIF was created from 'solidarity meetings' held in El Salvador. They were independent from the FMLN, and were mainly formed with young people and coordinated by two Salvadorians who spent several months in Colombia (Martinez & Laines, 2008). An Official of the FMLN in the province of Sonsonate, Hector Acevedo, was believed to have guided a FARC delegation through San Salvador in July 2001

---

[76] Interview with Ramon Abasolo, Analyst at the Institute of Strategic Studies in Lima, Peru. Lima, March 23, 2012.

(Martinez & Laines, 2008). He has also been signalled as intermediary between Colombian rebels and an Australian weapons dealer (Martinez & Laines, 2008).

But given the implementation of the CCB, and its later evolution into the MCB, by March 2005 according to a report sent by Marquez to Reyes, the volume of interactions had increased notoriously:

A) "there was active coordination with: Mexico, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, International Brigades (Basques, Italians, French, Danish…); in Cuba the MCB work is done by Alejandro with a group of five comrades, and there is work in Argentina, Guatemala and Brazil, although in the latter we have lost contact.

B) Number of organizations which coordinate actively (67): Mexico (2), Central America (2), Dominican Republic (2), Puerto Rico (2), Panama (2), Colombia (11), Venezuela (12), Ecuador (8), Peru (2), Bolivia (1), Brazil (5), Chile (7), International Brigades (7)

C) Social Organizations: Political Relations of Support and coordination of activities; some of them: Mexico, Partido Comunista de Mexico, Movimiento Jaurista Bolivariano, Juevntudes Socialistas, Movimiento Bolivariano de los Pueblos; Spain Izquierda Unida, Portal Rebelion; Honduras, Partido de Unificacion Democratica, Frente Unido de Trabajadores; Panama, Casa Azul, Casa Anfictionica; Colombia, Congreso Bolivariano de los Pueblos, Sintratelefonos, Diversas, Corporacion Colombo-Venezolana, organizaciones de masas; Cuba, Casa de las Americas; Uruguay, Federacion de Estudiantes Universitaria de Uruguay; Venezuela, Frente Civico Militar, Movimiento Ana Karina Rote, Partido Comunista de Venezuela, Federacion de Familiares Detenidos y Desaparecidos (Fedefam); Argentina, Partido Comunista de Argentina, Organizaciones Piqueteras; Organización Contiental y Latinoamericana de Estudiantes; Peru, Movimiento Etnocacerista de Antauro y Ollanta Humala, Partido Comunista del Peru M-1 del Peru.

D) Number of personalities with whom there are relations: 22" (Perez, 2008, p.224).

In Chile, Manuel Olate (alias Roque), a former member of the *Frente Politico Manuel Rodriguez FPMR* and coordinator of the MCB in Chile, visited Raul Reyes at his camp in Ecuador several times. According to intelligence information, in July 2004 Reyes demanded from 'Roque' the creation of "two clandestine cells to allow the administration of resources for FARC's activities."(Infobae, 2011, March 17). He was captured by Chilean authorities and was requested by Colombian justice in extradition.

Similarly, In Bolivia, there was interest among particular figures and social movements such as Felipe Quispe, former combatant of the Tupac Kapari guerrilla and head of the indigenous Pachacutic movement, to actively participate in the MCB. So was the case of Alejo Veliz, leader of a different indigenous community; of the *Asamblea por la Sobernia de los Pueblos;* and the Bolivian Communists (Perez, 2008).

In Venezuela, the Bolivarian Revolution created several spaces for FARC to widen its connections. According to the IISS, the *Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela PSUV* and the *Partido Comunista de Venezuela PCV* built extensive connections with FARC. According to emails, the insurgency even trained several PCV operatives during 2006 and 2007 (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011). But these were not the only organizations which established links with the insurgency. There was also communication with *Patria Para Todos, Movimiento Quinta Republica and the Movimiento Electoral del Pueblo* (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011).

The favourable atmosphere created by Chavez and other political organizations was enough for FARC to set the MBC's headquarters in Caracas. After Mexico and Costa Rica, Venezuela became the new hub for FARC clusters to develop. The office in Caracas was coordinated by Ivan Marquez, Rodrigo Granda and his daughter Monica, as members of the Cominter. But these were not the only elements that favoured the embeddedness of FARC nodes in this country as it will be explained ahead.

Although MCB's actions were mainly political, the networks also served to perform military tasks. The popularity of FARC in extremist circles all through South America increased, and with it, the interest of foreign citizens to either receive training or to serve with the guerrillas in Colombia. According to an Official of the Colombian Military Forces, there was even a waiting list for non-nationals to join the insurgency.[77] Militants in other countries contributed to make the journey of foreigners to Colombia possible: Roque helped in Chile as Quispe did in Bolivia (Infobae, 2011, March 17).

When Reyes's camp was attacked, there were seven Mexican citizens onsite. Five of them were militants of the Flores Magon cell and two were sympathizers. (Revista Semana, 2008, October 25) Three of them, as it was noted, were under protection of the Nicaraguan government by 2010. On the other hand, according to Colombian Police information, there

---

[77] Interview with unnamed Officer at the General Command of the Military Forces of Colombia. Bogota, Colombia, August 20, 2010.

were at least 25 foreigners in FARC's ranks by this year: Three Venezuelans, two Ecuadorians, four Chileans, one Canadian, two Argentineans, one Dutch, and the rest from diverse European nationalities (El Tiempo, 2011, February 1).

Alliances with Armed Actors

Besides social and political movements, FARC also had the opportunity to establish linkages with armed actors, extending its tentacles in other countries and finding allies for their projects. Linkages with established political organizations were more clearly relevant in terms of its political dimension, but with armed actors, the military dimension becomes central. Of course, some of the armed organizations can also be seen as political allies, especially members of the MCB, in the same way in which members of political movements sought military training. This is another example of how the dimensions are interrelated and how they overlap.

Chavez created a series of Bolivarian militia bodies parallel to the Military Forces and the National Guard. The militias, composed by armed civilians with very basic training, are supposed to constitute a reserve for the defence of the revolution. There is also a set of semi-criminal armed groups in specific areas of the cities which perform some sort of area and community control, which are also expected to act in defence of the Revolution. Examples are the Colectivo la Piedrita or the Tupamaros in the impoverished district of 23 de Enero in Caracas. This neighbourhood is the home of the MCB-Venezuelan chapter which has been notorious in the legitimation of FARC. They built the Manuel Marulanda square with a statue of FARC's founder, and murals of Raul Reyes and Alfonso Cano. The square has witnessed multitudinous ceremonies in honour of all of FARC's fallen leaders. Many of these groups were trained by FARC (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011).

Although Bolivarianists such as Commander Castro Soteldo draw a clear line between political organizations, such as the MCB Chapter and other more criminalized groups as La Piedrita or Carapaicas, for opposition activists as Indira de Peña "they are all part of the same. These groups act totally identified with the project of Chavez. The National Guard looks out after these armed groups"[78].

Interestingly enough, contacts forged through the MCB in Venezuela were not necessarily supported by the National Government. As a matter of fact, an email by Raul Reyes

---

[78] Interview with Indira de Peña, political activist and wife of Political figure Alejandro Peña Esclusa (Interviewed in Caracas, Venezuela, February 24, 2012).

demonstrates that Chavez was opposed to the idea the MCB, and even tried to block its actions:

> "Chavez, with his whims, jealousy and bad temper did not manage to prevent the CCB conference from taking place." (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, p.123).

This explains why the MCB was developed away from the influence of the Venezuelan Government, and probably against Chavez's interests, even when the bulk of its actions were performed in Caracas. In a message from Ivan Marquez to Raul Reyes he states:

> "The CCB has become the space for revolutionary leaders, who have been rejected by the Cuban-Venezuelan diplomacy, to meet. My friend, this is extraordinary. People are coming because in the end we are here, FARC. And here we have 'Nalso' [Narciso Isa Conde], and Petras, and Casaldaglia, etc." (Perez, 2008, p.204)

This is remarkable because it challenges the idea that Bolivarian actors had always been aligned and that Chavez had always demonstrated a favourable attitude to FARC's political influence and physical presence in Venezuelan territory. But it also proves that without support from the national government, FARC has managed to keep its combatants in Venezuela.

But there is also a proper guerrilla organization known as the *Frente Bolivariano de Liberacion FBL* which operates in the Western areas of Venezuela, serving as a reserve or rear-guard for the revolution. By 2002 they counted with 600 operatives, but by 2010, according to their own statements, they were 1200.[79] It is also believed that FARC has participated in their training, but their relation will be discussed further in the next chapter.

In the case of Peru, according to information of Reyes's computers, FARC commanders kept an "opened and wide communication with Sendero Luminoso", because it was their interest to strengthen the organizations as some sort of 'new front.' (El Tiempo, 2010, March). Through a contact known as 'Lucas' it was possible to establish a link with Victor Quispe Palomino (Camarada Jose) leader of the Sendero Column at the Valley of the Apurimac River and Ene (VRAE) (El Tiempo, 2010, March). FARC provided training for operatives, not only as part of a possible political alliance, but increasing their capacities for the armed struggle.

---

[79] Interview with a journalist who asked to keep her name in reserve. Caracas, Venezuela, February 16, 2012.

The case of the *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru MRTA* is different. A group of former members of the MRTA which had lived in Chile, Bolivia and Venezuela seemed to be connected to FARC to receive training, political and financial sponsorship, and access to their camps in the jungles, either directly or through radical Bolivarian groups in those countries (El Comercio, 2009, August 31). Their cells in these three countries were composed by active participants of the local chapters of the MCB, who created front organizations for their actions, at least in Venezuela (El Comercio, 2009, August 31). It is believed that between 2001 and 2007 about 30 militants or sympathizers went to Colombia for military training (El Comercio, 2009 August 31). According to an email, MRTA members constantly visited FARC leaders from 2005 to 2007 asking for financial assistance, a petition that was denied repetitively by the insurgency (El Comercio, August 31, 2009). Just as in the case of Venezuela, these contacts were developed in spite of the national government's opposition to FARC, proving that its support is not necessary.

On the other hand, there was information about the presence of extremists from the region of La Araucania, Chile, in FARC camps in Colombia. In this region Mapuche indigenous communities fight for the autonomy of their territory against the Chilean state, opposing the influence of transnational companies and corporations. There is information from Reyes's computers confirming that individuals from an organization known as the *Coordinadora Arauco Malleco CAM* were present in FARC's camps in order to learn about irregular warfare (Carrera & Palomera, 2010). The Chilean government, even more than Venezuela and Peru, rejects the actions of organizations as FARC, and yet it wasn't able to prevent links of cooperation between FARC and the Mapuche radicals.

In a similar case, FARC nurtured strong connections with the *Ejercito del Pueblo Paraguayo EPP* for over a decade (El Tiempo, 2010, April 27). After an investigation by Paraguayan officials it was evident that FARC had trained EPP units and supported the organization in the kidnapping and assassination of Cecilia Cubas, daughter of former President Raul Cubas. One of her assassins, Osmar Martinez confessed to have links to Bolivarian organizations through the *Congreso Bolivariano de los Pueblos*. According to Villamarin, FARCs support also led into the creation of mobile guerrilla units in the municipality of Juan Caballero and mobile militias in the outskirts of the capital, Asuncion. He describes the organization of networks in the location of La Marquetalia, district named after the municipality were Tirofijo created his first communist enclave, and where Police is said to have no access. He describes 16 bases, each of which is led by a political and a security leader. There are several deputies that

coordinate groups of 10 people which guard around 100 and 200 families. The leaders are Raul Marin and Marilina Marichal (Villamarin, 2007, p.188-189). It became evident that insurgents of the EPP asked FARC for refuge and training (El Tiempo, April 27, 2010). Once again this nexus of cooperation between armed actors occurred without government approval in its territory, proving once more that FARC can embed insurgents beyond borders through connections with other actors and not only through government support.

It has been illustrated that government support is the most powerful source that insurgencies can count on in order to embed nodes in other territories. But the level of embeddedness increases if there are also connections or alliances with other actors such as political movements or armed organizations. In spite of this fact, it is also notable that government support is not a necessary condition, and contacts with other agents may suffice for this purpose. The question, of course, is how valuable are this connections for the insurgency? What do they mean in terms of its survival? It could be thought, for example, that all the linkages established through the MCB offer opportunities for FARC to survive and re-emerge, but that is not necessarily the case. This will be a matter of analysis in the next chapter. It is now necessary to turn to 'empty spaces' which offer the best chances for the insurgency to place militants beyond borders, especially if the variables explored before come together.

Empty Spaces

Empty spaces allow for the expansion of the networks of the three dimensions, political, military and criminal. Embedding political nodes is of course important for the insurgency, but the possibility to place combating military nodes in spaces where they are safe, is almost priceless. Empty spaces also have the potential to serve as the theatre for connections and alliances with other agents, governments, social and political organizations and armed actors on the long term, because given the lack of strong presence of state's institutions, the insurgency engages in processes which gradually and increasingly make it an authority in the area. This attracts the attention of other agents or individuals in the region that will feel attracted to the insurgency (sympathy), legitimizing its actions. In these spaces they create the conditions for hubs to be embedded and to build insurgency clusters. But this will be further explored in the next chapter.

In the case of FARC, empty spaces were relevant for the embedment of militants beyond Colombian borders, creating insurgency hubs and clusters in neighbouring countries. These

spaces are important in the sense that they allow the existence of proper combatants beyond borders, and because they make the acquisitions of weapons and munitions easier. This was the case in Venezuela (Cragin, 2003, p.xviii). They were also ideal for the development of criminal activities related to drug trafficking as it was the case in Ecuador, Brazil, Panama and Venezuela. Although these spaces are more valuable in military terms, intense political activity was also witnessed, for example, in Raul Reyes's camp in Ecuador.

For FARC, empty spaces included the Panamanian side of the border with Colombia, the Jungles of Northern Peru, the Brazilian Amazon, Northern Ecuador, and Western Venezuela. In the first three, there were insurgents performing military and criminal duties, while in the latter two, politics were also observed.

Regarding militants in Western Venezuela, Avila published a seminal investigation about the presence of armed groups in the Colombian-Venezuelan border. He demonstrated that the existence of FARC's insurgents was not only a result of Chavez's willingness to cooperate with armed actors, but a progressive phenomenon of penetration related to local dynamics (Avila, 2012). Government's difficulty to control the region, demonstrating the existence of an empty space, is proved by Avila when he notes that the armed group with a stronger presence in the area was not FARC, but *Los Rastrojos*, a criminal organization composed by former Colombian paramilitaries, which deeply antagonized Chavez (Avila, 2012).

For years FARC had exploited the weak presence of both the Colombian and Venezuelan states on the isolated border region. FARC's presence dates back to the 1980s when a long process of penetration began (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011). Chavez, however, contributed with the expansion. It is not possible to conclude with absolute certainty if his lack of resolve to fight the insurgency was a consequence of his unwillingness or his incapacity to do so. As it was analysed before, it is more likely to be a combination of both.

There are different opinions on the subject. Chavez's opposition and right wing sectors in Colombia believe FARC's presence is a result of his support towards the insurgency. But in an interview with Spanish journalist, David Beria in, who has done extensive field research on Bolivarian circles and the region, he explained that the lack of capacity is more likely to be the case. He interviewed commanders of the FBL, and noted that the Military Forces and the National Guard knew where FARC and the FBL were located, but hardly saw the

possibility to fight them effectively.[80] In his documentary, he stops at a Military outpost close to Guasdualito, state of Apure, and an Officer shows in a map the exact places where FBL and FARC groups are placed. (Sistiaga, 2010) Whichever the case, FARC achieved an amazing expansion of its political and military networks.

Prestigious Venezuelan Journalist, Roberto Giusti, on the other hand, believes a combination of both is actually possible. He argues that whereas Chavez might not see FARC as an ally, especially after 2008, he does not fight the insurgency with conviction given a "Bolivarian relation of affection". But at the same time the lack of capabilities was evident, for example, through the inexperience of soldiers sent to fight the insurgents, in some cases with only 3 months of training.[81]

Before finishing his administration, Uribe revealed the amount of insurgents stationed in Venezuela. More than being a safe haven, Venezuela had become FARCs new hub and a territory for the development of insurgent clusters. According to the information provided by the Government with full evidence, there were 1500 insurgents organized in 28 camps located in El Nulia and Machiques, Zulia state; the Sierra del Perija; Achaguas; San Juan de Payara and Bruzal in Elorza; and La Victoria and Guascadillo in Apure state. Several of FARCs top commanders were also stationed in the camps: Ivan Marquez in Zulia, Timochenko and Bertulfo Alvarez in Perija, and Grannobles in Achaguas (El Espectador, 2012, July 15). According to the information provided, Ivan Marquez moved around El Nula in Apure and Machiques in Zulia, and his camp was known as *Acunflar*. It counted on a training camp known as *Efrain Guzman* for 700 people (El Espectador, 2010, July 15). (See Map 6)

Presence of FARC's nodes in Venezuela had become so evident that the debate was no longer about their presence, but more about their actions and implications. Luis Fernando Hoyos, former Colombian Ambassador to the Organization of American States, stated that "Venezuela had become a place for the meetings of international criminals, from where they plan attacks, trade with drugs and weapons, and perform kidnappings."(El Tiempo, 2010, July 22). The empty space was favourable for FARC to interact with armed groups, to provide training to the FBL and to strengthen links with organizations like ETA.

It was learned that FARC met members of ETA at Ivan Marquez's camp in 2003. They taught Colombian insurgents on the use of explosives in return for training on combat techniques

---

[80] Phone interview with David Beriain, journalist Reporteros en Cuatro (REC). February 5, 2012.
[81] Interview with Roberto Giusti, Journalist at El Universal, Caracas, Venezuela. February 20, 2012.

and shooting. Later visits were traced in 2006 and 2008 in the camps of Malanga, el Tigre and Las Pavas (El Espectador, 2010 January 18). ETA members were part of a special forces training course for about sixth months, in exchange for teaching on explosives such as C4, pendrite and RDX (El Espectador, 2010, January 18). According to intelligence information, training points were set in Apure, Maturín, Monagas, Aragua, Santa Cruz de Aragua, and even as far in inner Venezuela as the periphery of Maracay city (See map 6) (El Espectador, 2010, January 18). Comintern members Lucas Gualdron and Remedios Garcia were important to establish such contacts.

But this empty space was not only propitious for the establishment of connections between FARC and sectors of security institutions stationed in the area, there were also connections with local official and political figures. According to intelligence information, Ivan Marquez met a leader of the PSUV in the area of La Urbina in Caracas, and there were links with the Governor of Apure and the city mayors of Elorza, Achaguas and Mantecal (El Espectador, 2010, July 15). A Colombian intelligence report also indicates that Grannobles, Marquez and Timochenko had direct linkages with several individuals in powerful positions, businessmen and social and education organizations (El Espectador, 2010, July 15). The mayor of the Municipality of Libertador, one of the districts of Caracas, Freddy Bernal, was very close to FARC, and was even appointed by Chavez to serve as his representative (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011).

Although usually placed at the same level, the case of Ecuador differs to the Venezuelan experience. For FARC, this country was never as strategic as Venezuela. But the empty space in the north border allowed for the expansion of military networks, serving "as a refuge, as a base from which to launch attacks on Colombian military targets, and as a corridor for the group's movements between different areas of Colombia." (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, p.159). In political terms it served as a space where FARC could meet foreign representatives without any interference. It also "provided opportunities for selling narcotics, and raising revenue by other means; training operatives; and obtaining or storing weapons, explosives, food, medical supplies, health care, and immigration and residence documents." (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, p.160). Luis Villamarin explains how the presence of military nodes in Ecuador was useful to develop activities in all the dimensions: "The objective of [FARC's] presence in Ecuador was to count on networks of logistics support, coca routes, negotiating the liberation of hostages, mobility for

commanders, and establishing contacts with other subversive organizations." (Villamarin, 2007, p.159)

Other cases are important but less relevant strategically. The Brazilian government recognized in 2003 that there were three FARC camps in the states of Parana, Matto Grosso do Sul and Boavista. (Villamarin, 2007) They served the purposes of training, trafficking and even projecting force through the Amazon (Villamarin, 2007). A report from *Correio Braziliense* points at the existence of a second level commander in Brazil identified by Colombian counterintelligence as Ocyuber Sanchez (alias Hugo Mal Ojo), with the mission of acquiring weapons, uniforms, and supplies. He was in contact with Brazilian drug dealer Fernandinho Beira Mar (Sequeira, July 25, 2006).

As an example of how empty spaces are also relevant for the development of criminal tasks, it was known that the triple border area with Peru and Colombia was a cocaine production centre where the guerrillas had had an influence for about two decades. As a zone that connects three urban centres, Leticia in Colombia, Tabatinga in Brazil and Iquitos in Peru, it was also an important zone for food provision (Villamarin, 2007).

The case of Panama is not distant. The border area with Colombia is a dense jungle known as *El Darien,* particularly difficult to control. This country does not count on Military Forces, relying on its Police service for this task. FARC's 57th Front has exploited the complex terrain by crossing the border easily, placing nodes on the Panamanian side, and using the area for logistics, drug trafficking, rest and as a refuge of hostages (Reuters, 2010). There is information about 30 FARC delegates who moved around Panama in order to establish contacts and generally worked in favour of the insurgency (La Prensa, 2008 October 12) The Panamanian Border Service, however, dismantled a camp used by FARC's 57th Front in the province of Darien (Agencia EFE, 2011, January 15).

The north of Peru demonstrates similar dynamics. It is argued that the fall of Sendero Luminoso's Commander, Abimael Guzman, led into a stronger influence of FARC in the northern provinces of the country. The area became a zone for the exchange of weapons and drugs. It is believed that Peruvian drug dealers used to pay FARC for the use of landing strips, in order to transport raw materials, cocaine and money (Villamarin, 2007). In terms of military tasks, the area was useful for recruiting. Two insurgents, Jhon Jader Manrique Escobar (alias Oliver, Tanaca or Tanacas) and Leydy Vivas Guerrero, were captured for recruiting youths in the region. Several under-25 individuals with low economic capabilities

had already joined the guerrilla (Medina, O'Brian & Machiuca, 2008, March 20). The willingness of local inhabitants to join the insurgency as combatants is evidence of individuals' sympathy towards the insurgents in an empty space.

Similarly, cooperation between Colombian and Peruvian police led into the arrest of Gonzalo Guerra Siquihva (alias Gusano or El Profe) who negotiated rifles and munitions with the commander of FARC's Amazonian front (Medina et al., 2008, March 20). He admitted to provide 1000 guns and thousands of AK-47 munitions, among other weapons (Medina, March 20, 2008). In the opinion of prestigious Peruvian journalist Gustavo Gorriti, there was a lot of disinformation regarding FARC's connections with Sendero or MRTA but "the only thing we can be certain about is that [FARC] Fronts in Putumayo have crossed the border like they have done in Venezuela and Ecuador. They have a black market of weapons at their service, and whatever has been seized is minimal; there is a bigger amount"[82].

As it can be seen from the examples, empty spaces might happen because of the unwillingness of a state to fight armed actors in the region, or because of its incapacity to build a stronger institutional presence. It might be difficult to evaluate which is more significant for every case, but the consequences are clear. The insurgency finds opportunities for its military, political and criminal nodes to create connections with different sorts of agents. Given the relative lack of opposition, the scenario is ideal for the configuration of new insurgency clusters, and the embedment of hubs (insurgents with a higher amount of connections). The important question, once again, is what does this mean in terms of insurgency survival or reconfiguration? And this is the objective of the following chapter.

Node embeddedness and network characteristics

The embeddedness of FARC's nodes beyond Colombian borders, as it has been said, does not depend on a single variable. The alleged support from Chavez to FARC is not the only reason why this country had become, by 2010, the main territory for the development of guerrilla clusters. It is the combination of all the variables, government approval or support, connections with political and social organizations, linkages with armed groups and the existence of empty spaces, which allow for the insurgency's political, military and criminal nodes to be embedded in their territories on the long term, with a relative level of security.

---

[82] Interview with Gustavo Gorriti, journalist and researcher at Caretas Magazine. Lima, Peru, March 27, 2012

Governments constitute the ultimate source of support for insurgencies. It is with their acknowledgment, channelled as protection, material support or lack of confrontation, that insurgents find it easier to survive. However, this support is not a necessary condition, and even when governments oppose guerrilla presence in its territory, networks can be developed. Now, when this is the case, when the central government is not an ally, political networks, more than military, are likely to be developed, through contacts with particular social and political organizations. This can be evidenced through actions of all MCB chapters in different countries, which speak favourably about FARC. Military networks can be developed but related more to logistics, trafficking and obtaining war materiel than to stationing combat units.

But when empty spaces exist, and all the variables come together, there is a configuration of an ideal scenario for militants to be stationed on long term. In this case it is not only political networks which spread, criminal and military networks in the form of combatants, camps and heavy military hardware also find a space of protection.

Now, there are several characteristics that must be noted about the networks. Node resilience is very high. That is, when nodes stop functioning, because they are killed or captured, it is easy to replace them. When Comintern delegate in Brazil, Cura Camilo, was captured, Hermes replaced him in this position and continued travelling through Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela and Paraguay, under the alias of Libardo Antonio Benavides (Caracol Noticias, 2006, July 25). When Rodrigo Granda was captured, it was believed that the International Commission would fall apart, or at least, that its work would suffer a considerable setback, however Hermes took over Granda's responsibilities to allow the flow of the networks (Caracol Noticias, 2006, July 25). In the same direction, Ovidio Salinas, who was in Costa Rica, was replaced by Hernando Vanegas who lived in the country from 1999 until 2005. Then Vanegas left to Sweden under claims of a 'political persecution' leaving Ana Cecilia Jimenez, member of the group *Solidaridad con Cuba*, to administer goods (Rojas & Carvajal, 2008). Even better, when Raul Reyes was killed, Ivan Marquez who was already located in Venezuela took over the administration of international tasks.

A report by El Espectador, one of the most traditional newspapers in Colombia, ratifies this fact when it argues that "in spite of the death of Raul Reyes, or the arrest of Remedios Garcia in Spain, Miguel Angel Beltran in Mexico or Liliany Patricia Obando and Jairo Alfonso Lesmes in Colombia, [FARC´s] diplomacy is still alive and kicking." (El Espectador, 2010, January 9).

But networks are also flexible and adaptable in the sense that militants can move from place to place without altering their flows, especially in the case of hubs (senior members of the Comintern which have the higher amount of connections). Examples include Nubia Calderon (alias Esperanza), who after operating in Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru, was granted political asylum in Nicaragua, to be replaced in Bolivia by Soledad Conde (head of MCB Chapter). In similar terms, Ovidio Salinas was stationed in Panama from where he travelled to Costa Rica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Ecuador, Chile, Cuba, Spain, Portugal, Denmark and Sweden. In these last three countries he sealed negotiations to buy weapons (La Prensa, 2008, October 12). He also ended up in Nicaragua.

Flexibility can also be observed from the mobility of hub scenarios, from Costa Rica to Mexico and later to Venezuela. The internal flexibility that nodes enjoy in each of their countries can be exemplified with the re-accommodation of Mexico's nodes after the closure of FARC's office.

Another example of flexibility and resilience is given by the case of FARC's connections to the MRTA in Peru. The link between Reyes and the MRTA known as "Ricardo" was arrested in Venezuela, causing a disruption of contacts between MRTA cells in Bolivia and Chile and Reyes. As a consequence the MRTA group in Chile led by alias 'Gabriel', who had lived in La Paz, Bolivia, established contact with Roque Gonzalez de la Rosa, member of the MCB-Peru Chapter and former combatant of the MRTA. Through him contacts with FARC were re-established (El Comercio, 2009, August 31). Roque became a communication channel between Peru and FARC, and served as FARC's 'eyes and ears' in the neighbouring country (El Comercio, 2009, August 31). Roque was captured by Peruvian authorities, along with other six individuals, when they were returning from the Second Conference of the MCB in Quito.

On the other hand, militants become so embedded to their environments that when they are at risk, agents react in their favour. This is the case of Comintern delegate to Brazil Oliverio Medina who was captured by local authorities. Members of cells and support groups organized a 'Committee for the Liberation of Oliverio Medina' which lobbied the Refugee National Committee (Conare) to achieve his liberation, and for political asylum to be granted. Similarly, Manuel Olate was captured by Chilean authorities triggering an international campaign for his liberation with the participation of agents in Chile, and organizations, individuals, and cells from all over Latin America. Appendix 6 presents a list of members of

this campaign. Similarly, when Roque Gonzales was captured, a support committee organized a series of demonstrations in the streets of Lima. He was cleared of all charges.

It is now necessary to turn into significant questions: What value does the insurgency find in all of these constructions? What do they objectively have to offer?

Chapter 7. FARC as a regional actor and the survival of its structures.

Last chapter was set to explore those elements which made it possible for FARC to embed insurgents beyond Colombian borders, and the processes through which they did. It is now necessary to discuss the implications of the existence of nodes through the secondary environment, and how they contribute towards the survival and re-emergence of the insurgency.

This chapter explains that existing nodes of the three dimensions placed beyond borders by 2010 constituted a base for the insurgency to survive, if it was reduced to a point of near destruction by Colombian forces. Conditions in the environment contributed not only to the preservation of such nodes, but to give the networks a degree of flexibility, resilience, redundancy and adaptability. These conditions include the preservation of the ideology and political discourse, and the mobility of elements of the criminal economy.

These processes create the possibility for militants to engage with any of the dimensions, through node politicisation, criminalization and militarization as defined in the second chapter. As such, in order to avoid the survival and re-emergence of the organization, the counterinsurgent needs to develop a strategy to address elements of the three dimensions simultaneously, while acting in regards to elements placed beyond borders.

Complexity tells us that systems are opened; that the system (the insurgency) is in constant interaction with its environment (Latin America), in a process of co-evolution: the insurgency is changed by the environment, while the former contributes to variations in the latter. In that sense, the extent to which environmental conditions allow the survival of the insurgency depend on how deeply intertwined the system and its environment are, and how blurry the boundary between the primary and secondary environments is. As it was defined in the second chapter, there are three scenarios:

- Transnational networks of a national insurgency
- Insurgency as part of a regional revolution
- Transnational insurgency

In the first case, FARC would count with militants in several countries but they would exist in function of the Colombian internal conflict. Even when certain operative functions extend to other countries, the objective would still be action in Colombia. There would be no regional

common agenda, and alliances with other organizations would express solidarity but not a shared objective.

In the second situation, FARC would be part of a wider continental uprising in which several actors, movements, organizations and rebel groups pursue the same objective. FARC would not be alone in its struggle neither would Colombia be the only theatre of confrontation. Bolivarian governments, extremist parties, movements, and armed rebels would come together in a single borderless effort to implement political systems according to their ideals. This hypothesis has been considered within official and academic circles. It is popular through the Latin American right, and it was common in Colombia during the Uribe administration. The Sao Paulo Forum is seen as the space where such efforts are coordinated. This idea is linked to the vision of a 'Bolivarian Liberation Front', uniting different South American armed organizations such as FARC, MRTA, *Sendero Luminoso, Fuerzas Bolivarianas de Liberacion, Ejercito del Pueblo Paraguayo* and Venezuelan Bolivarian Militias as the armed wing of the regional revolution.

In the third case, FARC would constitute a transnational or regional revolutionary army by itself. There would be connections and alliances with other actors but they would be either local agents, operating in a national scenario, or actors pursuing a different regional agenda. In a similar way to the second scenario, the objective of the organization would not be explained exclusively through the logic of the Colombian conflict, but through wider dynamics in the region. This means that FARC would also target other governments opposed to its revolutionary cause.

It is here demonstrated that by the end of the Uribe administration, FARC remained as a national insurgency with transnational structures. Although its objectives remained purely national in terms of fighting the Colombian state and not others in the region, their operations have expanded according to the spread of its military, criminal and political networks. This expansion has given FARC the opportunity to survive and re-emerge, even when its objectives remain primarily national.

For this purpose some considerations about FARC as a part of a regional revolution are introduced first, to demonstrate afterwards why of such type of revolution is non-existent. Such demonstration will be done examining each of the variables introduced in the last chapter, analysing their implications for the preservation of nodes of the three dimensions.

Then some observations regarding FARC's possibility for re-emergence are noted, with a final examination on its potential to become a networked transnational insurgency.

The case for a regional revolution

Several authors, especially in the political right, would argue that the 'regional revolution' scenario is actually real. As it was argued in the last chapter, with the emergence of Bolivarianism in Venezuela and the ascent of other leftist and progressive governments in South America, the context was set for FARC to widen its international connections. The similarities in terms of discourse and foreign policy objectives (anti-Americanism and the union of Latin American peoples) were sufficient to consider the hypothesis of a united front between leftist governments, social movements and insurgent groups, including FARC. But such is not the case; a monolithic united front including diverse actors from the left is non-existent.

It has been said that the Sao Paulo Forum (FSP) is the arena for such coordination. This Forum created in 1990 by the *Partido de los Trabajadores* – PT from Brazil and the Cuban Communist Party intended to redefine the path of Latin American Communists after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The initial Forum counted with 68 political organizations from 22 Latin American and Caribbean countries. For the sixth meeting in 1996 there were already 187 delegates from 52 member organizations, 144 guest organizations represented by 289 delegates, and 44 observers of 35 organizations from Africa, America, Asia and Europe (Peña, 2010, p.24). FARC is a member of the Forum together with the ELN and many political parties of the Americas. Raul Reyes was even present at the VI Conference in El Salvador (Perez, 2008). Several presidents were members, including Lula da Silva from Brazil, Raul Castro from Cuba, Hugo Chavez from Venezuela, Tabare Vasquez from Uruguay, Evo Morales from Bolivia, Rafael Correa from Ecuador, Daniel Ortega from Nicaragua, Mauricio Funes from El Salvador, Leonel Fernandez from Dominican Republic and Rene Preval from Haiti.

In the view of authors such as Luis Villamarin and Alejandro Peña Esclusa, a Venezuelan writer, politician and opponent of Chavez, the FSP is a coordination mechanism to impose Marxism-Leninism throughout the Americas, forging a closer Latin American union opposed to American influence.[83] Member governments, parties, movements and rebels are all supposed to pursue the same objective, channelling the efforts to achieve the goals set at the FSP. Under this perspective FARC is not observed as an isolated group waging a war that

---

[83] Read (Peña, 2010)

is particularly Colombian; rather they are part of a wider regional process with a great diversity of agents pursuing the same ends.

Peña summarizes this idea when he argues that the "ideological affinity between FARC and several governments in the region constitute an alliance based in permanent coordination and mutual support." (Peña, 2010, p.20) And that "Presidents do not act as chiefs of state representing the interests of their nations, but as members of the Sao Paulo Forum, in defence of their FARC allies." (Peña, 2010, p.40)

If that was the case, the paths for survival and re-emergence of the insurgency would be evident since the environment would provide all of the necessary elements for this to happen. FARC would be waging the same war with other regional actors; and Colombia, the main US ally in the region, would be the common enemy and the strongest obstacle for the FSP regional agenda. The relation between the system (FARC) and its environment (the region) would be stronger, meaning that as an opened system the line that separates them would be very diffuse. Given the strong interaction and cooperation with all sorts of regional actors, it would be difficult to determine which elements actually belong to the insurgency. There would be no doubt about alliances with Chavez, Correa, Da Silva, Ortega and dozens of political parties and movements. If counterinsurgency operations in Colombia destroyed FARC, or reduced it to its minimum expression, it would be coherent to believe that such actors would provide all possible support for militants in their countries to re-engage with the struggle against the Colombian state.

But it is neither coherent nor analytically strict to place such a divergent group of actors under the same category, and to explain them as having the same objectives. The interests, priorities, ideologies, and doctrinal bases of all these actors are too diverse to conceive them as a united front with monolithic interest and aims. How can the objectives of Hugo Chavez, the Communist Party of Chile and the ELN be the same? They are all constrained by national realities and the day to day concerns. Chavez had to deal with the Venezuelan problems and his growing internal opposition, the Chilean Communist Party had to work on its electoral strategies and political alliances for the next elections, while the ELN had to focus on its survival given the strong counterinsurgency offensive of the Colombian state. Furthermore, data collected in four countries demonstrates that the 'regional revolution' scenario does not exist. And if a correct understanding of the possibility of the insurgency to survive and re-emerge wants to be defined, it is necessary to place the existence of its operatives beyond borders in the correct perspective.

The real scenario: node preservation

Evidence demonstrates that the 'regional revolution' scenario was not real, and in that sense the preservation of nodes depended on each of the variables introduced in the last chapter, for each of the types of nodes (political, military or criminal).

Several generalities can be stated. Insurgents existed in condition of social and political marginality in each of the countries. Even when there were connections established with Parties and other organizations, coordination was likely established either with only some of its members or with other fringe and more extremist groups with low social support. The MCB, however, was relevant for the preservation of political nodes as it created spaces for FARC cells in other countries.

Similarly, although alliances had been established with other armed groups, as it was explained in the last chapter, they were operational agreements with particular ends more than long-term coalitions based on identical organizational purposes. Government support, although useful, was not vital for the preservation of nodes; but state inaction regarding empty spaces, was the most powerful source for insurgency survival.

Secretive nodes, given their obvious lack of open interaction with the environment would be unaffected by the type of scenario. They would continue performing their functions, mainly criminal and logistical, in each of the countries where they were embedded. Finally, as it has already been stated, sympathy from individuals was an insufficient variable for the insurgency to place operatives through the secondary environment. As such, it was only valuable when it was expressed through other variables like the existence of empty spaces or the formation of social or political organizations.

Government support

Observing all leftist Latin American governments through the FSP lens is inaccurate. There are notorious differences, interest and priorities among them. To make just a basic distinction, which is not sufficient to explore differences in depth, there were at least two main tendencies: centre-left or social democracies including Lula, Bachelet, Vasquez, Funes and Fernandez; and radicals and Bolivarianists such as Castro, Chavez, Correa, Morales and Ortega. Incompatibility between them was so evident that it was necessary for more radical governments to recur to smaller and more ideologically-sound coordination spaces. This is how the *Alternativa Bolivariana para las Americas-ALBA* emerged. It brought together the governments of Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Cuba and Nicaragua. In similar terms, it could

also be argued that FARC's creation of the MCB served as an alternative to a very wide and inclusive FSP. Furthermore, spaces such as the South American Union of Nations (UNASUR) which emerged as an idea of leftist governments, proved to be more effective in advancing regional agendas than the FSP itself.[84]

Radical governments, as it was observed in the last chapter, were more instrumental for the placement of militants. Other leaders as Lula, Bachelet or Vasquez lacked an authentic ideological connection with FARC. As argued by Ivan Witcker, Professor at the *Academia Nacional de Estudios Politicos y Estrategicos* in Chile, in a personal interview, "there is no generality in Latin America and many differences between countries. The discourse of Bolivarianism is foreign to us, and Chavez is an alien element in our country."[85]

FARC and ALBA governments shared a similar, but not identical, doctrinal base, the Marxism-Leninism-Bolivarianism *entete* which was introduced in the last chapter. The important question would be if the ideological coincidence means that all actors pursue the same ends through the same methods, and if this is so, if they constitute a source of protection for FARC's operatives. But as the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian cases demonstrate this is not necessarily the case.

As Commander Castro Soteldo explained "we all have different interpretations of what Bolivarianism is. We have different interpretations of Bolivar, different visions, and different ways to drive our struggle. Not everyone wages war."[86] This is evident from the ambivalence that both Chavez and Correa demonstrated in its relation with FARC. During some periods they seemed to be more collaborative with the insurgency, while in others they were more confrontational, depending on what they were gaining from the relation. In the end, personal interests more than a common political or ideological vision of the region defined their relations:

> "Chavez's commitment to FARC has proved fragile for two reasons. Firstly, despite the overall strategic convergence, there is no firm ideological bond between FARC and Chavez, whose idosincratic and pragmatic approach to political problems has been perceived as incoherent and even alien to FARC. Secondly, the balance of power between Chavez and FARC has always been

---

[84] By 2010 the intergovernmental organization whose treaty was signed in 2008 had already developed a solid structure including Councils and Committees to attend all sectorial and thematic issues in the region, including a defence committee. Since then, several declarations had been produced, and meetings for the discussion of political affairs, including one to discuss Uribe's transgression of Ecuadorian sovereign space to bomb Raul Reyes's camp, had been summoned.

[85] Interview with Ivan Witker, Professor at ANEPE. Santiago de Chile, March 21, 2012

[86] Interview with Commander Wilmer Castro Soteldo, Guanare, Portuguesa, Venezuela. February 16, 2012

markedly unequal, with Chavez the stronger party. As a result, the president has not hesitated over the years to go back on promises made to the group, to distance himself from it, or even to harm its interests in Venezuela in pursuit of economic or political expediency." (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, p.56).

There are situations in which an alliance with FARC could be seen as counterproductive to Venezuela's interests. In his interview, Castro Soteldo noted as a "first objective to count on good and close relations with Colombia".[87] He pointed to the development of growing markets between both countries as a determinant motivation for a fluent relation: "for us it's fundamental; vital (…) We have to develop many projects together, the common forest reserve in Arauca, a joint centre of petroleum exploration, the cotton production, the Bolivarian touristic route…"[88]. But most notably, he rejected several criminalized armed groups, such as the *Colectivo La Piedrita* in Caracas, as stand bearers of Bolivarianism: "We do not share, and we will never share the use of criminal violence as a justification of the Revolution"[89]. This is not described ignoring patterns of cooperation between Venezuela and FARC as observed in the last chapter. But it is an explanation of the inexistence of a shared goal, and of their pursuit of particular interests, which elucidate the ambivalence in their relation.

What becomes relevant for the present analysis is that under Chavez's government the insurgency found the appropriate conditions for the expansion of its networks, transforming Venezuela into a space for the development of insurgency clusters and for the protection of hubs.

In the Ecuadorian case, it is also difficult to define with precision if the existence of FARC camps were possible given Correa's tolerance or his incapacity to respond effectively. Evidence of confrontation between these governments and the insurgents, introduced in the last chapter, is sufficient to conclude that each of the agents was also acting according to their own interests; and as such, the idea of a single monolithic regional revolution loses its logic.

The existence of empty spaces in their territories, more than direct material collaboration, is the most meaningful, probably indirect, contribution of governments to the protection of insurgents. It has been said that such spaces are valuable not only because political and

---

[87] Interview with Commander Wilmer Castro Soteldo, Guanare, Portuguesa, Venezuela. February 16, 2011
[88] Interview with Commander Wilmer Castro Soteldo, Guanare, Portuguesa, Venezuela. February 16, 2011
[89] Interview with Commander Wilmer Castro Soteldo, Guanare, Portuguesa, Venezuela. February 16, 2011

criminal tasks can be developed under relatively safe conditions, but especially because active combatants also find protection. Two security analysts interviewed in Caracas were very clear in their coinciding opinion: 'Venezuela had become FARC's country'.[90]

The cases of Venezuela and Nicaragua are very relevant in terms of hub protection. As it was explained in the first chapter, hubs are nodes with the highest amount of connections. In the case of the insurgency, this is the case of commanders or senior members of the Comintern. Caracas served as headquarters for the MCB hosting leaders such as Rodrigo Granda, Hermes and Carlos Casanueva. But also for military commanders including Ivan Marquez, head of the International Commission, Timochenko, Bertulfo Alvarez, Juan Santrich, and Grannobles. Nicaragua, on the other hand, had been the host of Ovidio Salinas, Nubia Calderon, Lucia Morett and Granda's Family.

This is important in terms of the preservation of command. For the insurgency to survive and re-emerge, it is not only relevant for nodes to be preserved but for command to exist. And if there are proper communications channels, whichever they might be, the survival of hubs will contribute to the reconstitution of the insurgency.

Political and Social Movements

Connections with political and social movements also demonstrate how the idea of a regional revolution scenario is unreal, but also how they are more meaningful for the preservation of FARC's operatives. Field research conducted in Chile and Peru demonstrates that such connections do not constitute general strategic alliances on the long term given the disparity in their objectives. However, this does not imply that they do not contribute to the preservation of nodes in their countries. NBAFs, which are proper FARC cells, remained alive through the existence of the MCB, and it was the enrolment of different political parties and movements which kept the MCB alive. Connections were not necessarily constructed between organizations as such, but more with particular individuals or groups within the organizations. Similarly, connections were stronger with smaller radical political groups instead of 'mainstream' Socialist and Communist Parties.

This is logical since organizations which participate in the MCB follow their own interests, not necessarily establishing communication channels or contributing with the insurgency. As such, FARC's political militants exist in those countries given their relations with like-minded

---

[90] Analysts asked to keep their names in reserve given the sensitivity of the issue.

individuals with whom they coordinate participation in forums, meetings, demonstrations, etc. For example, as explained by Jose Luis Cordova, Press Secretary of the *Partido Comunista de Chile*, in a personal interview, members of the Party who attended the Second Conference of the MCB in Quito did so under their own name and expenses.[91] As a consequence it must be clear that although FARC's political operatives exist beyond Colombian borders, they are marginal in political terms, both in their host countries and through the region.

In a personal interview with Manuel Castillo, Secretary of the *Partido Comunista Peruano*, he explained that the struggle of Communists and Bolivarians in Latin America was more a series of unbound national or local struggles with coincidences through the nations, than a single fight through the entire continent. In his words, "it is not a process where we are constantly agreeing on our actions; it obeys to each of our realities (…) the vision of Socialism is not necessarily common."[92]

In a similar way, Jose Luis Cordoba explained how the objectives and methods of Communists in South America were very different. He argued that there is solidarity between them and that some principles are shared, but that their priorities differ considerably from country to country.[93] He explained how distant Chilean communists feel from the idea of Bolivarianism: "our history is too different; we salute it, we support it, but we don't integrate it. There is no ideological affinity, and there is no unique party."[94]

The aims and methods of political and social organizations through the continent are too diverse through the region. In the Chilean case, Cordoba explained that the Communists were focused on mobilizing social sectors, students, workers and teachers in favour of particular struggles: resources, equality and salaries, especially in isolated regions like Punta Arenas, Magallanes and Aysen.[95] They were focused on the next elections and on political negotiations to retain local and national-level seats. Objectives beyond this panorama, he believed, are simply too idealistic.[96]

---

[91] Interview with Jose Luis Cordoba, Press Secretary of the Partido Comunista de Chile. Santiago de Chile, March 14, 2012

[92] Interview with Manuel Castillo, Secretary of the Partido Comunista Peruano, Lima, March 28, 2012.

[93] Interview with Jose Luis Cordoba, Press Secretary of the Partido Comunista de Chile. Santiago de Chile, March 14, 2012

[94] Interview with Jose Luis Cordoba, Press Secretary of the Partido Comunista de Chile. Santiago de Chile, March 14, 2012

[95] Interview with Jose Luis Cordoba, Press Secretary of the Partido Comunista de Chile. Santiago de Chile, March 14, 2012

[96] Interview with Jose Luis Cordoba, Press Secretary of the Partido Comunista de Chile. Santiago de Chile, March 14, 2012

There were even considerable differences with other organizations in their own country. He speaks about ultra-leftist radical sectors, small groups of anarchists and extremists, which actually criticize them for joining the coalition of parties known as the *Concertación*.[97] This coincides with an explanation given by an Official at a Ministry in Chile, who asked for his name to be reserved, according to whom the rivalry between Communists and more radical tendencies has been noticed, for example, in the competition to dominate the Bolivarian People's Congress, where FARC's militants have particular interests.[98]

The case of Peruvian Parties is not too different. In a personal interview with Edgardo Gavelan, secretary of the *Movimiento Nueva Izquierda MNI,* an umbrella organization that includes the Communist Party-Patria Roja, he explained how they sympathize with socialist and progressive governments from different countries; how they believe in international solidarity and Latin American Unity, but that they abide to the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs. He explained how their priority was also on politics and next elections, and in the campaigns they were leading against transnational mining companies in the region of Cajamarca.[99]

In two personal visits to the headquarters of Patria Roja in central Lima it was possible to observe how these explanations were correct. The first event was a Catholic mass offered in solidarity to the health of Hugo Chavez, organized by the MNI and the Secretary for Women and Gender Equality of the Party, with the participation of individuals from diverse backgrounds and organizations. The second event was a political meeting in which diverse leftist movements of Lima, including the NMI, *Fuerza Laboral, Tierra y Libertad, Voz Socialista* and *Lima Para Todos*, came together to agree on a joint strategy for the next local elections, proving the importance they see on the electoral agenda.[100]

They also drew a distance with FARC. Cordoba explained that Chilean Communists agreed with a democratic and humanitarian solution to conflict, but that they rejected the use of violence, the violation of human rights, or kidnapping, as methods. They only justified the use of force on very extreme conditions, such as the dictatorship of Pinochet.[101] He categorically denied any kind of support to FARC, which he recognized as a purely Colombian

[97] Interview with Jose Luis Cordoba, Press Secretary of the Partido Comunista de Chile. Santiago de Chile, March 14, 2012

[98] Interview with Official of a Ministry of the Government of Chile. Santiago de Chile, March 15, 2012.

[99] Interview with Eduardo Gavelan, General Secretary of the MNI. Lima, Peru. March 31, 2012

[100] Observations done in the headquarters of Patria Libre: Jiron Miro Quesada 360, Lima, Peru. First: March 28, 2012. Second: March 31, 2012.

[101] Interview with Jose Luis Cordoba, Press Secretary of the Partido Comunista de Chile. Santiago de Chile, March 14, 2012

problem to be solved by Colombians. He finds the idea of material support ridiculous from a small Party which struggles to find resources for its sustenance.

Similarly, Gavelan stated that "we are distant to FARC and the ELN, it is an issue that must be resolved by Colombians. FARC's methods, kidnapping, terrorism and drug-dealing, do not coincide with ours. We do not believe in militaristic solutions to the conflict, we believe in politics and elections"[102]. Another militant of the MNI argued that "we have totally distanced ourselves from terrorism."[103]

The words of Castillo summarize the dilemma that Communist parties and movements face when armed methods, or connections to armed actors, are considered:

> "Today, the organization of the popular movement is the base for elections. We do not conceive other way. The other way has been distorted by the actions of Sendero Luminoso and the MRTA, which have deviated into terrorist actions that the population rejects (…) There are no conditions to take up arms, we don't think its realist; it is intransigent; what must be avoided is a rift with the masses""[104]

Interestingly, and as evidence of the distance between legal political parties and armed insurgents, Sendero Luminoso had repetitively attacked members of Patria Roja and the *Partido Comunista Peruano*. This idea was confirmed by Ramon Abasolo, who stated that "Patria Roja rejects violence. Violent actions would be qualified as terrorist actions and they would be counterproductive. I don't see movements like 'Patria' with an insurgent attitude. They are more focused on elections"[105].

From this approach, it is easy to understand why leftist movements, supposedly FARC's allies, would reject the insurgency. A notable case was the rejection of the Brazilian *Partido dos Trabalhadores* to FARC's participation in the FSP meeting of 2005 in Sao Paulo (Agencia EFE, 2008, May 31). The insurgency was banned from a Conference supposed to be one of the epicentres of its external relations. From the 'regional revolution' perspective, this rejection would not make much sense.

Although these actors would obviously deny any connections with FARC, emails found in Raul Reyes's computers, as it was described in the last chapter, speak about meetings with members of Communist Parties. This should not be surprising, and it is still coherent with the

---

[102] Interview with Eduardo Gavelan, General Secretary of the MNI. Lima, Peru. March 31, 2012
[103] Interview with militant of the MNI known as 'Tania'. Lima, Peru. March 31, 2012
[104] Interview with Manuel Castillo, Secretary of the Partido Comunista Peruano, Lima, March 28, 2012.
[105] Interview with Ramon Abasolo, Analyst at the Institute of Strategic Studies in Lima, Peru. Lima, March 23, 2012.

analysis for two reasons: FARC should have engaged on all efforts to establish contacts with communist through the region. Dialogues could have been produced in several countries, in order to listen to insurgency representatives. But this does not imply the establishment of long-term alliances or even processes of cooperation between agents. On the other hand, sectors or individuals within the organization, as opposed to the organization as a whole, could actually feel a stronger sympathy for the insurgents and they could have engaged on a more permanent interaction.

In sum, FARC's political nodes were present, active and performing their tasks through connections with specific members of diverse political and social movements, and through the MCB. Although mainstream communist parties were affiliated to this Movement, smaller and more radical social and political groups were more likely to be closer to FARC's operatives. They provided spaces such as academic forums, public conferences, political meetings, or street demonstrations, where FARC's discourse could be spread in order to gather support and increase its legitimacy. Through these actions FARC could have won the sympathy of other individuals who would, in return, join the MCB or organize more support groups.

For example, in Buenos Aires, the MCB organized a demonstration in honour of fallen FARC Commander 'Mono Jojoy' in the centric symbolic square of *Plaza de la Republica*. (Barricada TV, 2010, October 14) The demonstration, more than being hosted by the Argentinean Communist Party or the Democratic Socialists, brought together a group of smaller organizations such as *MPR Quebracho, MTR FAR, Colectivo Amauta, Fogoneros, Organización Libres Del Pueblo, Cine Insurgente,* and *Brazo Libertario*. In Caracas, the group *Alexis Vive* also organized an event in honour of Jojoy in the *23 de enero* neighbourhood to symbolically and posthumously decorate him (El Espectador, 2010, August 8). In Montevideo, Uruguay, the inauguration of the MCB chapter composed mainly by university students began with the presentation of videos with messages of Hugo Chavez and FARC commanders (Revueltas, 2010).

Conditions in Peru and Chile exemplify realities of similar political organizations in different countries, and this is why it is possible to include MCB's actions in other nations as examples in the analysis.

Alliances with Armed Actors

The idea of a unified South American grand people's army, a 'Bolivarian Liberation Front', is also remote. Tirofijo set as an objective of the international campaign to "create a grand revolutionary army in the Americas with mass support to overthrow the capitalist system and implement socialism."[106] But by the end of 2010 this objective was farfetched. Although there were connections with several rebel groups through the continent, such as the EPP in Paraguay, MRTA and SL in Peru, FBL in Venezuela or Mapuche groups in Chile, the idea of a single transnational insurgent movement was still unthinkable. Most of the connections are explained more as operational alliances for the transfer of know-how than as a symbiosis of objectives and aims.

Most importantly, such alliances did not imply a long term placement of FARC's combatants in other territories, since schemes of cooperation consisted on the temporary location of either the other group's insurgents in Colombia, or FARC rebels in their territories. In several cases though, alliances produced mutual benefits for both parties, like in the case of the *Ejercito del Pueblo Paraguayo*, explained ahead. It has also been argued that FARC intended to appropriate remnants of Sendero Luminoso or the MRTA as new fronts of the organization, but evidence demonstrates they had their own particular agendas and objectives related to Peruvian economic and political realities.

An exemplifying case is offered by the Mapuche communities in Chile. As it was observed in the last chapter, several Mapuche fighters of the *Coordinadora Arauco Malleco - CAM* received training from FARC in Colombian camps (Carrera & Palomera, 2010). But there is no evidence pointing at an alignment of objectives, or even of methods. The struggle of the Mapuche communities is very precise: they want their territories, allegedly taken forcefully by the Spaniards and the Chilean state, to be restored, respected and cleared from the influence of all transnational companies.[107] In a personal meeting with Mapuche leaders from several communities at the office of the National Assembly of Leftist Mapuches, it was explained that there were diverse Mapuche groups from all political tendencies fighting for the same cause. Most of them, including Communist and other Leftist Mapuches, believed in democratic methods and rejected violence as a method. It was only a fringe group, the CAM, which justified the use of force, and which actually declared war against the Chilean

---

[106] Analysis document provided by an unnamed Officer of the General Command of the Military Forces of Colombia.
[107] Interview with Israel Aillapan Quijan, Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile in La Araucania región. Temuco, Chile,

state.[108] In an interview with Israel Aillapan Quijan, Secretary of the Communist Party for the region of La Araucania, he rejected CAM's tactics and judged the declaration of war "as a joke that would provoke the demonization of all Mapuche communities, hurting their own efforts in their struggle."[109]

The Director of the Assembly, Domingo Marileo, argued that using force was counterproductive. He believes using weapons is to "follow the game imposed by the system, and to justify a stronger presence of state security institutions in their territories".[110] Furthermore, even those who have recurred to violence have done so in a rational way, setting wide differences with FARC's tactics. Terrorist acts, kidnapping, extortion, drug dealing and attacking civilians had not been witnessed. They have focused on incendiary attacks against the property of transnational companies, leaving almost no casualties behind.

This understanding coincides with observations of a Chilean Ministry official who asked to withhold his name. He explained it was likely that eight or nine members of the Mapuche organization received training in Colombia given connections established through Manuel Olate. But even if that was the case a further alliance "would lose any sense since [Mapuche] violence is controlled, without assault rifles, clearly limited, and with a neat perception of benefits versus costs"[111]. He explained that, from their point of view, a connection to criminal organizations as FARC would only weaken them instead of making them stronger.

In general terms, Chilean actors know that recurring to violence is not a positive strategy. As explained by Ivan Witker, for sociological and cultural reasons, rejection of the use of force in Chile is very high, and actors who recur to it are deemed to find more opposition than support.[112] In that sense, political and social organizations would find connections to radical groups, such as FARC, more counterproductive than useful. If there were connections between members of the CAM and FARC, they were temporary and with the specific purpose of training. Significant presence of FARC's combatants in Chile as a result of this connection doesn't make much sense.

---

[108] General discussion at a meeting and over lunch with nine Mapuche leaders in the city of Temucho, capital of the region of La Araucania, principal Mapuche region in Chile. March, 2012
[109] Interview with Israel Aillapan Quijan, Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile in La Araucania región. Temuco, Chile. March, 2012
[110] Interview with Domingo Marileo, Director Unen Lonko, National Assembly of Leftist Mapuches. Temuco, Chile, March, 2012
[111] Interview with Official of a Ministry of the Government of Chile. Santiago de Chile, March 15, 2012.
[112] Interview with Ivan Witker, Professor at ANEPE. Santiago de Chile, March 21, 2012

The case of linkages with *Sendero Luminoso-SL* is far more complex. It was known that FARC was interested in creating a new 'front' of its struggle in Peru, and that Commanders maintained opened and wide communication with Leaders of Sendero. But the remnants of Sendero are nothing like the powerful insurgency of the 1980s. Since his top commander, Abimael Guzman, was captured the bulk of Sendero forces demobilized. By 2010 there were only two columns which rejected a peace agreement and consequently deployed in zones with low state presence. One column was located in the Alto Huallaga Valley, under the direction of alias Commander Artemio; and the other in the Valley of the Apurimac and Ene Rivers (VRAE), commanded by Victor Quispe Palomino. According to Ramon Abasolo, the group in the VRAE had a strong relation with drug-dealers since before 2007. Drug-dealers operated in the area and SL initially provided protection. Since 2008, however, information indicates that Quispe had already developed a network of trade with Mexican and Colombian drug dealers.[113]

Communists themselves believe that "Sendero is not a revolutionary group. If they had a programme, it was abandoned few months afterwards (…) it was dismembered into several groups which appeared to represent Sendero but were more the armed branches of drug dealers."[114] Business alliances of mutual benefit between FARC and Sendero could help both groups if there are sufficient sources for the parties to make a profit, otherwise competition more than cooperation, could be the rule, as it happens in the West of Venezuela. But a political united front between the two groups lacks sense given the criminalization of the VRAE column.

On the other hand, the Alto Huallaga column was led by alias Commander Artemio, a highly ideologized insurgent with a more political vision. But, according to Abasolo, this column was very weak, operating in an area of traditional and organized coca consumption, where state efforts of eradication have been positive, and where people are not threatened by the insurgents. According to a report by the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (2011b), cultivated coca hectares decreased in this area from 17,080 in 2006 to 13,025 in 2010 given state intervention and development policies (p.3). In terms of strategic benefit, FARC would have found a reduced source of support on this column. Furthermore, SL former combatants

---

[113] Interview with Ramon Abasolo, Analyst at the Institute of Strategic Studies in Lima, Peru. Lima, March 23, 2012.

[114] Interview with Manuel Castillo, Secretary of the Partido Comunista Peruano, Lima, March 28, 2012.

leaving prisons were focused on the construction of a new political movement known as *Movimiento por Amnistia y Derechos Fundamentales* MODAVEF.

The case of the MRTA is not distant. Clandestine remnants of the guerrilla group could offer FARC an opportunity to embed combatants. But as former members of the MRTA are starting to leave prisons, they also are forming groups which promote political action, gaining legitimacy in regions like Amazonas, and San Martin, in the North, where social conflict is strong.[115] An example is the *Frente Ambiental de Cajamarca,* which is very active in the South and is led by Wilfredo Saavedra, a former combatant.[116] In the same direction Gustavo Gorriti, a prominent Peruvian journalist argued: "there are no signs showing that [former MRTA members] are becoming insurgents. They all apologized for their actions. After spending 20 years in prison, I don't see the logic of returning to war."[117] MRTA might be more interested in following the line of Patria Roja than the path of Sendero Luminoso. In that sense, connections to FARC more than being useful could be counterproductive.

Furthermore, emails in Raul Reyes's computer demonstrate that although before 2007 there were active elements of the MRTA constantly looking for FARC sponsorship and were eager to participate on the MCB, the insurgency was sceptic of providing material support:

> "The comrade from Peru arrived here without any energy, and he was looking the wrong way because he was asking for 100 thousand American dollars, we told him there is nothing here." (El Comercio, 2009, August 31)

If FARC perceived MRTA elements as part of its new franchise in Peru, as extensions of its military networks, then it would be logical to confirm some sort of support. If financial capabilities were not sufficient to provide the amount requested, there should have been at least some confirmation of interest. But as it has already been analysed, the bulk of MRTA former combatants have different priorities in terms of political participation and action, and they wouldn't probably constitute a good element for military node preservation.

Now, FARC benefited with the connection with the *Ejercito del Pueblo Paraguayo*, at least in terms of resources. As explained by Paraguayan prosecutor, Sandra Quiñonez, FARC received a percentage from the kidnappings performed by this group. In an email, for example, Raul Reyes speaks about US$300,000 received for the kidnapping of Maria Edith Borbon in

---

[115] Interview with Ramon Abasolo, Analyst at the Institute of Strategic Studies in Lima, Peru. Lima, March 23, 2012.

[116] Interview with Carlos Monje, Associate Researcher, Centre for Studies and Development Promotion. (DESCO) Expert on Peruvian social movements and drugs. Lima, Peru. March 28, 2012.

[117] Interview with Gustavo Gorriti, journalist and researcher at Caretas Magazine. Lima, Peru, March 27, 2012

November 2001 (El Tiempo, 2010, April 27). However, this does not mean that we were witnessing the emergence of a FARC franchise in Paraguay, or that Paraguayans were willing to rise in favour of a regional insurgency. In fact, field research conducted by journalist Alexander Oyola, in the community of Marquetalia, demonstrates that rejection of the population to the insurgency is high, and that they were willing to change the name of their district to avoid stigmatization (Testigo Directo, 2010, May 18).

Now, Venezuela is the most representative case to explain that even though insurgents and armed groups were far from becoming a single grand regional guerrilla army, active combatants could still be embedded. It has been explained that the existence of an empty space has allowed the establishment of all sort of connections with diverse actors, to the extent that Venezuela was, by the end of the Uribe period, a base for a possible hypothetical reconstitution of the commercial insurgency. The case of linkages with the *Frente Bolivariano de Liberacion* is particularly exemplifying in that sense. FARC trained units of the FBL and as a consequence there was a relation of mutual benefits:

> "I talked to Tomas one of the guys from the FBL who made a course like a year ago with Raul. He is in Barinas and works in public health, they offer the infrastructure to cure the sick and the injured and they are committed to the preparation of acts against Plan Colombia. They constitute themselves as a support group"[118] (…) "The group that came with Tomas from Barinas is very good. We have to concrete with them to know how much they can contribute in practice" (International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011, File Number I245).

The relation is not necessarily smooth, and there is also evidence of clashes between both organizations. As explained by prestigious journalist Roberto Giusti, together with the ELN, they were immersed in the typical confrontation for territory control, which ultimately means access to resources.[119] Spanish Journalist Salud Hernandez-Mora, who visited the border regions of Apure, coincided with Giusti's explanation: "They are immersed in a rapid and intense criminal race to make their arcs bigger." (Hernandez-Mora, 2011) From a series of demonstrations with the participation of inhabitants from Amparo, Guasdualito and El Nula, against FARC, ELN and FBL, it became clear that their competition was starting to affect civilians in this region (Testigo Directo, 2011, November 18). Extortion and kidnapping were increasingly affecting cattle owners, traders, contractors and professionals (Hernandez-Mora, 2011).

---

[118] Email from Rodrigo Granda to Ivan Marques. (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011, File number I244)

[119] Interview with Roberto Giusti, Journalist at El Universal, Caracas, Venezuela. February 20, 2012.

In general terms, then, marginality expresses the condition of FARC's nodes both in other societies and through the region. Communists and other radical movements are not precisely the most popular tendencies in each of the countries (except for Venezuela). But insurgency nodes exist in conditions of even more marginality since their supporters are members or sectors within these parties, and at best, smaller and more marginal social organizations. In that sense, the emergence of a mass movement through the Americas was farfetched. But marginality, as it has been said, is not equivalent to non-existence, and threats to security could come from a marginal organization. Insurgencies, by definition, begin as a marginal phenomenon. FARC within Colombia is a fringe organization in terms of national popular support, and yet it was the most pressing issue in the national security agenda.

Empty Spaces

What we observe in an empty space is a process of co-evolution between the system and its environment. FARC's presence generates emergent social, political and economic processes incorporating elements of the environment: local actors such as civilians, leaders, businessman, local government officials, members of political parties and other organizations. As its power, authority and legitimacy increase so does the possibility to multiply its linkages and contacts with agents through the environment. Such actors will try to strengthen linkages given the insurgency's increased authority and legitimacy. It is a situation that resembles the concept of 'black hole' described by Makarenko in the second chapter.

This is basically a replication of the dynamics observed through areas of dominion of the insurgency within Colombian borders, especially where the criminal economy flourishes. Given the lack of an effective presence of state institutions, authority is captured by FARC and legitimacy is gained to a certain extent. For this reason, in empty spaces beyond national borders it is also possible to observe the sympathy from indivuals who are not members of an organization, as another element that contributes to FARC's legitimacy.

This is the case in Western Venezuela. As it has been argued, it might be difficult to determine with precision if it's Chavez's unwillingness or the state's incapacity which creates this empty space; but whichever the case, it is evident that his position created a permissive atmosphere motivating agents to forge connections with FARC. Conditions described in the last chapter had made of the insurgency a natural actor in the region, embedded in social, economic, political and even criminal processes. In several occasions they were observed as proper

authorities by the population. As files from Raul Reyes's computer demonstrate, they participated in many events involving local communities, and established contacts with individuals in several locations.

This bears a significant impact in terms of node survival and insurgency re-emergence. Even if Chavez was opposed to the presence of insurgents, it would not be easy to break the emergent processes which give the organization a certain level of authority and legitimacy on the local level.

For example, in an email from Rodrigo Granda, Italo Gonzales and Lucas Iguaran to Raul Reyes and Olga Lucia Marin, they explained how

> "On Saturday the 24th we were present at the 'Farmers and Free Men Meeting', which happened in Tinajitas, Guanare State. There were delegates from other 5 states, with representation of peasant organizations. We attended this event by invitation of the organizers from different political tendencies, and officials of the state and municipal government. (…) Participants from several states made contact with us and asked us to organize this type of events because it is necessary to support the Venezuelan process, to be solidary with our people and to reject Plan Colombia" (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011, File Number I303).

In a similar way, Italo Gonzales told Rodrigo Granda in an email:

> "Yesterday I went to a forum with 25 radical leaders of *Quinta Republica*. People with their attitudes demonstrated to be interested in listening to the authorized voice of FARC (…) in the practice he [a challenging figure] realized that he was out of place and that we do have authority and a real ability to pull in the crowds." (International Institute for Strategic Studies 2011, File Number I190)

On another occasion Rodrigo Granda wrote to Raul Reyes and Olga Marin explaining

> "I just came back from San Fernando de Apure. There was a preparatory meeting for the event in Mexico. There were 150 people from all the political tendencies and they said that there hasn't been an event like this in a long time. It was organized by the Comite Apureño de Solidaridad con los Pueblos (Casop), the Bolivarian University Circle, and the friends of the support group [NBAF]." (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011, File Number I343)

There is also evidence of connections with local authorities. In another email from Rodrigo Granda to Raul Reyes and Olga Lucia Marin, he describes that

> "Lucas the singer has been collaborating, and he just arrived from Guaraca where he had a conversation with the Mayor, city councillors, friends and sympathisers, and they agreed on my visit for the end of the month. They told him that with Arsaid Artunduaga, who was in the direction of the M19, together with the son of

Ivan Marino, they are moving around the border with help from Raul Frontera, it seems. There are conditions for a support group there.

On the 24th we are participating in San Fernando de Apure in a meeting on Plan Colombia organized by the University in that place." (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011, File Number I337)

Further evidence describes FARC as a figure of authority, not only in political but in military terms. In a personal meeting in Caracas with a prestigious Venezuelan journalist who asked to withhold her name, she explained, showing video evidence, how units of the National Guard met FARC rebels somewhere in the border with Colombia, in order to deal with a member of paramilitary squads who had been captured. The person was later found dead.[120] She explained how units of the Venezuelan Military Forces "used its entire operative arsenal, including the suspension of border operations, to help FARC avoid Army action through a command chain that went all the way up to Miraflores."[121] A de-classified intelligence report of the Colombian military forces explains that during March 6-12, 2010 there were two meetings between Marquez and a Venezuelan General, commander of a battalion in the city of Barinas". Among the individuals the report cites

"A radical general, with his centre of operations in Guasdualito and a brigade in Valencia; a Lieutenant Colonel, referred to as the connection between FARC and FBL in Elorza to train militias in Barinas, Mantecal, Quintero, San Vicente and others; a security chief with connections to the ELN; an officer of Syrian descent; two Munitions Directors of the Army; and more officers and colonels." (El Espectador, 2010, July 15)

Political activist Indira de Peña recognized this level of authority. She explained "FARC is in charge here, they visit military outposts in the border; there is total cooperation, they find logistical support, a space to rest, supplies and a comfortable life. FARC is here, it is entirely FARC's territory."[122]

It is important to note that FARC's presence and actions in Venezuela were extending further beyond the border with Colombia to inner states like Barinas, Guanare and Carabobo, and even to main cities where they built political networks and engaged in businesses.[123] "There were cells in Barquisimeto, the Centre-West, and Barinas"[124]. The Venezuelan journalist who

---

[120] Interview in Caracas, Venezuela, February 16, 2012.
[121] Reference to Miraflores Palace, the seat of the Venezuelan President. Interview in Caracas, Venezuela, February 16, 2012.
[122] Interview with Indira de Peña, political activist and wife of Political figure Alejandro Peña Esclusa. Caracas, Venezuela, February 24, 2012
[123] Interview with Roberto Giusti, Journalist at El Universal, Caracas, Venezuela. February 20, 2012.
[124] Interview with Carlos Romero, Professor of Political Studies at Universidad Central de Venezuela. Caracas, Venezuela. February 22, 2012.

was interviewed mentioned the case of a shelter of FARC in the mountains of Yaracui, in Central-North Venezuela. She mentioned the training of militias, mainly for extortion and kidnapping, in an area extending from Carabobo to Central Venezuela.[125]

The militias were yet another actor through which FARC could extend its influence in the country. In the opinion of Indira de Peña, militias are the "people in arms". She calculates about 80,000 to 120,000 militia members who would supposedly be under FARC command in the event of an attack.[126] It was learned that a high military commander ordered a governor of the state of Amazonas to organize a group of peasants and militants to be trained by the Army, FARC and the ELN. The idea was to count on 3000 people of whom 200 would develop intelligence duties (El Espectador, July 15, 2010). FARC's involvement in the formation of militias became evident with an email sent by Italo Gonzalez to Rodrigo Granda:

> "Last Sunday I was invited to participate in the meeting of the Central Political-Military Commission of the Communist Party in order to give a lecture on our experience with the Bolivarian Militias. That same day, with our help, a national plan for the creation of militias in Venezuela militias was created." (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011, File Number I190)

As described by Roberto Giusti, "many NGO's, cooperative social organizations, and criminal structures, emerged associated to FARC."[127]

These emergent processes are also confirmed by the multiplication and diversification of criminal activities in the area. In a personal interview with Carlos Romero, Professor of Political Studies at the Universidad Central de Venezuela, who had studied border dynamics between Venezuela and Colombia, explained that the debate was not anymore about FARC's presence in the country, but about what militants were actually doing in each region. He explained that local economic and social dynamics explain the involvement of FARC in the area, and that each region had a particular function:

- The Guajira-Zulia axis: useful for weapons smuggling.
- The Santander-Tachira axis: Considerably commercial, useful for smuggling and for the flow of cash. It is the zone with the highest amount of coca fields and cocaine production.

---

[125] Interview with a journalist who asked to keep her name in reserve. Caracas, Venezuela, February 16, 2012.
[126] Interview with Indira de Peña, political activist and wife of Political figure Alejandro Peña Esclusa. Caracas, Venezuela, February 24, 2012.
[127] Interview with Roberto Giusti, Journalist at El Universal, Caracas, Venezuela. February 20, 2012.

- The Arauca-Apure axis: A savannah extending from country to country, rich in water resources. It is useful for the mobility of criminals and insurgents. Rich oil resources in this sector had derived into pressure of insurgents to oil and transnational companies. Close relation with political authorities in the area.
- The Amazonas region: Is the base of smuggling towards European countries. (See map 6)[128]

As it was explained in the last chapter there were also strong connections with political parties, businessman, social organizations and political figures. This is why, it has been argued, that even in the absence of a single regional revolution, the Venezuelan space had become not only the most important element for the clustering of combatants beyond borders, but the base for the reconstitution of insurgency networks. As Indira de Peña explains, "If FARC needs to be re-organized here they can find all they need."[129]

Other empty spaces exits, as it was observed in the last chapter, but none with the strategic significance of Venezuela. Panama was useful for criminal networks to develop; and militarily, it served for the protection of operatives of the 57th Front. Ecuador was very important for the development of political networks since Raul Reyes's centre of operations was located there. In terms of militarily structures, it was useful for units of the Southern bloc which continuously crossed the border in order to find safe haven. It was also valuable for the development of criminally activities since some of the most powerful drug structures of the organization used the area for their transactions. Brazil was never relevant in terms of the amount of active combatants embedded, but the political connections and especially the development of criminal networks for narco-trafficking were more significant. Peru's north, more than being a space for the development of clusters, was a potential region for the expansion of coca crops, but such consideration will be explored ahead.

It is evident that empty spaces offer the opportunity for nodes of all the dimensions to survive, but such is not the case for all the variables explored. The following matrix summarizes how variables had contributed in a differentiated manner to the embedment of the three types of nodes. The level of influence can be classified in three stages: high

---

[128] Interview with Carlos Romero, Professor of Political Studies at Universidad Central de Venezuela. Caracas, Venezuela. February 22, 2012.
[129] Interview with Indira de Peña, political activist and wife of Political figure Alejandro Peña Esclusa. Caracas, Venezuela, February 24, 2012

probability, possible or marginal, and low probability of embeddedness. A deeper analysis of this matrix will be done in the conclusion.

	Government support	Political Organizations	Alliances with Armed Actors	Empty Spaces	Secretive nodes
Political	X	X	O	X	O
Military	X	O	O	X	X
Criminal	O	-	-	X	X

X   High embeddedness
O   Possible or marginal embeddedness
-   Low embeddedness

The re-emergence of a commercial insurgency

As it was demonstrated, by the end of 2010 FARC continued to be a national insurgency in terms of its position within the region. It was still fighting against the Colombian state and not to implement a revolutionary system through South America. However, in terms of its operations (military, political and criminal), it was becoming more transnational. The expansion of its networks created a window of opportunity for the insurgency to survive creating a serious challenge to the Colombian counterinsurgent. How would this be possible?

Network theory, introduced in the first chapter, explains that networks do not collapse when a considerable number of nodes are disabled, or even when several of its hubs are destroyed. It was mathematically proven that about 5% to 15% of its hubs would have to be de-activated simultaneously for its destruction, but this is precisely what protection of nodes and hubs beyond borders prevents. As it has been said, military hubs (insurgents with the highest number of linkages) such as Timochenko, Ivan Marquez, Grannobles, Hermes, and Juan Santrich continued to live comfortably in Venezuela; while political hubs such as Rodrigo Granda, Olga Lucia Marin, and Hermes were also protected in this country. Other hubs such as Lucia Moret, Ovidio Salinas and Nubia Calderon were living in Nicaragua, while in Europe Alberto Martinez and Lucas Gualdron continued performing their functions. In Cuba, Alberto Bermudez was also continuing his duties.

Nevertheless, it is not only hubs that are being preserved in other countries. The survival of FARC would also be possible given the considerable amount of common nodes (insurgents with a fewer number of connections) beyond the reach of the counterinsurgent. In Venezuela alone, as it was said, there were about 1500 combatants by 2010, and politically there were an uncountable number of individuals through organizations, groups, and cells affiliated to the MCB. If we observe Appendix 7 we could have an approximate idea of elements that would survive an offensive of the counterinsurgent in Colombia. As it was

explained in the second chapter, these elements together, not only those of one dimension or those remaining in a single state, constitute a base for the insurgency to re-emerge. As defined, re-emergence occurs when dispersed nodes come together with some sort of organizational logic to re-engage with the three dimensions and to return to the primary theatre of operations.

As network theory suggests, networks are not static structures but evolving entities in constant change according to the conditions of its nodes and the influx of elements from the environment. Complexity tells us that systems are in a co-evolution process with the environment, meaning that the latter creates conditions that affect the system, stimulating change. In the case of FARC, the environment does not only create opportunities for the organization to place insurgents in other countries, it also allows a series of conditions that permit the flexibility, redundancy and adaptability of its networks. Ultimately, these processes contribute to the survival of the insurgency, and more notably, to the possibility of its re-appearance in Colombia if the circumstances are appropriate.

In political terms, it is necessary to make a distinction between two different processes. One is the direct support by an actor (government, organization or armed group), not only through its political acts but also in terms of material support. This is the case of Venezuela's financial support as explained in the sixth chapter. However, there is a different process that might actually be more relevant in political terms. That is an 'indirect' support to the insurgency through the preservation, maybe legitimation, of FARC's ideology and discourse. This may come in the form of clear and precise declarations as the ones Hugo Chavez has given:

> "FARC and ELN are not terrorists, they are real Armies, and they should be recognized as such (…) they are insurgent forces with a Bolivarian political project that is respected here" (Yamhure, 2011).

More importantly, the discourse will be preserved because a great diversity of actors, without necessarily being FARC's allies, shares its ideology, visions and claims. In that sense, and through their day-to-day activities, they will spread the idea that grievances still need to be addressed, and that their ideological approach is an appropriate answer. Even if they don't agree with the use of force, through their discourse they create a context to justify the existence of an insurgency in Colombia. This must not necessarily be understood as the responsibility of such agents. As it was explained, they exist with their own particular interests and pursue their own goals. Some of them will speak more openly in favour of FARC,

like MCB-affiliated groups, whereas others will abstain from doing so. An example is offered by an Argentinean citizen who in an MCB rally declared:

> "We had a week full of international events; besides the savage bombardment of the Colombian Air Force to the camp of comrade Mono Jojoy we had elections in Venezuela and yesterday a complicated situation in Ecuador. These speak about the particular situation that our continent is living and the importance that we remain organized here in Argentina, where we have another trench from were to fight this grand battle for the liberation of Latin America. This event and the presence of all these organizations are very important for us, because we consider the struggle in Colombia as the first trench against Imperialism. There, our fighting comrades, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, the *Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional*, and all the resisting Colombian people, are in the first trench of war; the toughest and the bloodiest." (Barricada TV, 2010, October 14)

In this sense, the MCB was the most relevant instrument for the survival of political networks. The movement's discourse clearly justifies the existence of the insurgency. In the Declaration produced after the Second Conference of the MCB in Quito, Ecuador, its members endorsed

> "The need to wage all the necessary wars, to employ all forms of struggle to change the system: the pacific and non-pacific struggles, the civic manifestations, the rise of oppressed classes and sectors, the transforming electoral options, civil disobedience, the just social struggles and rebellions, the popular mobilizations and all types of political protests and irreverence against the oppressing and marginalizing order" (Movimiento Continental Bolivariano, 2008).

They also proclaimed that:

> "The reactivation –from the Bush Administration, from the CIA and the Pentagon, and from the 'fascistoid' regime of Alvaro Uribe and his narco-paramilitaries– of the war and subversion project against the Bolivarian revolution will have in us, sworn and incorruptible enemies capable of fighting it in any of its forms" (Movimiento Continental Bolivariano, 2008).

And more importantly, that

> "The recognition of FARC-EP and other insurgent sectors as belligerent forces, will find in us tireless fighters. So will do the liberty of Simon Trinidad and Sonia, of the five Cuban patriots and all prisoners of the empire" (Movimiento Continental Bolivariano, 2008).

In this way, militants of the political dimension in other countries are embedded on the long term, and the networks they constitute will achieve flexibility, adaptability and redundancy. MCB members, including members of NBAFs, can easily move from country to country spreading FARC's discourse. If pressure increases in a particular country, they will find spaces to continue their actions in other states, preserving the system. Similarly, they will be able

to incorporate more individuals in their movement, and even if militants are captured or if they decide to retire, there will always be more candidates willing to join. Political networks in Europe should not display different dynamics, with activists finding spaces of action through different countries. Militants in this continent would survive an offensive in Colombia, both because they have a life of their own and because they could continue interacting with hubs remaining in other countries.

This means that as long as the discourse and ideology are preserved through the secondary environment, networks will find the necessary forms to adapt in order to continue existing. For example, after Raul Reyes's computers were seized, there was an 'offensive' against members of the MCB. Knowledge about connections between FARC and several organizations became public, and since then, no other plenary Congresses have been celebrated. Nevertheless, this did not mean that FARC withdrew from the international arena; on the contrary, as it was explained, the international command was taken over by Ivan Marquez, and with all certainty adaptations to the new environment were under way. Probably new channels and new organizational forms, spaces and scenarios were explored.

However, the criminal dimension, in terms of narco-trafficking, also exemplifies the flexibility and adaptability of the networks, creating opportunities for the insurgency to survive. There are three different processes through which this is possible: the accommodation of nodes in other cultivation zones, the flexibility of traffic routes, and the balloon effect.

There are several spaces through the region where FARC's operatives could extend its dominion. In Peru, the northern region of Loreto had been one of the areas of major growing coca cultivation. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2011b), crops in the *Marañon-Putumayo-Amazonas* basin increased from 986 hectares in 2006 to 3169 in 2010; a 90.2% increase (p.20). There is no major Peruvian armed organization controlling these areas as Sendero columns do in the VRAE or Alto Huallaga. There might already be an influence of FARC on this region but no conclusive evidence could be drawn. There are mixed accounts. The prestigious journalist Gustavo Gorriti, who has conducted field research in the area and has talked to the local peasants, believes that although the type of plant used in the area is brought from Colombia there are no signs that FARC are controlling the activity.[130] However, Luis Villamarin (2007) believes the insurgency's presence is evident. He believes that FARC had taken advantage of the coca crops in the provinces of Mayres, Requena,

---

[130] Interview with Gustavo Gorriti, journalist and researcher at Caretas Magazine. Lima, Peru, March 27, 2012

Nauta, Ucayali and Loreto. He recalls reports by the Regional President of Loreto denouncing the presence of FARC in the Valley of Napo River by 2006.

However, this is not the only space in which the insurgency's criminal nodes could expand. There are other areas where FARC's options are not as clear. As it was noted, there was a connection between FARC and Quispe's Sendero Luminoso column in the VRAE. Cultivation in this region increased from 15,813 hectares in 2006 to 19,723 in 2010, a 12.8% raise (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011b, p.20). Now, FARC's nodes would not move into the region to compete for territorial domination against Sendero. Given a possible context of alliances, several of FARC's nodes could contribute in the area until they are able to re-engage with activities in Colombia. From an economic perspective, however, this idea is not necessarily logical. Similar opportunities are offered by the *Palcazu-Pichis-Pachitea* basin in central Peru, where coca fields increased by 58.9% since 2006 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011b, p.20); and the provinces of the North of La Paz, Bolivia where there was an increase of 33.3% of coca hectares from 2009 to 2010 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011c, p.9). Nevertheless, the probability for FARC's operatives to reach these areas is rather low. It is more likely they will move into regions neighbouring Colombian territory.

Similarly, trafficking routes have also proved to be sufficiently flexible. Whereas Colombia was the base for aerial transportation of cocaine for decades, Venezuela became the new space from where almost all cocaine was flown into other destinations. The air traces presented in Appendix 8 describe the evolution of trafficking routes. The state of Apure in Venezuela, more than any location in Colombia, became the point of origin for almost all air traffic. The struggle of different types of organizations including former paramilitaries, FARC, the FBL and the ELN in Western Venezuela is related to the dominion of territory for the purpose of controlling drug routes. Empty spaces not only in this country but in Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Brazil were also useful for the transportation of drugs. As such, FARC's criminal operatives could continue to be involved with drug markets through a combination of different production centres and alternative traffic routes outside of Colombia.

The presence of criminal nodes in other areas is not the only contribution from the environment explaining the preservation of the system. As explained in the fifth chapter, there is a 'balloon effect' in drug production processes. Just as the air in a balloon moves into new spaces when it is squeezed, the elimination of coca plantations in a region or zone leads into their increase in different areas. When antinarcotic operations were successful in Peru

and Bolivia during the 80's, coca fields increased in Colombia. Years later, as Uribe's policies contributed to the reduction of crops in Colombia, they increased in the former two countries. While cultivation in Colombia decreased from 163,300 hectares in 2000 to 62,000 in 2010, in Peru they increased from 43,400 to 61,200 and in Bolivia from 14,600 to 30,900 for the same period (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011a, p.101). This clearly opens the possibility for the criminal economy to return to Colombia in the future, even if it is considerably reduced.

In military terms the dynamics do not need further discussion. On one hand, the existence of camps, field commanders and combatants beyond borders represent the preservation of a capacity to attack, ready to be re-deployed in Colombia when the conditions are right. On the other, insurgents performing military functions in different countries, such as Comintern members in Europe and South America, could move around different markets to guarantee war materiel supply chains.

This brings us to an idea introduced at the beginning of the chapter: that existing elements of the three dimensions, dispersed through the region, could survive internal counterinsurgent efforts in Colombia allowing a probable re-emergence of the insurgency. This is possible given certain environmental conditions which make its networks flexible, adaptable and redundant.

In specific terms of re-emergence, there are many possible paths depending on how the organization is being attack in Colombia, and on which elements manage to survive. It would depend on economic, political, social and strategic circumstances in the country. It can occur in one single moment, or it may happen gradually by dimensions. As in complexity, the direction of the system is undetermined and unpredictable, and presents no single path for the re-appearance of the insurgency in Colombia.

But the possibilities of re-emergence are also related to the processes of node militarization, politicization and criminalization, explained in the second chapter, through which all the dimensions of the commercial insurgency can be reconstructed. Militants focused on political activities in Colombia and other countries could suddenly become combatants. As it was observed in the fifth chapter, members of the PC3 and the MB were receiving military training, and according to an interview with a member of the PC3, they were ready to take up arms if the conditions justified it. On the other hand, a number of foreigners within the ranks demonstrate the will of non-nationals to join the organization.

An important element for the reconstruction of the insurgency would be the return of fighters stationed in Venezuela to Colombia, including military commanders through which command and control protocols can be preserved or reconstructed.

Similarly, military nodes (combatants) stationed in other countries may lose their motivation given a strong counterinsurgent offensive. But the persistence of the ideology and discourse through the region could convince them of the need to continue their political struggle through weapons. Combatants that have turned to crime, which could spread through the region, can also be persuaded by the discourse and ideals to re-engage with the politically-motivated struggle. Several political agents might even contribute for this to be the case. In general terms, there will continue to be a justification to wage war in Colombia, a sort of regional impulse that can be exploited by insurgency remnants to explain their need to recur to arms against the Colombian state.

In terms of criminalization, the return of the criminal economy to areas in Colombia could serve as a motivation for individuals, Colombians and foreigners, to return to war as a means to obtain profits from the new coca boom.

For this reason the counterinsurgent needs to address all of the dimensions of the commercial insurgency simultaneously. For example, if it fights militarily only, militants will merge towards the political or criminal dimensions. This was already being witnessed with increased operations in Colombia during the Uribe administration. On one hand, a more urban model was being developed, meaning political nodes were becoming more relevant; and on the other, as explained by former Deputy Minister of Defence Sergio Jaramillo, more autonomous fronts were becoming more interested in criminal profits.

Pressure was also pushing combatants towards the borders and especially to Venezuela. So the counterinsurgent did not only face the challenge of addressing the three dimensions altogether, but to confront the nodes of the three dimensions beyond Colombian borders. The state could potentially reduce FARC to the point of near-destruction within its borders, but to guarantee that the insurgency will not re-emerge it needs to implement control measures to mitigate the effects of those elements remaining in other spaces.

A potential future

The analysis in the present dissertation does not take into account insurgency conditions after Uribe's administration, but it is important to consider a potential transnational scenario based on changes motivated by the implementation of Cano's model.

It was explained in the fifth chapter that this model intended to turn the insurgency into a more urban political organization, more connected with the communities, and embedded within its society, exploiting the real grievances of marginalized or specific social sectors. International networks could become the extension of this model through other societies, allowing the organization to become a more transnational networked-complex insurgency with legitimacy and support within specific social and political sectors through the region. Such sectors would include marginalized communities, students, peasants, indigenous peoples, labour unions, political radicals, progressive organizations, communists, Marxists and extremists, possibly unified under the umbrella of Bolivarianism.

From this perspective there would be a connection between the internal and external dimensions. The line that divides internal and external institutions would become blurred; external cells and networks would be understood as extensions of national ones. The insurgency would be a grand single movement with the same kind of cells in Colombia and beyond borders; a massive set of interconnected groups performing similar functions through different social and geographical spaces. Political internal structures, the PC3 and the MB, would be articulated with support groups created by the Comintern and NBAF's within the MCB. Furthermore, they could be understood as a single institution but with different labels. They would all be embedded through the region exploiting elements that have been discussed, in the hope of building a real mass movement.

A graphic vision of this model would be, very much as in the case of Al Qaeda, an interconnected group of individuals in a specific country motivated by the ideals of Bolivarianism and sympathetic towards FARC. They would engage in all sorts of activities in favour of the insurgency: blogging; spreading the discourse; recruiting more militants; organizing demonstrations; and using virtual spaces, such as the internet and social networks. Once again, Cano's model is closer to the idea of a netwar, in which the political and military dimensions would overlap significantly, as combatants would be members of cells embedded within the population instead of isolated guerrillas in the jungle.

Now, as it was said, this was not the case by the end of 2010, and the probability of the insurgency becoming a mass movement was still remote. If commanders would observe and understand the current global social and political contexts, they would appreciate the potential that an insurgency could find in this type of models as a source of power. The rise of the internet, the interest in social networks, the Arab Spring, the proliferation of student protests, and in general terms, the emergence of a wide global people's movement with local

expressions, constitute an enormous opportunity for the insurgency to become a mass political movement. Cano seemed to have recognized such importance:

> "[We need to talk] to Senator Piedad [Córdoba] about the need to create a Party
> of the people and to look for its alliance with the Movimiento Bolivariano"[131]

In the interview with the member of the PC3 which was introduced in the fifth chapter, he mentioned FARC's efforts to articulate its political structures (PC3 and MB) into a new wider movement that would be known as *Marcha Patriotica* which would serve as a new initiative for FARC's participation in politics. In the interview conducted in November 2011, he argued that such Movement would officially appear in March 2012. Months after the interview, around April 2012 *Marcha Patriotica* appeared as a wide opened movement with considerable support from peasant groups and in the Colombian countryside. The articulation of this movement into the regional Bolivarian structures, including the MCB, could be a step in the direction just described.

Similarly, the idea of a political organization linking the internal and external structures based on FARC cells was already present before Raul Reyes's death. In one of his emails he describes:

> "FARC's party cells, for being the motor of all our activities, are responsible for supporting the work of the CCB and other forms of mass organization. The cells appoint someone in charge of promoting CCB cells, who informs his cell about the tasks developed, and at the same time receives instructions or recommendations for the good performance of his duties. He is also in contact with his similar from another cell." (Perez, 2008, p.214)

In the opinion of Carlos Romero, the insurgency cannot be understood independently from the scenario of global revolutions and social upheaval, since it gives particular opportunities and characteristics to the organization. "FARC is not the same now as it was before."[132] It exploits communication technologies and social networks. Its discourse spreads through different websites; political structures like the MCB and the MB are active in Facebook and YouTube; and FARC and commanders such as Hermes have twitter accounts.[133] By August 2012 FARC counted on 11304 followers in twitter, and messages of support from individuals in different countries, mainly Latin America and Europe, could be read in its online profile.

---

[131] Email sent by Alfonso Cano to members of the Secretariat known as 'Plan Renacer Revolucionario de las Masas'. Provided by an Intelligence Official of the Colombian National Navy.
[132] Interview with Carlos Romero, Professor of Political Studies at Universidad Central de Venezuela. Caracas, Venezuela. February 22, 2012.
[133] FARC: @FARC_Colombia; Commander Hermes: @CdteHermes

This is positive evidence of the work of cells overseas in their duty to spread FARC's visions and discourse in other countries.

Nonetheless, it is important not to overstate the consequences of this scenario, if ever achieved. It is highly likely that even through this approach FARC will remain a marginal organization in the region. As it was stated before, extremists and communist organizations are marginal in Latin American societies. Just as Al Qaeda is marginal to the Muslim world and yet poses a threat worldwide, FARC would still exist and it would threaten security and stability in Colombia, and probably throughout the region. In order to become a mass popular movement insurgents need to understand the weakness of pure violence and terrorism, especially against civilians and communities.

Conclusion

Insurgencies are by definition political; they wage a particular type of warfare. Insurgents pursue a political goal through the means of arms and violence. But in practice, insurgencies may be permeated by criminal interests of those who profit from a particular illicit activity, such as narcotics production and trade. If such is the case, the motivations of combatants change: instead of waging war for a political and social objective, they wage it in order to secure their profits. Scholars have analysed in detail how internal conflicts become a protracting competition for the access to resources instead of a struggle to reach political and social ends.

Through these processes non-state armed actors, and particularly insurgencies, are transformed. Criminologists have analysed how politically-motivated organizations may become criminal entities and how criminal agents may turn into organizations which pursue political objectives. This might happen through the direct transformation of an entity or through its alliance with an organization of a different nature (e.g. criminals and insurgencies). Through these processes it is possible to observe the formation of a 'hybrid entity', or in terms of insurgency, a 'commercial insurgency'. It is not possible to clearly determine if the motivation and aims of this type of agent are purely political or strictly economic. In that sense, it will be difficult to strictly define this phenomenon as either political violence or criminality.

To appropriately understand commercial insurgencies this dissertation introduced a particular narrative explaining the organization not as a monolithic entity with a single body, direction and aim, but as a system composed by individuals (nodes, in terms of network theory), which display differentiated interests and functions according to three dimensions of the organization: political, military and criminal. For this reason it was argued that commercial insurgencies display a triadic character of complementing dimensions. It is necessary to go beyond simplistic and reductionist perspectives to 'open the box' and discover competing and contrasting interests and functions of groups or individuals within the organization. An understanding of these entities through simplifying concepts such as 'narcoterrorism', terrorism, or criminality is insufficient to include all the elements at play in this type of situations.

Furthermore, as it was analysed in this dissertation, insurgencies do not exist in a vacuum, they are part of their environment. In general terms, the environment in which non-state actors operate has evolved as the interconnection of societies has increased over time. Progressively, events in remote locations are not only known halfway around the world, they generate effects through distant societies. As such, the environment of operations for a rebel organization is no longer the territory of a state and a particular nation, but a continuum of social and geographical spaces binding together the local, national, regional and global levels, blurring the boundaries between them in the process.

Complexity teaches us that the system (the insurgency) and the environment are in constant interaction. Due to this intense relation, the environment becomes a source of opportunities for the rebels. This dissertation demonstrated that through the exploitation of particular elements within the environment an insurgency is capable of embedding nodes (militants, members and combatants) through other social and geographical spaces beyond a single state. These elements include: sympathy from non-organized individuals; connections with social and political movements; alliances with armed organizations; government support; the exploitation of empty spaces; and the accommodation of secretive nodes. For analytical purposes the environment was studied through a categorization in which a 'primary environment' included the local and national levels, whereas a 'secondary environment' expressed the regional and global levels.

It was explained that through these elements combatants or militants who perform political, military or criminal tasks, can be embedded in the environment, through societies and territories beyond the borders of a single state. Their embedment in other social and geographical spaces depends on the type of functions they perform. In other words, not all variables are equally useful for the conduction of the three types of tasks. Some of them allow militants who perform political duties to act, but are not useful for the development of military or criminal activities. By contrast, other elements allow insurgents to conduct political, military and/or criminal duties.

It is first necessary to recognize, that the level to which militants are embedded depends on the type of interaction between the insurgency and its environment. That is, how the insurgency is part of wider processes of regional insurrection and upheaval determines how deeply insurgents are able to penetrate other societies, and how easily they can move and act within it.

This dissertation describes three types of scenarios: national insurgency with transnational networks; insurgency as part of a wider regional revolution, and transnational insurgency. In the case of the first category FARC proved to be an example, since it was demonstrated that by 2010 there were no regional monolithic processes of revolution or upheaval. Doctrines like Bolivarianism and Communism served more as a platform for the formulation of common principles for action within each state, than as the ideology of a single movement with a transnational agenda and coordinated agents throughout the region. This is an important contribution to the debate since traditional observations of FARC's international dimension either underestimated the role of external elements, in the belief that they were irrelevant for the future of the organization, or overestimated them on the understanding that every agent in the Left of the Latin American political spectrum was part of a conspiracy to undermine the Colombian government.

In the case of FARC, it was possible to determine which types of nodes (insurgents developing tasks of one of the dimensions) could be embedded through which specific elements, as it is expressed in the following chart:

	Government support	Political Organizations	Alliances with Armed Actors	Empty Spaces	Secretive nodes
Political	X	X	O	X	O
Military	X	O	O	X	X
Criminal	O	-	-	X	X

X   High embeddedness
O   Possible or marginal embeddedness
-   Low embeddedness

Several conclusions can be drawn from this observation. Empty spaces, created either by the government's unwillingness or incapacity to fight rebels, allow the embedment of insurgents developing all types of tasks. As it was explained, in these spaces the insurgency might even develop processes to increase its legitimacy as it becomes the unopposed authority in the area, probably multiplying its connections with individuals, social and political organizations and maybe even armed actors. This was mainly the case in western Venezuela.

In the case of government support, insurgents developing political and military tasks can be embedded as it was showed in the cases of Mexico, Venezuela and even Costa Rica. In the case of criminal activities, however, it was not very clear. The office in Mexico was arguably useful not only to develop political networks but to establish contacts with drug dealers. But this type of action was not necessarily developed with the government's approval, so rather than being attributed to government support, they can be observed as secretive actions of particular militants. In general terms it is difficult to explain drug-dealing related activities as

a direct result of government support. It might be the case that militants placed in other countries, with the acknowledgement of its national government, end up performing criminal duties without its consent or awareness. But there is no evidence to support this claim. As such, the level of embeddedness in the case of insurgents performing criminal duties is usually marginal.

In terms of armed actors, conditions for embedment are varied. FARC alliances with armed actors did not necessarily imply the placement of its militants (political, military or criminal) through other social and geographical spaces. Alliances were usually forged with the purpose of training or providing logistic support to other groups, mainly in camps in Colombia and rarely in other countries, but only for particular actions, as it was the case with the EPP in Paraguay. They did not require a permanent presence of FARC insurgents in other territories. With this is mind, embedment through military alliances is low or marginal for all types of functions.

In the case of political organizations, the embedment of militants conducting political tasks was higher, especially through groups affiliated to the MCB. But the possibility to embed insurgents who perform military or criminal tasks through this type of organizations was marginal. This, because political organizations are not involved or interested in drug trafficking and they do not control territory in order to allow combatants to be stationed in their countries. Although the possibility of embedding political militants through political agents is high, we must remember that their position within societies, with the exception of Venezuela, is marginal as they usually lack strong popular support.

In case of the accommodation of secretive nodes, it was evident that clandestine networks mainly perform criminal and military functions, acquiring weapons and making drug-related transactions. For these two dimensions then embedment is classified as high. In political terms, militants who were placed secretly in other countries were a cornerstone in the construction of political cells and groups. However, political activities in the secondary environment should be, by definition, open and transparent since the main objective is to spread FARC's vision and to gather support.

It is interesting to observe, by contrast, that FARC had developed a political organization with secretive militants through the primary environment. The PC3, more than being an opened organization, is a political party composed of individuals performing clandestine activities where they operate. The MB is a semi-clandestine organization, so although its activities are

public the identity of most of its militants is unknown. This is one of the differences between the primary and secondary environments.

As another example of a difference, sympathy from non-organized individuals was relevant for the insurgency through the primary environment. It is one of the reasons explaining recruitment processes. However, through the secondary environment this variable tends to be irrelevant. Support from individuals only becomes significant when social or political organizations are created or when communities exist in an empty space. This variable alone cannot account for insurgent embeddedness beyond borders.

It is necessary to keep in mind that whereas political organizations in host countries do not necessarily contribute directly to the embeddedness of militants who perform criminal or military tasks, their constant support and direct participation with FARC in political events, contributes to the stability of the cell. Individuals in the cell could well be establishing contacts for drug-dealing and weapons acquisition, without the knowledge or approval of members of other organizations. Europe is an example. The networks created in those countries, as it was explained, had a clear mission to engage in political activities. In that sense, they created a web of NGOs and supporting organizations. But Europol had knowledge of FARC's interest in increasing criminal activities through the continent, mainly for the purpose of drug-dealing and weapons acquisition. For this reason the interrelatedness of dimensions is important.

These particular observations vary according to the relation system-environment or the participation of the insurgency within regional processes. For insurgencies that are part of a regional revolution it should be easier to find more political and armed organizations willing to help militants beyond national borders, at least, those performing military and political tasks.

Now, in terms of structure FARC was not necessarily a network, but it increasingly incorporated networked elements. As explained by netwar theorists, insurgencies are likely to be composed of a combination of hierarchies and networks; with different types of networks coexisting within the same organization. A hierarchy is strictly preserved through its military structure with centralized command and control. But increased flexibility was evident as conventional-like structures gave way to smaller, more mobile and adaptable formations. Swarming, more than frontal confrontation became a routine. Militias, by

nature, although following hierarchical patterns of command, operated through swarming in cities and urban areas.

The PC3 and the Movimiento Bolivariano were more networked than FARC's military structures. The PC3 was indeed a vertical, centralized and directed network, with an organizational logic of patterns resembling Christakis and Fowler's telephone tree model. In case of the MB it is more difficult to determine its structure given its character as a more opened organization. Its networks were configured in a macro level as a scale-free network; with hubs, stars, all-channel designs, chains, and cliques, as explained in the first chapter, in a micro level.

In regards to criminal actions it is clear that not every front in the organization participated in drug-related activities. Those which did, constitute the first links of complex trafficking chains spread all over the world. These structures were decentralized, without a particular head (as in the case of the cartels), arranged as a line or 'bucket brigade' at a macro level. On a micro level a hybrid of different network topologies emerges, including chains and stars. These networks were adaptive and complex in that they were composed of individuals of different organizations which dominated particular sectors of the line or specific routes. Disabled nodes were easily replaced by others (individuals or organizations).

In terms of counterinsurgency it has been argued that the state faces a two-fold challenge. On one hand, the insurgency is multidimensional, meaning that the state must address the three dimensions simultaneously (military, political and criminal) in order to avoid the re-composition of the organization. On the other, it must address or at least mitigate the effects of the existence of militants in geographical and social spaces where it is not in control.

Although it is not the intention of this dissertation to formulate detailed and specific counterinsurgency recommendations, it is necessary to note several issues. Regarding the multidimensional character of the threat, the evolution of counterinsurgency theory introduced in the third chapter explains the emphasis that should be placed on state actions. It is clear that military action alone is not effective itself. A focus on the population, more than on the destruction of the rebels, is more successful.

Winning people's hearts and minds became the main objective in counterinsurgency. The state needed to implement all types of policies and programmes to become legitimate in the eyes of the population, while diminishing the authority of the insurgency. As it was analysed, the insurgency built legitimacy not only around a particular ideological discourse, but

through the provision of services where the state had been absent. The criminal economy was the base for these processes to develop; it allowed inhabitants to have an income and sources for their sustenance. Defeating the insurgency consequentially required the disruption of the narcotics-based economy and the provision of services, allowing the population to live under regular secure conditions within the law.

Given this logic, it is not possible to win hearts and minds through 'civic action' campaigns. Temporary educational, cultural, recreational, and health missions have limited value. An effective approach needs to permanently incorporate these marginalized communities into productive and social structures. It needs to have the war economy replaced by sustainable economic processes providing a stable income for the development of these communities. For this reason the development-centred counterinsurgency approach makes sense. In the end, the solution is to build state institutions in those areas where their historical absence has allowed a parallel authority to appear. Such institutions are logically not limited to the Military or Police Forces; they must include state agencies in charge of sectors such as rural development, infrastructure, sanitation, health, education, trade, agriculture, and the environment.

Counterinsurgency theory explains that these efforts should not be conducted in the absence of an overall strategy and without the coordination of a civil authority of the highest level. This was finally grasped during the Uribe administration, which formulated a national policy with participation of all state institutions known as *Politica de Consolidación de la Seguridad Democrática*. Although specific gains had been achieved in regions such as La Macarena, Montes de Maria and Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, by 2010 there were still many regions in the country in which few gains had been made.

Of course, part of this overall strategy also needed to include a military component to fight insurgents. Diverse types operations, as explained in Chapter 4, including surgical strikes against high value targets and wider operations to recover larger territories, proved to be successful against FARC's military structures.

But political networks had been the most difficult to confront. Their actions fluctuated between the liberty of expressing ideas in free-speech democratic societies, and the illegality of cooperating with violent armed agents. In judicial terms it will always be difficult to prosecute individuals based on their political beliefs or their association with a political organization, if there is no proven connection with an armed actor.

As counterinsurgency history demonstrates, repression of political thoughts is not only inconsistent with the principles of a democratic state; it has also been counterproductive, generally providing more justifications for the insurgency. Intelligence, more than force, becomes strategic when it comes to discovering and dismantling clandestine networks. Infiltration, penetration, and information operations are more valuable in this sense.

Targeting the general population through psychological operations aimed to delegitimize the insurgency is practically unnecessary. The lack of support of FARC at the national level makes it difficult to believe that Colombians are willing to join the insurgency *en masse*. But on the local level, and through marginalized social sectors which the insurgency is expected to exploit, information operations could be used in order to avoid an increase in recruiting for the insurgent's political networks. This should not be done through indoctrination, but by raising awareness about the risks of becoming part of organizations associated with the insurgency, and the importance of acting through institutions which act fully within the law.

As it was described, networks can be targeted in two ways: the destruction of its structure or the disruption of its functions (altering its flows). Regarding the first, several hubs and nodes need to be physically destroyed or disabled. This is achievable when nodes are identifiable, and it should be a course of action when the result is forecasted to be positive. But in the case of political networks, the identity of nodes is unknown; and in several cases their linkage to the organization is hard to confirm. The strategy, then, should not aim at the destruction of nodes, but to the contamination of network flows. That is, a kind of virus transmitted from node to node (militant to militant) with a convincing message of why it is necessary to abandon the insurgency. This is a very difficult task and requires the implementation of psychological and information operations.

But political structures have a particular value. In democracies, insurgencies are illegal because they recur to violence, not because they display certain type of ideals or pursue particular political goals. The counterinsurgent could then stimulate process to strengthen the insurgency's political dimension if that derives into the weakening of its military dimension. In other words, it could motivate insurgents to leave their weapons and to conduct their struggle through political parties. Counterinsurgency, once again, is not necessarily about physically destroying the enemy, but about finding a balance between different sorts of measures that will produce the end of violence. From this perspective, political concessions are legitimate and logical, and not necessarily a weakness of the state, if they are part of an overall strategic plan. Political concessions have been successful in the

struggle against insurgents: the British promise of Independence to Malayans reduced the base of support of the communists, and the creation of a Royal Commission on Jewish Immigration in Palestine defused the Arab revolt in 1936.

Accepting the constitution of some sort of political organization could be a correct step in the elimination of the insurgency as a violent agent. This of course cannot be achieved without considering the particular political context, and without the certainty that the effects of such concessions will be as intended (confirming the need of an overall strategy). Otherwise, the consequences can be counterproductive.

But addressing the multidimensional nature of the insurgency in the primary environment is only one step in the right direction; it is also necessary to act regarding the transnational character of the networks. In that sense a regional understanding of counterinsurgency, more than a state-based approach, is more effective to confront insurgents.

From this perspective, through the concepts of netwar and complex insurgency the response to the phenomenon is understood as an enterprise that brings together diverse agents beyond a single state. The idea that 'it takes a network to defeat a network' could be understood as the need to include a wider range of actors. In similar terms, authors such as Bunker or Mackinlay insist on the need of a 'networked counterinsurgency' approach when bringing together the forces of several states, international and regional organizations, private military companies, the United Nations, etc. For the case of FARC this would be clearly effective if a coalition of countries including Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru and Ecuador were to come together to fight the insurgency with support from regional institutions. In practice, though, this had been impossible to achieve. Reasons include a supposed sympathy from governments towards the insurgency, or at least their unwillingness to fight the rebels because of their fear of being dragged into the conflict.

There is a possibility for other action beyond the participation of specific states. Through regional institutions cooperative action would acquire more legitimacy and strength than through particular coalitions. But mechanisms are still underdeveloped. There is a Defence Council at the Union of South American Nations UNASUR, which by 2010 didn't have much practical effect. This type of institutions should give the first steps to implement multinational actions addressing all sorts of threats to the region including drug production/dealing, transnational criminal networks and terrorism. It could begin with joint exercises, and it could aim at the creation of task forces, or even a regionalized force under

the flag of UNASUR, for specific duties. Similarly helpful would be a real regional centre for the exchange of intelligence information and probably for Police cooperation, which are effectively non-existent, and only bilateral. Given the lack of development and institutional presence in border areas, this regional institutional framework could be ideal to develop joint projects to address the situation in such areas in order to disrupt the stability of empty spaces. In other words, this requires the construction of real regional security and cooperation institutions within existent regional organizations.

The difficulty in this case is achieving the commitment of states and to define the procedures, protocols, and decision-making processes for such actions. A strong diplomatic effort would be required to motivate the countries to join.

Ironically, because UNASUR grew as the creation of leftist and Bolivarian governments, Uribe's administration was reluctant to join. But through this scenario a real regional approach could actually be forged, if the Colombian diplomacy worked hard to achieve it. Although costly in terms of diplomacy and political capital, this would be the most effective approach to deal with militants and combatants placed beyond Colombian borders, and to avoid the survival and re-emergence of the organization.

In sum, this dissertation assessed several elements in the case of FARC which are usually ignored or marginalized from most analyses. The role of external elements tends to be either underestimated or overestimated according to subjective political perceptions: either the belief that every actor on the Left of the Latin American political spectrum is an ally of the organization; or the conviction that elements in foreign geographical and social spaces are meaningless for the future of the insurgency. This thesis seeks to construct a more objective understanding of the importance of the international dimension for FARC.

At the same time, it explores processes through which the insurgency could survive and re-emerge. A sector in Colombia is convinced that FARC's political structures are entirely irrelevant, and that only the military body of the organization is of importance. But as it has been demonstrated, non-military elements provide the insurgency with relative opportunities and should be taken into account. Policy makers and military analysts would fail if they only react to insurgency's adaptations. Their success will always depend on their ability to foresee likely scenarios and to be prepared to respond accordingly. In that sense, understanding real opportunities found by FARC in the international arena, beyond simplistic generalizations based on ideological affinity, is vital to avoid a possible reconfiguration of the

insurgency. Believing in oversimplifications about FARC's relations with several regional agents including governments, political organizations, communities and other armed actors, might be too costly for the Colombian counterinsurgent.

Appendix 1. Number of FARC combatants

Evolution number of combatants

	1964	1966	1970	1974	1978	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
■ Series1	48	400	650	700	850	1300	3650	8200	9500	11300	16900	20766	18690	14840	13970	11783	10179	8777	8268	8943
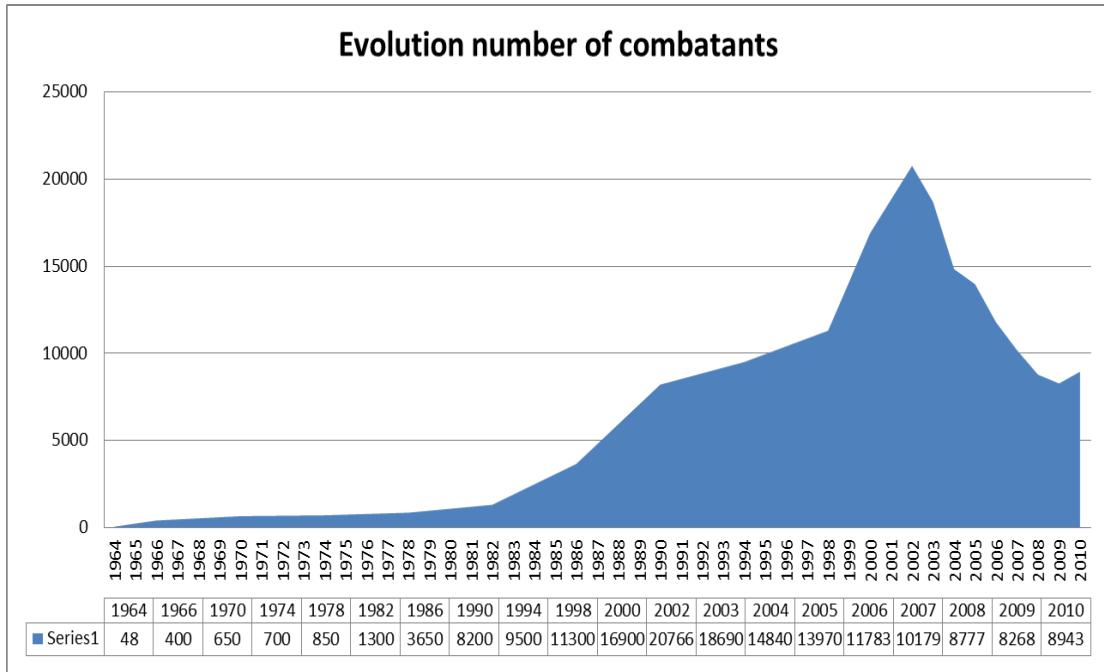
Source: Presentation provided by Intelligence Officer of the National Army

Number of combatants by 2009

BLOC	GUERRILLA MEMBERS
Caribe	550
Jose María Cordoba	950
Magdalena Medio	800
Oriental	4250
Comando Conjunto Central	450
Comando Conjunto de Occidente	1900
Sur	1600
TOTAL	**10500**

Source: ¿Que les queda a las FARC? (2008, June 6). In *Semana.* Retrieved from http://www.semana.com/conflicto/multimedia/que-queda-farc/141008-3. Accesed in March 22, 2009

Appendix 2. FARC guerrilla conferences

First Conference 1965   Location: Riochiquito, Cauca.

About 100 combatants and representatives from several groups including Marquetalia, Riochiquito, El Pato y Guayabero and 26 de Septiembre, came together to celebrate a first conference. After assessing what guerrillas had achieved they convene on a series of basic military, political, educational and organizational plans. The main objective was to preserve the integrity of the guerrilla movement, so a defensive more than an offensive character is adopted. As a previous stage to the official formation of FARC they come together under an organization named *Bloque Sur*.

Second Conference 1966   Location: El Duda, Meta

250 combatants come together for FARC's constitutive conference. The *Bloque Sur* officially becomes the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia FARC. For the first time it declares the objective of a protracted take-over of power. Acting as mobile guerrillas there is a decision to extend into new areas. The bases are set to form a real organization for the masses, education, propaganda and finances. The need to create a distribution of forces in determined areas is established. Several commands are created under the leadership of the guerrilla figures such as Ciro Trujillo, Joselo Lozada, Carmelo Lopez, Rogelio Diaz, Manuel Marulanda Velez and Jacobo Arenas. The latter two would move to the zone of El Pato in the province of Caqueta.

Third Conference 1968 Location: El Guayabero, Huila-Meta

After an assessment of current conditions, new fighting tactics were determined in order to avoid mistakes made by specific commanders. A national school of ideological formation is created for the purpose of studying "preventive war" and popular war.

Fourth Conference 1970

There were reformations to the High Command, and to command structures through the organizations. The idea of local Fronts is set, and the unfolding of fronts is ordered to cover new territorial spaces. New military plans are also established including a return to the central mountain range.

Fifth Conference 1974   Location: Meta

It ratified the methodology which was being applied giving positive results. A political project was proposed to increase the quality of the movement.

Sixth Conference 1978

One of the most important conferences for the organization. FARC counted on 1000 men and 120 commanders. The insurgency was constituted as a revolutionary army. The Statutes, the Internal Disciplinary Rules and command norms which define procedures in FARC began to be established. There was a general balance of the organization's work, of its political and mass organizations. Clandestine political organizations, as opposed to

opened and public parties were created. New modifications were implemented for the Central High Command and to the command structures through all hierarchal levels. High Commands were created for Fronts. The Secretariat of the Central High Command was formally constituted. A stronger emphasis is placed on education and it is determined that schools are to be created for Fronts and a high command and secretariat school. The journal *Resistencia* is to be published frequently

Seventh Conference 1982   Location: El Guayabero, Huila-Meta

FARC is transformed into an offensive movement. The 'Strategic Plan' for taking power in Colombia is sketched, and it is named 'Bolivarian Campaign for a new Colombia'. The need to engage on offensive operations through mobile commands is discussed and a 'new form of operations' is defined. The guerrillas will no longer be on the defensive, but instead they will look for the enemy in their positions to overwhelm it. The name of the organization is changed into Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP). The conference included a plenary in which the commanders of all 27 fronts met.

**Eighth Conference 1993**   Location: La Uribe, Meta

The biggest Conference held by FARC summoned sixty fronts of urban structures and the special guard of the Central High Command. It produced FARC's political programme for its participation in peace dialogues known as the 'Platform for a Reconstruction and National Reconciliation Government'. This was, in the insurgent's views, a government to achieve peace. The National Secretariat was reformed to include seven members. The figure of Simon Bolivar becomes more relevant for the organization.

Sources:

Movimiento Bolivariano por la Nueva Colombia. (2007, December). *La Organizacion en Marcha: las Conferencias Guerrilleras.* In Movimiento Bolivariano por la Nueva Colombia. Retrieved from http://mbolivariano.blogspot.com/2007/12/la-organizacion-en-marcha-las.html.

FARC-EP. (2007, April 21). *Cronologia de la Resistencia: FARC-EP Una Historia de Lucha*. Bloque Ivan Rios y Martin Caballero de las FARC-EP. Retrieved from http://www.resistencia-colombia.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=159:cronologia-de-la-resistencia-farc-ep-una-historia-de-lucha&catid=24&Itemid=38.

Appendix 3. FARC's militias.
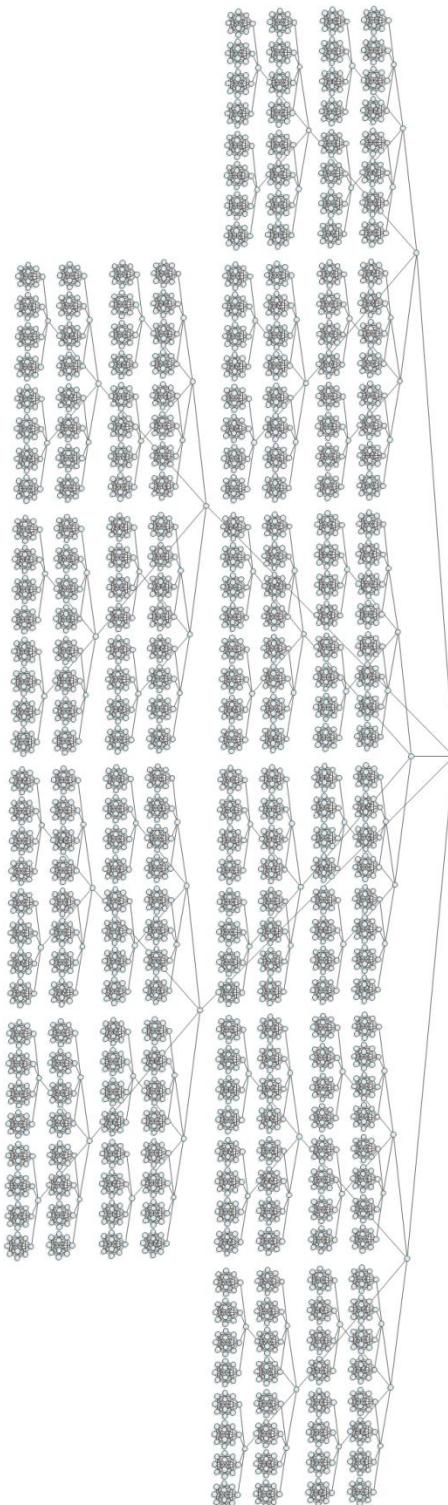
Note: It is important to note that there is no national Commander of militias. Commanders of Blocs and Fronts are the head of the militias in their areas. In that sense, The head of the whole structure is the Commander of FARC himself.
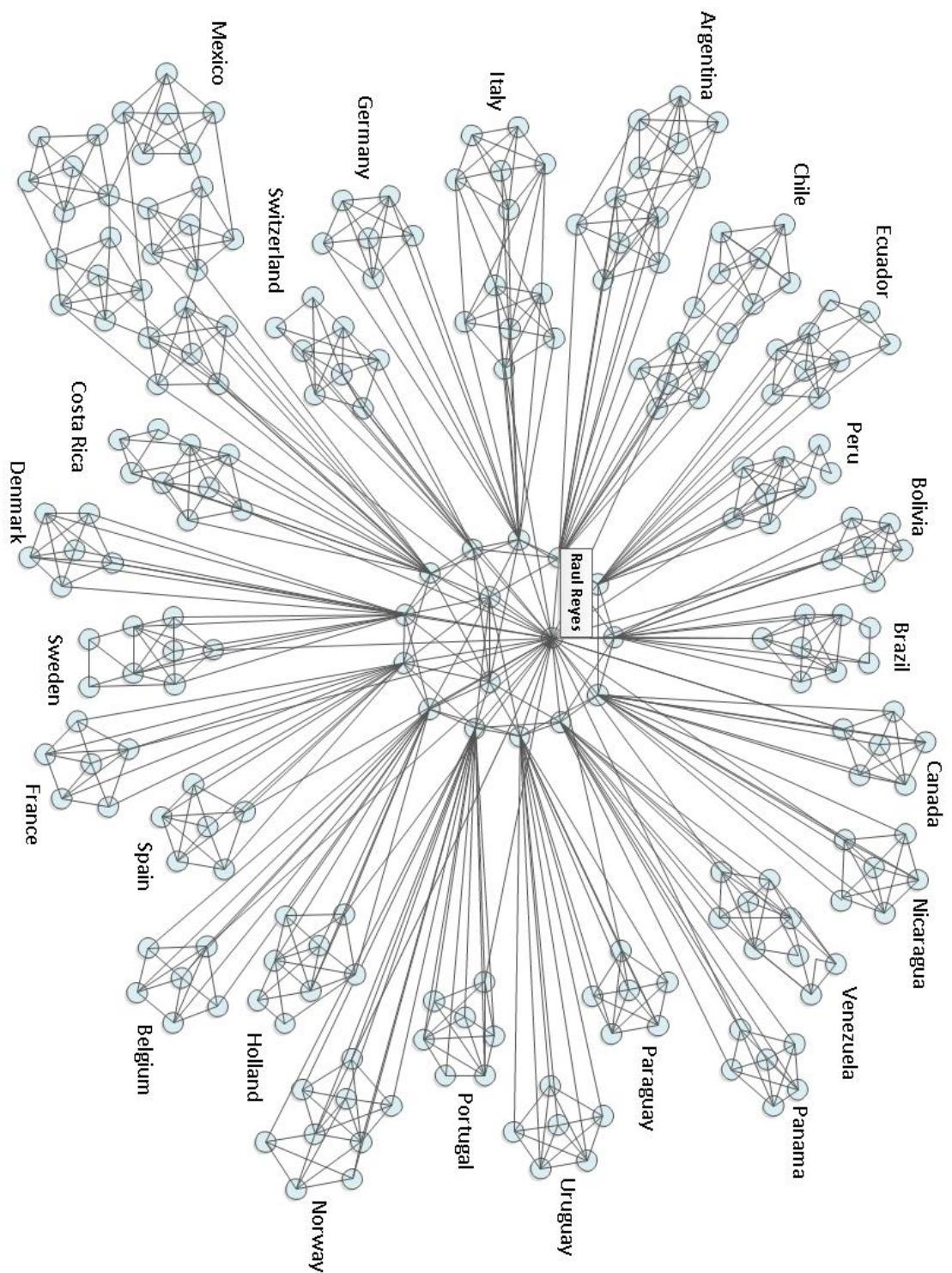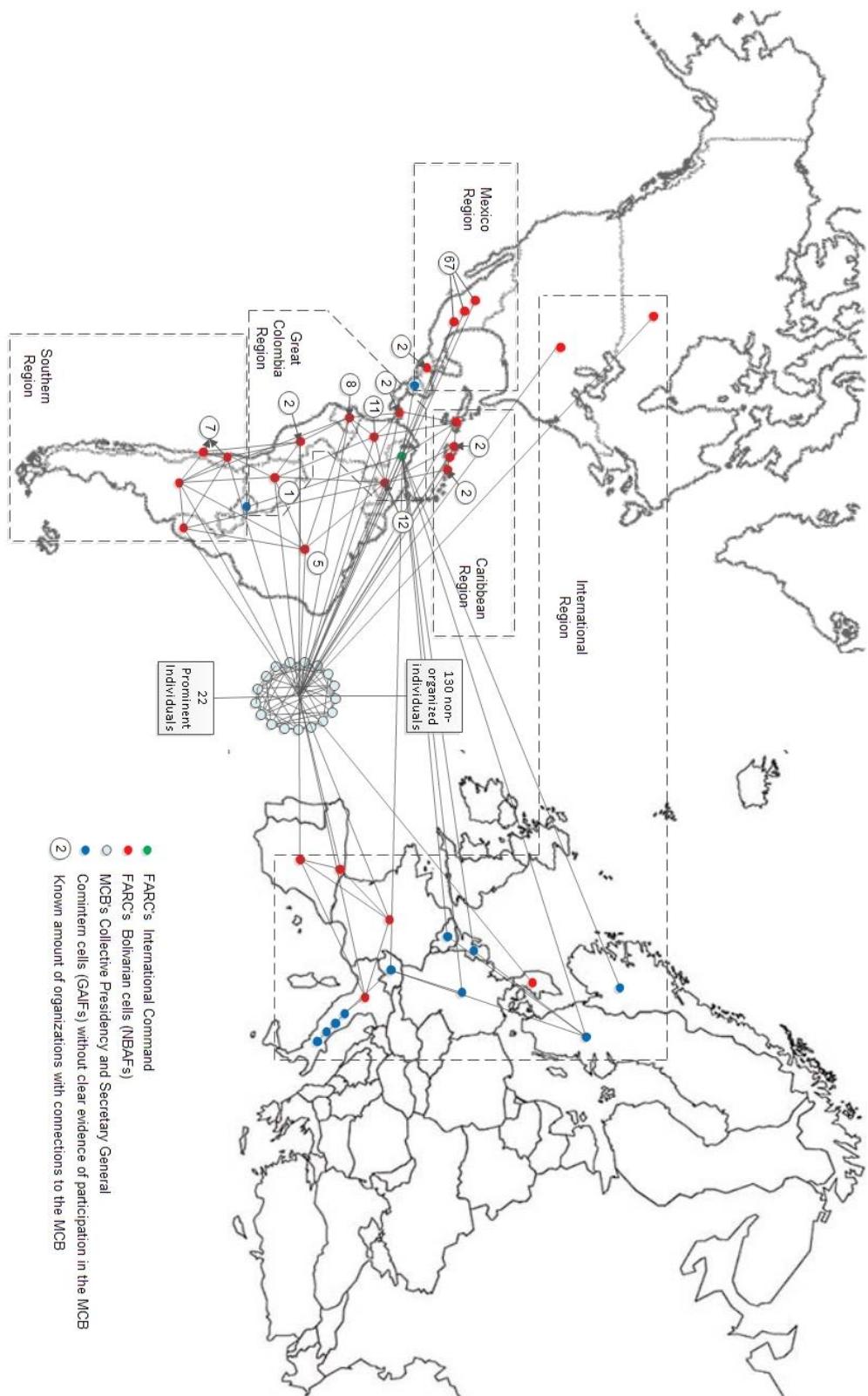
Appendix 6. Members of the Campaign for the Liberation of Manuel Olate

Argentina
Jorge Beistein, Economist
MCB, Argentinean Chapter
Nestor Kohan, Writer
Movimiento Brazo Libertario
Pedro Ponce Carrasco, General
Secretary Lomas de Zamora
Rosario Cortés

Bolivia
Felipe Quispe, Union and Peasant
leader

Brazil
Ivan Pinheiro, General Secretary,
Brazilian Communist Party
MCB, Brazilian Chapter

Chile
Carlos Sanchez, Poet
Claudia Echeverria, Sociologist
Partido Comunista de Chile, Calama,
Chile
Colectivo Andamios
Dario Quiroga Director, Corporacion de
Cultura y Turismo, Calama, Chile
Fernanda Cautivo, Psychologist and
former political prisoner
Hernan Vargas, Partido Comunista de
Chile, Arica, Chile
Hilda Alfaro, City Councillor, Communist
Party, Tocopilla,Chile
Ivan Araya, Partido Comunista de Chile,
Talca, Chile
Jaime Malagueño, former political
prisoner
Javier Rowe Communist City Councillor,
Calama, Chile
Jedry Veliz, Director, Union of Coper
Workers

Jimena Cumicam, Assembly of Leftist
Mapuches.
Jose Mardones, President, Central
Unitaria Trabajadores, Loa, Chile
Juan Carlos Berrios, Geographer and
Environmentalist Consultant
Marisol Acuña, Partido Comunista de
Chile, Linares, Chile
Movimiento Patriotico Manuel
Rodriguez
Sandra Pastenes, Antofagasta, Chile
Sergio Alvarado, Psychiatrist

Colombia
Comité de Solidaridad con Venezuela,
Comasolve
MCB Colombia Chapter

Dominican Republic
MCB Dominican Republic Chapter
Movimiento Caamañista
Narciso Isa Conde, Writer and essayist

Ecuador
Dax Toscano, Journalist
MCB Ecuador Chapter
Movimiento Guevarista Tierra y
Libertad
Movimiento Guevarista de Liberacion

USA
Luis Barrios, Priest and University
teacher.

France
Francisca Bravo
Movimiento continental Bolivarian
global

Guatemala
Miguel Angel Sandoval, former
presidential candidate

Italy
Marco Santopadre, Director, Radio città
Aperta
Gaia Capogna
Haidi Gaggio Giuliani
Giorgio Raccichini, Teacher, Porto San
Giorgio
Giuseppina Catalano
Valli Simone, Anpi Sarnano, Italy

Mexico
Judhit Galarza, Asociacion Derechos
Humanos de Mexico

Nicaragua
Salah Ahmine.
Agencia Bolivariana de Prensa APB
Nuestra America

Basque Country
Askapena Pais Vasco
Iñaki Gil de Sanvicente
Colectivo de Solidaridad Internacional
Pakito Arriaran

Peru
Bruno Diaz, Patagonia
Frente Patriotico de Liberacion de Peru
FPLP
Revista Mariategui

Puerto Rico
Linda Lebron, Partido Nacionalista de
Puerto Rico
MCB Puerto Rico Chapter

Sweden
Radio Café Stereo

Uruguay
Carlos Aznares, Director, Resumen
Latinoamericano Magazine
Fogoneros
MCB Uruguay Chapter
Santiago Mazzarovich, Photographer

Venezuela
Almicar Figueroa, Congressman
Carolus Wimner, Congressman
Colectivo Abre Brecha
Colectivo Alexis Vive
Colectivo Voces Antiimperialistas
Guardianes Latinoamericanos Medio
Ambiente
Israel Sotillo, Congressman
Jose Hernandez, Congressman
Juan Contreras, Coordinadora Simon
Bolivar
Jul Jabour, Member Latin American
Parliament
MCB Venezuela Chapter
Oresteres Leal, Congressman
Oscar Figuera, Congressman
Guadalupe Rodríguez, Coordinadora
Simón Bolívar
Felix Marcano, Coordinadora Simón
Bolívar
Frank Leon, Coordinadora Simón Bolívar
Luis Flores, Coordinadora Simón Bolívar

Source

Fogoneros, "Libertad para Manuel Olate Ahora!"
in Fogoneros Website (November 6, 2010) online
at
http://www.fogoneros.nuevaradio.org/articulo.p
hp?p=272&more=1&c=1. Accessed in September
22, 2011

Appendix 7. Elements remaining beyond Colombian borders.

Military Hubs (commanders)

Political Hubs (Comintern Commissioners)

Political Networks - Cells

Possible areas of expansion of criminal networks (cultivation areas)

Military camps and bases
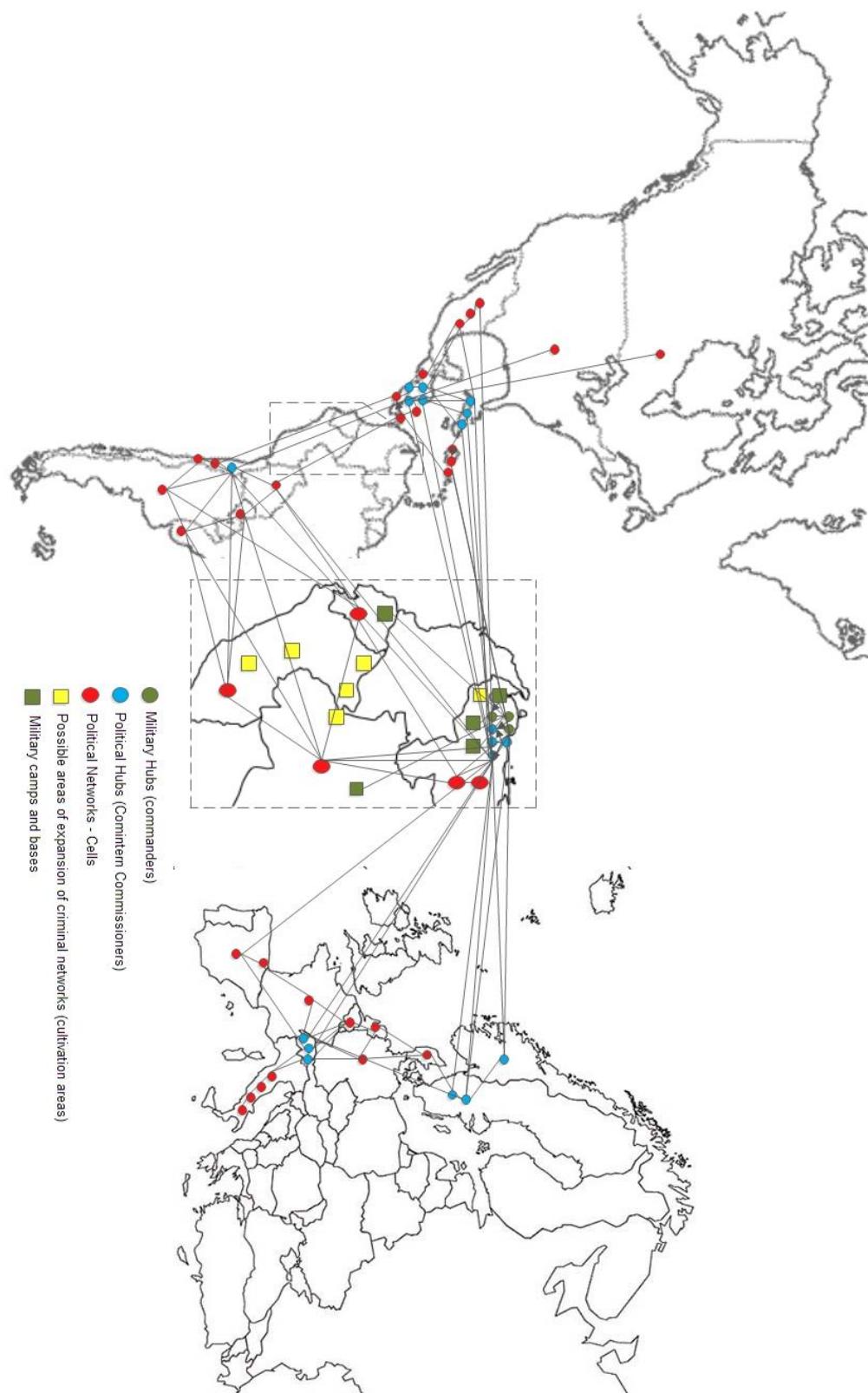
Appendix 8. Evolution of trafficking routes 2005, 2007, 2010

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Map 1. Colombia Political-Administrative Division

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Map 2. FARC's colonized autonomous territories (repúblicas independientes) by 1958

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Map 3. Coca leaf zones of expansion

Map 4. 'Zona de distensión'

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Map 5. FARC's Fronts and Blocs

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Map 6. FARC camps and activities in Venezuela

IMAGE REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

Bibliography

SECONDARY SOURCES

BOOKS

Abou-Zahab, M., Roy, O. (2004). *Islamist Networks: The Afghanistan-Pakistan Connection.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Adams, J. (1986). *The Financing of Terror.* Sevenoaks: New English Library.

Alberts, D., Garstka, J., Stein, F. (1999). *Network Centric Warfare, Developing and Leveraging Information Superiority.* Washington: Department of Defense Cooperative Research Programme.

Alberts, D., Gartska, J., Hayes, R., Signori, D. (2001). *Understanding Information Age Warfare* Washington: Department of Defense Cooperative Research Programme.

Alberts, D., Hayes, R. (2003). *Power to the Edge: Command and Control in the Information Age.* Washington: Department of Defense Cooperative Research Programme.

Arquila, J. (2008). *Worst Enemy: The Reluctant Transformation of the American Military.* Chicago: Ivan R. Dee.

Arquila, J., Ronfeldt, D. (2001). *Networks and Netwars, The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy.* Santa Monica: RAND.

Arquilla, J., Ronfeldt, D. (1997). *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for conflict in the information age.* Santa Monica; RAND.

Arreguin-Toft, I. (2005). *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Assymetric Conflict.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Avila, A. (2012). *La frontera caliente entre Colombia y Venezuela.* Bogota: Random House Mondadori.

Ballantine, K., Sherman J. (2003). *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance* Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Barabasi, A. (2002). *Linked, The New Science of Networks.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Perseus Publishing.

Baritz, L. (1985). *Back Fire: A History of how American Culture led us Into Vietnam and Made us Fight the Way we did.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Baron, L. (2006). *Historias no Oficiales de Guerra y de Paz.* Bogota: CINEP.

Battram, A. (1988). *Navigating Complexity.* London: The Industrial Society.

Bauman, Z. (2010). *"44 Letters from the Liquid Modern World".* Cambridge: Polity.

Baylis, J. (2002). *Strategy in the Contemporary World.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Beckett, I. (2001). *Modern Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies.* London: Routledge.

Beckett, I., Pimlott, J. (1985). *Armed Forces and Modern Counterinsurgency*. London: Croom Helm.

Benbow, T., Thornton, R. (2008). *Dimensions of Counterinsurgency: Applying Experience to Practice* Oxon: Routledge.

Berdal, M., Malone, D. (2000). *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil War* Boulder,Co: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc

Berdal, M. (2009). *Building Peace After War.* Oxon: Routledge.

Bergendorff, S. (2009). *Simple Lives, Cultural Complexity: Rethinking Culture in Terms of Complexity Theory.* Plymouth: Lexington.

Berger, M., Borer, D. (2008). *The Long War, Counterinsurgency, Insurgency and Collapsing States.* London: Routledge.

Berkowitz, B. (2003). *The new face of war: How War Will be Fought in the 21st Century.* New York: The Free Press.

Bhattacharyya, G. (2005). *Traffick: The Illicit Movement of People and Things.* London: Pluto Press.

Biersteker, T., Eckert, S. (2008). *Countering the Financing of Terrorism.* London: Routledge.

Bobbitt, P. (2002). *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace and the Course of History.* New York: Anchor Books.

Bousquet, A. (2008). *The Scientific Way of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity* New York: Columbia University Press.

Broers, M. (2010). *Napoleon's Other War.* Oxford: Peter Land.

Bruggeman, J. (2008). *Social Networks: An Introduction.* London: Routledge.

Buckley, W. (1998). Society – A Complex Adaptive System. Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach publishers.

Bunker, R. (2005). *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency.* London: Routledge.

Bushnell, D. (1996). *Colombia: Una Nacion a Pesar de si Misma.* Bogota: Planeta.

Byrne, D. (1998). *Complexity Theory and the Social Sciences, an Introduction.* London: Routledge.

Camacho, A. (2003). *El Conflicto Colombiano y su Impacto en los Paises Andinos.* Bogota: Universidad de los Andes.

Camacho, A. (2006). *Narcotrafico, Europa, USA, America Latina.* Bogota: Universidad de los Andes.

Carrillo, V., Kucharz, T. (2006). *Colombia: Terrorismo de Estado.* Barcelona: Icaria Editorial.

Cassidy, R. (2006). *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror: Military Culture and Irregular War* Westport: Praeger.

Castells, M. (1996a). *End of Millenium.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Castells, M. (1996b). *The Rise of the Network Society.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Cebrowski, A., Gartska, J. (1988). *Network-Centric Warfare: its origin and future.* Washington: Department of Defense Cooperative Research Programme.

Christakis, N., Fowler, J. (2009). *Connected, The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives.* New York: Little, Brown and Company.

Clavijo, A. (2007). *Espejo Retrovisor, los Errores en el Manejo del Conflicto Interno*. Bogota: Verdad Colombia.

Clutterbuck, R. (1990). *Terrorism and Guerrilla Warfare: Forecasts and Remedies.* London: Routledge.

Coker, C. (2008). *Ethics and War in the 21st. Century.* London: Routledge.

Coker, C. (2009). *War in an Age of Risk.* Cambridge: Polity.

Collier, P., Sambanis, N. (2005). *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis.* Washington: The World Bank.

Cragin, K., and Hoffman, B. (2003). *Arms Trafficking and Colombia.* Santa Monica: RAND.

Cromer, G. (2006). *Insurgent Terrorism.* Aldershot; Burlington VT: Ashgate.

Cuerpo de Generales y Almirantes en Retiro de las Fuerzas Militares de Colombia (2002) *Esquilando al Lobo: La Dimension Desconocida del Conflicto Colombiano.* Bogota: Panamericana.

De Nooy, G. (1997). *The Clasewitz Dictum and the Future of Western Military Strategy*. The Hague: Klower Law International.

Duyvenstein, I., Angstrom, J. (2005). *Rethinking the Nature of War.* Oxon: Frank Cass.

Ehrenfeld, R. (1990). *Narco Terrorism.* New York: BasicBooks.

Esdaile, C. (2004). *Fighting Napoleon: Guerrillas, Bandits and Adventurers in Spain, 1808-1814.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Estrada, J. (2002). *El Plan Colombia y la Intensificacion de la Guerra.* Bogota: Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

Eve. R., Horsfall, S. and Lee, M. (1997) *Chaos, Complexity and Sociology: Myths, Models and Theories* London: Sage

Felbab-Brown, V. (2010). *Shooting Up, Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs.* Washington: Brookings Institution Press.

Ferro, J., Uribe, G. (2002). *El orden de la guerra, las FARC-EP entre la organización y la política.* Bogota: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

Freedman, L. (1994). *War.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Friman, R., Andreas, P. (1999). *The Illicit Economy and State Power.* Lanham: Littlefield Publishers.

Galindo, M., Valencia, J. (1999). *En Carne Propia.* Bogota: Intermedio.

Galula, D. (2006). *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. Westport: Praeger.

George, A., Bennett, A. (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Germani, S., Kaarthikeyan, D. (2008). *Pathways Out of Terrorism and Insurgency.* New Delhi: New Dawn Press.

Giraldo, J., Trikunas, J. (2007). *Terrorism Financing and States Reponse.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Giustozzi, A. (2009). *Decoding the Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Gomez, E. (1993). La Tragedia de la Droga. Bogota: Universidad Sergio Arboleda.

Gray, C. (1999). *Modern Strategy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gray, C. (2002). *Strategy for Chaos.* Oxon: Frank Cass.

Gray, C. (2005). *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare.* London: Phoenix.

Gray, C. (2007). *War, peace and International Relations*. Oxon: Routledge.

Grinsley, M., Rogers, C. (2002). *Civilians in the Path of War.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Griset, P., Mahan, S. (2002) *Terorrism in Perspective.* London: Sage

Guerrero, F. (2005). *Colombia y el Putumayo en Medio de la Encrucijada.* Bogota: Editorial Claridad.

Guevara, E. (1998). *Guerrilla Warfare.* Nebraska: Nebraska University Press.

Guillermoprieto, A.(2000). *Las Guerras en Colombia.* Bogota: Alguilar.

Guzman, I., Muñoz, J. (2004). *The Hyper Cartel, The Real Story Behind the Finances of Colombian Terrorist Groups.* Bogota: Circa-DKF.

Gwynn, C. (1934). *Imperial Policing.* London: Macmillan.

Hague, R., Harrop, M., Breslin, S. (1998). *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction.* New York: Macmillan.

Hammes, T. (2006). *The Sling and the Stone: on War in the 21st Century.* St Paul: Zenith.

Harvaky, R., Newman, S. (2001). Warfare and the Third World. New York: Palgrave.

Hess, G. (2009). *Vietnam: Explaining America's Lost War.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Heuser, B. (2002). *Reading Clausewitz.* London: Pimlico.

Hoffman, B. (2006). *Inside terrorism.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Howard, M. (2001). *The Franco-Prussian War.* London: Routledge.

Isaacs, A. (1983). *Without Honor: Defeat in Vietnam and Cambodia.* Batlimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Jackson, T. (1999). *The Boer War.* London: Macmillan Publishers.

Joes, A. (2004). *Resisting Rebellion, the History and Politics of Counterinsurgency.* Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.

Josselin, D., Wallace, W. (2006). *Non-state Actors in World Politics.* New York: Palgrave.

Keen, D. (1998). *The Economic Functions of Civil Wars*. *Adelphi Paper 320.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Keen, D. (2006). *Endless War? Hidden Functions of the War on Terror*. Ann Arbor: Pluto Press.

Keen, D. (2008). *Complex Emergencies.* Cambridge: Polity Pres.

Kenney, M. (2007). *From Pablo to Osama: trafficking and terrorist networks, government bureaucracies and competitive adaptation.* Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press.

Kiel, D., Elliot, E. *Chaos Theory in the Social Sciences, Foundations and Applications.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Kilcullen, D. (2009). *The Accidental Guerrilla.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kilcullen, D. (2010). *Counterinsurgency.* London: C.Hurst & Co.

Kitson, F. (1971). *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peacekeeping.* London: Faber and Faber.

Klotz, A., Prakash, D. (2008). *Qualitative Methods in International Relations, A Pluralist Guide.* New York: Palgrave Mcmillan.

Kuhn, T. (1996). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Laqueur, W. (1997). *The Guerrilla Reader, a Historical Antology.* New York: New American Library.

Latham, R. (2003). *Bombs and Bandwith.* New York: The New Press.

Lesser, I. (1999). *Countering the New Terrorism.* Santa Monica: RAND.

Lewison, R. (1936). *The Profits of War Through the Ages.* London: George Routledge and Sons Ltd.

Lozano, C. (2006). *¿Guerra o Paz en Colombia? Cincuenta Años de un Conflicto sin Solucion.* Australia: Ocean Sur.

MacFarlane, S., Khong, Y, F. (2006). *Human Security and the UN: A Critical History.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Mackinlay, J. (2006). *Defeating Complex Insurgency: Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan.* London: Royal United Services Institute.

Mackinlay, J. (2009). *The Insurgent Archipelago.* London: Hurst.

Mannes, A. (2004). *Profiles in terror: The guide to Middle East Terrorist Organizations.* Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield.

Manwaring, M. (2008). *Insurgency, Terrorism and Crime: Shadows of Past and Portraits of the Future.* Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press.

Marsden, P. (1982). *Nan Lin Social Structure and Network Analysis.* London: Sage.

Marston, D., Malkasian, C. (2008). *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare.* Oxford: Osprey Publishing.

Matta, L. (1999). *Colombia y las FARC-EP.* Txalaparta: Nafarroa.

McCuen, J. (1996). *The Art of Counterrevolutionary War: the Strategy of Counter-insurgency.* London: Faber.

Medina, C. (2011). *FARC-EP Flujos y reflujos, la guerra en las regiones.* Bogota: Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

Merom, G. (2003). *How Democracies Lose Small Wars.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Metz, S. (2000). *Armed Conflict in the 21st Century: The Information Revolution and Postmodern Warfare* Carlisle, USA: Strategic Studies Institute.

Metz, S., Millen, R. (2004). *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response.* Washignton: US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute.

Mockaitis, T. (2008). *Iraq and the Challenge of Counterinsurgency.* Wesport: Praeger.

Mueller, J. (2004). *The Remnants of War.* New York: Cornell University Press.

Munkler, H. (2005). *The New Wars.* Cambridge: Polity.

Nagl, J. (2010). *Learning to eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya to Vietnam.* Westport: Praeger

Nasi, C. (2007). *Cuando Callan los Fusiles: Impacto de la Paz Negociada en Colombia y Centroamerica* Bogota: Norma.

Naumkin, V. (2005). *Radical Islam in Central Asia.* Oxford: Rowman and Littlefiled.

Norberg, J., Cumming, G., (eds.). (2008). *Complexity Theory for a Sustainable Future.* New York: Columbia University Press.

O'Brian, W. (1981). *The Conduct of Just and Limited War.* New York: Praeger.

O'Neill, B. (1980). *Insurgency in the Modern World.* Boulder: Westview Press.

Paget, J. (1967). *Counterinsurgency Campaigning.* London: Faber and Faber.

Pardo, R. (2004). *Historia de las Guerras.* Bogota: Ediciones B.

Peña, A. (2010). *El Foro de Sao Paulo, una amenaza continental.* Bogota: Random House Mondadori.

Perez, J. (2008). *Raul Reyes, el Canciller de la montaña.* Bogota: Norma.

Peters, G. (2009). *How opium profits the Taliban.* Washington: United States Institute of Peace.

Pizarro, E. (2004). *Una Democracia Asediada.* Bogota: Norma.

Pizarro, E. (2011). *Las FARC 1949-2011 De guerrilla campesina a máquina de guerra*. Bogota: Norma.

Pustay, J. (1965). *Counterinsurgency Warfare.* New York: Free Press.

Radu, M. (1990). *The New Insurgencies: Anticommunist Guerrillas in the Third World.* New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

Rangel, A. (1998). *Colombia: Guerra en el fin de Siglo.* Bogota: Universidad de los Andes.

Rangel, A., Meyer H. (2005). *La Nueva Seguridad Andina: Avances y Retos.* Bogota: Legis.

Rashid, A. (2002). *Los Taliban.* Barcelona: Ediciones Peninsula.

Rashid, A. (2008). *Descent into chaos: the United States and the failure of nation building in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia*. New York: Viking.

Record, J. (2007). *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win.* Washington: Potomac Books.

Rich, P., Stubbs, R. (1997). *The counter-insurgent state: guerrilla warfare and state building in the twentieth century.* London: Macmillan.

Rid, T., Hecker, M. (2009). *War 2.0 Irregular Warfare in the Information Age.* London: Praeger.

Rifken, J. (2009). *The Empathic Civilization.* New York: Tarcher-Penguin.

Rihani, S. (2002). *Complex Systems Theory and Development Practice: Understanding Non-linear Realities.* London: Zed Books.

Rivera, G. .(2005). *Cultivos de Coca, Conflicto y Deslegitimación del Estado en el Putumayo.* Bogota: Universidad Externado de Colombia.

Rizo, H. (2002). *Evolucion del Conflicto Armado en Colombia e Iberoamerica.* Bogota: Editorial Nomos.

Rodriguez, G., Vargas, F. (2002). *La Cara Oculta del Enemigo.* Bogota: Editorial Litotécnica.

Sageman, M. (2004). *Undertsanding Terror Networks.* Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press.

Salazar, A. (2001). *Drogas y Narcotrafico en Colombia.* Bogota: Planeta.

Saleyhan, I. (2009). *Rebels Without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Santos, J. (2009). *Jaque al Terror: Los Anos Horribles de las FARC.* Bogota: Planeta.

Sarkesian, S. (1975). *Revolutionary Guerrilla Warfare.* Chicago: Precedent.

Schmitt, C. (1963). *The Theory of the Partisan: A Commentary/Remark on the Concept of the Political* Berlin: Duncker & Humbolt.

Schmitt, C. (2003). *The Nomos of Earth.* New York: Telos Press Publishing.

Schultz, R. (2006). *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias: the Warriors of Contemporary Combat.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Secher, R. (2003). *A French Genocide.* Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

Springer, N. (2005). *Desactivar la Guerra.* Bogota: Aguilar.

Stalder, F. (2006). *Manuel Castells, The Theory of the Network Society.* Cambridge: Polity.

Taber, R. (1970). *The War of the Flea: A Study of Guerrilla Warfare, Theory and Practice.* London: Paladin.

Terriff, T., Karp, A., Karp, R. (2008). *Global Insurgency and the Future of Armed Conflict: Debating fourth-generation Warfare.* London: Routledge.

Toffler, A., Toffler, H. (1994). *War and Anti-war: Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century.* London: Warner Books.

Torres del Rio, C. *Fuerzas Armadas y Seguridad Nacional.* Bogota: Planeta.

Ucko, D. (2009). *The New Counterinsurgency Era, Transforming US Military for Modern Wars.* Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Valencia, L. (2002). *Adios a la Politica, Bienvenida la Guerra.* Bogota: Intermedio.

Valeriano, N., Bohannan, C. (1962). *Counterguerrilla Operations: the Philippine Experience.* London: Pall Mall.

Vargas, A. (2008). *El Papel de las Fuerzas Armadas en la Politica Antidrogas Colombiana.* Bogota: Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

Vargas, R. (1994). *Drogas, Poder y Región en Colombia.* Bogota: Cinep.

Vargas, R. (2005). *Narcotrafico, Guerra y Politica Antidrogas.* Bogota: Grupo TH.

Villamarin, L. (2005). *Narcoterrorismo, La Guerra del Nuevo Siglo.* Madrid: Nowtilius.

Villamarin, L. (2007). *El Cartel de las FARC.* Bogota: Arango Asociados.

Watts, D. (2003). *Six Degrees, The Science of the Connected Age.* London: Vintage Books.

Weinstein, J. (2007). *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilkinson, P. (1997). *Terrorism and the Liberal State.* Norfolk: McMillan Press.

Book Chapters

Arnson, C. (2005). The Political Economy of War: Situating the Debate. In Arson, C & Zartman, W. *Rethinking the Economics of War, The Intersection of Need, Creed and Greed,* (pp. 1-22). Washington: The Woodrow Wilson Centre Press

Arquila, J. & Ronfeldt, D. (1997). The Advent of Netwar. In Arquila, J. & Ronfeldt, D, *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for conflict in the information age* (pp.275-294) Santa Monica: RAND

Arquila, J. & Ronfeldt, D. (2001). The Advent of Netwar (Revisited) In Arquila, J. & Ronfeldt, D. *Networks and Netwars, The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy*. (pp. 1-28) Santa Monica: RAND

Avila, A (2011b) Bloque Oriental in Medina, C. In *FARC-EP Flujos y reflujos, la guerra en las regiones.* (pp. 165-206) Bogota: Universidad Nacional de Colombia

Brown, T. (1996) Non-linear Politics. In Elliott, E. & and Kiel, L.D. *Chaos Theory in the Social Sciences, Foundations and Applications* (pp. 119-138) Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press

Bunker, R. & Bergett, M. (2005). Operational Combat Analysis of the Al Qaeda Network. In Bunker, R. *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency.* (pp. 146-169) London: Routledge

Cater, C. (2003) The Political Economy of Conflict and UN Intervention: Rethinking the Critical Cases of Africa. In Ballantine, K & and Sherman, J. *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict, Beyond Greed and Grievance* (pp. 19-46) Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers

Deibert, R. & Gross Stein, J. (2003). Social and Electronic Networks in the War on Terror. In Latham, R. *Bombs and Bandwidth: The Emergent Relation between Information Technology and Security.* (pp. 157-174) New York: The New Press

Elliott, E. & and Kiel, L.D. (1997). Nonlinear Dynamics, Complexity, and Public Policy: Use, Misuse and Applicability". In Eve, R., Horsfall, S., & Lee, M. *Chaos, Complexity and Sociology, Myths, Models and Theories* (pp. 64-78) London: Sage

Leal, N. (2011). Bloque Sur. In Medina, C. *FARC-EP Flujos y reflujos, la guerra en las regiones.* (pp. 231-268) Bogota: Universidad Nacional de Colombia

Lee, M. (1997). From Enlightment to Chaos: Towards Non-Modern Social Theory. In Eve, R., Horsfall, S., & Lee, M. *Chaos, Complexity and Sociology, Myths, Models and Theories* (pp. 15-29) London: Sage

Lieb, P. (2008). Few Carrots and a lot of Sticks: German antipartisan warfare in World War Two. In Marston, D. & Malkasian, C. *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare.* (pp. 57-78) Oxford: Osprey.

Lizarazo, N. (2008) Papel de las Fuerzas Armadas en la Politica Antidrogas 1985-1990. In Alejo Vargas, *El Papel de las Fuerzas Armadas en la Politica Antidrogas Colombiana.* Bogota: Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

Malkasian, C. (2008). Counterinsurgency in Iraq: May 2003-January 2010. In Marston, D. & Malkasian, C. *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare.* (pp. 287-310) Oxford: Osprey.

Marston, D. (2008). Realizing the extent of our errors and forging the road ahead: Afghanistan 2001-2010. In Marston, D. & Malkasian, C. *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare.* (pp. 251-286) Oxford: Osprey.

Mihata, K. (1997). The Persistence of Emergence. In Eve, R., Horsfall, S., & Lee, M. *Chaos, Complexity and Sociology, Myths, Models and Theories* (pp. 30-37) London: Sage

Moreno, D. (2011). Comando Conjunto Central. In Medina, C. *FARC-EP Flujos y reflujos, la guerra en las regiones.* (pp. 41-76) Bogota: Universidad Nacional de Colombia

Nagl, J. (2008). Counterinsurgency in Vietnam. In Marston, D. & Malkasian, C. *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare.* (pp. 119-136) Oxford: Osprey.

Navias, M. & Moreman, T. (1994). Limited War and Developing Countries. In Freedman, L. *War* (pp. 310-314) Oxford: Oxford University Press

Ross, M. (2003) Oil, Drugs and Diamonds,The Varying Role of Natural Resources in Civil War. In Ballentine, K & and Sherman, J. *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict, Beyond Greed and Grievance* (pp. 47-72) Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers

Shifter, M. (2011). The United States and Colombia: Recalibrating the Relationship. In Lowenthal, A., Piccone, T & Whitehead, L. *Shifting the Balance: Obama and the Americas*. (pp. 55-68) Washington: Brookings Institution Press. p. 61

Sullivan, J. (2005) Terrorism, Crime and Private Armies. In Bunker, R. *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency.* (pp. 69-83) London: Routledge

Sullivan, J.& Bunker, R. (2005) Multilateral Counterinsurgency Networks. In Bunker, R. *Networks, Terrorism and Global Insurgency.* (pp. 183-198) London: Routledge

Thoumi, F. (2003) Por qué razón un país produce drogas y de qué maneras esto determina la eficacia de una política: Un modelo general y unas aplicaciones al caso Colombia.In Camacho, A. *El Conflicto Colombiano y su Impacto en los Paises Andinos* Bogota: Universidad de los Andes.

Williams, P. (2008). Terrorist financing and Organized Crime: Nexus, appropriation or transformation?. In Biersteker, T & Eckert, S. *Countering the Financing of Terrorism* (pp. 126-149) London: Routledge

Journal Articles

Amend, K. (2010). Counterinsurgency principles for the diplomat. *Orbis, 54(2)* pp. 215-231

Baker, J. (2006). Systems Thinking and Counterinsurgencies. *Parameters, 36(4)* p. 26

Barno, D. (2006). Challenges in fighting a global insurgency. *Parameters, 36(2)* p. 15

Beaumont, R. (1995). Small wars: Definitions and Dimensions. *Annals of the Academy of Political Science, 541(1)* pp. 20-35

Bjornehead, E. (2004). Narco-Terrorism, the merger of the War on Drugs and the War on Terror. *Global Crime, 6(3-4)* pp. 305-324

Bousquet, A. & Curtis, S. (2011). Beyond models and metaphors: complexity theory, systems thinking, and International Relations. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 24(01)* pp. 43-62

Brooks, R. (2012). What's not wrong with drones?" in *Foreign Policy* (September 5, 2012) Online at:
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/05/whats_not_wrong_with_drones. Retrieved in October 4, 2012.

Casale, K. (1993). Illicit Production of Cocaine. *Forensic Science Review, 5* pp. 95-107

Cassidy, R. (2002). Why Great Powers fight Small Wars Badly. *Military Review, 82(5)* p. 41

Cassidy, R. (2006). The Long Small War: Indigenous Forces for Counterinsurgency. *Parameters, 36(2)* p. 47

Celso, A. (2010). Phase IV' Operations in the War on Terror: Comparing Iraq and Afghanistan. *Orbis, 54(2)* pp. 185-198

Chamberlain, R. With friends like these: grievance, governance, and capacity building in counterinsurgency. *Parameters, 38(2)* p. 79

Cornell, S. (2005a). The Interaction of Narcotics and Conflict. *Journal of Peace Research, 42(6)* pp. 751-760

Cornell, S. (2005b). Narcotics, Radicalism, and Armed Conflict in Central Asia: The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 17 (4)* pp. 619-639

Crider, J. (2009). A View From Inside the Surge. *Military Review, 89(2)* p. 81

Dishman, C. (2001). Terrorism, Crime and Transformation. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 24 (1)* pp. 43-58

Farrell, T & Gordon, S. (2009). COIN Machine: The British Military in Afghanistan. *Orbis, 53(4)* pp. 665-683

Finley, M. (1976). Prelude to Spain: The Calabrian Insurrection, 1806-1807. *Military Affairs*, 40(2) p. 84

Fitzsimmons, M. (2008). Hard hearts and open minds? Governance, identity and the intellectual foundations of COIN strategy. *Journal of Strategic Studies, 31(3)* p. 337-365

Ford, C. (2005). Speak no evil: Targeting a population's neutrality to defeat an insurgency. *Parameters, 35(2)* p. 51

Gentile, G. (2009). The imperative for an American general purpose Army that can fight. *Orbis, 53(3)* pp. 457-470

Goolsby, R. (2006). Combating Terrorist Networks: An evolutionary approach. *Computational and Mathematical Organization Theory, 12(1)* pp. 7-20

Gumz, J. (2009). Reframing the Historical Problematic of Insurgency: How the Professional Military Literature Created a New History and Missed the Past. *Strategic Studies, Vol. 31(4).* pp. 553-588

Haines, D. (2009). COIN in the real world. *Parameters, 38 (4)* p. 43

Kilcullen, D. (2005). Countering Global Insurgency. *The Journal of Strategic Studies, 28(4)* pp. 597-617

Kuehl, D. (2009). Testing Galula in Ameriyah: The people are the key. *Military Review, 89(2)* p. 72

Lal, R. (2005). South Asian Organized Crime and Terrorist Networks. *Orbis, 49(2)* pp. 293-304

Makarenko, T. (2004). The Crime Terror Continuum: Tracing the interplay Between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism. *Global Crime, 16(1)* pp. 129-145

Mann, P. (2002). Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan: Will it strike back?. *Strategic Analysis, 26(2)* pp. 294-304

Marion, R & Uhl-Bien, M. (2003). Complexity Theory and Al Qaeda: Examining Complexity Leadership *Emergence, 5(1)* pp. 56-76

Marks, T. (2007). A Model Counterinsurgency: Uribe's Colombia (2002-2006) vs FARC. *Military Review 87(2).* p. 41

Martinez, C. (2012) Transnational Criminal Organizations: Mexico's Commercial Insurgency. *Military Review* 92 (5). pp. 58-62

Metz, S. (1995). A Flame Kept Burning: Counterinsurgency Support after the Cold War. *Parameters, 25(3)* pp. 31-41

Nagl, J (2009). Dirty windows and burning houses: setting the record straight on irregular warfare. *The Washington Quarterly, 32(2)* pp. 91-101

Ospina, C. (2006). Insights from Colombia's Long War: Counterinsurgeny Lessons Learned. *Journal of Counterterrorism and Homeland Security International, 12(3)* p. 26-33

Robertson, H. (1929). The Uncertainty Principle. *Physical Review, 34(1)* pp. 163-164

Roth, M & Sever, M. (2007). The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 30(10)* pp.901-920

Shafer, M. (1988). The Unlearned Lessons of Counterinsurgency. *Political Science Quarterly, 103(1)* pp. 57-80

Shelley, L & Picarelly, J. (2005). Methods not Motives: Implications of the Convergence of International Organized Crime and Terrorism. *Policy Practice and Research, 3(4).*pp. 305-318

Shelley, L. (2002). The Nexus of Organized International Criminals and Terrorism. *International Annals of Criminology, 1(2)* pp. 85-92

Sitaraman, G. (2009). Course Correction. *New Republic, 240(19)* p. 23

Slump, G. (2005). The Theory of the Partisan: Carl Schmitt's Neglected Legacy. *History of Political Thought, 25(3)* pp. 502-519

Sullivan, J. & Bunker, R. (2011). Rethinking insurgency: criminality, spirituality, and societal warfare in the Americas. *Small Wars and Insurgencies, 22 (5)* pp. 742-763

Walker, L. (2009). Forging a key, turning a lock: counterinsurgency theory in Iraq 2006-2008. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 32(10)* pp. 909-918

Wardlaw, G. (1988). Linkages between the Illegal Drug Traffic and Terrorism. *Conflict Quarterly, 8(3)* pp. 5-26

Online Articles by Scholars

Coker, C. (n.d.). War in the 21C: War, memes and memeplexes. *Bedeutung.* Retrieved from http://www.bedeutung.co.uk/magazine/issues/3-life-death/coker-war-21c-memes-memeplexes/

Rojas, P. (2011, September 30). Sobre el Partido Comunista Clandestino de Colombia y otros demonios. *Website Fundacion Primero Colombia.* Retrieved from http://www.pensamientocolombia.org/DebateNacional/sobre-el-partido-comunista-clandestino-de-colombia-pc3-y-otros-demonios.

Valencia, L. (2010, January 12). Balance de las Farc después de Jojoy y los nuevos carteles del Narcotrafico. *Revista Semana.* Retrieved from http://comunidad.semana.com/t5/Blog-Corporaci%C3%B3n-Nuevo-Arco-Iris/Las-Farc-despu%C3%A9s-de-Jojoy-y-los-nuevos-carteles-del-narcotr%C3%A1fico/ba-p/2712

PRIMARY SOURCES

Reports published by research institutions

Avila, A. (2008, December). FARC: dinámica reciente de guerra. *Revista Arcanos,* 14. Bogota; Fundacion Nuevo Arco Iris.

Avila, A. (2009). La guerra contra las FARC y la guerra de las FARC. In Celis, L. *Tomandole el pulso al conflicto armado: balance del primer semestre de 2009.* Bogota: Corporacion Nuevo Arco Iris, Planeta Paz, Grupo de Investigacion en Seguridad y Defensa.

Avila, A. (2011a). De la 'Guerra de Jojoy' a la Guerra de 'Cano'. *Revista Arcanos,* 16*.* Bogota; Fundacion Ideas para la Paz.

Center for International Policy, Latinamerican Group Education Fund, Washington Office in Latinamerica. (2010, February). Collected Maps of Suspect Trafficking. In *Just the Facts.* Retrieved from http://justf.org/blog/2012/02/02/collected-maps-suspect-trafficking.

Clive, L. (2005). *Pseudo operations and counterinsurgency: lessons from other countries.* Carlisle; US Army War College-Strategic Studies Institute.

Cordesman, A. (2005). *Rethinking the Challenge of Counterinsurgency Warfare: Working Notes* Washington; Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Cordesman, A. (2009). *The Afghan-Pakistan War: A Status Report: 2009.* Washington; Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

Corporacion Nuevo Arco Iris. (2009). Tomandole el Pulso al Conflicto Armado. *Balance del Primer Semstre, 1.* Bogota; Corporacion Nuevo Arco Iris.

Curtis, G., Karakan, T. (2010, June). *The Nexus Among Terrorists, Narcotics, Traffickers, weapons proliferators, and Organized Crime Networks in Europe*. Washington: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress.

Fundacion Ideas Para la Paz. (2009, June). Las Farc: un año después del jaque. *Siguiendo el Conflicto: Hechos y Analisis, 55.* Bogota; Fundacion Ideas para la Paz.

Gray, C. (2006). *Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt?* Carlisle; US Army War College-Strategic Studies Institute.

International Crisis Group. (2005, January). *War and Drugs in Colombia, Latinamerica Report, 11.* Bogota; International Crisis Group.

International Crisis Group. (2010, 29 June). Improving Security Policy in Colombia. *Policy Briefing. Latin America Briefing, 23.* Bogota, Brussels; International Crisis Group.

Lowenthal, A., Piccone, J., Whitehead, L. (2011). *Shifting the Balance: Obama and the Americas.* Washington; Brookings Institution Press.

Mets, S. (1993) *The Future of Insurgency.* Carlisle; US Army War College-Strategic Studies Institute.

Metz, S. (2007). *Learning from Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy.* Carlisle; US Army War College-Strategic Studies Institute.

Metz, S., Millen, R. (2004). *Insurgency and counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing threat and response.* Carlisle; US Army War College-Strategic Studies Institute.

Murray, W. (2006). *Strategic Challenges for Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terorrism.* Carlisle; US Army War College-Strategic Studies Institute.

Onay, A. (2008, February 21). PKK Criminal Networks and Fronts in Europe in *Policy Watch No. 1344* Washington: The Washington Institute.

Ronald, S. (2008, 14 October). The Islamic Jihad Union (IJU). *NEFA Foundation*. Retrieved from http://es.scribd.com/doc/35614293/Islamic-Jihad-Union-al-Qaida%E2%80%99s-Key-to-the-Turkic-World.

Shelley, L., Picarelly, J. (2005). *Methods and Motives: Exploring links between transnational organized crime and international terrorism.* Washington: United States National Institute of Justice

Spencer, D. (2011). *Colombia: Camino a la Recuperacion: Seguridad y Gobernabilidad 1982-2010* Washington; Centre for Hemispheric Defense Studies.

The International Institute for Strategic Studies. (2011). *The FARC Files: Venezuela, Ecuador and the Secret Archive of 'Raul Reyes'.* London; The International Institute for Strategic Studies.

The Nefa Foundation. (2008, Juy). *Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP): Why are we fighting China?.* Retrieved from http://nefafoundation.org/file/FeaturedDocs/nefatip0409-3.pdf.

Valencia, L., Avila, A. (2011). *La nueva realidad de las FARC.* Bogota; Corporacion Nuevo Arco Iris.

Vinson, M. (2012, May 8). Tajikistan Cracks down on Islamic movement of Uzbekistan.i *The Jamestown Foundation.* Retrieved from http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=39346&cHash=68981da308020dd931b70d7c00768ea5.

Official Documents

Department of Defense. (2011, April). *Report on Progress Towards Security and Stability in Afghanistan.* Washington: Department of Defense.

Department of the Army/Department of the Marine Corps. (2006). *Field Manual 3-24 Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5 Counterinsurgency*. Washington.

Europol. (2010). *EU Terrorism situation and trend report TE SAT 2010.* Brussels: Europol.

Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. (2002). *The Nexus among Terrorists, Narcotics,*
Traffickers, Weapons Proliferators and Organized Crime Networks in Western Europe. Washington: Library of the Congress.

Finney, N., HTS Doctrine Development Team Leader. (2008). *Human Terrain Team Handbook.* Ft. Levenworth, Kansas: Human Terrain System.

Fiscalia General de la Nacion (Colombia)(2009, September 2). Aseguran supuesto cabecilla del frente urbano de las FARC. *Fiscalia General de la Nacion.* Retrieved from http://fgn.fiscalia.gov.co/colombia/noticias/aseguran-supuesto-cabecilla-de-red-urbana-de-las-farc/.

Ministerio de Defensa Nacional (2007). *Politica de Consolidacion de la Seguridad Democratica.* Bogota: Ministerio de Defensa Nacional.

Ministerio de Defensa Nacional. (2002). *Politica de Seguridad Democratica.* Bogota: Ministerio de Defensa Nacional.

Observatorio del Programa Presidencial de Derechos Humanos y DIH. (n.d.). *Panorama actual de los municipios que conformaron la zona de distención*. Bogota: Programa Presidencial de Derechos Humanos y DIH. p. 2. Retrieved from: http://www.derechoshumanos.gov.co/Observatorio/Publicaciones/documents/2010/Estu_Regionales/04_03_regiones/zonadedistension.pdf. Accessed in January 2, 2013

Perl, R. (2001, October). *Taliban and the Drug Trade.* Washington: Congressional Research Service, Library of the Congress.

Staff Trip Report to the Committee on Foreing Relations, United States Senate.(2006). *Plan Colombia: Elements for success.* Washington: US Government Printing Office.

United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. (2012). *World Drug Report 2012.* New York: United Nations.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2009, June). *Colombia Monitoreo de Cultivos de Coca.* New York: United Nations.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2011a). *World Drug Report 2011.* New York: United Nations.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2011b). *Peru Monitoreo de Cultivos de Coca 2010.* New York: United Nations.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2011c). *Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia. Monitoreo de Cultivos de coca 2010.* New York: United Nations.

United States Southern Command. (2011, February). *Precision Targeting: A USSOUTHCOM Perspective.* Retrieved from http://justf.org/files/primarydocs/110223ussc.pdf.

FARC documents

Alfonso Cano (n.d.). *Plan Renacer Revolucionario de las Masas.* Email sent by Alfonso Cano to the members of the Secretariat. Provided by an Intelligence Officer of the Colombian National Navy.

FARC-EP. (1993, April). *Plataforma para un Gobierno de Reconstruccion y Reconciliacion Nacional.* In Fundacion Ideas Para la Paz. Retrieved from http://www.ideaspaz.org/portal/images/stories/pdfs/boletinpaz/diezpuntos.pdf.

FARC-EP. (2007, April 21). *Cronologia de la Resistencia: FARC-EP Una Historia de Lucha*. Bloque Ivan Rios y Martin Caballero de las FARC-EP. Retrieved from http://www.resistencia-colombia.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=159:cronologia-de-la-

resistencia-farc-ep-una-historia-de-lucha&catid=24&Itemid=38.

FARC-EP. (March 25, 2000). *Documento del Pleno del Estado Mayor Central de las FARC – EP*. Document provided by Intelligence Officer of the Military Forces.

FARC-EP. (May 10-17, 1989). *Conclusiones Generales del Pleno del Estado Mayor Central de las FARC-EP*. Document provided by Intelligence Officer of the Military Forces.

FARC-EP. (May 4-14, 1982). *Conclusiones Generales de la Septima Conferencia Nacional*. Document provided by Intelligence Officer of the Military Forces.

FARC-EP. (n.d.a). *Conclusiones de la Octava Conferencia sobre el trabajo de masas*. Document provided by Intelligence Officer of the Military Forces.

FARC-EP. (n.d.b). *Estatuto de las Milicias Bolivarianas.* Document provided by Intelligence Officer of the Military Forces.

FARC-EP. (n.d.c). *Reglamento de las Milicias Bolivarianas.* Document provided by Intelligence Officer of the Military Forces.

FARC-EP. (n.d.d). *Documento sobre la Organizacion de las Masas*. Document provided by Intelligence Officer of the Military Forces.

FARC-EP. (n.d.e). *Estatutos del Partido Comunista Clandestino Colombiano*. Document provided by Intelligence Officer of the Military Forces.

FARC-EP. (n.d.g). *"Manifiesto Bolivariano" Fundación Movimiento Bolivariano por una Nueva Colombia.* Document provided by Intelligence Officer of the Military Forces.

Movimiento Bolivariano por la Nueva Colombia. (2007, December). *La Organizacion en Marcha: las Conferencias Guerrilleras.* In Movimiento Bolivariano por la Nueva Colombia. Retrieved from http://mbolivariano.blogspot.com/2007/12/la-organizacion-en-marcha-las.html. Accessed in November.

Movimiento Continental Bolivariano. (2008, February 28). *Acta Final de Cierre Coordinadora Simon Bolivar: Conclusion y Proclama Bolivariana, II Congreso de la Coordinadora Continental Bolivariana*. Provided by an Intelligence Officer of the Colombian National Army.

Online sources and websites

Barricada TV. (2010, October 14). *Barricada TV: Lanzamiento del Movimiento Continental Bolivariano*. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BFVNQCXjx0. Accessed in August 20, 2012.

El Espectador. (2010, August 10). *Homenaje al Mono Jojoy en Venezuela*. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lc5Qcf75oZk&feature=related. Accessed in August 20, 2012.

FARC-EP. (2004, May). Cronologia de la Resistencia. In *Revista Resistencia Edicion Internacional. No. 32.* Retrieved from http://farc.narod.ru/magazine/32/23s.html. Accessed in May 2, 2012

Fogoneros. (2010, November 6). *Libertad para Manuel Olate Ahora!*. Retrieved from http://www.fogoneros.nuevaradio.org/articulo.php?p=272&more=1&c=1. Accessed in September 22, 2011

Movimiento Bolivariano Suroccidente de Colombia. (2012, May 10). *Documental sobre el MB.* Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GetzbV4v8U&feature=related, Accesed in May 10, 2012

Movimiento Bolivariano Suroccidente. (2011, November 21). *MB 11 Años. Entrevista al Cte. Matias.* Retreived from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uRt4a9lDV0&feature=plcp

Ocalan, A. (2005, February 4). *The Declaration of Democratic Confederalism in Kurdistan.* In KurdishMedia.com. Retrieved from http://www.kurdmedia.com/article.aspx?id=10174. Accessed in September 27, 2012

Proyecto Colombia Nunca Mas. (2011). Paramilitarismo Como Politica de Estado*.* In *Bogota: Movimiento Victimas de Crimenes de Estado*. Retrieved from http://movimientodevictimas.org/~nuncamas/index.php/documentos/recomendados/25-paramilitarismo-como-politica-de-estado.html. Accessed in August 6, 2011.

Revueltas, X. (2010, February 27). Lanzamiento del Movimiento Continental Bolivariano-Uruguay. In *El Muerto, Informacion Alternativa*. Retrieved from http://elmuertoquehabla.blogspot.com/2010/02/lanzamiento-del-movimiento-continental.html. Accessed in August 29, 2012

Sistiaga, J. (2010). *Los Guardianes de Chavez.* Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvXXUhpoV4M&feature=fvst
Testigo Directo. (2010, May 18). *Las FARC en Paraguay.* In Testigo Directo Youtube Channel. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYec5x6A7No. Accessed in August 17, 2012.

Testigo Directo. (2011, November 18). *Guerra Silenciosa en Casa de Chavez*. In Testigo Directo Youtube Channel. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2J93k7OMxs. Accessed in May 14, 2011

Website Blog Los Computadores de Raul Reyes at http://computadoresderaulreyes.blogspot.com/

Website of the Movimiento Bolivariano por la Nueva Colombia: http://mbolivariano.blogspot.com/

Website of the Movimiento Bolivariano Suroccidente de Colombia at http://www.mbsuroccidentedecolombia.org/

News

Agencia Bolivariana de Prensa. (2010, February 2). El Movimiento Continental Bolivariano denuncia planes de asesinatos y amenazas de muerte contra sus dirigentes. *La Rosa Blindada*. Retrieved from http://www.rosa-blindada.info/?p=311. Accessed in August 2, 2010.

Agencia EFE. (2008, May 31). Raul Reyes intento aproximarse al Presidente de Brasil. *El Espectador.* Retrieved from*.* http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/elmundo/articulo-raul-reyes-intento-aproximarse-sin-exito-al-presidente-de-brasil. Accessed in August 20, 2012.

Agencia Efe. (2010, July 14). Ecuador ha ubicado 60 instalaciones de FARC y narcos en lo que va del 2010. In *El Tiempo*. Retrieved from. http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/politica/ecuador-ha-ubicado-60-instalaciones-de-farc-y-narcos-en-su-territorio_7805623-1. Accesed in July 14, 2010.

Agencia EFE. (2011, January 15). Policia de Panama desmantela campamento de las FARC en Darien. In *Telemetro.* Retrieved from http://www.telemetro.com/noticias/2011/01/15/nota65136.html. Accesed in May 9, 2012

Arango, T. (2012, September 28). Kurds prepare to pursue more autonomy in a fallen Syria. *In New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/29/world/middleeast/kurds-to-pursue-more-autonomy-in-a-fallen-syria.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0. Accessed in September 28, 2012.

Arrazola, M. (2012, January 15). La diplomacia de las FARC. In *El Espectador.* Retrieved from http://www.elespectador.com/impreso/farc/articuloimpreso-diplomacia-de-farc.

Bayrak, E. (2012, June 19). BDP Chairman calls on PKK to lay down arms. In *Today's Zaman.* Retrieved from http://www.todayszaman.com/news-283975-bdp-chairman-calls-on-pkk-to-lay-down-arms.html. Accessed in September 27, 2012

BBC News. (2007, March 6). Kurd jailed for honouring Ocalan. In *BBC News*. Retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6425043.stm. Accessed in September 27, 2012.

Berrocal, F. (2009, November 7). En caida libre. In *La Nacion.* Retrieved from http://wvw.nacion.com/ln_ee/2009/noviembre/07/opinion2151132.html. Accessed in August 12, 2010

Calderwood, J. (2011, June 24). Dreaming and fighting: the Kurdish guerrillas who say 'to be free you need to accept suffering. In *The Nationa.l* Retrieved from http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/dreaming-and-fighting-the-kurdish-guerillas-who-say-to-be-free-you-must-accept-suffering. Accessed in September 27, 2012

Caracol Radio (2008, March 7). *Interview with Marta Lucia Ramirez*. Retrieved from http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/actualidad/empezo-el-fin-de-las-farc-dice-la-ex-ministra-de-defensa-martha-lucia-ramirez/20080307/nota/560000.aspx. Accessed in May 8, 2012.

Caracol Radio. (2006, July 25). Prensa denuncia que nuevo 'canciller' de las FARC esta en Brasil. In *Caracol Radio.* Retrieved from http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/judicial/prensa-denuncia-que-nuevo-canciller-de-las-farc-esta-en-brasil/20060725/nota/312943.aspx. Accessed in October 2, 2011

Caracol Radio. (2008, July 21). Las FARC buscaron el respaldo de Bolivia para lograr su expansión. In *Caracol Radio.* Retrieved from. http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/judicial/las-farc-buscaron-el-respaldo-de-bolivia-para-lograr-su-expansion/20080721/nota/636258.aspx. Accessed in October 26, 2011.

Caracol Radio. (2008, July 27). Información del Computador de 'Reyes' está en manos de diez países. In *Caracol Radio.* Retrieved from http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/judicial/informacion-del-computador-de-reyes-esta-en-manos-de-10-paises/20080727/nota/640139.aspx. Accessed in December 15, 2012.

Caracol Radio. (2008, July 30). Colombia exige colaboracion de Europa contra las FARC. In *Caracol Radio.* Rertieved from. http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/actualidad/colombia-exige-colaboracion-de-europa-contra-las-farc/20080730/nota/642199.aspx. Accessed in September 30, 2011

Carrera, P & Palomera, F. (2010, August 14). Carabineros: Grupo de Apoyo a las FARC era controlado por jefe guerrillero. In *La Tercera*. Retrieved from http://diario.latercera.com/2010/08/14/01/contenido/pais/31-35414-9-carabineros-grupo-de-apoyo-a-las-farc-en-chile-era-controlado-por-jefe.shtml. Accessed in January 14, 2012.

Dantas Sequeira, C. (2006, July 25). Novo 'Chanceller' des FARC vive em Sao Paulo. In *Correio Braziliense*. Retrieved from http://www.mre.gov.br/portugues/noticiario/nacional/selecao_detalhe.asp?ID_RESENHA=247097. Accessed in February 2009.

EFE News Agency. (2011, June 5). Milicias Urbanas son la nueva apuesta de las FARC. *El Pais.* Retrieved from http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/judicial/milicias-urbanas-son-nueva-apuesta-farc. Accesed in May 1, 2012.

El Comercio. (2009, August 31). Las FARC entrenaron a 30 del MRTA segun documentos de Raul Reyes. In *El Comercio.* Retrieved from http://elcomercio.pe/politica/335628/noticia-farc-entrenaron-30-mrta-confirman-documentos-raul-reyes. Accessed in August 26, 2011.

El Espectador. (2010, January 18). Crece el expediente ETA-FARC. In *El Espectador.* Retrieved from http://www.elespectador.com/impreso/internacional/articulo-245781-crece-el-expediente-eta-farc. Accesed in January 18, 2010.

El Espectador. (2010, January 9). Las tenazas de las FARC afuera. In *El Espectador.* Retrieved from http://www.elespectador.com/impreso/articuloimpreso181234-tenazas-de-farc-afuera. Accessed in January 10, 2010

El Espectador. (2010, July 15). Asi se mueven las FARC en Venezuela. In *El Espectador.* Retrieved from http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/articulo-213637-asi-se-mueven-farc-venezuela. Accessed in July 15, 2010.

El Espectador. (2010, July 15). FARC tiene 1500 hombres en 28 campamentos en Venezuela. In *El Espectador.* Retrieved from http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/articulo-213492-farc-tienen-1500-hombres-28-campamentos-venezuela. Accessed in July 15, 2010.

El Espectador. (2010, May 29). FARC aprovechan selva panameña para el tráfico de droga. In *El Espectador.* Retrieved from http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/articulo-205544-farc-aprovechan-selva-panamena-el-trafico-droga. Accessed in May 29, 2010

El Pais. (2008, July 27). Garzon dejo en libertad bajo fianza a la presunta representante de las FARC en España. In *El Pais.* Retrieved from http://elpais.com/elpais/2008/07/27/actualidad/1217146622_850215.html. Accessed in September 21, 2011)

El Pais. (2008, May 10). Las redes de las FARC en la region. In *El Pais.* Retrieved from http://www.elpais.com.uy/08/05/10/pinter_345788.asp. Accessed in November 12, 2011.

El Tiempo. (2008, August 27). Correos en computador de 'Reyes' amenazan nuevamente con agitar el ambiente con Nicaragua. In *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-4470930. Accessed in July 31, 2012.

El Tiempo. (2010, April 27). El Dossier de los nexos de las FARC con la guerrilla en Paraguay. In *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/justicia/dossier-de-nexos-de-las-farc-con-la-guerrilla-en-paraguay_7673770-1. Accessed in April 27, 2010.http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/justicia/dossier-de-nexos-de-las-farc-con-la-guerrilla-en-paraguay_7673770-1

El Tiempo. (2010, July 22). En Venezuela hay 1500 guerrilleros, asegura el embajador Luis Fernando Hoyos. In *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/politica/oea-colombia-presenta-pruebas-de-las-farc-en-venezuela_7820314-1. Accesed in July 23, 2010.

El Tiempo. (2010, June 6).El Dossier de los contactos Daniel Ortega-FARC en el caso Ruben Granda. In *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/justicia/contactos-daniel-ortega-farc-causan-polemica_7740648-1. Accessed in June 6, 2010.

El Tiempo. (2010, May 25). En Caquetá golpe más fuerte contra la Fuerza Pública en el 2010; nueve infantes de marina muertos. *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/justicia/en-caqueta-golpe-mas-fuerte-contra-la-fuerza-publica-en-el-2010_7724273-1. Accessed on May 25, 2010.

El Tiempo. (2010, November 23). Ataques de las FARC en Guaviare, Meta y Caqueta dejan 9 muertos. In *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/ataques-de-las-farc-en-guaviare-meta-y-caquet-dejan-9-muertos_8433186-4. Accesed in November 23, 2010.

El Tiempo. (2011). La cadena de narcotráfico. In *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/Multimedia/especiales/bacrim/ARCHIVO/ARCHIVO-8931601-0.pdf. Accessed in November 6, 2012

El Tiempo. (2011, February 19). Alias Manuela la ficha de las FARC en España. In *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/la-ficha-de-las-farc-en-espana_8885500-4. Accesed in February 20, 2011.

El Tiempo. (2011, February). Con alias 'Camilo' son 25 los extranjeros en las FARC. In *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://m.eltiempo.com/justicia/con-alias-camilo-son-25-los-extranjeros-en-las-farc/8813101. Accessed in February 2, 2011.

El Tiempo. (2011, January 9). Ecuador desmantelo 125 campamentos de las FARC en 2010. In *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/ecuador-fortalece-lucha-contra-el-terrorismo_8769308-4. Accessed in January 9, 2011.

El Tiempo. (2011, June 3). Ejercito abatio a Alias El Abuelo, ficha clave de Cano. In *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/santos-hace-anuncios-a-traves-de-twitter_9536525-4. Accesed in June 4, 2011

El Tiempo. (2011, September 21). Correa sabia de dinero de las FARC en su campaña, dice investigador. In *El Tiempo.* http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/libro-sobre-los-archivos-de-raul-reyes_10412244-4. Accesed in September 22, 2011.

El Tiempo. (2012, January 23). Indigenas denuncian muerte de civil en combates entre Ejercito y FARC. In *El Tiempo* Retrieved from http://m.eltiempo.com/justicia/indgenas-denuncian-atropellos-en-combate-entre-ejrcito-y-farc/8795944 Accessed in January 24, 2012

El Universal. (2008, April 13). Aseguran que FARC busco instalar oficina en Costa Rica. In *El Universal*. Retrieved from http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/notas/498155.html. Accessed in July 20, 2011)

Europa Press. (2008, August 3). Buscan a cuatro españoles por vínculo con las FARC. In *Tribuna Latina*. Retrieved from http://www.tribunalatina.com/es/viewer.php?IDN=13396. Accessed in October 12, 2011.

Gurkov, A. & Welle, D. (2009, April 25). Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan expands its geography. In *Trend*. Retrieved from http://en.trend.az/news/politics/1461139.html. Accessed in August 26, 2012.

Hernandez-Mora, S. (2011, February 6). Sectores de Arauca denuncian el santuario venezolano de los terroristas. In *El Mundo.* Retrieved from http://www.elmundo.es/america/2011/02/06/colombia/1297004520.html. Accessed in July 22, 2012.

Hincapie, L & Posada, F. (2012, February 26). Informe Exclusivo: Las FARC tienen al Cauca en una encrucijada sin fin. In *El Pais.* Retrieved from http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/judicial/noticias/informe-exclusivo-farc-tienen-cauca-en-encrucijada-sin-fin.

Hurryet Daily. (2012, May). Turkish army confirms air strikes against PKK camps in N. Iraq. In *Hurryet Daily News.* Retrieved from http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/turkey/8839165.asp?gid=231&sz=777. Accessed in September 2, 2012

Infobae. (2011, March 17). Esperan que Chile extradite al activista que operaba para las FARC. In *Infobae.* Retrieved from http://america.infobae.com/notas/21040-Colombia-insiste-en-reclamar-extradicion-de-chileno-que-opera. Accessed in September 20, 2011

Interfax: Russia & CIS Military Information Weekly. (2009, May 22). Law Enforcement; Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan try to form drug dealing network in Russia – official. In *Interfax Religion.* Retrieved from http://www.interfax-religion.com/print.php?act=news&id=6034. Accessed in August 30, 2012.

Jackley, A. (2012, September 24). Turkey pro-Kurd Party urges talks to end Kurdish conflict. In *Yahoo News.* Retrieved from http://news.yahoo.com/turkey-pro-kurd-party-urges-talks-end-kurdish-080458368.html. Accessed in September 27, 2012.

Keneş, B. (2011, September 30). European PKK. In *Today's Zaman.* Retrieved from http://www.todayszaman.com/mobile_detailc.action?newsId=261416. Accessed in September 2, 2012.

La Prensa. (2008, October 12). El hombre de Raul Reyes en Panama. In *La Prensa.* Retrieved from http://mensual.prensa.com/mensual/contenido/2008/10/12/hoy/panorama/1552617.html. Accessed in September 28, 2011

Leivoich, J. (2009, April 26). Pais Urbano. In *El Espectador.* Retrieved from http://www.elespectador.com/impreso/articuloimpreso137981-pais-urbano. Accesed in May 2, 2012.

Martinez, J. (2011, April 23). Las redes de las FARC en el exterior. In *La Red 21.* Retrieved from http://www.lr21.com.uy/mundo/448688-las-redes-de-las-farc-en-el-exterior. Accessed in August 23, 2011)

Martinez, J. (2011, March 4). Los extranjeros de las FARC. In *La Red 21.* Retrieved from. http://www.lr21.com.uy/mundo/443203-los-extranjeros-de-las-farc. Accessed in October 3, 2011

Martinez, S & Laines, L. (2008, May 27). Correos muestran más nexos FMLN-FARC. In *La Prensa Gráfica.* Retrieved from http://archive.laprensa.com.sv/20080527/nacion/1067998.asp. Accessed in November 5, 2011.

Medina, J & O'Brian, P & Machuca, J. (2008, March 20). Dircote detiene en Iquitos a dos presuntos miembros de las FARC. In *El Comercio.* Retrieved from http://elcomercio.pe/edicionimpresa/html/2008-03-20/dircote-detiene-iquitos-dos-presuntos-miembros-farc.html. Accessed in October 7, 2011.

Mendoza, P. (2008, October 30). La nueva estrategia de las FARC. In *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-4635264. Accessed in November, 21, 2011

Norland, R. (2012, May 12). In Afghanistan, new group begins campaign of terror. In *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/20/world/asia/in-afghanistan-new-insurgent-group-emerges.html?_r=0. Accessed in October 2, 2012.

Noticias 24. (2010, May 10). Uribe: El final de las FARC está cerca. In *Noticias 24.* Retrieved from http://www.noticias24.com/actualidad/noticia/15653/uribe-el-final-de-las-farc-esta-cerca. Accessed in May 8, 2012.

Oppel, R. (2007, October 23). In Iraq, Conflict Simmers on a 2nd Kurdish Front. In *The New York Times.* Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/23/world/middleeast/23kurds.html?pagewanted=all&_moc.semityn.www. Accessed in May 22, 2010.

Ponguta, N. (2008, September 24). Justicia italiana inicio investigacion contra presuntos colaboradores de las FARC. In *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-4560110. Accessed in November 2, 2011.

Press TV. (2009, April 29). Iran Police: Dead PJAC rebels not Iranian. In *Press TV.* Retrieved from http://edition.presstv.ir/detail/92936.html. Accessed in September 27, 2012.

Revista Cambio. (2008, November 2). El dossier brasileño. In *Revista Cambio.* Retrieved from http://www.cambio.com.co/portadacambio/787/ARTICULO-WEB-NOTA_INTERIOR_CAMBIO-4418592.html. Accessed in August 23, 2011.

Revista Cambio. (2009, June 4). La 'diplomacia' de las FARC. In *Revista Cambio.* Retrieved from http://www.cambio.com.co/portadacambio/831/ARTICULO-WEB-NOTA_INTERIOR_CAMBIO-5346592.html. Accessed in September 23, 2011

Revista Semana. (2008, June 14). FARC-Export. In *Revista Semana.* Retrieved from http://www.semana.com/nacion/farcexport/112750-3.aspx. Accessed in October 25, 2011.

Revista Semana. (2008, June 6). ¿Que les queda a las FARC? In *Semana.* Retrieved from http://www.semana.com/conflicto/multimedia/que-queda-farc/141008-3. Accesed in March 22, 2009

Revista Semana. (2008, October 25). Las fichas de las FARC en Mexico. In *Revista Semana.* Retrieved from http://www.semana.com/nacion/fichas-farc-mexico/117035-3.aspx. Accessed in September 3, 2011.

Roggio, B. (2006, September 5). Talibanistan: The establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Waziristan. In *The Long War Journal.* Retrieved from http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2006/09/talibanistan_the_est.php. Accessed in September 26, 2012.

Rojas, R & Carvajal, E. (2008, April 10). FARC aposto a la clandestinidad en Costa Rica. In *Al Dia.* Retrieved from http://www.aldia.cr/ad_ee/2008/abril/10/nacionales1492157.html. Accessed in February 20, 2010.

Santos, J. (2011, July 13). Jamas Ordenare una Medida Contra la Poblacion Civil. In *El Tiempo.* Retrieved from http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/respuesta-de-juan-manuel-santos-a-editorial-de-el-tiempo_9900344-4. Accesed in July 14, 201

The Economist. (2009, June 11). The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan: Here comes trouble. In *The Economist.* Retrieved from http://www.economist.com/node/13837440. Accessed in August 28, 2012)

The Economist. (2009, June 12). Uzbekistan politics: Fata Ferghana. In *The Economist Intelligence Unit ViewsWire*. Retrieved from http://www.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=VWArticleVW3&article_id=44579589&region_id=4 50000445&country_id=710000071&channel_id=210004021&category_id=&refm=vwCh&p age_title=Channel+Latest. Accessed in September 15, 2012

Today's Zaman. (2010, May 10). Turkish police report reveals PKKs role in drug trafficking. In *Today's Zaman.* Retrieved from http://www.todayszaman.com/news-243511-police-report-reveals-pkks-role-in-drug-smuggling-from-1984-to-2010.html. Accessed in September 2, 2012.

Turkish Daily News. (2007, September 11). Turkey asks Romania to block PKK's activities in Bucharest. In *Turkish Daily News.* Retrieved from http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-asks-romania-to-block-pkks-activities-in-bucharest.aspx?pageID=438&n=turkey-asks-romania-to-block-pkks-activities-in-bucharest-2007-11-10. Accessed in September 2, 2012.

Valenzuela, C. (2009, November 24). Balconazo. In *Agencia Peru.* Retrieved from http://archivo.agenciaperu.tv/ventana/index.php?q=node/537. Accessed in July 3, 2011.

Vox Populi. (2012, December 4). Ejército tiene rodeado a 'John 40', Jefe del narcotráfico de las FARC en Guanía. In *Vox Populi.* Retrieved from http://voxpopuli.net/ejercito-tiene-rodeado-a-jhon-40-jefe-del-narcotrafico-de-las-farc-en-el-guiania/. Accessed in December 12, 2012.

W Radio (2008, July 3) *Interview with General Freddy Padilla.*Retrieved from: http://www.wradio.com.co/noticia/es-el-fin-del-fin-de-las-farc-general-freddy-padilla-de-leon/20080703/nota/625901.aspx. Accessed in May 8, 2012

Yamhure, E. (2009, July 22). El Cuerpo diplomatico del terrorismo. In *El Espectador.* Retrieved from http://www.elespectador.com/columna152137-el-cuerpo-diplomatico-del-terrorismo. Accessed in July 23, 2009.

Yamhure, E. (2011, March 30). Chavez locuta. In *El Espectador.* Retrieved from http://m.elespectador.com/impreso/columna-260125-chavez-locuta. Accessed in March 30, 2011.

Interviews

In Colombia

- Alexander Oyola, Journalist and researcher, Testigo Directo.
- Alvaro Balcazar, Director Centro de Fusion Integral de la Macarena
- Cesar Castaño, Researcher and Writer, Federación Verdad Colombia
- Fabio Mariño, Former member of the Movimiento 19 de Abril (M19)
- General Jose Roberto Ibañez, Director Academia Colombiana de Historia Militar
- Gerson Arias, Researcher Fundacion Ideas para la Paz.

- Luis Villamarin, Former Lieutenant Colonel of the National Army and Writer.
- Martha Ruiz, Journalist at Semana Magazine.
- Sergio Jaramillo, former Deputy Defense Minister and current High Presidential Commissioner for Security.
- (Name Withheld) Retired Non-Commissioned Officer of the National Army.
- (Name withheld) Civilian Analyst, formerly linked to National Army Intelligence. Bogota
- (Name withheld) Major, Intelligence National Army Intelligence.
- (Name withheld) Non-Commissioned Officer, National Army Intelligence.

In Venezuela

- Commander Wilmer Castro Soteldo, Governor of the State of Portuguesa, former Minister and senior member of the Bolivarian Revolution. Member of the group of Officials which organized the 1992 coup against President Carlos Andres Perez, with President Hugo Chavez.
- Eric Eckvall, Independent Political Advisor, head of Corpstratcom
- Fernando Egaña, Former Minister of Information of Venezuela under President Rafael Caldera.
- Indira de Peña, member of the anti-Bolivarian UNO America network, and wife of senior opposition leader and writer Alejandro Peña Esclusa.
- (Name withheld) Journalist at El Universal, former researcher on Insurgencies and *Chavismo*
- Natalia Cobo, First Secretary of the Colombian Embassy in Caracas.
- Professor Anibal Romero, Professor of Political Science at Universidad Simon Bolivar.
- Professor Carlos Romero, Researcher on security and bilateral relations Colombia-Venezuela.
- Roberto Giusti, writer and journalist for El Universal newspaper. Researcher on the presence of Colombian insurgencies in Venezuela.

In Peru

- 'Adrian Roncapulmon', Head of Intelligence Field Operatives, PKS Consultants
- 'Tania Roja', activist of the Movimiento Nueva Izquierda
- Carlos Monge, Associate Researcher, Centre for Studies and Development Promotion. (DESCO) Expert on Peruvian social movements and drugs.
- Edgardo Gavelan, General Secretary of the Movimiento Nueva Izquierda
- Gustavo Gorriti, Journalist and Researcher at Caretas Magazine.
- Luis Giacoma Macchiavello, Analyst at PKS Consultants
- Manuel Castillo, General Secretary to the Partido Comunista Peruano – Unidad
- Ramon Diego Abasolo, Lawyer, Former official at the Ministry of Interior
- Secretary of the Partido Comunista del Peru - Patria Roja

In Chile

- Adolfo Vera, Former Researcher at Academia Nacional de Estudios Politicos y Estrategicos (ANEPE)
- Alejandro Arevalo, Official at Chilean Gendarmerie
- Carolina Sancho, Coordinator of the Lecture on Intelligence at ANEPE

- Cristian Garay, Professor at the Universidad de Chile
- Domingo Marileo, Director Unen Lonko, National Assembly of Leftist Mapuches.
- Israel Aillapan, member of the Regional Chapter of Communist Party in the Region of La Araucania and activist of the Mapuche indian community.
- Ivan Witker, Deputy Director at the Academia Nacional de Estudios Politicos y Estrategicos (ANEPE)
- Juan Luis Cordova, Press Secretary for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Chile
- Liza Zuñiga, Consultant to the Red de Seguridad y Defensa de America Latina (RESDAL)
- (Name withheld) Official at the Ministry of Defense and researcher on criminal networks in South America
- (Name withheld) Official at the Ministry of Interior
- Rafael, PhD Candidate and researcher on Bolivarianism as the basis for the construction of Venezuelan Foreign Policy.

Others

- Conversation with General Javier Florez, former Commander of the Fuerza de Despliegue Rapido (FUDRA), and current Military Attache to the Embassy in Washington. Talks held during the Specialized Course on Terrorism and Counterinsurgency, at the National Defense University-Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies. Washington D.C.
- Email exchange with Dr. Thomas Marks, Head of the War and Conflict Studies Department at the College of International Security Affairs, National Defense University.
- Phone conversations with David Beriain, Spanish independent journalist and researcher of conflict in Colombia and Venezuela.