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**Title: The Elusive Quest for Peace in Colombia.
Past and Future Conflict Resolution Schemes**

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC — Autodefensas Campesinas de Casanare
ACMV — Autodefensas Campesinas de Meta y Vichada
AUC — Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia
BC — Bloque Calima
BLS — Bloque Libertadores del Sur
CERAC — Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos
CINEP — Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (Programa por la Paz)
CIT — Centro Internacional de Toledo para la Paz
CNRR — Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación
COHA — Council on Hemispheric Affairs
COP — Corporación Observatorio para la Paz
DANE — Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística
DDR — Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration
DT — Diócesis de Tumaco
ELN — Ejército de Liberación Nacional
EPL — Ejército Popular de Liberación
ERPAC — Ejército Revolucionario Popular Antiterrorista Colombiano
FARC — Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
GMH — Grupo de Memoria Histórica
GN — Gobernación de Nariño
HRW — Human Rights Watch
ICG — International Crisis Group
INDEPAZ — Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz
ISC — In-Sight Crime
M19 — Movimiento 19 de Abril
MAPP — Misión de Apoyo al Proceso de Paz
NG — Nueva Generación
NN — Noche y Niebla
NVC — Norte del Valle Cartel
UNODC — United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VR — Vicepresidencia de la República

INTRODUCTION

When nearly three years ago I started my doctoral research in Department of Social Sciences at the University of Naples “Federico II” I intended to study the conflict resolution issues with reference to the Colombian civil war and its partially accomplished peace process in 2003-2006. I wanted to focus on the evaluation of the already applied resolution scheme in order to understand its achievements and shortcomings in terms of their implications for presently negotiated peace accords with the biggest insurgent group still operating in Colombia, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). What I found particularly interesting within the topic was the relationship between conflict resolution design/implementation and post-conflict risks of violence reemergence. I chose to analyse the Colombian war since it constituted an ideal case for comparative research with widely available systematic data. First of all, the Colombian conflict represents a particular type of sub-state wars with more than one violent conflict simultaneously going on in the territory of a single country. Even though waged almost independently, all of these sub-state conflicts belong to the same kind of irregular warfare characterised by the absence of ethnic, sectarian, or religious background which could have made a viable compromise unachievable (see Kalyvas and Kocher 2007a). For policymakers, the existence of such myriad of largely similar but still independent conflicts means total mess (Arias Ortiz 2012). For researcher, it guarantees perfect conditions for comparative research design.

More importantly, the most recent peace process in Colombia (2003-2006) was concluded amid the ongoing warfare. Paradoxically, it actually facilitates the evaluation of the resolution’s successes and failures because it ensures the continuity of conflict data collection. What usually happens in the situation of fully resolved armed contests are radical changes in conflict monitoring strategies. The states, NGOs and international community observers tend to overlook the existence

of low-intensity post-conflict violence as long as it does not take any political turn. Call (2002) observes, for example, that in El Salvador post-conflict violence was on a constant increase for the period of at least ten years since early 1990s, and still went almost unnoticed internationally. Call finds that although the majority of post-conflict violence was either perpetrated by armed gangs formed by ex-conflict participants, or reflected newly-established law enforcement authorities' inability to control crime, it was never considered as having anything to do with just terminated civil war. As a result, Salvadoran conflict resolution is unanimously judged as the success story, even if it left the country as one of the world's most insecure places — the situation which continues until present. Coming back to Colombian case, the fact that the most recent peace process offered only partial conflict resolution meant, among other things, that the monitoring of conflict-related violence has never been interrupted in the country since 2006. Thanks to that, analysts have nowadays more data to evaluate Colombian resolution's outcomes than any other peacefully terminated civil war since 1945.

Practicalities apart, my research agenda centred on the evaluation of the already concluded Colombian peace process seemed limited enough to allow me to address the problem empirically within the time of three-year doctoral programme. On the other hand, it was broad enough to make it potentially interesting for more general social sciences audience. Not surprisingly, after few months of exploratory period I found that the dynamics of conflict-related violence since the first applications of negotiated solution in 2003 remain still largely under-researched topic (for the difficulties of conflict resolution evaluations see Pugel 2009). Having completed vast background and theoretical reading I came up with an idea that my research could venture to explain the variation in the intensity of organised violence perpetrated amid partially resolved conflict with reference to the hypotheses derived from organised crime theory. I believed that such an analytical approach could make my study relevant for political conflict theory, organised crime research, as

well as policy design (both anti-criminal and conflict resolution policies) — which by an large proved true at the end of three-year doctoral period.

For organised crime research, the present study may be interesting because it tests quantitatively (and confirms) the until now unverified hypotheses about criminals' violent behaviour appeared on the side of some prominent organised crime research (Gambetta 1992; Paoli 2003) or derived from predominantly ethnographic observations (Sánchez-Jankowski 1991; Gambetta 2009). The Colombian case gives a great occasion to address the problem of organised crime violence with systematic, disaggregated and publicly available data. The information on organised crime violence is usually more difficult to obtain than the information on violence perpetrated by civil war participants. To begin with, domestic conflicts attract more attention than criminal problems. NGOs and international institutions play a huge role in reporting the dynamics of ongoing conflicts, while they rarely have competences and interests in registering organised crime violence. Once conflicts terminate, survived participants, victims and international mediators usually insist on making war crimes public, establishing truth commissions or creating transitional justice institutions. Thanks to those initiatives (or pressures) the information of conflict-related violence is made public and gets released relatively quickly after its perpetration, which is rarely the case of the information on organised crime violence. The case of Colombian war is interesting in such respect because some of the contemporary conflict participants can be considered as real organised crime actors (even if engaged politically) whose violent behaviour follows a similar logic

as violent behaviour of gangs, organised crime groups and mafias (even if both phenomenas differ in scale).¹

For political conflict research, my criminologically-inspired model of violence dynamics in the ongoing Colombian civil war since 2003 may be innovative because it tries to improve the existing studies with the insights from organised crime research. To put it in another way, I make an attempt to explain the recent dynamics of paramilitary violence (responsible for roughly 70 per cent of all conflict-related violence experienced in the country since 1970s; GMH 2013) arguing that the explanation based on criminological insights should provide more consistent fit to the data compared to the existing political science arguments. In fact, during the exploratory period of my research I discovered that, contrarily to Kalyvas' (2006) predictions, most of Colombian paramilitary violence took place in the areas of most disputed territorial control. What is more, I established that Weinstein's (2007) hypothesis about irregular armed groups' violence as a function of the nature of their initial endowments did not hold in paramilitaries' case since it could not address the heterogeneity of paramilitary violence observed across time and space. Finally, I learnt that Sanín and Wood's (2014) claim that conflict participants use more or less violence dependent on their ideology accounted only for the instances of high-intensity paramilitary violence but did not explain those situations when paramilitaries used relatively little coercion. My preliminary tests of these political science theories against empirical data from Colombia revealed that more

¹ While I do not claim that all political violence in the Colombian war can be interpreted as criminal one, I still believe that there is a significant proportion of violence in the Colombian conflict which classifies as such. I am referring here to the violence perpetrated by paramilitary groups who can best be understood as politically engaged organised crime actors (or politically engaged extra-legal governance providers in control of large range of criminal markets). Political involvement is nothing new among complex forms of organised crime, with the Sicilian mafia being an obvious illustration of such phenomena (see Catanzaro 1988; Lupo 1993). The interpretation of Colombian paramilitaries as organised crime actors is bound to be controversial (as I learnt during my first seminar talk in Bogotá on 23.10.2013), and thus I am going to spend considerable time later in the thesis to demonstrate that no matter how we interpret paramilitary groups their violence dynamics can surely be accounted for with criminological tools (see Chapter Two).

comprehensive explanation is still needed to address the problem of violence dynamics in such highly criminalised wars as the Colombian one.

Road Map

The thesis is organised in the following way. The first part offers a theoretical introduction to the problems of conflict resolution design and its implementation with a special attention to the Colombian case. To begin with, in Chapter One I explore the possible consequences of forthcoming peace accords between Colombian government and the biggest insurgent group still operating in the country, FARC. I identify on what premises the future peace agreement is expected to affect Colombians' well-being and improve country's security situation. I claim that the expectations of peace accords' largely positive effects seem rather unfounded. The historical micro analysis shows that conflict resolution negotiated with FARC is unlikely to put an end to the perpetration of organised violence in the country and therefore may not eliminate the most significant costs provoked by the Colombian civil war. The analysis of conflict's dynamics reveals its strong regionalisation and the omnipresence of private ordering competition. One could hardly expect that such violent competition will be stamped out once an agreement with FARC is reached. Contrarily, it may actually be aggravated by post-conflict fragmentation of local and regional extra-legal governance providers.

To support these claims with empirical evidence, in Chapter Two I propose an analytical model to evaluate the achievements of already accomplished peace process with paramilitary groups which led to their almost complete demobilisation in 2003-2006. Moreover, I try to explain in what sense the outcomes of that process can be informative for the predictions of FARC's possible demobilisation's consequences. The chapter presents the central argument of the paper where I argue that there exists positive relationship between post-demobilisation paramilitary

violence and state's anti-paramilitary repression launched simultaneously with peace negotiations in 2003. In other words, I claim that wherever the state committed itself to truly peaceful conflict resolution it brought evident security improvements. On the other hand, wherever the state defied on their peace agreement's promises, or refused to negotiate with selected paramilitary factions, the security situation was largely aggravated. I hypothesise that the relationship between repression and violence is driven by two mechanisms which make paramilitaries intensify their coercion along with state's repressive action either (a) because of the destruction of their non-violent resources, or (b) due to the lack of control over the centrifugal predatory initiatives within their organisations. At the end of Chapter Two I describe my research design based on comparative analysis of two Colombian macro regions representing the areas which improved (Eastern Plains) and aggravated (Pacific Coast) their security records since the implementation of the first negotiated solutions in 2003. Finally, I outline the key properties of the data used in the rest of the work.

In the second part of the thesis (Chapters Three and Four) I evaluate quantitatively the consequences of negotiated conflict resolution with paramilitary groups. As hypothesised, I find that the positive impact of this process was far from uniform - it varied not only across regions but also within them. Following my theoretical considerations I pay special attention to the post-demobilisation behaviour of the state in order to identify the conditions which made negotiated solution successful. To begin with I address the puzzle of the persistence of high levels of post-demobilisation paramilitary violence in Colombian Pacific Coast compared to an evident reduction in Eastern Plains region. The usual explanations derived from political conflict theories are empirically tested here against my criminologically-oriented argument. In fact, the results of my analyses show that Colombian post-demobilisation paramilitary violence could not be explained with the argument of the weakness of the state as proposed by Restrepo and Muggah (2009) or Howe, Sanchez and Contreras (2010). Contrarily, I demonstrate the the observed high levels of violence in some Colombian (sub-)regions covary positively with the abundance of state's

repressive intervention. Quite surprisingly, the results hold only for Pacific Coast sample which leads me to the introduction of new empirical puzzle to my analyses.

The third part of the thesis (Chapters Five and Six) investigates the new puzzle qualitatively trying to answer why the logic of post-demobilisation paramilitary violence varied across regions. I discover that this heterogeneity can be explained with reference to the nonpartisan character of anti-paramilitary crackdown adopted against paramilitary groups in some regions but not in others. More specifically, both chapters find that the paramilitaries challenged by the state in nonpartisan manner (as happened in Pacific Coast) used more violence either as a way of substituting their non-violent resources most affected by law enforcement activities, or in response to crackdown-related intensification of predatory tendencies within their respective organisations. At the micro level, violence is found to reflect risk-driven adaptations of paramilitary organisations. At the macro level, violence seems to be the consequence of paramilitaries' losses in terms of their non-violent resource which provoke general instability at paramilitary governance markets. Eastern Plains analyses presented in Chapter Six confirm those findings showing that none of violence reinforcement mechanisms can be evidenced among the paramilitaries of this "control" region. The thesis concludes with theoretical and practical implications of its key findings.

Part I: Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Risks. Lessons from Colombia

CHAPTER ONE: Rethinking Colombian Civil War(s) 1946-2014. The role of forthcoming peace accords

In the first half of 2014 Colombia experienced extremely tight presidential contest between the incumbent candidate, Juan Manuel Santos, and his challenger Óscar Iván Zuluaga. The distance between the candidates apparently represented the fracture of Colombian society, which made the contest especially heated. The main difference between Santos and Zuluaga's political agendas lied in their ideas how to put an end to the ongoing civil conflict (Fisas 2014) which made the pre-election debate almost exclusively dedicated to the Colombian civil war (COHA 2014). Apparently, the fact finds its justification in the sentiments of Colombian population:

The most profound fracture is in the streets: between those who can accept the fact that with the passage of time the guerrilla [Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC] will be transformed into political party, and those who cannot accept it; between those who believe that the government is making too many concessions in exchange for nothing, and those who believe in the peace process to be evaluated only by its joint outcomes; and, above all, between those who believe that prison sentences for some members of FARC are necessary, and those who would tolerate other types of sanctions (Blanco 2014).²

² All the texts originally in Spanish translated by myself.

In a schematic way, Santos' pre-election promises included unconditional peace negotiations with main insurgent group. Zuluaga, on the other hand, insisted to condition further peace negotiations with FARC on their fulfilment of certain prerequisites which, in practice, would most probably mean the abandonment of negotiated solution and the return to military escalation (COHA 2014).

In the end, Santos marginally won the presidency, but election's turnout demonstrated that politicians might have overestimated the importance of peace process for Colombian voters. "The Colombian population's disenchantment with their political system has reached unprecedented levels, with an abstention rate of 60 percent in the first round of elections" (COHA 2014). Some people hinted at people's relative indifference towards peace process with FARC insurgents: "I don't feel that the negotiations in Havana with FARC are real, we don't know if they bear fruits. All happens there in Cuba, as if behind our backs [...] Here you look at things from different perspective. When you hear about a massacre, about an attack, it impresses you no longer [...] We're used to it, we grew up with it" (Blanco and Reyes 2014). What is more, "[t]he war remains concentrated in 10 per cent of 1,100 municipalities in twelve regions of Colombia, where only 5 per cent of the population live" (*Ibid.*). It makes majority of Colombian society relatively unaffected by war cruelties — at least in the last few years of the conflict since its partial resolution agreed between the state and paramilitary groups in 2003-2006. When accused of an overemphasis of war-related issues in the pre-election debates, the politicians argued that although the war affects directly only a marginal fraction of Colombian population it represents the crucial factor for Colombian's future well-being. Santos campaign's advisor claimed that: "The state destines about 5,000 million dollars to fight against the guerrilla, which are not invested into health, education, hygiene... it comprises between 1 and 1.5 per cent of GDP" (*Ibid.*). According to the Colombian Minister of Economy, Mauricio Cardenas, the country will grow 1 per cent more once peace accords with FARC are reached (Saiz 2013).

Are the politicians right to stress the importance of the peace process as a determinant of Colombians' future well-being? Does Colombians' disinterest with conflict resolution reflect their ignorance, or the insensibility towards compatriots suffering from war-related violence? I believe that the turnout at 2014 elections should rather be interpreted as the population's largely correct mistrust in the promises that an accomplished peace process with the FARC could be central to the improvement of country's well-being and that it could provide fully satisfying solution to serious security problems experienced in the country for decades now. To demonstrate the plausibility of such argument in macro historical perspective I will proceed in the following manner. Firstly, I will individuate the mechanisms which make Colombian civil conflict damaging to Colombians' well-being, discovering that the most important of them concerns the perpetuation of organised violence. Secondly, I will argue that the mechanisms which drive the persistence of organised violence are unlikely to be eliminated by forthcoming peace accords. Such a claim will be supported by historical reconstruction of Colombian civil conflict's dynamics since its very origins in 1946. This discussion will introduce us to the later parts of the thesis where I will evaluate empirically the already concluded peace process with Colombian paramilitary groups (and some individually demobilised insurgents).

How Does War Damage Country's Well-Being?

Political economy literature is rife with arguments which identify the mechanisms linking slow economic growth to conflict and violence. It is important to realise that the relations between growth and violence, and between growth and conflict are distinct. Conflict does not always produce violence (in fact, in most situations it does not) and non-violent political conflict affects economic growth via different mechanisms than violent one. In brief, non-violent conflict slows down growth because it increases the risks of unpredictable and inconsistent reforms, which makes

entrepreneurs reluctant to make long-term investments — a condition *sine qua non* for development (Frye 2010; Easterly 2006). I am obviously more interested in violent political conflict and its impact on growth. Riascos and Vargas (2011) offer a complex review of the literature dedicated to this problem identifying four micro mechanisms which explain why violence impedes development. In short, violence inhibits growth because (a) it precludes the accumulation of human capital, (b) influences the growth-unfriendly micro decisions of the productive firms, (c) negatively interferes with early childhood development, and (d) creates the sovereign risks (Riascos and Vargas 2011, 12).

Do we observe these micro mechanisms at work in case of the ongoing Colombian conflict? The activities of the Colombian biggest guerrilla group, FARC, undoubtedly affect economic growth by all above mentioned mechanisms. The group's operations exercise unquestionable influence on accumulation of human capital (kidnappings, torture, disappearances, homicides), and on early childhood development (child recruitment, Spartan discipline among the populations subject to FARC's local governance; see HRW 2003). Although a lot of media coverage is dedicated predominantly to those two aspects of FARC's activities, it seems that they provoke only minimal obstacles for growth. Only 5 per cent of population live in the areas of *occasional* FARC's activities, and at the present stage of war only tiny fraction of them is actually affected. The sovereign risks are arguably no longer a threat given FARC's practically inexistent hopes of taking over the state.

Probably the most negative influence of group's activities on growth should be identified in the pressure FARC exercises on the decisions of productive firms via imposition of extra-legal "taxation" (see Duncan 2005; Vargas 2004; Medina Gallego 1990). The growth-unfriendliness of insurgency taxation lies in the negative incentives it creates for productive activities by affecting competition and provoking insecurity of property rights. Colombian guerrillas, similarly to the mafias, exercise "violent redistribution of revenues which alternates the rationality of consumption

and the use of savings in the areas of [their] presence, discouraging local investments and impeding formation of trust networks with the result of an increase in transaction and information costs” (Centorrino and Signorino 1997, 11-2; author’s translation from Italian). At the individual level guerrilla taxation actually duplicates the legal one. In the macro perspective it effectively *substitutes* legal taxation since it reduces local fiscal entries (via influence on consumption patterns) and encourages legal tax evasion³ (*Ibid.*, 26-7). As a consequence, guerrilla’s extra-legal governance (private ordering), even if present in relatively small fraction of Colombian territory, may bear directly on public deficit.

There is another reason why mafia-like private ordering exercised by guerrilla groups impedes growth and makes it the most economically damaging aspect of low-intensity Colombian armed conflict. One of the fundamental characteristics of private ordering systems is the fact that they work for the benefit of some at the cost of others. Private ordering cannot be delivered as a public good because no one pays for those who cannot afford to pay for themselves, and, additionally, it must guarantee some exclusive benefits (club goods) for the payers in order to make them participate in the exchange on the voluntary rather than purely coercive basis (see Nozick 1974, 10-25; Gambetta 1992, ch. 1). The exclusiveness of private ordering system makes it inescapably conflictual and persistently rife with violence. Proneness to conflict between protectors and protégées is reinforced by the fact that the latter ones usually do not possess mechanisms of collective control over their protectors. It, in turn, incentivises private protection providers to be less benevolent than they would have been if they had dealt with clients (rather than victims) at truly competitive markets of private security (Varese 2010).

³ Double-taxed entrepreneurs would inevitably look for some ways of alleviating their tax burden. There is every likelihood that they will opt for legal tax evasion rather than mafia-like one. The former taxation is impersonal and relatively easy to evade, compared to the mafia-like taxation supervised via personalised monitoring system and collected with a substantial doses of coercion (Centorrino and Signorino 1997, 24).

In sum, the most important conflict-related damage to Colombians' macro-economic well-being lies in the guerrilla's extra-legal governance and its impact on the decisions of productive firms. Does FARC's demobilisation suffice to overcome this problem? Meléndez and Harker (2008, 2) argue that the cessation of organised violence perpetuated by irregular armed groups must be accompanied by the restoration of public order to stimulate development and produce security improvements. Otherwise, the disarmament of organised violence perpetrator cannot eliminate all the conflict-related obstacles for development (e.g. negative entrepreneurial incentives rooted in distorted competition and the absence of property rights protection). In such case, there is every likelihood that new forms of organised violence emerge in place of the old ones (see Duncan 2009). In sum, I believe that the forthcoming peace accords with FARC could eliminate only some macro-economic side effects of the ongoing war, but arguably not the most significant ones.

Forthcoming Peace Accords as Unlikely Solution to Organised Violence Problem in Colombia

The present section is dedicated to the particulars which make possible peace agreement with FARC unlikely to improve security situation in Colombian peripheries. More specifically, I show the limitations of peace negotiations' design stemming from erroneous assumption that FARC represents an *exogenous* organised violence actor. According to this assumption, FARC imposes its governance in certain areas of Colombian territory via coercion, and for the mere purpose of effective pursuit of group's political interests. In the empirical part of the section I will show that it is hardly the case. In fact, FARC's extra-legal governance turns out to be driven by *endogenous* local-level dynamics. Given the limitations imposed on peace negotiations expressed in the agenda set in 2012, it seems that, whatever the exit of Havana talks will be, the local private ordering markets presently dominated by FARC are not going to disappear, and, consequently, local-level violent conflict is unlikely to cease even if it changes its main protagonists. In short, the present

agenda of Havana negotiations does not consider the real *raison d'être* of organised violence in Colombia, which is the existence of myriad of private ordering markets.

Contrarily to the common expectation, the demobilisation of well-disciplined and hierarchically organised extra-legal governance provider, such as FARC, may increase the potential for conflict at private ordering markets and may even reinforce the negative economic incentives which impede development in certain parts of Colombia. The absence of private ordering monopolist usually deteriorates the quality of extra-legal governance services and intensifies predatory tendencies among the operating governance providers. Easterly (2006, 309) argues that the fragmentation of private ordering markets creates a dilemma of decentralised predation, in which everyone maximises the volume of his own “loot” because he knows that whatever he leaves will undoubtedly fall prey to his fellow predators. What shall we expect to happen once FARC decides to sign peace agreement and to dissolve its organisation? One answer is that we may expect that there will be some groups eager to take over FARC’s abandoned businesses (newly-emerged ones or those already operating in cooperation or in competition with insurgents as extra-legal governance providers). Colombians have already observed this process in the aftermath of paramilitaries’ collective demobilisation (2003-2006) followed by almost immediate replacement of disarmed groups by so-called *bandas criminales*, new illegal armed groups (NIAG), or neoparamilitary squads, all of them glad to reincorporate demobilised ex-combatants (Villarraga 2013; ICG 2012; CNRR 2009). In short, the peace process under way does not design any solution to quench demand for private ordering. Such a solution would require state’s round-the-clock presence in Colombian peripheries — the presence based on trust, rather than on emergency crackdowns against local suppliers of extra-legal governance (DT 2011). Emergency interventions may be successful to eliminate actors from private ordering markets, but they cannot eliminate the markets themselves, which makes organised violence perpetual (I develop the point in Chapter Four).

Before moving on to empirical evidence, I ought to advert that my thesis should not be read as controversial. I believe that peace accords are crucial for ending bloodshed amid civil conflicts. All the same, I argue that at times they promise tangible results, at times they do not. The peace process with Colombian paramilitaries concluded during Álvaro Uribe's presidency in 2003-2006 undoubtedly produced substantial security improvements (see Restrepo and Muggah 2009 and Chapter Three), but those accords were designed on regional rather than national basis, and therefore more accurately addressed the complexity of the past strife. Moreover, the present stage of the conflict with its low-intensity warfare does hardly resemble the fully-fledged war from the beginning of Uribe's presidential mandate in 2002. For these reasons, I argue that nationally-designed peace accords cannot become a successful solution to low-intensity conflict driven almost exclusively by regional dynamics. To make it clear: peace process with FARC is necessary, but given its present shape one should not overestimate its practical importance in improving Colombia's immediate security or in boosting the country's development.

Rethinking Colombian Civil Conflict(s): Historical Reconstruction of Regional Dynamics

In order to demonstrate the plausibility of the hypothesis of non-centrality of national peace accords in improving Colombia's well-being I am going to rethink the dynamics of Colombian civil conflict in a historical perspective. Political scientists usually identify two Colombian civil conflicts since 1946: the first one, the Violencia, started between 1946 and 1948, and terminated between 1958 and 1963 (dependent on the coding rules applied); and the second one, which I shall call the

guerrillas insurgency, dated at mid-1960s, yet unresolved⁴. Given the proximity between the end of the first civil war and the beginning of another, the conflicts are often interpreted as causally related, even if they usually get coded as independent rebellions (Arjona and Kalyvas 2006, 3). For the purpose of present work I find it opportune to think of the continuum of Colombian civil conflict(s) since 1946 with the various degrees of warfare's intensity. To avoid excessive simplification I distinguish between the conflict's two phases: the Violencia (1946-63) and guerrillas insurgency (1966-2014) periods.

One of the most perplexing characteristics of Colombian civil war lies in the impossibility to identify what the war is about. The Violencia phase of the conflict, schematically classified as a war about eliminating party-driven privileges and partisan clientelism in the rural areas of Colombian peripheries, under close analyses reveals extremely complex dynamics. Zamosc (1986, 18) says that "although the Violencia was largely a peasant war, the peasants did not fight to win the agrarian issue. They fought for their interests only in the course and as a derivation of fighting for the interests of others, and this usually involved direct conflict with each other." In some places conflict focused on demands for land, in others on demands for state's services (health, roads, schooling), and yet elsewhere on demands for credit and peasant economy subsidies (Zamosc 1986). What about the guerrillas insurgency? It seems equally hard to find a common denominator for the majority of the violent struggles since mid-1960s. Insurgent movements alone present complexity of motivations for war waging, making anti-state forces extremely fragmented, not rarely in direct military competition among themselves (Núñez 2012; Kline 2007). Considering only the remaining

⁴ Quantitative studies of civil war worked out precise rules of coding war's outbreak and its termination based on a number of deaths among each side of the conflict. Conventionally, political violence is coded as a civil war when at least 1000 people die in the arch of three years, and the death toll stays at 1000 conflict-related deaths per year in subsequent period, with no more than 95 per cent of deaths at one side of the conflict. Quantitative studies of Colombian civil conflict(s) usually code the Colombian strife as a civil war only between 1953-1958, and 1983-2003 periods (see Giraldo 2005; Gutiérrez 2003).

insurgent groups, the rebellion gravitates either towards a systemic change towards socialism, land redistribution and more egalitarian society (as declared by FARC), or towards delegitimising multinational corporations' activities and the abandonment of neoliberal policies in Colombia (as declared by Ejército de Liberación Nacional, later ELN). How come each rebel group finds its own *casus belli* irreconcilable with those of its fellow insurgent factions? Barely sketched complexity of the revolutionary strife since 1966 reveals that neither in this phase of war one can find a straightforward answer to the question of what the Colombian civil war is about.

In the remaining part of the section I will search for an explanation of the persistence of violent conflict in Colombia — an explanation coherent not only for each phase of war separately, but for both of them simultaneously. As I have already said in the previous section my hypothesis identifies the reasons of the perpetuation of the Colombian civil conflict in the intrinsically irresolvable competition over local private ordering markets. Coming back to the main point of this chapter, I will demonstrate that the conflict from its very origins was driven by the multitude of local- or regional-level feuds which could not (and still cannot) be solved by nationally designed peace treaty. This evidence suggests that whatever happens at Havana negotiations table there is every likelihood that Colombia will not get rid of irregular armed groups involved in extra-legal governance, and that the conflict will continue (even if no longer under political umbrella).

The section is organised in the following way: I begin with an identification of the *raison d'être* of this world longest civil war testing a privatisation of war hypothesis. This argument says that the war is driven by local dynamics associated with private ordering competition which inscribe themselves in the national insurgency master cleavages for instrumental purposes. In the first empirical part, I show that the Colombian conflict could better be understood from local rather than national perspective. Secondly, I discuss how Colombian warring parties make use of instrumental politics which help them to dress particularistic interests in universal objectives and values expressed via insurgency discourse. I conclude with an explanation why these insights demonstrate

the non-centrality of present negotiations with FARC in an effort to eliminate organised violence from Colombian landscape. The data used in the section comes from detailed ethnographic studies of the Colombian civil conflict — quoted at length in various parts of the text.

Privatisation of War Thesis

Political conflict analysts often observe the disparity between grass-root and top-down motivations for war waging (Lichbach 1994). They often show that rank-and file rebels react to different incentives to join insurgency than rebellion's to-be commanders and its political leaders. Lichbach (1994) argues that the explanation of conflict's outbreak requires good understanding of the modalities how disparate motivations to rebel converge. Kalyvas (2006) claims that disparity of goals and aspirations in civil war happens not only at the individual level (e.g. along the lines of insurgency hierarchies). He argues that there exists aggregate-level discrepancy of motivations, for example, between warring localities which join rebellion for the convenience of furthering their local or regional goals, not necessarily coincident with those of national insurgency. Kalyvas adds that the phenomena is hardly observable because of "master cleavage" adherence. Master cleavage adherence happens when small warring sides, with publicly irrelevant reasons to fight, prefer not to be explicit about their actual motives (e.g. plunder of a neighbouring village), and consequently decide to conceal their actual aspirations under the language (values and objectives) of national armed resistance. These tactics gains them legitimacy, simultaneously obscuring the complexity of conflict's dynamics for bird-eye observers (Kalyvas 2006).⁵

⁵ The master cleavage argument differs from the common conviction that political leaders or "violence entrepreneurs" can easily manipulate and cajole people into participating in collective violence (see Tilly 2003).

What kind of particular gains make people adhere to the master cleavages of national rebellion if they do not really care about the pursuit of common political cause? These gains can be divided into exogenous or endogenous ones. The exogenous benefits usually exist prior to the conflict's outbreak, while the ongoing warfare simply creates an opportunity to effectively pursue them. Among exogenous incentives to participate in civil war we shall consider material benefits from plundering, pillage, or mercenaries' pay. Despite a recent trend in academic literature to describe material incentives in war waging as a criminalisation of conflict (Kaplan 1994) or as an emergence of new generation of war (Kaldor 1999), the practice dates back to the ancient times (see Lucano 2006; Tucidide 1985). Another form of material incentive pursuable in a situation of collective violence is a relief from obligations and a dissolution of debts – equally ancient phenomena (see Sallustio 1982). The endogenous gains from joining rebellion's master cleavages emerge as a *consequence* of an ongoing armed conflict. They comprise, among other things, the provision of private protection. Backing up one group can guarantee a form of security in a situation when normal forms of protection, such as police and army, become unreliable — either because of they are exclusively occupied with counterinsurgency struggle, or because they adopt indiscriminate counterinsurgency measures responsible for civilian casualties via mistargeting. A good example of endogenous war-adherence benefits can be observed in the Vietnamese war. American Operation Phoenix in Vietnam (aimed at identifying and eliminating rebels' supporters) illustrate a situation when active participation in the conflict turned out to be safer than the otherwise preferable neutrality (Kalyvas and Kocher 2007b).

The master cleavage argument also helps us to understand one of the most puzzling aspects of the Colombian conflict, its unprecedented length. Blattman and Miguel (2010) argue that civil war in general should be treated as empirical puzzles. Their high costs usually make each warring side worse off at the end of the fighting than they could have been if no fighting had ever occurred. The authors propose few hypotheses which may explain why people still embark on such

uneconomic enterprises as infinitely long civil wars, with informational setbacks and commitment problems among the most promising explanations (*Ibid.*, 11). In Colombian case none of these accounts seems reasonable though. To begin with, Blattman and Miguel (2009, 11) hypothesise that people may continue uneconomic fighting because — due to informational asymmetries — they erroneously estimate the chances of winning the war by each of conflict participants. Yet, is it really possible that the Colombian warring parties are not aware of their respective strengths after forty eight years of continuous fighting? Fearon (2004), on the other hand, argues the prolonged uneconomic fighting may be explained by rebels' awareness of the state's incentives to fall back on commitments undertook during peace negotiations (usually in the moment of state's weakness). In fact, there is a long history of Colombian state's commitment problems — especially in case of 1960s and 1970s resolution schemes (see Zamosc 1986). Nevertheless, since late 1990s the successive Colombian governments have forcefully signalled their determination to arrive at a durable peaceful solution for example, by creating demilitarisation zone under President Pastrana's negotiations in 1998-2002 (Kline 2007), or by conducting successful paramilitary demobilisation in 2003-2006 (Arjona and Kalyvas 2006). It is thus hardly possible that state's commitment can still be perceived by insurgents as an obstacle to a peaceful conflict resolution in Colombia.

Once we agree though that the Colombian strife is a war about furthering private interests not realisable with alternative means, the persistence of conflict will become less of a puzzle (see war-as-business hypothesis in Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom 2004). The master cleavage argument suggests that the extreme fragmentation of original *casus belli* (mainly land redistribution and exclusive politics) into an infinite number of non-zero-sum struggles makes the Colombian conflict so persistent simply because it cannot be placated with any single overarching resolution scheme. In the rest of the section I will illustrate empirically the plausibility of this hypothesis by showing that the behaviour of warring parties throughout the entire length of the Colombian civil war (until present) repeats the following sequence: (1) an outbreak of regional war-related disorder,

(2) an adoption of private means of order reestablishment, (3) legitimisation of private ordering providers via instrumental use of war politics.

Disorder (1) and Private Ordering Solutions (2)

The outbreak of Violencia-related disorder in mid-1940s Colombia is a well documented phenomena. “[I]ndividuals spared execution were subjected to every depredation imaginable. [...] [It] included the time-honoured tactics of agrarian conflict: the destruction of plantings, the theft of animals, tools, and harvests, and the burning of houses and structures for sugarcane and coffee processing” (Sánchez 1992, 206). In fact, Sánchez (1992, 191-2) claims that the Violencia’s original social protest was almost immediately transformed into violent rage and pillage:

When the political objective of seizing the Presidential Palace was frustrated by the intervention of a small but effective military detachment, the crowd grew angrier and its attention turned to destruction and looting. [...] The predominant form of their social protest was pillage, the objects of which were diverse. The crowd seized consumer goods, such as food, clothing, and household effects, as well as arms and metal tools that were useful not only in general but also for protecting one's loot. Liquor too was taken since drink supposedly can help one tolerate sadness, and that afternoon, on which the pueblo's most important figure had died, was one of immense popular mourning. And since there was no tomorrow to consider, anything that could not be used immediately was better destroyed. The crowd's actions represented a mixture of anger, impotence, and rebellion.

Meertens (2000) argues that at least since 1953 (the year of the first national-level peace accords) the Violencia-related political conflicts ceased to be orchestrated by the national political

elites and started to be driven by purely regional dynamics. She claims that the Violencia's explosion of banditry was the result of the atomisation of private armed groups which contributed to the creation of decentralised predation dilemmas. "A factor of disintegration [of political conflict] lied in the atomisation [of armed groups] which implied their [...] direct and compromising dependency on local patron, who conferred on [them] certain legitimacy only as long as they became subordinated to patron's provincial interests" (Meertens 2000, 144).

Simple greed and a willingness to profit at another's expense were other important sources of Colombia's late Violencia. Individuals throughout the region affected by the late Violencia, which embraced a great portion of the coffee zone, received coffee and other stolen property from *violentos*. The Violencia typically swept the region during the semiannual coffee harvest, when the crop was frequently stolen from farms whose owners were too frightened to guard them. Local merchants and other petty capitalists purchased such farms at bargain prices, frequently from the widows of Violencia victims (Henderson 2001, 396).

Predation was not the only form of disorder. Its other forms comprised the multiplication of private vendettas, extra-judicial retribution seeking and property destruction. Meertens (2000, 144) observes that the Violencia brought huge damage to rural populations leaving them with no other choice but to follow insurgency path. During that time, agricultural infrastructure was ruined in many Colombian peripheries and people's morale got badly aggravated (Sánchez 1992, 206). Individual vendettas could not have been pursued by legal justice system and went to private hands — never reluctant to adopt extremely violent means. Demobilised combatants became the primary targets of "evening out old scores" initiatives.

[D]ifficulties inherent in stopping the Violencia were suggested by two incidents in Tolima during 1959. Early that year the young violento Teófilo Rojas Varón (“Chispas”) wrote to Father Germán Guzmán, who had formerly served as parish priest in the Violencia-lashed *municipio* of Líbano. Guzmán knew Chispas from the commission’s work in southern Tolima. The young man, at the time just twenty-three years old, had tried to take advantage of the government’s amnesty program, settling on a farmstead in the *municipio* of Rovira. But too many of his neighbours were interested in settling old scores, and this made it impossible for him to resume the life of a simple campesino. “Tell these people not to persecute me,” he implored Father Guzmán. But the priest was powerless to protect him. A short time later Chispas reconstituted his gang and resumed operations in western Tolima and southeastern Caldas (Henderson 2001, 388).

The extreme deterioration of public order (banditry, extrajudicial persecution, looting) created demand for private ordering solutions which ultimately resulted in the proliferation of private security agencies and self-defence armed bands. Given the fragility of political situation, army and police were not the ones to be trusted. Army’s counterrevolutionary strategy caused many mistargetings and in certain areas of the country significantly increased civilian’s risks of being killed. Moreover, the state was often unwilling to deal with crimes committed against the populations stigmatised as guerrilla supporters. “Many of those returning to claim homesteads abandoned during the fighting discovered that others had laid claim to their land and were supported by the army. A complicating factor for the peasants of the region was the fact that they counted socialists, Marxists, and Communist revolutionaries among their number” (Henderson 2001, 370). Roldán (2002, 5-13) observes that the mistrust in legal authorities led many powerful local patrons (*gamanoles*) to invest in the creation of their own private protection agencies. It needs to be mentioned that the proliferation of this private ordering system occurred amid an ongoing

armed struggle which considerably contributed to the escalation of warfare at that time. It happened so because the newly-created agencies never limited themselves to the provision of private security. Quite contrarily, it seems that they used their violent skills more frequently for offensive purposes than for defensive ones. For example, they used violence to accumulate goods and properties for their patrons, to eliminate their political and economic competitors at the local level, or to intimidate their “unfriendly” neighbours (Roldán 2002; Henderson 2001; Sánchez 1992).

In the guerrillas insurgency phase of war, the frequent waves of disorder and predatory violence reinforced the already existent private protection system. Since mid-1960s the majority of extra-legal governance in war-torn Colombia was exercised by guerrilla groups emerged from the Violencia-originated rebels. It seemed that due to their powerful ideologisation, high degree of discipline and apparent inexistence of individual material incentives (Gutierrez 2008a) those groups might have created a stable, socially acceptable and relatively complex forms of private ordering (Molano 1975; Wickham-Crowley 1987). Nevertheless, by the late 1970s guerrillas’ governance was already transformed into organised predation as a result of unfavourable war dynamics. Medina Gallego’s (1990) analysis of FARC’s governance in Puerto Boyaca shows that in 1970s the guerrilla’s project of alternative state-making got unexpectedly interrupted. It happened so because the warfare-related financial exigencies forced the group to introduce very unfavourable private protection deals which made their governance become perceived as predatory (see Vargas 2004; Gutiérrez and Baron 2006; Gutiérrez 2008b). The guerrillas crisis at private ordering markets led to their almost immediate replacement by newly-emerged self-defence vigilance units or paramilitary squads (Medina Gallego 1990). By 1990s the latter groups took over the majority of private ordering niches in Colombian territory changing the very character of extra-legal governance exercised in the country. The traditional fragmentation of paramilitary organisations precluded even the most rudimentary regional consolidation of their governance which continued to be exercised on the local basis, and as such remained rather volatile, unstable and most often predatory (Gutiérrez

2008a). Given the limited territorial ambitions of poorly coordinated paramilitary units, they rarely managed to refrain from disorderly tactics of plundering neighbouring sub-regions and forced displacement of unprotected peasants (GMH 2013).

Instrumental Politics

If this is how the Colombian civil conflict looks like from its regional dynamics perspective, what does it need national politics for? It seems that from the struggle's very origins Colombian warring parties used national politics for dressing their own particularistic interests into publicly acceptable enterprises. Henderson (2001, 397), for example, discovers a rather perplexing fact that the Violencia's combatants often maintained some mutually exclusive political affiliations. He explains the fact with a suggestion that different political identities served opportunistically for armed actors — which identity was brought forward at particular moment in time depended on the context and the audience of the situation:

[E]specially vexing aspect of the late Violencia was the claim of violentos that they were fighting on behalf of the Liberal Party, at a time when Liberal supporters of the National Front struggled to combat the bloodshed. Paradoxically most Liberal bandits of the late Violencia claimed allegiance both to the splinter MRL [Movimiento Revolucionario Liberal] and to local politicians having MRL ties. Gonzalo Sánchez and Donny Meertens, authors of the best work on bandits and their political allies, wrote that in Tolima “Pedro Brincos,” “Desquite,” and others “acted . . . under the aegis of the MRL, which occupied the space left by traditional gamonales; at the local and regional levels that made possible highly diverse interpretations of [the MRL's] revolutionary slogans (*Ibid.*, 397).

Chacón's (2003) quantification of the Violencia deaths shows that the correlation between intensity of violence and level of political polarisation within micro administrative units ceased to exist since 1958. How can we explain that? I would venture to interpret this finding along with a following reasoning: partisan divisions offered a convenient jumping point for those who wanted to use violence in order to pursue their private goals. Once the war was firmly on, and disorder crept over Colombian peripheries, organising an armed brigade with financial support of some independent local patrons appeared legitimate enough to make dressing one's interests in publicly acceptable enterprise an unnecessary hassle. It is not to say that partisan competition was totally irrelevant. What I suggest instead is that easily malleable partisan identities meant that the adherence to the warring parties amid the Violencia conflict followed opportunistic patterns and quite quickly wore out the original partisan boundaries. "[War] became an umbrella under which every variety of criminality could be found. As the depredations of men under arms grew even more ghastly, it became clear that large numbers of psychopaths and common bandits had joined those who claimed to be fighting to maintain their political principles" (Henderson 1985, 149). In other words, the Violencia, which commonly appears as highly politicised struggle, under a more detailed scrutiny resembles more of a chain of private feuds than a truly bipolar armed contest.

By 1951 and 1952, however, significant changes were occurring amid the uproar of the factional struggle. In the coffee areas and throughout the highlands, landlords and peasants were beginning to use the Violencia to settle by force old and new land disputes. In the central departments of Cundinamarca, Tolima, and Huila, the Communist Party was organising strongholds of self-defence among uprooted peasants who tried to resettle in marginal mountainous areas. In the Eastern Llanos, some Liberal armed groups were slipping away from the control of the political bosses, so that many Liberal landowners became targets for compulsory "contributions" to support the guerrilla activities. In addition, widespread

banditry was developing behind the partisan banners, as more and more of the originally political gangs were now bent on private revenge and economic profit (Zamosc 1986, 15).

In the guerrillas insurgency phase of Colombian conflict the instrumental use of war politics could be inferred from the fragmentation of insurgent movements. FARC, ELN, Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL), Movimiento Revolucionario 19 de Abril (M19), and many more smaller groups were never inclined to cooperate with each other despite representing highly convergent political views. Most authors argue that what divided (and still continue to divide) those groups was the diversity of their regional objectives (see Kline 2007; Romero 2003). Individual-level instrumentalisation of war politics can be illustrated by switching sides phenomena observed among rank-and-file rebels and counterinsurgency soldiers. Arjona and Kalyvas (2006) report that approximately 30 per cent of ELN's demobilised combatants included belonged formerly to paramilitary groups. The same can be said about 20 per cent of demobilised FARC's members. Respectively, 30 and 35 per cent of demobilised ELN and FARC members belonged previously to national army. Guerrillas' strict measures against defection were high enough to deter rebels from switching sides, but still more than 10 per cent of them passed to paramilitary groups (Arjona and Kalyvas 2006, 16-7).⁶ The frequency of switching sides phenomena seems high enough to make me think that Colombian irregular fighters were more committed to armed conflict as a way of participating in private ordering, rather than to any particular political cause *per se*.

In fact, Zamosc (1986) confirms such hypothesis demonstrating that radical shifts in political affiliations during the second phase of Colombian conflict happened in response to selective incentives which appeared as a result of conjunctural economic changes. He argues, for example, that booming marihuana economy brought financial relief to poor peasants in some parts

⁶ The results are based on demobilised ex-combatants survey (N=829) administered by Arjona and Kalyvas (2006).

of the country which induced them to abandon guerrillas-related peasant movements and to transfer their loyalties to marihuana-promoting irregular armed forces (drug-trafficking armed wings and paramilitary groups).

In Magdalena and Cesar, the marihuana bonanza completely transformed the situation. The fierce land conflicts suddenly ended and were replaced by a vertical alignment in which landowners, peasants, and officials shared a common interest in the underground economy. The nature of the marihuana industry and the participation of the peasants in the new regional block of classes had a devastating effect on ideology, paving the way for attitudes and values that promoted mafiosi factional loyalties and relegated to the background class demands that had originally fed the fighting spirit at the grass-roots level (Zamosc 1986, 139).

What made Colombian peasants at times less concerned about insurgents' struggles for land redistribution was the fact that at times (e.g. during bad harvest season or in case of unavailability of credit) land could be more of a burden than a source of income. In such cases, peasants preferred to forgo land claims in exchange for new opportunities of seasonal employment in Venezuela (Zamosc 1986, 139).

Further example of the prevalence of instrumental politics in the Colombian conflict comes from the studies of paramilitary groups. In 1997 most of Colombian paramilitaries decided to politicise their movements under Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) umbrella, and launched vociferous public campaign of legitimising their presence in Colombian politics. Letters between AUC's leaders from that period reveal that the organisation's instrumental politics were to facilitate the pursuit of their particularistic interests, such as a delegalisation of extradition to United States those paramilitary members who were sentenced for drug trafficking, or a legalisation of paramilitaries' financial assets amid demobilisation process (Camacho 2009; COP 2002). The letters

reveal also that paramilitary unification was hard to maintain given the irreconcilability of local and regional interests pursued by various paramilitary factions. Gutiérrez (2008a) argues that AUC union's political failure stemmed from the fact that highly localised armed groups could not have been aggregated in a single political project encompassing mutually exclusive and highly particularistic interests. In short, paramilitaries' political expression stands out as the fullest adoption of instrumental politics by mafia-like extra-legal governance providers omnipresent throughout Colombian civil conflict since 1946.

Predicting Conflict Resolution Outcomes

In sum, the Colombian civil conflict turns out to be extremely complex phenomena without clear identities of its warring parties, with its main areas of clashes vague and incomprehensible for bird-eye observer. The lack of continuity and consistency in the political commitment to armed struggle indicate the prevalence of private motivations opportunistically inscribed at times in the master cleavages of national rebellion, at time in the master cleavages of counterinsurgency opposition. Coming back the main question of the preceding section, I should argue that the reason why Colombians produced such a long-lasting conflict does not lie neither in the exceptional skilfulness of its violence entrepreneurs, nor in population's unprecedented greed, ruthlessness, and predatory drive. It is rather the intractability of conflict's *raison d'être* which makes each attempt to solve it inefficient and rejected by significant parts of interested parties. War-related organised violence persists as result of state's institutional collapse, which makes violent means of furthering one's interests omnipresent in Colombia. In such panorama, private ordering markets emerged as a necessity to introduce some form of regulation into socio-economic exchange suffering from diffidence, unpredictability and insecurity: "Here people are desperate, they rob you things, there is more delinquency. All's upside-down in this country" (Blanco and Reyes 2014). Politicisation of

particularistic interests via inscribing them into the master cleavages of national insurgency seems no more than instrumental rhetorics, or — at best — inconsistent and undetermined pursuit of fluid political project.

Having this picture in mind, how shall we estimate the hopes of putting an end to Colombian organised violence with forthcoming peace agreement with FARC? The historical evidence suggests to be rather modestly optimistic. Firstly, as I have demonstrated, in each phase of the conflict we observe myriad of various motivations for war waging. What happens in Colombian case is the fact that fighting does not strive for any single goal, but for many different ones simultaneously - barely traceable and not easily satisfiable by any single conflict resolution scheme. Sánchez (1992, 253) illustrates the elusive quest for peace in this world's longest civil conflict by exposing intrinsic difficulties faced by any overarching resolution proposed:

For peasants, peace meant, above all, that they would be recognised as the legitimate occupants of the land for which they had fought for decades, and which they had won with their blood albeit aided by the landowner exodus of the 1940s and 1950s. [...] For landowners, peace only had one acceptable outcome: their guaranteed return to their properties and eviction of the peasants.

Shall we assume that FARC's diverse factions will be willing to lay down arms in exchange for the promises which can hardly satisfy all of them simultaneously?

Secondly, one may expect that demobilised FARC's soldiers will suffer from all kinds of post-conflict reintegration difficulties already observed among various combatants voluntarily disarmed in 2003-2006 period (both paramilitary and guerrillas' soldiers). There exist few studies describing the hardships which ex-combatants usually face when trying to re-enter into normal lives after a period of irregular army service. Villarraga (2013), for example, demonstrates that ex-

combatants are not always welcomed back. They suffer from hate crimes committed by people who blame them for war crimes (Ibid., 130). Employers are reluctant to employ them given their rather negative perception among the society and their presumed minimal preparation for productive work (Ibid., 135). Finally, demobilised combatants' lives are continuously endangered by survived armed groups willing to punish them for defection (Ibid., 134; see bombing episode in Bogota in Arjona and Kalyvas 2006, 5-6). In fact, Kaplan and Nussio (2013) prove econometrically that the post-conflict reintegration of ex-combatants depends largely on their reception by communities — a thing hardly manageable by state's intervention which, nonetheless, poses a serious obstacle for post-conflict security improvements (see Blattman and Annan 2009; Pugel 2009). What will be the future of demobilised FARC's soldiers? Some of them may suffer from reintegration hardships and live on, but less resistant others could find it worthwhile to go back to relatively secure and lucrative criminal jobs, fuelling in turn organised violence in post-war Colombia (see Villarraga 2013, 134; Nussio and Howe 2012).

Thirdly, another reason of possibly limited impact of forthcoming peace accords concerns the fact that state's fragmented monopoly on violence, responsible for the collapse of public order in many parts of Colombian territory, cannot be pulled together by an elimination of one of the main extra-legal governance providers. The reestablishment of public order requires time-consuming trust-building and incremental expansion of state's institutions to Colombian peripheries which most probably would take more time than signing peace treaty with remaining guerrilla forces. A following comment illustrates well similar preoccupations:

40 billion has been promised for major infrastructure works. A new vetting office has been set up with a bureaucratic budget and the order to start handing out contracts has been received. But despite Santos' fine words about building a modern and connected Colombia, despite throwing heaps of cash at the problem, all we have to show for the hard work so far is an extra

layer of bureaucracy. NOT A SINGLE [originally capitalised] project has started (Colombia Politics 2014; for more examples of the same see DT 2011).

Not surprisingly it seems that the problems associated with private ordering in many parts of Colombian peripheries are bound to remain unsolved whatever the outcomes of presently negotiated conflict resolution with FARC are. What could the state do with the persistence of extra-legal governance in post-conflict Colombia? There are two basic options. The first one is to tolerate those private ordering markets as long as they do not threat the national security. Another possibility is launch a repressive campaign against any forms of private ordering that fill up the power vacuum created by FARC's demobilisation and its inevitable abandonment of some of its extra-legal governance dominiums. I would argue that neither of these two strategies could bring fully positive effects, but still the disadvantages related to each of them might differ quite significantly. The first strategy (tolerance of post-conflict extra-legal governance providers) can possibly reinforce the already discussed conflict-related negative effects on growth by an interference with local competition which would perpetuate the poor integration of Colombian peripheral economies into national markets (see Centorrino and Signorino 1997). The second solution (repression of post-conflict extra-legal governance providers), on the other hand, may provoke slightly different impediments to development which would include an increase in insecurity (due to criminal competition), continuous violations of property rights, and successive discouragement of any long-run investments in the territories abandoned by FARC (see Arias et al. 2014).

While individuating the lesser of two evils may fall beyond the powers of my thesis, I shall still venture to understand the content of each of these two "evils" in more detail. In practice, such an effort means trying to predict the specific outcomes associated with state's tolerance and state's repression in relation to FARC's heirs at extra-legal governance markets. Making predictions of this kind is always risky but, fortunately, in the case at hand we do have some empirical record to learn

from. In 2003-2006 Colombian state concluded the collective demobilisation of more than 30,000 paramilitary soldiers. Despite the success of this partial conflict resolution scheme, numerous Colombian regions experienced almost immediate return of rearmed paramilitary groups to their traditional areas of influence (ICG 2007; Porch and Rasmussen 2008). It created all sorts of problems which are likely to emerge in case of FARC's successful demobilisation (insecurity increase, deterrence to long-run investments, extra-legal interference with competition, violation of property rights). To deal with post-demobilisation paramilitary crisis, the state adopted all sorts of reactions to reemerging paramilitary governance which ranged from an evident tolerance of some newly established factions to a dedicated anti-paramilitary crackdown.

In fact, the close inspection of regional variation in state's treatment of post-demobilisation paramilitaries should provide us with insights worth considering in order to understand what might happen with post-demobilised guerrillas and their governance niches. Reviewing the achievements of regionally heterogeneous reactions to reemerging paramilitary governance seems to me a fundamental step in order to individuate the post-conflict policies which mitigate or aggravate the already discussed obstacles to security improvement. I believe that by comparing an aftermath of paramilitary collective demobilisation across regions (and sub-regions) we could improve our understanding of the trade-offs faced by the state when choosing the most appropriate reaction to the probable turbulences following the disarmament of a well-established extra-legal governance provider such as FARC.

In the rest of the thesis I am going to illustrate how sub-nationally and sub-regionally divergent outcomes of paramilitaries' demobilisation depended on state's management of post-demobilisation paramilitary crisis. In other words, I will demonstrate long-term conflict resolution outcomes as a function of Colombian state's response to the return of rearmed or survived (non-demobilised) paramilitary groups. I will try to identify those conditions which favoured the most successful conduct of the peace process, and those which hampered the positive consequences of

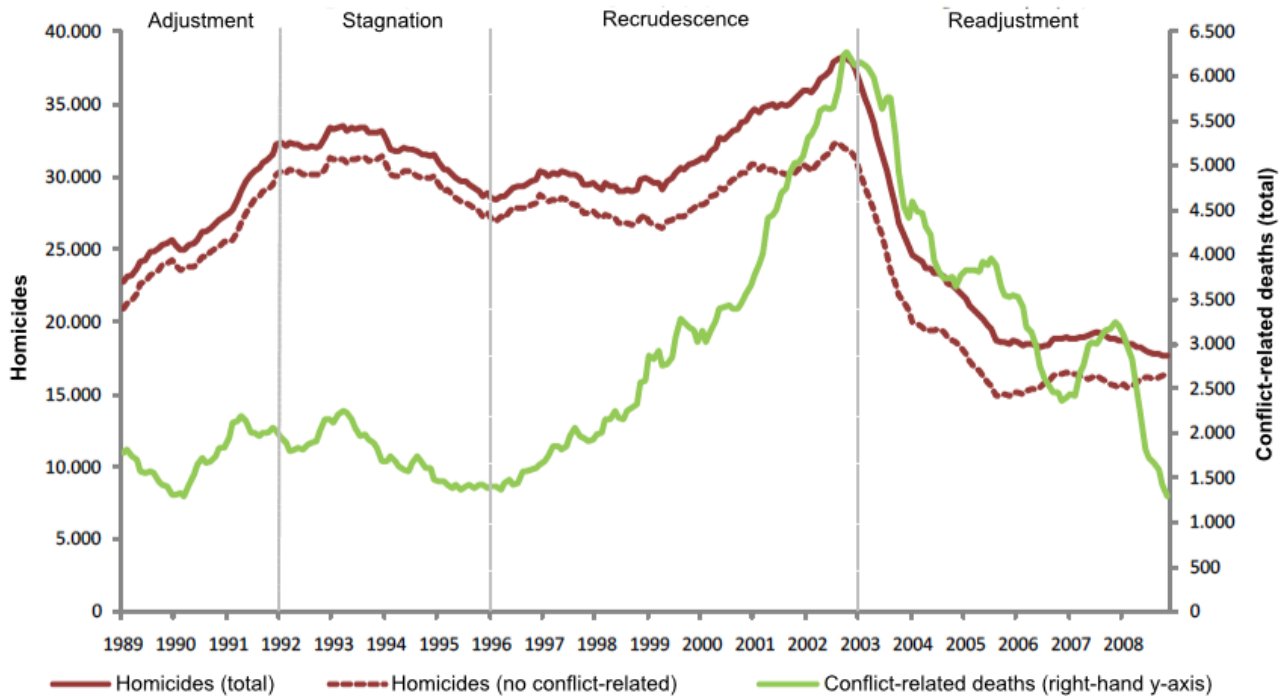
negotiated solution. In the concluding section I will demonstrate that the conditions responsible for cancelling the positive impact of paramilitaries' demobilisation are very likely to become the side-effects of FARC's (and possibly ELN's) future disarmament. As a consequence, there is every likelihood that once the existing guerrilla groups disappear from private ordering markets extra-legal governance in some peripheral parts of the country will experience mass-scale fragmentation, accompanied by short- and medium-run escalation of organised violence. Sadly, I am going to show that most of the empirical evidence from paramilitary demobilisation point to the direction of this very prediction.

CHAPTER TWO: Partial Conflict Resolution 2003-2006: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Programme. Towards Empirical Evaluation

At the beginning of twenty first century Colombia was one of the most insecure places in the world. At that time violence perpetrated by civil conflict participants reached its highest levels since the outbreak of fully-fledged civil war in 1978. In 2003 the trend of almost uninterrupted fifteen-year-old rise in conflict-related homicides finally reversed, and between 2003-2009 conflict-related homicides decreased nearly by half (see Figure 1). This security improvement was widely attributed to conflict resolution scheme designed by Colombian President Álvaro Uribe, who offered an opportunity of voluntary disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) to all participants in the conflict. The most notable success of this scheme came from the collective demobilisation of paramilitary union, Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), which by the end of 2006 resulted in the disarmament of more than 31,000 paramilitary soldiers (Restrepo and Muggah 2009, 36). There is widespread consensus that paramilitary groups are responsible for the vast majority of conflict-related violence since 1978, and, not surprisingly, their exit from Colombian conflict produced substantial security improvement. Restrepo and Muggah (2009) find quantitative evidence that paramilitaries' demobilisation produced considerable national-level decline in insecurity by significantly decreasing paramilitary violence.

Nonetheless, there are areas where DDR application has not brought security dividends. Restrepo and Muggah (2009) argues that occasional DDR's failure to improve regional security in some parts of Colombian territory can be explained with the absence of adequate state presence and consequent reappearance of paramilitary groups.

Figure 1: Conflict-related deaths and homicides in Colombia 1988-2008
(reproduced from Granada, Restrepo and Vargas 2009, 73)



One of the main reasons for the lack of progress in terms of the paramilitary DDR relates to the absence of adequate state presence in those areas that were previously under paramilitary control. Despite the costly efforts of the Colombian armed forces and police to establish a presence in what were once considered isolated and marginal areas of the country, the continuation of the conflict and the emergence of new groups seem to be driving new forms of violence that undercut recent DDR gains. Like in other areas of disarmament, only the provision of strong protection centred security by the state plus DDR bring about sustained reductions in violence (Restrepo and Muggah 2009, 43)⁷.

⁷ For a similar argument see Vásques and Vargas (2011, 354).

There are few questions which remains unaddressed in this account though. To name only the most evident ones, I would like to point out that the re-emergence of paramilitary groups after successful conclusion of demobilisation programme in 2006 was widespread phenomena, observed in all parts of Colombia and not limited to the areas of unimproved security. If paramilitary reappearance curbed DDR-related security improvements in some places, it most certainly did not curb them in most of Colombian territory, which begs for explanation. Secondly, the existence of extra-legal governance provider, such as paramilitary groups, not necessarily implies its frequent resort to violence. Some political scientists who developed specific arguments to account for the intensity of violence perpetrated by irregular armed groups in conflict situations (e.g. Kalyvas 2006, Weinstein 2007), would have actually predicted low levels of paramilitary violence in those areas which have experienced paramilitary violence escalation since 2006.⁸ Given all these reasons, the instances of security non-improvements in the wake of successful DDR application requires further academic work.

The remaining part of the thesis is dedicated to the re-examination of the heterogeneity of 2003-2006 Colombian conflict resolution outcomes. The present chapter sets the stage for such

⁸ Weinstein (2007) argues that the violence of extra-legal governance providers depends on the type of their principal endowments. If these are predominantly economic (foreign donors, access to lootable goods), a group does not care about good relations with subjected populations and uses more violence in predatory manner. Gutierrez and Baron (2006), Vargas (2004) and Duncan (2005) showed that in the period under study Pacific Coast paramilitaries were highly dependent on their social endowments (apart from economic ones), which in Weinstein's argument would imply their restrain in using violence. Kalyvas (2006), on the other hand, claims that violence perpetrated by irregular armed groups is a function of their territorial control. The group uses violence when it exercises sufficiently tight control over territories to be able to collect reliable information about cooperation and defection on the part of their subjected populations. According to Kalyvas, irregular armed groups strive for selectivity in administering their violence and in the areas of most disputed territorial control with no clear dominating parties (as it happens in Pacific Coast) they restrain the use of violence not being able to distribute punishments in a selective manner.

research agenda. In the first place I present a detailed discussion of the empirical puzzles and develop a conceptual approach which will guide my analyses throughout the rest of the work. I begin with demonstrating the insufficiencies of the existing explanations of observed DDR heterogeneity (including the one suggested by Restrepo and Muggah 2009). Then I review the theoretical arguments developed by criminal research which investigate the relationship between state's repressive actions and organised crime violence. These insights allow me to formulate one testable proposition about the association between repression and violence, and two hypotheses which address the mechanisms driving the relationship. In the second place, I outline research design based on comparative analysis of two Colombian regions with strong paramilitary presence: security-improved (Eastern Plains), and security-unimproved (Pacific Coast). I argue that the findings from between-regional comparisons should be also verified by analysing within-regional variability in DDR outcomes for Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains regions separately. The final part of the chapter describes my novel dataset and discusses its advantages in addressing present research problems.

Empirical puzzles

The peace process launched by President Uribe in 2003 ended up with successful demobilisation of approximately 40,000 irregular combatants, nearly 31,000 of whom were collectively demobilised paramilitaries. As I said before the successfully concluded “DD” (disarmament and demobilisation) components of Uribe’s resolution scheme did not prevent paramilitaries’ almost immediate reemergence in the panorama of Colombian organised violence.⁹

⁹ Since 2006 official sources refer to paramilitary groups as *bandas criminales*. Academic sources prefer different terms, such as “neoparamilitaries” (Granada, Restrepo and Tobón 2009) or “new armed illegal groups” (ICG 2007). I will continue calling them “paramilitaries” in order to avoid confusion.

National Police estimates the presence of 4,170 paramilitary members operating within various groups in 2012 (INDEPAZ 2013, 4), 17% of whom are previously demobilised AUC's members (CNRR 2007, 5). Despite almost immediate reemergence of some paramilitary groups¹, Restrepo and Muggah (2009) find quantitative evidence that DDR programme contributed to considerable national security improvement by significantly decreasing the amount of paramilitary violence perpetrated in the country (so-called "deparamilitarisation" of the conflict). Nonetheless, they admit to have observed an important sub-regional heterogeneity in DDR-related security dividends hypothesising that the occasional DDR failure could stem from "the absence of adequate state presence [...] the continuation of the conflict and the emergence of new groups" (Restrepo & Muggah 2009, 43). Howe, Sánchez and Contreras (2010) investigated this hypothesis quantitatively and found that DDR-related security improvements (reductions in homicide rates) were the most substantial in the municipalities with better policing (measured as arrests per homicides). In short, the usual suspect — state's weakness — seems to blame for occasional DDR failure.

I believe that such explanation of the heterogeneity of DDR outcomes may still be improved. Both of the cited studies associate DDR-related security improvements with the decrease in paramilitary violent activities. If the argument of state's weakness is correct, one should be able to demonstrate that better policing reduce paramilitary violence. Would it be theoretically expected outcome? It is a well-established criminological fact that law enforcement activities deter crimes (Cook 2008), but the relationship does not hold for all types of crime (Friedman 1995). Better policing may deter individual offences, but it does not necessarily deter crimes perpetrated by organised crime groups and other types of extra-legal governance providers (whom paramilitaries undoubtedly are). In fact, some studies argue that law enforcement activities actually provoke more violence in such cases (see Smith and Varese 2001; Carey 2006). Why should then Howe et al. (2010) find the negative relationship between policing and post-DDR security improvement implicitly attributed to the deescalation of paramilitary violence? There are two possible answers.

Firstly, Howe et al. (2010, 22) use the proxy of policing quality (arrests per homicides) at *department* level to explain *municipal* homicide rates. It is entirely possible that in some departments law enforcement activities are concentrated only in few municipal areas (see Sánchez, Vargas and Vásquez 2011), and therefore the department-level measurement of policing may obscure within-departmental variability. Since the homicide rates are heterogeneous within departments, we could hardly exclude the possibility that the finding is spurious. More importantly, if post-DDR security improved with the “deparamilitarisation” of the conflict, Howe et al. (2010) might have omitted an important variable by not controlling for state’s anti-paramilitary offensive not reflected in police operational statistics. To the best of my knowledge it was not the police that challenged paramilitaries most seriously since 2003 but Colombian military forces. Failing to account for military repression along with conventional measures of policing may lead to an overestimation of the actual “weakness” of the state.

For the above reasons, I am going to reexamine the determinants of heterogeneous deescalation of paramilitary violence since the beginning of DDR process. To do so I will address two empirical puzzles. To begin with, I will try to explain the heterogeneity of DDR outcomes comparing paramilitary violence dynamics in 2001-2012 period in two Colombian macro regions: the one which experienced significant reduction in paramilitary violence since the conclusion of DDR process (Eastern Plains), and another one where paramilitary violence did not subside and even slightly increased since 2006 (Pacific Coast). Secondly, I will analyse municipal paramilitary violence trends in Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains separately to account for the within-regional heterogeneity observed in 2003-2009 period.¹⁰ The reduction of paramilitary violence constituted the crucial mechanisms of security improvement according to all existing DDR evaluations, and thus I believe that in order to understand the heterogeneity of DDR success one shall analyse the determinants of paramilitary violence deescalation. In the next chapters I will demonstrate

¹⁰ Municipality disaggregated data are not available for the entire period between 2001 and 2012.

empirically that, contrarily to the explanations which stress the state's weakness as a root cause of occasional DDR failure, demobilisation's heterogeneous outcomes could be explained with reference to the strength (or determination) of state's repressive intervention against paramilitary groups. In other words, I argue that anti-paramilitary repression cancelled DDR-related security dividends in some parts of Colombia. My argument stems from the observation that, theoretically speaking, the law enforcement activities may have *both* positive and negative effect on violence perpetrated by extra-legal governance providers (such as paramilitary groups). The arrests and other repressive instruments may reduce violence at private ordering markets because they reduce the number of operating violence perpetrators. Yet, law enforcement actions may also provoke more violence since they interfere with extra-legal governance providers' resources, their organisational arrangements and their relationships with the outer world (to be developed in theoretical section). The empirical puzzle addressed in the thesis can be expressed in twofold manner. Above all it is a question why since the beginning of DDR process paramilitary groups became more violent in some Colombian regions (or sub-regions) but not in the others. Alternatively formulated, the puzzle asks why some regions (or sub-regions) benefited from DDR-related "deparamilitarisation" of conflict more than the others.

Conceptual Approach

We know little about the logic of paramilitary violence beyond its counterinsurgency aspect (Romero 2003; Medina Gallego 1990; Arjona and Kalyvas 2005). There are few studies which link the amount of violence perpetrated by Colombian paramilitary groups to their organisational models, but given then lack of systematic data these works usually limit themselves to straightforward claims about the association between paramilitary fragmentation (the quality of leadership) and within-paramilitary violence (Garzón 2008, 47-8; Rozema 2008, 448-52). Probably

one of the most overlooked and under-researched aspects of paramilitary violence is its relationship with law enforcement activities. This important gap may stem from the fact that paramilitary groups are usually known for their nonbelligerent relations with the state (Arjona and Kalyvas 2005, 28-9). In Colombia it was certainly the case at least until early twenty-first century (Medina Gallego 1990, Áviles 2006) but since 2003 the situation dramatically changed (Granada, Restrepo and Vargas 2009). Academic studies of state's repression and its impact on organised violence usually investigate the relationship between government repression and dissent movements (Moore 2000, Carey 2006, Henken Ritter 2014). It makes them inapplicable to the analysis of paramilitary violence because their underlying assumptions of the competitors' distance on policy preferences do not hold in such context. I believe that in order to understand the relationship between state's repression and paramilitary violence one needs to refer to the logic of organised crime violence, rather than political one. Why shall we treat paramilitary violence as organised crime one? I will answer this question by describing the nature of Colombian paramilitary groups as extra-legal governance providers which places them on the same analytical continuum as organised crime groups. Then I will demonstrate the mechanisms which link organised crime violence to law enforcement activities and formulate case-specific hypotheses to be tested empirically in the rest of this part of the thesis.

To begin with, Colombia has a long tradition of extra-legal governance (Henderson 2001). Its usual providers range from political rebels to all sorts of self-defence units (indigenous guards and armed wings of criminal syndicates included). The omnipresence of private ordering is often explained as a result of the country's geographically fragmented territory and still not consolidated national identity which obstacle the establishment of strong central institutions (Thoumi 2012, 984). In this picture contemporary paramilitaries represent one of the most complex forms of private ordering. The history of contemporary paramilitarism started in 1980s when Medellín drug cartel urgently needed army-like structure to protect its interests from guerrillas advances. At that time

insurgent organisations, which had fought against Colombian state since mid-1960s, discovered drug economy as a perfect way to finance their war waging and posed a serious threat to the traditional drug-trafficking operators which decided to create their own armed wings. New-born paramilitaries rapidly spread across Colombian territory thanks to their counterinsurgency character and the favourable legislation which permitted anyone to create self-defence groups as a way of protecting oneself from all sort of political rebels whom Colombian state could not defeat single-handedly (Áviles 2006, 385). The expanding paramilitarism took over most of smaller organised crime groups, up to the point of dominating big drug cartels (Duncan 2005; Camacho and López 2008). Since its very beginning paramilitarism offered its services to legal enterprises run by land-rich classes, such as cattle ranchers, commercial agriculture workers, and emerald barons - all of them dissatisfied with harsh conditions imposed by guerrillas' extra-legal governance (Medina Gallego 1990).

All academics agree that Colombian paramilitaries' primary business is the provision of private security and extra-legal governance (Arjona and Kalyvas 2005, 29). Varese (2010) shows that such groups can be incorporated in the criminal research and described with the same analytical categories as gangs, organised crime groups, mafias, and even states — each of them placed on various points of the same governance continuum. One of the fundamental characteristics of private ordering markets is their monopolistic character. Extra-legal governance do not allow for any market sharing; it is a zero-sum game where only the winner can effectively establish its authority (Nozick 1974, ch. 1). Those who operate as extra-legal governance providers (paramilitaries included) require very specific resources to monopolise private ordering markets. These resources include intelligence and secrecy, violence, reputation, and advertising (Gambetta 1992, ch. 2). Criminal research has shown that state's repression can affect all of these criminal resources (see Reuter 1995, Rankin 2012), but it is more successful in affecting some of them (intelligence, reputation, and advertising) than the others (violence). As a result, extra-legal governance providers

can make up for the loss of most crackdown-affected resources by substituting them with those affected to a lesser degree. To illustrate the point, they can substitute reputation and advertising resources with violence. Gambetta (1992, 40-46) claims that mafia-type governance is more often exercised on the mere basis of reputation for violence (diffused thanks to criminal advertising) than the actual use of costly coercion. His argument implies that there exists an inversely proportional relationship between reputation and violence in the underworld: the latter intensifies when the former declines. Smith and Varese (2001) show that when an extortion racket suffers from reputation loss as a result of improved policing (or leadership succession) its members often get “tested” (disobeyed) by to-be victims who refuse to pay extortion money because they doubt the credibility of extortionists’ threats and their ability to deliver promised services.¹¹ By testing racketeers’ credibility the victims can single out fakes, but the real racketeers (even if in crisis) will punish them in order to reestablish own reputation for violence. Thanks to these exemplary punishments other to-be victims realise the high costs of disobedience and decide to pay extortion money if demanded in the future (Smith and Varese 2001). In short, violence appears as a handy fix to reputation deficit in private ordering markets.

State’s repression provokes violence among extra-legal governance providers not only because it affects their resources. Sánchez-Jankowski (1991) claims, for instance, that gangs increase their use of violence when they feel threatened. Varese (2010, 18) elaborates the argument showing that fear-driven violence perpetrated by organised crime groups may reflect the situation when criminals turn to those criminal practices of wealth accumulation which require high volumes of violence but bring large rewards in short run (e.g. predation and extortion not exchanged for any services). Organised criminals choose these short-run profitable practices when they fear the

¹¹ If we assume that an essential part of racketeers’ reputation concerns their ability to coordinate and interact with the state, law enforcement authorities’ crackdown undercuts the racketeers’ image of being well connected and reduces the risks of their punishment in case of disobedience (I am indebted for this thought to Francisco Gutiérrez).

possibility of immediate death or imprisonment, and do not expect to stay in the business for a long time — which is precisely what happens under determined state's crackdown. They appear disincentivised to invest in less violent long-run rewarding relationships with non-criminal environment, and as a result they switch from “stationary” to “roving” banditry (Olson 1993).

One could argue that criminal groups predate even if not under siege. Underpaid rank-and-files and mid-level ambitious leaders may prefer “roving banditry” even in the absence of high underworld risks or fully-fledged crackdown (Levitt and Venkatesh 2000). State's repression still reinforces these temptations by pushing criminal groups towards some organisational adaptations which, on the one hand, help them to avoid excessive public exposure and easy prosecution by law enforcement authorities, but at the same time preclude the centralised control over predatory tendencies. These adaptations include organisational horizontality with significant levels of outsourcing (Blok 2008, 18), and extra-legal governance limited to illicit commodities such as drugs or prostitution (Shortland and Varese 2014, 743). Decentralised organised crime structures with scarce interest in a wide range of socio-economic exchange intensify their use of violence because they face a dilemma of decentralised predation in which every predator maximises the volume of his own loot because he knows that whatever he leaves will undoubtedly fall prey to his fellow predators (Easterly 2006, 309). Decentralisation of this kind makes it difficult to coordinate the activities of various criminal factions which often enter into violent competition among themselves.

Coming back to Colombian case, there is no doubt that state's anti-paramilitary repression in Pacific Coast provoked risk and reputation shocks among local paramilitary groups (see Sánchez, Vargas and Vásques 2011). In order to understand the significance of these crackdown-related shocks, one needs to consider that until 2000 Colombian paramilitaries were almost never challenged by the state (Granada and Sánchez 2009, 262). Given the tradition of good relations with Colombian state, we may expect that paramilitaries were not well-prepared to confront public

forces, and that the rapid increase in state's pressure (especially the military one) must have had profound consequences on their organisations and resources. Some researchers believe that from its very origins paramilitary governance was possible only thanks to the tolerance of Colombian public authorities (Medina Gallego 1990; Romero 2003; Áviles 2006). The end of nonbelligerent relations with the state must have provoked some behavioural changes among paramilitaries' protégées and their governance competitors (e.g. guerrilla groups), which could have altered previously established equilibria. All theoretical arguments considered, I am going to formulate one general proposition about the relationship between state's repression and paramilitary violence, as well as two specific hypotheses which identify the exact mechanisms driving the relationship:

Proposition: Paramilitary violence increased with state's repressive intervention since the beginning of DDR programme in 2003.

Hypothesis 1: State's repression affected such paramilitary resources as reputation, advertising and intelligence, which became substituted with violence (less crackdown-affected resource).

Hypothesis 2: Risks increase associated with state's repression intensified paramilitaries' predatory tendencies and led to violent conflicts among the operating groups.

Before I move on, one caveat needs to be made. I do not claim that state's repression is the only factor responsible for intensifying paramilitary violence. Yet, I believe it remains the most counterintuitive and the least understood one, and that is why I dedicated so much room for its theoretical explanation here. Other factors already found to be correlated with organised violence in general or paramilitary one in specific will be discussed at reasonable length in the empirical section of Chapters Three and Four when I overview all the variables considered for statistical analyses.

Comparative design

The aim of the rest of the thesis is to reconstruct the logic of paramilitary violence in the context of partial peace process (2003-2006) marked by successful demobilisation of close to 40,000 irregular combatants, including nearly 31,000 collectively demobilised paramilitary soldiers (Restrepo and Muggah 2009). Some of the peculiarities of this DDR initiative have not been discussed yet. The first one regards the fact that the main beneficiaries of DDR programme were pro-state paramilitary groups rather than anti-state insurgents. Secondly, the programme did not extend to all paramilitary factions. It is true that some of them refused to participate in the scheme, but few groups which expressed their willingness to demobilise were denied this opportunity on the basis of very controversial and highly arbitrary criteria (Duncan 2005). In practice it meant that the DDR's application left enormous space for to-be "spoilers" both on insurgent and paramilitaries' sides. Given these limitations the objectives of Colombian DDR were not those of terminating the ongoing civil conflict, but rather of cooling it down. Because of such unusual context, the peace process got accompanied by heavy military crackdown on all conflict participants, paramilitaries included (Granada, Restrepo and Vargas 2009). Paradoxically, it seems that this "peace-supporting" intervention provoked paramilitary unilateral violence not necessarily related to the conflict participation, but certainly related to the exercise of extra-legal governance. Before I can verify this claim empirically, the data and comparative design need to be discussed in detail. There are two empirical puzzles addressed in the thesis. The first one regards between-regional heterogeneity of paramilitary violence trends (and thus DDR outcomes); while the second one deals with within-regional heterogeneity of the same sort. Each one requires slightly different comparative design.

Between-regional comparisons

The only way to comprehend the lack of deescalation of paramilitary violence in Pacific Coast is to confront it with the region where such deescalation actually occurred. Eastern Plains, another Colombian peripheral area, offers an interesting comparison in such sense. Academic research identified some socio-economic conditions correlated with key extra-legal governance characteristics (social embeddedness, type of monopolies, organisational models). These conditions are: peripherisation (Catanzaro 1988), mistrust (Gambetta 1992), multitude and heterogeneity of economic transactions (Bandiera 2003), and type of illicit activities (Haller 1971; Zhang and Chin 2003). I can control for these macro socio-economic characteristics while comparing Pacific Coast with Eastern Plains. To begin with, the history of institutional mistrust and tradition of extra-legal governance in both regions date back to the very origins of paramilitary phenomena (*Verdad Abierta* 2014, González 2007). Moreover, both regions are characterised by poor incorporation into the markets, staggering economies and high poverty rates (NBI¹² index: 49.1 in Eastern Plains and 49.5 in Pacific Coast, against 27.8 nationally). On the other hand, they feature significant resistance to the concentration of land processes, which accounts for relatively small GINI index for land property structure (0.51 in studied regions, against 0.6 nationally), and multitude and heterogeneity of economic transactions observed in both regions (Sánchez, Vargas and Vásques 2011; González 2007, 243-51). Additionally, Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains constitute today the key centres of Colombian coca leaves cultivations (UNODC 2012). Similarities apart, each region is composed of the territory of five administrative departments¹³ which create both within- and between-regional variation on key variables of interest (paramilitary violence trends and state's anti-paramilitary

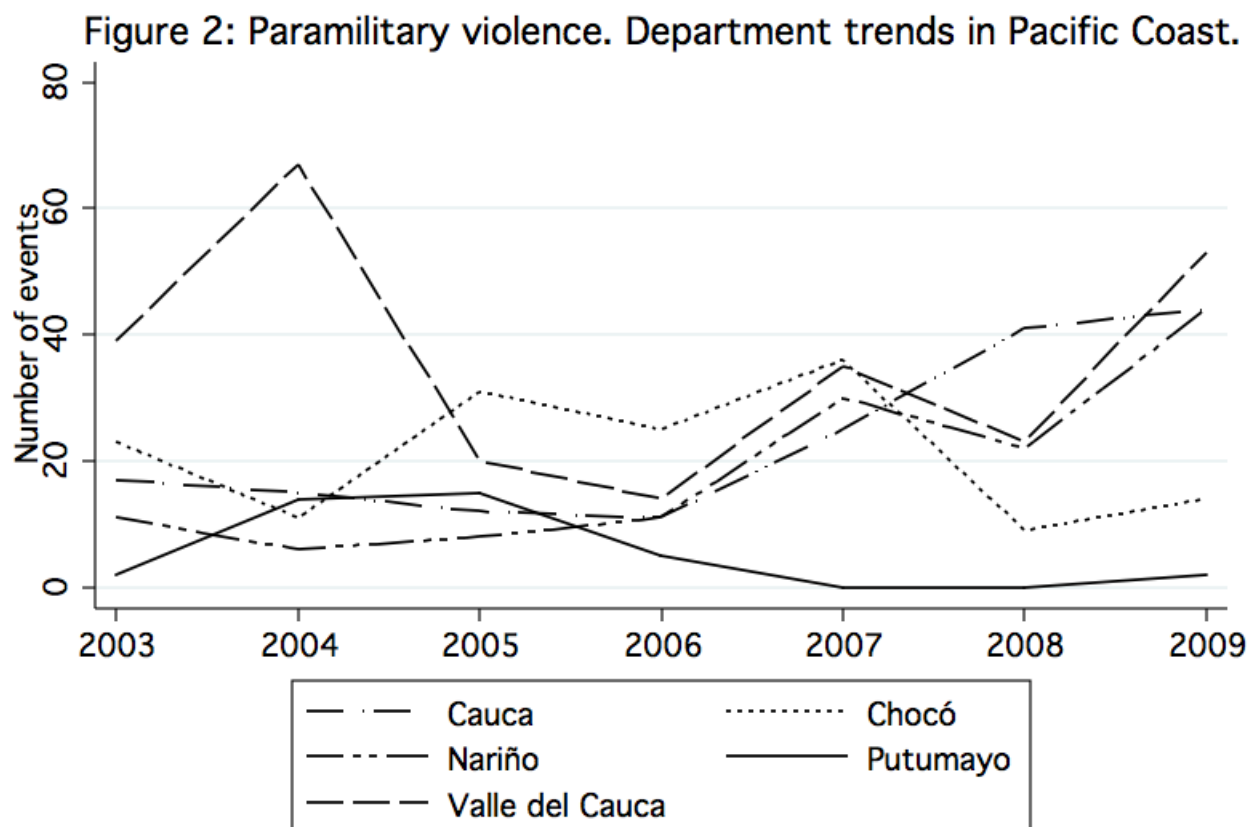
¹² Spanish acronym of “basic needs unsatisfied”.

¹³ The departments of Arauca, Casanare, Guaviare, Meta, Vichada (Eastern Plains) and Cauca, Chocó, Nariño, Putumayo, and Valle del Cauca (Pacific Coast).

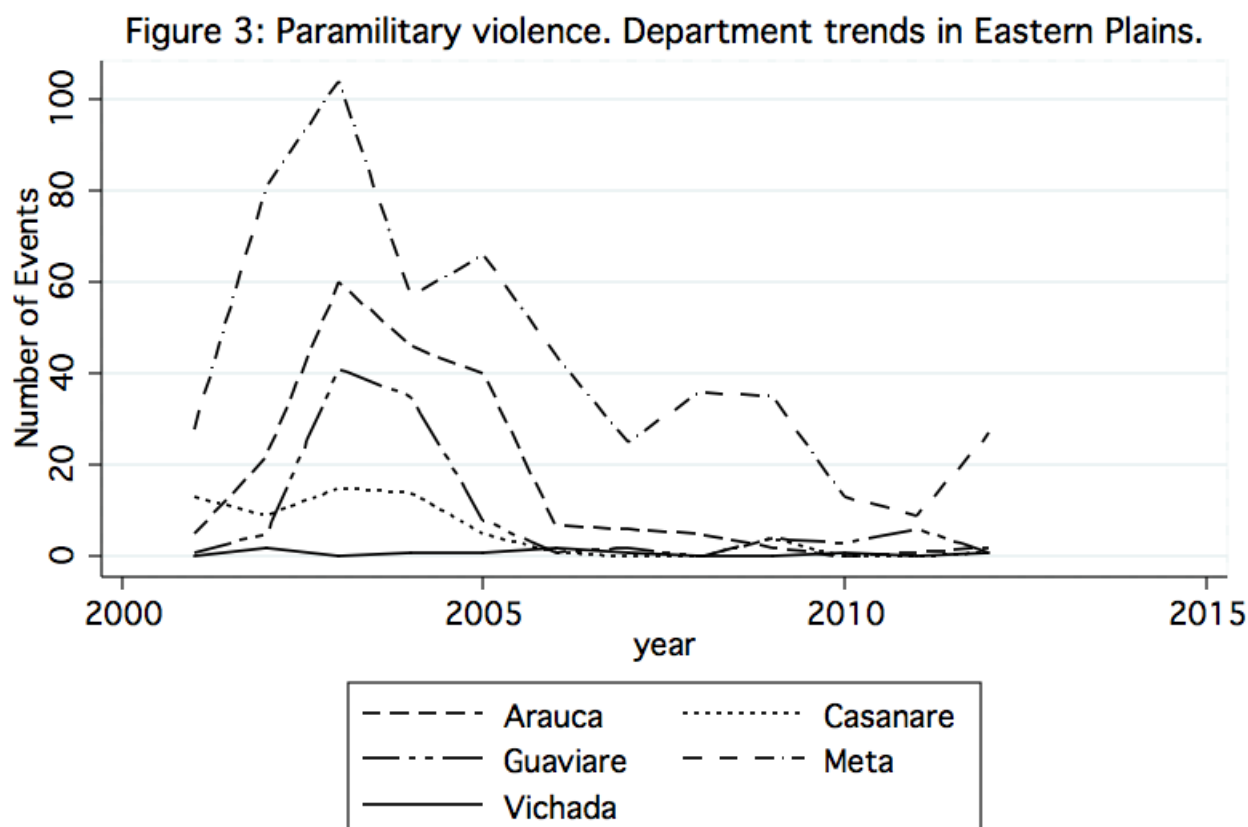
repression). The socio-economic characteristics of both regions will be discussed in a more detail in the following chapter.

Within-regional comparisons

The comparative design necessary to address the second empirical puzzle seems much more straightforward since both Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains regions offer an opportunity for interesting sub-regional comparisons. Firstly, the trends in paramilitary violence during the period under study vary significantly across Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains municipalities. Figure 2 demonstrates the departmental heterogeneity of violence dynamics in the former region. As we see, the trends range from overall violence reduction (Chocó), through its relative stability (Putumayo) to progressing escalation (Cauca, Nariño). Although in Eastern Plains the departmental



Source: Noche y Niebla (author's elaboration).



Source: Noche y Niebla (author's elaboration)

heterogeneity of violence dynamics appears less evident (see Figure 3), it still remains far from constant across region's departments. Secondly, both Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains include some of the places with the most precarious state's presence in terms of public infrastructure, institutions, and law enforcement activities. The existence of such localities gives me a chance to address the previously discussed arguments of state's weakness and its alleged impact on DDR failure. Finally, in the period under study Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains hosted a mix of diverse organised violence actors. Apart from strong insurgents' presence, there operated two of the biggest paramilitary groups which were refused the possibility of DDR participation (Rastrojos and Machos in Pacific Coast), and one group which declined an invitation to demobilise (Autodefensas Campesinas de Casanare in Eastern Plains). The presence of these paramilitary "spoilers" pushed the state to launch a heavy (though non-uniformly distributed) military crackdown against irregular

armed groups in the regions. As already stated, Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains in fact leave me with a considerable variation on dependent variable and key explanatory ones.

Data

For the purposes of quantifying paramilitary violence I created my own violence dataset. It covers 2001-2012 period using the information from Noche y Niebla (NN) quarterly. I decided to embark on the creation of my own dataset for a number of reasons. To begin with, almost all available datasets on Colombian organised violence have some serious shortcomings:

In the case of Colombia, existing data sets have the above and other problems. For example, the criminality DIJIN-Data set from the National Police includes information on guerrilla attacks. This data set has daily information, though only from 1993 when the conflict was well under way. More importantly, the data list events but without any intensity measure such as the number of people killed, as we have in our data set. The main basis for data inclusion is reports to police authorities or events known to police authorities in townships, excluding events that are not reported, particularly those that occur outside of institutional presence. Clashes between military forces, guerrillas and paramilitaries are not usually registered in this database because they do not involve the police. All police operations are registered but not all attacks by the guerrillas or paramilitaries are. Criminality data sets are available annually since 1960, but the formal classification is either that of health statistics or is criminological typology, making it difficult to isolate the effect of the armed conflict from various forms of organised crime, common crime and other types of violence. There are other data sets at the Colombian internal security agency (DAS) and at the Ministry of Defence, devised mainly for strategic purposes, but typically researchers are only allowed access to highly aggregated low-

frequency subsets of them. Some NGO's such as País Libre and Codhes produce data sets, but they are limited to specialised aspects of the conflict (kidnapping and internal displacement, respectively). (Restrepo, Vargas and Spagat 2004, 403)

How does my dataset alleviate the problems described above? First of all, it lists violent acts registered in the territory of Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains ten administrative departments, and allegedly perpetrated by paramilitary groups. NN quarterly is published by Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP) and reports violence attributable to all participants of Colombian Civil War since 2001 until present. NN gathers information from over 20 daily local and national newspapers and from large-scale fieldwork including interviews with human rights NGOs' members, local public ombudsmen and Catholic church priests (Restrepo et al. 2004, 403-4). The number of registered cases is massive and each of them is described in extraordinary detailed way.

What is more, data collection procedure adopted by NN most probably minimises the visibility bias intrinsic to the data on organised violence related to the exercise of extra-legal governance. This type of data usually registers only those situations when something goes seriously wrong between extra-legal governance providers and their protégées (victims), overlooking inherent moderate-level violence (threats, intimidations, nonlethal injuries) which occurs on the continuous basis in turbulent private ordering environments (see Smith and Varese 2001). Since NN-registered denunciations are not really incriminating and cannot lead to legal prosecution, the quarterly has more chance to learn about violent incidences which would probably pass unobserved in official statistics. Researchers from Centro de Recursos para el Análisis de Conflictos (CERAC) verified the quality of NN data collection procedure and confirmed its compatibility with other data sources on conflict-related violence in Colombia:

In the original dataset and in quarterly updates the RSV team follows a stringent quality control regime in cleaning the data that proceeds in four stages, covering both event inclusion and the coding of events. First, they randomly sample a large number of events and check against the CINEP source that they are properly included and coded. Second, they randomly sample events, look up these events in press archives and again verify their inclusion and coding. This is a test both of the transfer of information from the CINEP source to RSV and of the quality of the CINEP raw information itself, which turns out to be high. Third, they find all the major events in the dataset and carefully investigate each one in the press record. Finally, they compare lists of significant events from other sources, such as Human Rights Watch and Colombian government reports, with RSV, occasionally adding events after thoroughly investigating them themselves. (Restrepo et al. 2004, 406).

I decided to create my own dataset for yet another reason. Some of the existing datasets which do not seem systematically biased are still not detailed enough to address my research problems. One of the examples comes from CERAC dataset which was also compiled thanks to the same NN publications. I cannot use it because, given rather different research objectives, CERAC's data collectors ignored a lot of information from NN raw sources which are relevant to my project. As a result, my dataset ends up more limited in terms of time span and the number of violent actors analysed, but at the same remains much richer in detail compared to CERAC database. To illustrate my effort, one can imagine magnifying glass put to a systematically filtered excerpt of CERAC data. The magnification could not have been done automatically, and thus I had to went back to NN original sources and re-read them in a more diligent manner. Apart from the yearly counts of paramilitary violent attacks aggregated at municipal and departmental levels, my dataset includes event matrix which specifies the modalities of violence, socio-economic profile of the victim (known for roughly half of the sample), number of victims per event, supposed violence motivation,

accompanying events (e.g. pillage accompanying homicides or sexual abuses), and the presence of co-perpetrator (e.g. police or armed forces).

The crucial characteristics of my dataset is a disaggregation of violence by its modality and by the nature of its perpetrator. NN publications do not differentiate between pre- and post-demobilisation paramilitary groups which some sources interpret as two separate phenomena. I shall not consider it as a problem given the fact that the ongoing debate about the nature of post-demobilisation paramilitaries and their continuity with pre-demobilisation groups has already documented profound links between the two types of organisations (CNRR 2007, ICG 2007). During some paramilitary raids registered in NN more than one violent events occurred at the same time (e.g. homicide of entire family and displacement of their neighbours). Restrepo et al. (2004, 406) report a similar problem encountered while preparing CERAC dataset: “On many occasions there are different types of actions associated with one event (e.g., ambush and attack on the military, minefield and ambush, etc.).” To deal with such cases CERAC researchers prescribe to code similar events as single acts attributing the modality which offers the “greatest descriptive richness” (Ibid., 406). I chose not to follow CERAC’s prescription because it seems excessively arbitrary. Consequently, I coded all cases of multiple violent events within one paramilitary raid in two ways: once as two (three, four, ..., n) separate events, and then as one event with double (triple, quadruple, ..., n) modalities of violence. In the quantitative analyses I will use the second coding rule as a default one, and then evaluate the robustness of my findings using paramilitary violence variable coded in the first manner. In case of more than one type of victimisation, I chose the most lethal type and coded it as a principal modality of violence. To understand how it works, consider a following case: if a woman was sexually abused and consequently killed, I coded an event as a homicide. A more problematic cases included those where both modalities of violence seemed equally (non-)lethal, such as tortures accompanied by arbitrary imprisonment, or sexual abuse followed by tortures. In the former case I coded torture as principal violence modality since it

somehow implied that a tortured person had been arbitrarily detained during its victimisation (even if for a short period of time). In the latter case I coded an event as sexual abuse, since it represents a limited case of torture which arguably gives more specific information about the event.

CINEP publishes conflict-related violence reports quarterly since 1988. Their original publications used to be released as *Justicia y Paz* quarterly which in 2001 was renamed as *Noche y Niebla*. I am going to use the data published in NN only. While I am primarily interested in the paramilitary groups operating since 2003 onwards (the beginning of state's anti-paramilitary repression), I also want to compare their use of violence with immediately preceding period. Year 2001 offers a good cutting point since it happened by that time that Colombian paramilitaries had managed to establish themselves virtually in the territory of almost entire country. If I had decided to add prior data on paramilitary violence to my analyses, the comparisons could have been biased by inflated violence rates for some regions where at the end of 1990s paramilitarism was in the phase of conquering new territories. In other words, the inclusion of pre-2001 data might have revealed the regional heterogeneity in paramilitary violence trends attributable *not* to different group characteristics or non-uniformly distributed state's repressive actions, but to some theoretically less interesting factors (e.g. entering new private ordering markets required intense short-run violence not necessarily bearing on long-term trends). Still, the analyses relative to 2001-2003 years remains vital for my study since they reveals the regional violence baselines and allows me to check whether post-2003 differences in the levels of paramilitary coercion are not the legacies of previously established trends. To put it in another way, thanks to the longer analysed period I can control for the history of paramilitary violence in each region.

Part II: Successes and Failures of Paramilitaries'

Demobilisation 2003-2006. Quantitative Evidence

CHAPTER THREE: DDR in Two Colombian Regions. Between-Regional Comparisons

Having shown the comparative rationale of proposed research design and having described my data, I am going to proceed with empirical analyses. Table 1 shows the basic descriptive comparisons between Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains in terms of paramilitary violence trends observed in each of the regions in 2001-2012 period. In the pre-demobilisation¹⁴ period (2001-2006) both regions experienced very similar number of violent events. If we acknowledge the fact that Pacific Coast has a population roughly three times as big as Eastern Plains, we may conclude that in 2001-2006 Eastern Plains region was much more insecure place in terms of paramilitary violence than Pacific Coast. Nevertheless, it needs to be noticed that paramilitaries not necessarily spread to the entire Pacific Coast region as they did in Eastern Plains. In 2005 paramilitary population in Pacific Coast was approximately only half as big as paramilitary population in Eastern Plains, judging from crude police estimates and paramilitary demobilisation statistics reported by Alto Comisionado por la Paz.¹⁵ Given the comparability issues relative to absolute violence numbers, it seems more meaningful to compare the dynamics of paramilitary violence trends and see how they differed across regions in 2001-2012 period rather than report the

¹⁴ "Pre-demobilisation period" is somehow misleading but practical term. More precisely, years 2001-2006 could be referred to as "pre-demobilisation and demobilisation negotiations period".

¹⁵ Consulted at: www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co and www.policia.gov.co.

Table 1: Paramilitary violence in Pacific Coast and in Eastern Plains per time period.

Number of attacks	Pacific Coast	Eastern Plains	Total
pre-demobilisation (2001-2006)	787	815	1,602
post-demobilisation (2007-2012)	826	210	1,036
Total	1,613	1,025	2,638

Note: T-test: $p < .00$. Source: Noche y Niebla (author's elaboration).

exact counts of paramilitary attacks. In order to understand the divergent violence trends in the two analysed regions, one should consider that 79.51 per cent of all Eastern Plains violence took place in pre-demobilisation period. Post-demobilisation paramilitary violence there was nearly four times lower. In Pacific Coast the counts of pre- and post-demobilisation violent events attributable to paramilitary groups are nearly equal: 48.79 per cent of all events occurred before 2007 and 51.21 per cent afterwards. In sum, the basic descriptive data relative to 2001-2012 period shows us the progressive de-escalation of paramilitary violence in Eastern Plains and its evident persistence in Pacific Coast.

Yet, the aggregate persistence and de-escalation of paramilitary violence can be interpreted from still another angle. One need to be aware of the fact that paramilitary population in each Colombian region was much smaller in post-demobilisation period compared to pre-demobilisation one. Although it is hard to estimate the exact number of paramilitaries operating in both analysed regions for each single year between 2001 and 2012, by using the data relative to two data points — 2006 as the concluding year of Uribe's DDR and 2012 as the final year of my study — I calculated that in Eastern Plains there were roughly four times less paramilitaries in post-demobilisation period compared to pre-demobilisation one.¹⁶ The reduction of paramilitary population in the region

¹⁶ Estimated thanks to the information consulted at: www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co, and in INDEPAZ (2013).

corresponds to 75 per cent reduction of paramilitary violence perpetrated in the same time. It suggests that paramilitaries in Eastern Plains did not become neither less nor more violent after the application of Uribe's DDR programme but simply that their presence in the region diminished significantly after 2006, which seems to explain how the violence reduction occurred in the area. In Pacific Coast, on the other hand, the paramilitary population appears to have been reduced only by half in the analogical period (between 2006 and 2012).¹⁷ Since we do not observe 50 per cent aggregate reduction of paramilitary violence in the region, one may conclude that Pacific Coast paramilitaries became twice as violent from 2006 onwards than they had been before. With this observation in mind, we should bear in mind that what appears as the persistence of paramilitary violence in Pacific Coast aggregate statistics, in fact represents the sheer escalation of violence if observed from the perspective of regional paramilitary units' propensity to use coercion.

The descriptive statistics demonstrated so far point to the evident difference in paramilitary violence trends observed in the two analysed regions. They confirm thus the usefulness of Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains joint analyses. The explanation of the observed heterogeneity will be the subject of most of the present chapter and will occupy the entire length of Chapter Four. Firstly, I will try to address the previously outlined puzzles (see Chapter Two) with the hypotheses already present in Colombian academic literature which try to account for regional divergence of post-DDR security improvements with reference to socio-economic and historical variables. My extended discussion of socio-economic realities in Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains along with the intertwined history of paramilitarism in both regions will bring me to the conclusion that the existing hypotheses do rather poorly to account for regions' divergent paramilitary violence trends in 2001-2012 period. For this reason in the subsequent part of the chapter I will try to explain different trends in paramilitary violence with a help of between-regional comparisons trying to establish the plausibility of my repression hypothesis which sees paramilitary violence as a function

¹⁷ Ibid.

of state's anti-paramilitary repression. In the final section of the chapter I will present more detailed qualitative characteristics of paramilitary violence in the regions. This section will deviate slightly from the central puzzle of this work but, in turn, it will introduce us to some of the new questions to be addressed in the case studies discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

Regional Heterogeneity in Paramilitary Violence Trends 2001-2012 (I). Socioeconomic Explanation?

The existing socioeconomic hypothesis tries to explain the heterogeneity of paramilitary violence trends across Colombian regions claiming that the violence is a function of the paramilitaries' social embeddedness as extra-legal governance providers. Some academics argue that national dynamics of Colombian civil conflict are responsible for crowding extra-legal organised violence groups in some parts of the country (Pacific Coast included). It creates, in turn, a situation when extra-legal governance providers do not emerge endogenously in response to local or regional demand for private ordering but arrive from the outside (exogenously) imposing their services in the contexts where those are not really needed (Guzmán and Moreno 2007; Vásques and Vargas 2011; Barreto Henriques 2009, 554-8). Other authors claim, on the other hand, that in some Colombian regions paramilitaries try to create their monopolies where other extra-legal governance providers are already well-established and legitimised locally, which provokes violent competition between the two actors. In Pacific Coast, for instance, indigenous and negro collective communities are often believed to represent efficient and well-embedded extra-legal governance providers¹⁸ who minimise demand for exogenous private ordering in the region and provoke violent tensions between Pacific Coast populations and paramilitary soldiers (Ávila Martínez 2011; Romero 2011; Barreto Henriques 2009, 552, 558, 566).

¹⁸ Even though in some instances such governance becomes recognised by the state.

Even though the above quoted arguments seem reasonable and convincing, they cannot explain the difference between Eastern Plains and Pacific Coast paramilitary violence trends if verified via diligent empirical examination. To begin with, the socioeconomic conditions and historical legitimacy of some extra-legal governance providers may in fact explain the baseline variation in regional insecurity, but it remains unclear how these variables can account for the divergent *dynamics* of certain phenomenas. What is more, it turns out that paramilitaries' exogeneity in Pacific Coast may actually be exaggerated. To demonstrate that socioeconomic conditions have nothing to do with long-run patterns of paramilitary violence (at least in the regions analysed in this thesis), I am going to trace down the social roots of private ordering in Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains consequently, to name the principal extra-legal governance actors in each region, and to determine their areas of influence going through the history of groups' embeddedness and social support among subjected populations. In the present chapter I will show that while the embeddedness in extra-legal governance markets is far from irrelevant for paramilitaries' short-term behavioural patterns, it does not appear capable of explaining violence dynamics in the longer perspective.

In the present section I am going to show that socioeconomic conditions and paramilitaries' embeddedness did not differ greatly between Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains at the beginning of XXI century, and as such the variables cannot account for significant difference in the use of violence by paramilitary groups of each region. The historical reconstruction will demonstrate that contrarily to common opinion paramilitary governance is not a new phenomena in Pacific Coast (as claimed in Guzmán and Moreno 2007). In fact, paramilitary governance in Pacific Coast seems equally ancient as the one in Eastern Plains, since both regions saw the surge in paramilitarism in the late 1970s (the same as most of other Colombian regions). The idea of the following comparisons is to outline socioeconomic commonalities between Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains

and to show the inadequacy of socioeconomic arguments in accounting for different use of violence by paramilitary groups from each region.

Social Roots of Paramilitarism in Pacific Coast

“Pacific Coast” is somehow misleading and imprecise term, since not all the departments considered in my study as a part of Pacific Coast region lie on the coast of the Pacific Ocean. I adopt the term because it appears quite frequently in Colombian literature denominating the area which I analyse here. What I refer to as Pacific Coast is the territory of five Colombian departments: Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Nariño, Putumayo and Chocó. The territory is relatively heterogenous and for descriptive clarity I decided to divide it in two distinct areas discussed in turn.

(1) The first area could be identified along the Interamericana highway which includes huge part of relatively developed department of Valle del Cauca, the central part of Cauca and tight Interamericana carriageway in Nariño. (2) The second group of territories lies both to the left and to the right of Colombian main transit route (Interamericana highway) and includes the entire departments of Chocó and Putumayo, large extends of Cauca and Nariño, and Northern part of Valle de Cauca. For the simplicity purposes let me refer to these two sub-regional areas as more (1) and less (2) developed parts of Pacific Coast.

(1) The beginning of the colonisation of Pacific Coast's more developed area dates back to the mid-nineteenth century. It happened via spontaneous occupation of *tierras baldias* (up-for-grabs public unused land, free to occupy) by the peasants and indigenous groups migrating from adjacent departments (Antioquia, Caldas, Quindia, Tolima, and Cundinamarca). The present territory of Valle del Cauca department was the most popular migrants' destination in nineteenth century due to its agricultural advantages including fertile soil and moderately mountainous terrain which allowed for growing virtually any kind of crops (VR 2006, 5). The legal regulation of those settlements

favoured rapid colonisation given the fact that the legal rights were relatively more easily obtainable in Valle del Cauca compared to *tierras baldias* in other parts in Colombian peripheries (Ibid., 5-6). In the mid-twentieth century Valle del Cauca was characterised by modernity and by relatively high level of urbanisation. Apparently, it resulted in firmer presence of the state in the region (Guzmán and Moreno 2007, 166). Nevertheless, one should not overlook the important role of paramilitary-like private social intermediaries who served as “communication bridges” between state’s actors and Valle’s population, and who largely dominated “public” institutions in the area (VR 2006, 5).

The industrialisation and urbanisation of Valle del Cauca was linked to the production of sugar cane and coffee. It had profound effects on the type of rural property and the structure of agricultural classes and their settlement patterns. “The industrialisation driven by sugar cane cultivations meant the passage from *hacendados* [big landowners] to tenants and capitalist entrepreneurs; from peasants and hacienda labourers to agriculture workers. It brought the consolidation of the network of cities, in part cities-dormitories of agriculture workers, with urban culture and modern organisations and progressive political claims” (Guzmán and Moreno 2007, 167). As a result, the citizens in Valle were more democratic and characterised by greater equity than average Colombian citizens from other regions. The capital accumulated during sugar boom helped to diversify the agricultural production and contributed to the creation of internal markets and the establishment of relatively high local consumption (Duncan 2005, 28). The picture should not be idealised though. “One can talk about “top-down” modernisation, backed by the powerful elite which committed itself to the management of the state and which constructed the vision of the public by large as an extension of their private interests” (Guzmán and Moreno 2007, 168).

The regional economy experienced an “earthquake” in the 1980s and in the beginning of the 1990s with the fall of sugar prices. It forced many people to switch to other types of agricultural production whose preferred option, not surprisingly, included coca cultivation (Guzmán and Moreno 2007, 168). Because of its location and favourable geographic conditions, the area

progressively got transformed into drugs production region. It also started to serve as a strategic corridor for the transportation of drugs, with transport routes connecting Pacific Coast seaports of Tumaco and Buenaventura with poorly controlled border crossings with Ecuador in Ipiales, up to the third biggest Colombian metropolitan area of Cali (HRW 2010, 77). Those changes contributed to the modernisation and development of large stretches of Pacific Coast territory along Interamericana highway (such as Ipiales and Popayan municipalities in Nariño and Cauca) making differences between more and less developed parts of the region ever starker.

A described shift toward illicit economy required some powerful underworld organisation to regulate the emerging market. Given a dispersed character of the settlements, along with area's relative modernity, urbanisation and firmer presence of the state, the armed groups operating in the region were not very big historically. The majority of them could be classified as urban gangs or small armed bands (VR 2006). Those groups were never stable and consisted of considerable number of mercenaries contracted on the pay-as-you-go basis (Guzmán and Moreno 2007, 170). The arrival of the coca industry created powerful incentives for the centralisation and the establishment of mafia-like structures with unified the existent extra-legal violence apparatus. Those who managed to consolidate extra-legal governance market (founders of Cartel de Cali and its later paramilitary associates) descended from the group of original social intermediaries dating back to colonisation days:

[O]ne of the decisive factors in the consolidation of drug-trafficking in Valle department was the high level of penetration achieved by the cocaine mafias into social, economic and political structures of the department, principally thanks to such practices as psychological pressure, buying votes, corruption in general, as well as thanks to tight territorial control exercised via infliction of violence and terror (VR 2006, 7).

These criminal groups were well equipped to inflict violence, and found considerable social support, which facilitated their political and economic advances, and put them in the best position to monopolise growing private ordering markets. Their main competitors, guerrilla groups, could hardly make any significant inroads into the territory of predominantly urban character given their preferences for operating in rural milieus (Duncan 2005, 4-6; Gutiérrez 2008).

(2) The second type of Pacific Coast territories (the less developed part of the region) covers the entire Chocó and Putumayo departments, as well as the majority of Nariño and Cauca ones. This area is characterised by late colonisation often explained by difficult settlement conditions: a landscape dominated by rain-forests and mountainous terrain (Vásques, Restrepo and Vargas 2011). Ethnic minorities, either indigenous or Afro-Colombians, comprise a high percentage of regional populations there. A significant fraction of Pacific Coast less developed territories has the legal status of the collective property of these ethnic groups. Although the hectareage of their properties is not impressive compared to the hectareage of the entire departments, the concentration of collective property titles makes ethnic groups the most important landowners in certain sub-areas of Pacific Coast. For example, in Tumaco diocesan district 78 per cent of 15,558 square-km area have the legal status of the collective properties of negro or indigenous communities (DT 2011, 17). The collective properties explain the relatively small concentration of land in Pacific Coast (contrarily to a general tendency in Colombia), because they cannot be sold in the real estate market, even if a community expresses its will to do so (for example under the pressure of organised violence actors). “These territories are inconfiscable, imprescriptible, and inalienable, which means that they fall (by and large according to the constitution and the law) beyond the market mechanism of demand and supply, and constitute an important space for afro and indigenous populations to survive and develop” (DT 2011, 17). The relative equality in the land tenancy is outbalanced, however, by huge income inequality. In some areas of Southern Nariño Gini index for revenues inequality amounts to .65 which seems dramatically high (see Sánchez, Vargas and Vásques 2011). This fact can be

explained by poor fertility of collective land — usually less productive because located in such areas as rain-forests, swamps, or high mountainous terrain where agricultural opportunities remains very limited (Sánchez, Vargas and Vásques 2011).

Contrarily to other Colombian peripheries, the less developed part of Pacific Coast remained relatively unaffected by the events that determined the massive migration movements in the mid-twentieth century (especially by the Violencia war).¹⁹ It was only recently, in the 1990s and especially in the beginning of the twenty-first century, that migrations in Nariño, Cauca and Putumayo became more dynamic due to the explosion of coca economy in Putumayo (Torres 2012). More recently, the main reasons behind migrations across the less developed parts of Pacific Coast lie in the massive displacements related to the expansion of civil conflict warfare (Sánchez, Solimano and Formisano 2005) and to the consequences of state's actions against coca cultivations (aerial eradications) responsible for enormous agricultural damage in the region (Thoumi 2013). “Now there is no plantain, chontaduro, Chinese potatoes, yuca, rice, etc. The little that had survived was razed to the ground by “manual eradications” which entered the area in October 2009. The agriculture substitution projects offered to the communities have not been noticed yet” (DT 2011, 28). The cyclical agricultural damage, related to the waves of US-sponsored anti-drug repressive actions, provokes virtually constant migration flows in the region (Sánchez, Vargas and Vásques 2011). What are the consequences of this process? First and foremost, the constant migrations destroyed most of the *autoconsumo* economies (close-circuit “street-corner” economies organised around communities) in the region. As a result, the rural communities became more dependent on organised violence actors such as guerrilla groups or paramilitary squads which offered them employment in illicit economies (Torres 2012; Vargas 2004). In other cases, many ex-rural

¹⁹ Most probably, it may be explained with to a simple fact that these territories for a long time remained uninteresting for the majority of organised violence actors operating in Colombia (Vargas 2004).

communities — forced to abandon their traditional territories — transformed themselves in the urban proletariat living in the shantytowns on the outskirts of metropolitan areas of bigger cities (NN, Valle del Cauca, 14.03.2003).

The public institutions and non-migrating residents of the less developed parts of Pacific Coast seem very inhospitable towards conflict-related migrants: “[D]isplaced people are stigmatised as indigenous or beggars. Moreover, they are requested proof [of their displacement]; if they do not have any, they cannot receive any public assistance, which violates the rights established in Law 387” (DT 2011, 25). Given the encountered hostility, the displaced communities began to organise themselves in various forms of associations and human rights protection groups to defend their rights for land and dignity in a legal way. It brought, in turn, a lot of violence and hatred against them, and contributed to the farther atomisation of the society in Pacific Coast — historically famous for tight communities and strong reciprocity networks, no longer existent in the period under study (Barrieto Henriques 2009). Some authors argue that the deterioration of problem and growing hostility towards displaced communities have their roots in the ambiguous stance of the state, which at times seemed very far from supporting the victims of massive displacement in Pacific Coast, if not victimising them itself (Romero 2011).

The presence of the state in the less developed areas of Pacific Coast is historically weak. The inadequacies of state’s presence manifest themselves in high insecurity, as well as in the lack of health, education and transportation infrastructure. In fact, the health and education infrastructure deficiencies (see DT 2011, 22-8) go hand in hand with the problem of underdeveloped transportation routes:

From this principal carriageway to the highlands of Junín one turns in a secondary route which leads to Barbacoas, an unpaved road in the worst conditions: to drive its 56 km one needs at least five hours. During President Andrés Pastrana’s administration 18 km were

announced to be paved. The half of it was done in reality. During President Álvaro Uribe's administration (Presidential Program 2005) out of 25 km contracted, nine has actually been paved, and the work remains incomplete. In August 2010 the same President Uribe charged FFAA [a construction company] with the final execution of the project. So far no works have started... [...] El Charco municipality has a population of 27,000 citizens, 17,000 of them displaced. One can reach the municipality via river, or in a small plane which operates three times a week (DT 2011, 17, 24).

The security problem remains related to the omnipresence of various armed groups engaged in such profitable industries as coca cultivation, natural resources extractions, and industrial agriculture (e.g. palma africana). It cannot be easily resolved because some of these groups have managed to achieve certain level of legitimacy at the local level as power brokers, community protectors, or informal employers. "It must to be admitted that public authorities redoubled their efforts to offer security for the citizens, increasing their presence in the area and punishing delinquents. Nevertheless, these actions do not resolve the core problem which is profoundly rooted in the society and which reappears in one or another form defying established controls by modifying its facets" (DT 2011, 10).

Social Roots of Paramilitarism in Eastern Plains

The second region analysed in this study, Eastern Plains, represents another Colombian peripheral area, composed of five administrative departments of Arauca, Casanare, Guaviare, Meta, Vichada. Analogically to Pacific Coast, the region is heterogenous with important sub-regional differences. In order not to oversimplify the entire picture, for the purpose of present analyses I will discuss Eastern Plains specifying its two distinct sub-areas. (A) The first sub-region comprises most

of Meta department as well as Guaviare and Vichada departments. The most important geopolitical characteristic of the region is the predominance of impenetrable jungle covering most of this part of Eastern Plains territory. This area is mainly rural with the prevalence of scarcely populated tropical forests, characterised by very precarious communication network. The state's presence in Vichada and Guaviare is minimal — each of these territorially huge departments comprises only four municipalities. The deficiencies of institutional coverage include health and education infrastructure, as well as inefficient policing. (B) The second sub-area is composed of the extreme part of Northern Meta, and the entire Casanare and Arauca departments. It represents more developed and more urbanised part of the region, where the state's absence is less evident but still preoccupying. What I find common across the entire Eastern Plains territory is the heavy presence of extra-legal governance providers which substitute inexistent or inefficient public institutions since its very colonisation period in the late 1940s. For the convenience I will refer to the two specific sub-regions as Southern Eastern Plains (A) and Northern Eastern Plains (B).

(A) Southern Eastern Plains cover the territory of Meta, Guaviare, and Vichada departments. For the sake of a greater precision the sub-region can be further divided into two quite distinct areas — complementary from economic point of view. The Southern part of the sub-region (along Ariari and Guayabero rivers) forms one of the principal centres of coca cultivations in the country. The relatively small territory in Northern Meta, on the other hand, concentrates the majority of latifundio-type structures (big land properties), not necessarily tuned to coca economy. The colonisation of the area along Ariari and Guayabero rivers started roughly in 1930s as a result of *hacienda* crisis in Southern part of Huila department (González 2007, 244-5). Those who could not obtain or consolidate their *fincas* (real estates) in Huila decided to march towards so-called *tierras baldias* which were widely available either in the West (already discussed Pacific Coast and Valle del Cauca department), or in the East (Meta and Guaviare departments). According to the legislation of that time the poor or displaced peasants could claim the land titles of *tierras baldias* which they

had effectively managed to occupy (Molano 1975). Nevertheless, the peasants found obstacles from “territorial entrepreneurs” and corporate colonisers which made the effective occupation of up-for-grabs land problematic. “[T]his massive displacement of the rural poor towards tierras baldias almost immediately had to confront itself with the aspirations, manipulations and exploitation of territorial entrepreneurs and corporate colonisers, who, via various mechanisms, impeded, deceived or made it difficult for newly arrived colonisers to achieve property titles despite the existing legislation” (González 2007, 247-8). In response to the similar difficulties, migrating peasants decided to organise themselves in bigger colonising groups and purchased military protection from irregular armed groups in order to pursue the effective occupation of tierras baldias (Molano 1975).

The second wave of massive colonisation occurred in 1940-50s as a result of the Violencia civil war. Masses of victimised or threatened peasants from Huila and Tolima departments (the most heated centres of the Violencia war) decided to escape the conflict and settled in the Eastern parts of the country, usually in Meta, Casanare and Guaviare departments (González 2007; Pérez 2011; Zamosc 1986). There were two distinct forms of this war-related colonisation: so-called armed colonisation and spontaneous colonisation (Molano 1975). The armed colonisation model dominated along Guyabero river and was characterised by *autoconsumo*, hunting, fishing, and fruit and vegetable picking. It was organised around *caudrillos* (military leaders) of armed self-defence groups who led displaced people to their new territories and organised their daily routines. The armed groups which protected colonisers were perceived as legitimate because they guaranteed better survival in the jungle given the introduction of organised forms of collective labour. In fact, it has been argued that in 1960-70s the armed colonisation limited the spread of latifundio model in Eastern Plains (Ibid., 46). Another form of Violencia-related colonisation prevailed along Ariari river and did hardly present any collective traits. Its spontaneous character determined its rapaciousness and made it harder for the colonisers to survive given the lack of any enforceable rules within settlers’ communities. The hostility of the jungle made this model rather inefficient and

quickly abandoned (Molano 1975, González 2007). As a result, the spontaneous colonisers were pushed further into the jungle (towards Amazonas and Vichada departments) and their original settlements were overtaken by organised violence actors which opened the way towards drug economy expansion.

The consequent marihuana boom in the 1960-70s brought a lot of money into the region concentrated in the hands of regional economic bonanzas. Initially, the drug industry was controlled by the caudrillos of original armed colonisation leaders. With the advance of FARC, the guerrilla took control of the drugs industry which did not meet with any significant resistance of the agriculture workers. Molano (1975, 75) quotes few coca cultivators who claimed that fixed taxation imposed by the guerrilla was more acceptable than the fluent and arbitrary bribes demanded by state's authorities who were never perceived as legitimate actors in this part of the country. The end of 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s marked the introduction of the coca cultivation in most parts of the Meta and Guaviare departments. The rapid enrichment of regional power brokers contributed to the redefinition of general lifestyles of the local population. With the introduction of beauty centres, bars, and discos Eastern Plains dwellers re-evaluated their aspirations and modified their daily habits (Molano 1975, 62). All of that aggravated the social conflicts and resulted in the growing support for various guerrilla groups (especially among the poorest peasants). It lasted until the coca boom of 1980s which put an end to the politically-related preferences for specific extra-legal governance providers. At that time, guerrillas and paramilitaries were as good as the precise deals they were prepared to offer to local coca economy workers.

The traditional latifundio areas, on the other hand, occupy rather small territory in Southern Eastern Plains — situated between Puerto López and Manacacias municipalities, as well as in San Martín—Mapiripán—Puerto Concordia triangle. Progressing latifundisation (concentration of land and creation of extended land properties) combined with expanding commercial agriculture makes this sub-area rather exceptional case of land tenancy structure in Eastern Plains region. It may be

explained with the fact that some of its parts have good connections with big urban centres of Villaviciencio and Bogotá which favours their greater integration into national markets (González 2007, 250). Southern Eastern Plains latifundio area concentrates also the highest percentage of indigenous populations who, nevertheless, live on the least productive and least accessible lands (Molano 1975).

(b) The extreme parts of Northern Meta, along with Casanare and Arauca departments constitute the Northern Eastern Plains sub-region. It experienced somehow similar colonisation and economic development history as its Southern counterpart. The area served as a refuge place for the persecuted Liberals during the Violencia war in 1940-50s (Henderson 2001, 317-22). The colonisation of the place was driven by the war dynamics and the first colonisers migrated to Casanare in the search of security along with their self-defence or guerrilla-like armed groups (Zamosc 1986, 15). These colonisers included Liberal landowners not powerful enough to survive Conservatives' pressure in the Violencia's fight centres, but still capable of creating their new dominiums elsewhere. The initial land structure in the area resembled the one observed in Southern Eastern Plains. The land tendency patterns were dominated by *minifundios* (small land properties) dedicated to small-scale stockbreeding, as well as to corn and beans cultivations. The agricultural entrepreneurs protected their businesses with private means from the very beginning, contracting or creating self-defence irregular armed groups.

The agricultural decline in the sub-region came with the discovery of oil extraction opportunities. Arauca department started its oil extraction immediately after the end of major Violencia's hostilities, roughly in 1953. The Casanare's oil resources were discovered in 1990s which resulted in the emission of the so-called *regalias* (state's subsidies for infrastructural development) and the consequent construction boom in the area. The publicly-sponsored investments in Northern Eastern Plains were intended to foster rapid infrastructural development of the region which might have helped to expand petrol extraction and to increase state's oil-related

revenues in relatively short period. The reality saw regalias grabbed by the political and economic elites (both legal and illegal ones) supported by paramilitaries and other organised crime groups grew out of self-defence units created by the first Casanare's colonisers (Garay and Salcedo 2012, 99-100). These organised violence actors were the only ones who could protect the new businesses from guerrillas' incursions or banditry, and who could guarantee the enforceability of often informal contracts. The armed regalias' addressees invested heavily at the local and regional level, which made them perceived as regional benefactors and gained them substantial level of social support, subverting in fact the Colombian state as legitimate governance provider in the region (ICG 2012, 6).

[I]t is comprehensible that local electoral operators were easily subordinated to the projects of major financial liquidity and greater economic capacity, ready to invest in electoral campaigns [...] The new constitution of 1991 reflected institutionally those new realities and established the bases for incentivising the flourishing of multiple small political movements. In the end, the power relations were resolved in favour of local operators, the proprietors of the votes, and led to the detriment of big departmental and national political movements of the past. Once electoral resources ended in the hands of those who enjoyed the major liquidity to "mobilise popular vote", civil and economic life in those territories became completely subordinated to expanding criminal projects (Pérez 2011, 14).

In sum, I would argue that the above analyses demonstrate the far-reaching commonalities between the socio-economic realms of Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains. The economic panorama in both regions appears dominated by relatively limited concentration of land, and by underdevelopment and poverty observed across small agricultural units. The agricultural production concentrates on the cultivation of coca leaves, and other crops necessary in the chemical processing

of drugs (e.g. palma africana). The public infrastructural development initiatives are either inexistent, or conducted under the auspices of mafia-like structures. It makes the latter groups very powerful actors at the local private ordering markets and helps them to diversify their revenues (in order to avoid overwhelming dependence on drug trade). The social panorama in Pacific Coast and in Eastern Plains reveals advanced atomisation and marginalisation of strong communities (such as indigenous groups). They are constantly intimidated, threatened and displaced as long as they form an obstacle to the interests of the major economic actors, paramilitaries and drug-traffickers included. The social relations start to be instrumental, norms of reciprocity weaken, distrust becomes prevalent, and denunciations among neighbours intensify.

The situation has great potential for self-reinforcement: the social atomisation makes it easier for economic bonanzas to oppress the peasants; the process which, in turn, makes it less viable to rebuild community trust and to produce well-concerted collective action. “In sum, the colonisation processes related to land conflicts, the illegal cocaine bonanzas, the precarious state’s presence, and the weakness of social and communitarian organisations, all of that aggravated the regional crisis and invigorated the presence of illegal armed groups in every nook and cranny of the department” (González 2007, 251). There is nothing in these analyses which could support the claim that paramilitaries in one region are more violent than paramilitaries in another region simply because of their different embeddedness in the socio-economic reality at the regional level or because of their fewer legitimacy at local private ordering markets. In short, the structural explanatory variables appear to have too little variation in order to account for the considerable heterogeneity of organised violence patterns observed across regions.

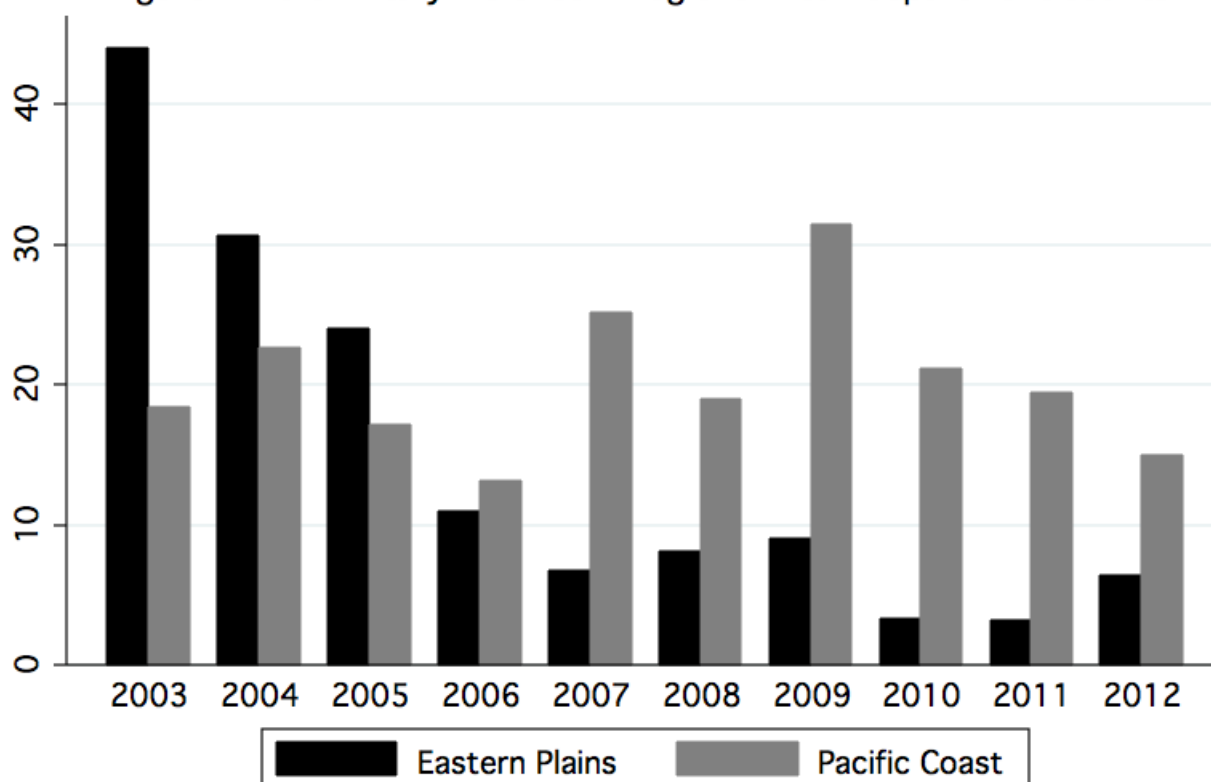
Regional Heterogeneity in Paramilitary Violence Trends 2001-2012 (II). Repression hypothesis?

With socioeconomic explanation clearly insufficient, one needs to look further for a convincing account of paramilitary violence dynamics and markedly different violence trends observed in Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains regions. To do so I would like to test the repression hypothesis proposed and discussed in detail in the theoretical section in Chapter Two. In short, following Granada, Restrepo and Vargas (2009, 28), I believe that “today more than ever before state’s actions determine violence dynamics” in Colombia. Consequently, I hypothesise that there is an association between state’s repression and paramilitary violence in the analysed regions. Such explanation implies that one should observe the repression dynamics to mirror paramilitary violence trends which makes the hypothesis falsifiable and feasible for empirical verification. In the present section I am *not* going to probe into the specific mechanisms driving the possible relationship (described by two hypotheses spelled out in Chapter Two) and I will limit myself to test the general proposition of this thesis, namely the hypothesised association between paramilitary violence and anti-paramilitary repression.

To begin with, I am going to compare the compatibility of the trends in anti-paramilitary crackdown and paramilitary violence. I decided to measure anti-paramilitary repression here as a number of paramilitaries arrested by law enforcement authorities in each region per year (source: National Police, the operational statistics reported in *Criminalidad* journal²⁰). Paramilitary violence, on the other hand, is measured as the number of unilateral violent attacks attributable to paramilitary groups in each region per year (source: already discussed NN publications). The police operational statistics are available from 2003 onwards and unfortunately I will not be able to check the compatibility of the trends in anti-paramilitary crackdown and paramilitary violence for 2001-2003 period. In the period covered by the forthcoming analyses (2003-2012 years), 65 per cent of paramilitary violent acts registered in my NN database could be classified as violence against physical integrity (e.g. homicides, torture), 29 per cent as psychological violence (e.g. death

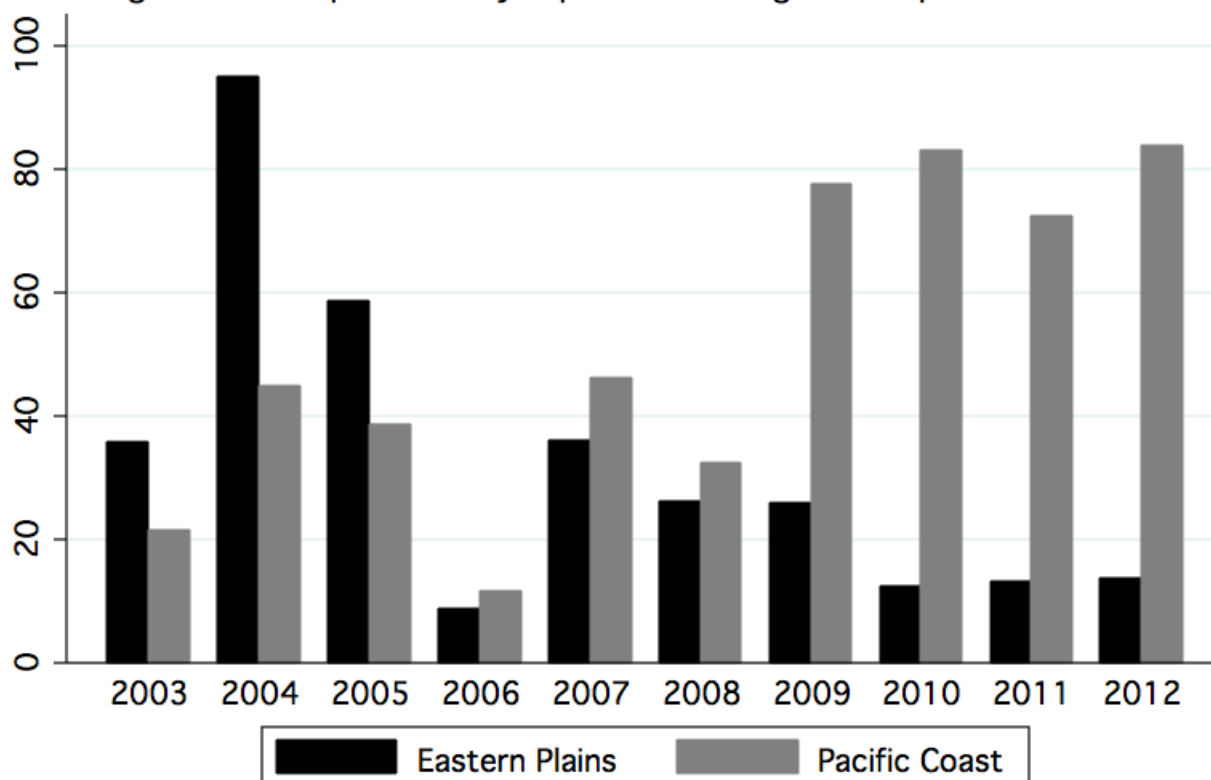
²⁰ Consulted at: www.policia.gov.co.

Figure 4: Paramilitary violence in regions. Mean department counts.



Source: Noche y Niebla (author's elaboration)

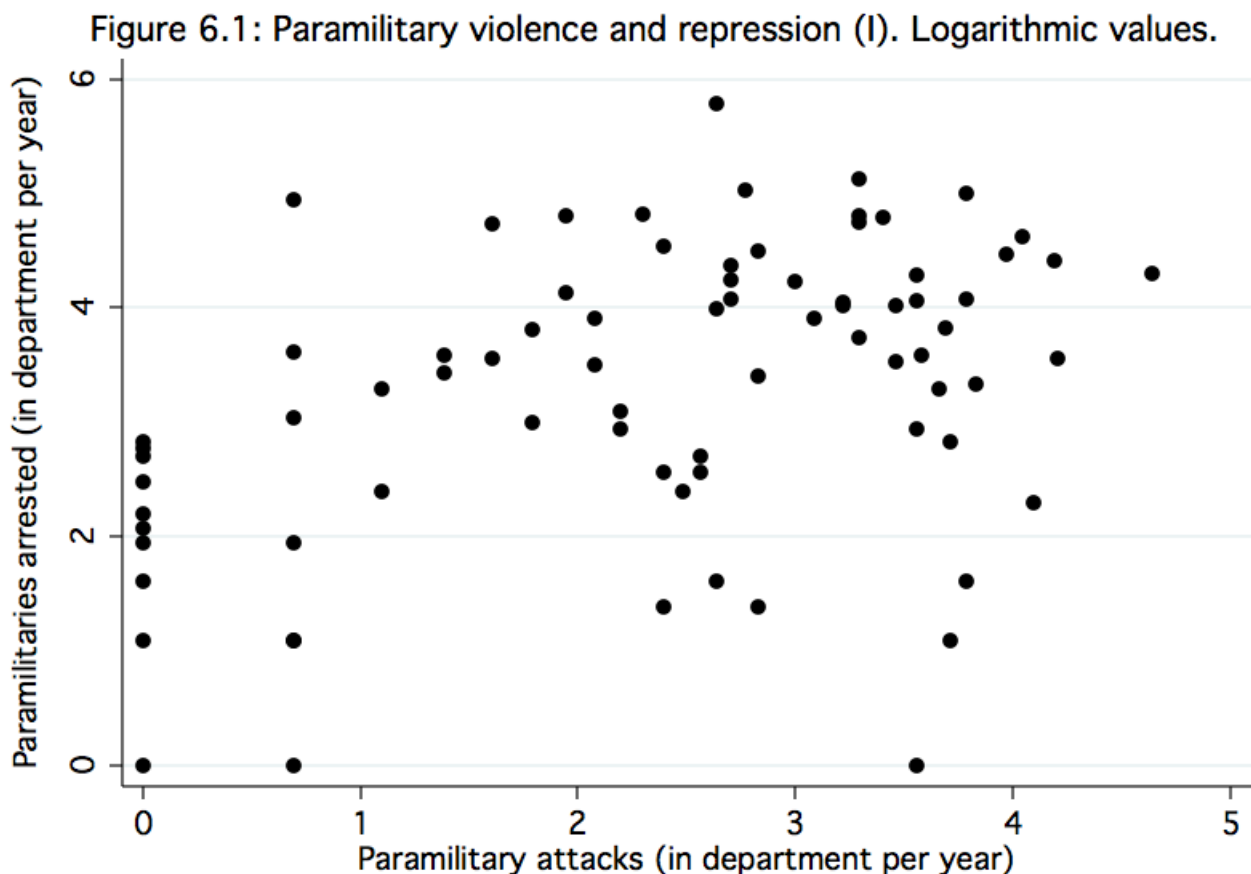
Figure 5: Anti-paramilitary repression in regions. Department means.

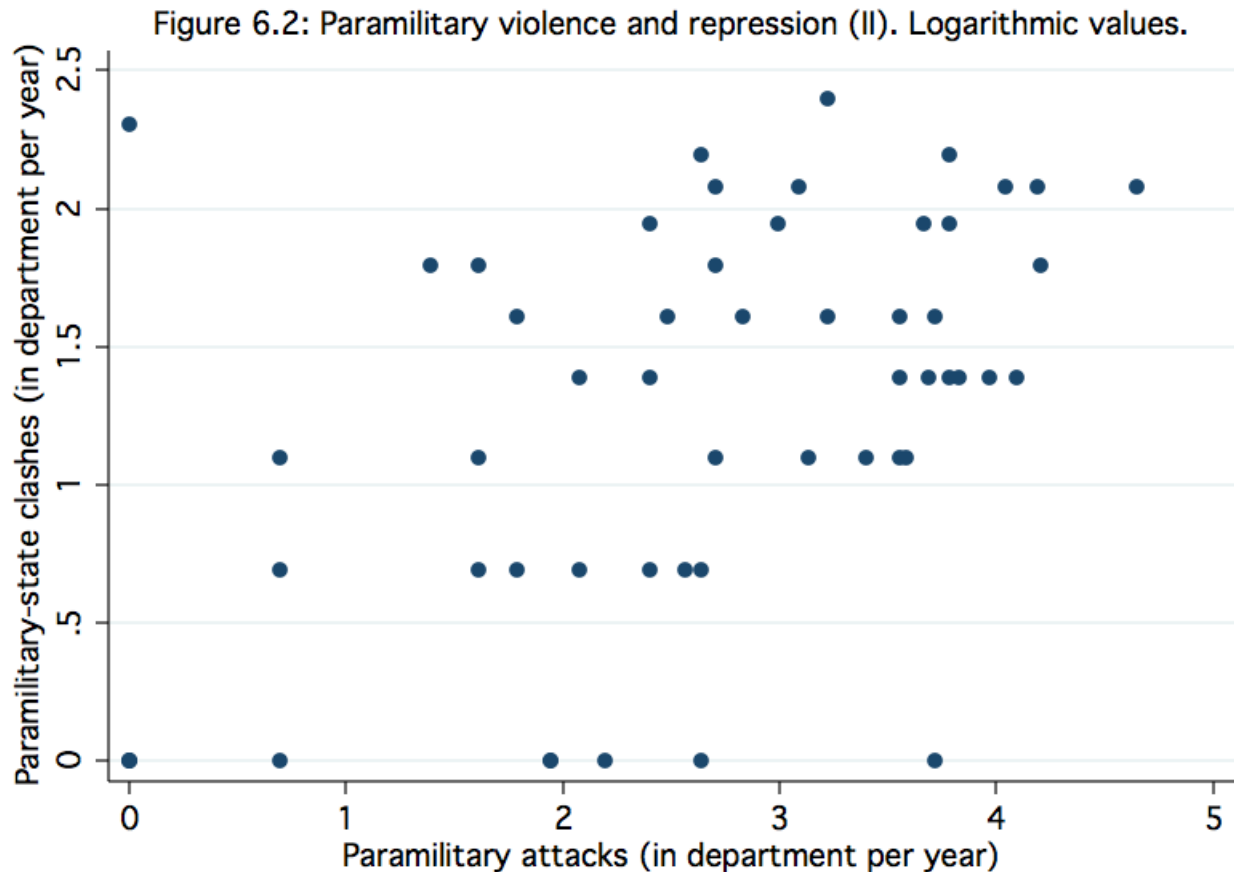


Source: Noche y Niebla (author's elaboration)

threats, community expulsions), and 6 per cent as violence against property (e.g. forced abandonment of one's accommodation or other mobile properties). These proportions vary slightly between regions and the issue will be addressed later in the chapter.

Figures 4 and 5 report year by year trends of paramilitary violence and state's repression respectively — both for Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains regions. We can see that by and large repression and violence trends correspond to each other while comparing annual departmental means calculated for each region separately (as reported in Figures 4 and 5). Figure 6.1 confirms this correspondence demonstrating that in 2003-2012 period there was statistically significant correlation of .42 ($p < .00$) between state's repression (log of the number of paramilitary members arrested in a department per year) and paramilitary violence (log of the number of violent acts attributed to paramilitary soldiers in a department per year) for department-level observations from Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains joint sample. The quartile of observations with the lowest





repression presents on average more than three times less paramilitary violence than the quartile of highest repression. These preliminary descriptive results contradict the already discussed evidence reported in Howe et al. (2010) who find negative association between law enforcement efficiency and DDR's success/failure implicitly attributable to organised violence reduction/persistence. I am going to re-examine Howe et al.'s proposition in more systematic manner during within-regional analyses in the next chapter.

As I said in the introductory part of the chapter the policing measured as sub-regional arrest rates represented only one side of state's repressive actions against Colombian paramilitaries in 2003-2012 period. Another form of anti-paramilitary repression included military clashes between the Colombian armed forces and paramilitary groups. The information on this type of anti-paramilitary repression is available thanks to CERAC dataset²¹ which registers military

²¹ Accessed at: www.cerac.org.co/en/resources/bdcc/.

confrontations between all participants in Colombian civil conflict at the municipal level since 1988 until 2009. There is large empirical evidence that in case of the vast majority of state-vs-paramilitary clashes paramilitaries had not been the initiating party of these disputes, and therefore I feel entitled to use the term “repression” rather than “confrontations” in reference to the clashes between these two armed forces (see Granada, Restrepo and Vargas 2009, 28). Figure 6.2 shows the department-level correlation of .47 ($p < .00$) between military repression (number of state-vs-paramilitary clashes in a department per year) and paramilitary violence (number of paramilitary attacks in a department per year) for observations pooled from both analysed regions. Pearson’s correlation coefficient relative to Figure 6.2 is statistically significant and its relatively high value suggests that the present association may be even stronger than the one between paramilitaries’ arrest rates and paramilitary violence (see Figure 6.1). Unfortunately, the two correlation statistics are not straightforwardly comparable given the fact that the second repression variable does not provide information relative to 2010-2012 years, while the first one does. I will probe into the comparisons between arrest rates and military repression variables and their respective effects on paramilitary violence in the following chapter dedicated to within-regional analyses. In sum, the descriptive facts presented so far lend some support to the central argument of the chapter which claims that between-regional difference in anti-paramilitary repression’s intensity could explain between-regional difference in paramilitary violence trends.

It needs to be said, though, that the correlation between state’s repression and paramilitary violence may capture other types of relationships. I have already shown that the socio-economic and historical factors cannot explain between-regional differences, yet quite a few non-structural variables accounting for regional conflict dynamics could possibly matter in the context of divergent paramilitary violence trends in the analysed regions. For example, guerrillas’ presence and guerrilla-vs-paramilitary disputes could potentially bias above quoted analyses. It is entirely possible that guerrillas’ presence provoked paramilitary violence, while at the same time it also

Table 2: Paramilitaries, state and guerrillas' interactions. Correlation matrix.

	Paramilitary attacks	Paramilitaries arrested	Paramilitary-state clashes	Guerrillas' attacks	Guerrilla-paramilitary clashes
Paramilitary attacks	-				
Paramilitaries arrested	.238*	-			
Paramilitary-state clashes	.491**	.190	-		
Guerrillas' attacks	.474**	— .054	.421**	-	
Guerrilla-paramilitary clashes	— .305*	— .044	.064	.377**	-

Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. Source: Noche y Niebla (author's elaboration).

brought more law enforcement authorities to the region/department. Police/army might have not limited themselves to fight against insurgent groups exclusively, but following the logic of economies of scale they might have chosen to challenge paramilitaries as well. If this was the case, it could have meant that guerrillas' presence made two phenomenas (paramilitary violence and anti-paramilitary repression) meet quite accidentally and that they may not in fact be causally related.

To control for such possible bias, I am going to check if the guerrilla variables are not correlated with state's repression ones. In case of very strong positive correlation between repression and guerrilla variables, state's crackdown's effect on paramilitary violence could represent a spurious correlation. Table 2 shows correlation matrix between the variables measuring guerrillas' activities and anti-paramilitary crackdown proxies. There is very little evidence to confirm the concerns that Figures 6.1 and 6.2 suffer from spurious correlation bias. Although we observe quite strong and significant correlation between state-vs-paramilitary combats and guerrillas' departmental presence, the same guerrilla variable is *not* correlated with another repression variable which would be inexplicable if it shall really confound state's crackdown and paramilitary violence association.

Spurious correlations aside, there is much more serious problem which could invalidate my findings presented until now. The association between anti-paramilitary repression and paramilitary violence is difficult to interpret due to uncertainty about the direction of causality. It is entirely possible that police actions intensify in response to *prior* paramilitary violence, rather than the other way round. Fortunately, in the present case there are good reasons to believe that direction of causality is the one hypothesised. Granada, Restrepo and Vargas (2009, 29) show that initial state's repression was directed prevalently against those paramilitary groups which were not to participate in demobilisation scheme (labelled as "dissidents"²²). Duncan (2005, 30) claims that DDR non-participants were different from DDR participants only in their symbolic engagement in national politics with strong anti-insurgency rhetorics. To put it in another way, the state's decision to exclude paramilitary group from demobilisation process (which was one way of group's becoming DDR non-participant) seems motivated by political reasons, rather than by the criminal profile of repression targets (such as use of violence, organisational model, or type of governance)

To understand the point, one needs to know that demobilisation initiative brought heavy criticism upon the President Uribe's administration culminating in the hypothesis of Uribe's secret coalition with key representatives of Colombian paramilitarism (see Contreras and Garavito 2002). In order to repair its public image Uribe's administration opted for some anti-paramilitary demonstrative action. It consisted of an exclusion of certain groups from demobilisation process and their subsequent military defeat. The targets (so-called "dissidents") were chosen according to the

²² Such a label erroneously suggests the intentions of paramilitary groups non participating in demobilisation scheme. Some of them refused to negotiate with the government and may actually be called dissidents. Others, on the other hand, were not accepted within AUC union by its larger factions, which precluded them an opportunity of negotiated solution to the conflict. Yet other groups were excluded from demobilisation process by the government itself which, in the face of heavy criticism and wide-spread allegations of criminal alliances with paramilitary groups, was deemed to undertake some form of demonstrative anti-paramilitary action to silence its critics and disassociate itself from the pervasive rumours.

level of their political involvement. Those who failed to enter national-level politics and did not develop strong anti-insurgency discourse were deemed to become labelled as “dissidents” and consequently to suffer from state’s military repression (Duncan 2005, 30). Having said that, I am aware that the present discussion cannot exclude entirely the problem of reversed causality. It does exclude reversed causality between paramilitary violence and repression at the outset of anti-paramilitary crackdown, but it cannot account for repression’s later dynamics. For this reasons, I will address reversed causality concern yet in a more systematic manner (using disaggregated regional data) in Chapter Four dedicated to within-regional analyses.

Putting two and two together, the results of between-regional comparisons are largely supportive to the central argument of this chapter. Although they leave many questions unanswered and few bias concerns unaddressed, I am going to deal with these issues further in the thesis when I reevaluate the present explanation with slightly different focus (moving away from between-regional comparisons towards within-regional analyses). Thanks to the use of much more sophisticated statistical methods²³ I shall be able to discover more about the relationship between paramilitary violence and state’s repression while controlling for numerous potentially confounding factors not discussed yet. Before I continue my puzzle-solving with within-regional focus I would like to offer more detailed description of paramilitary violence structure and its multifaceted relationship with law enforcement anti-paramilitary intervention at the aggregate level. Even though such discussion will move me beyond the immediate solution to the puzzle of this chapter, it should be informative in other ways. Most importantly, it will confirm the fact that state’s repression has some effect on paramilitary violence — in this case, on its structure and its non-quantitative properties

²³ More sophisticated statistical methods could not be applied to department-level analyses discussed so far due to aggregation and research design issues.

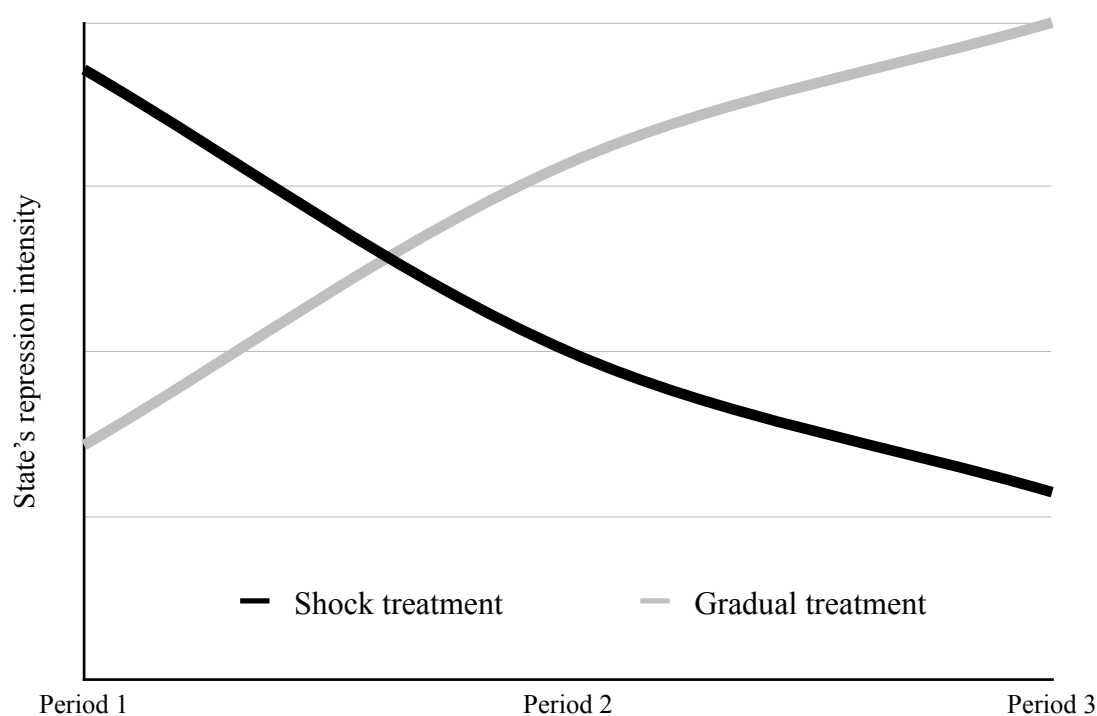
The Structure of Paramilitary Violence

Moving beyond the immediate puzzle of this chapter I am going to investigate the specific ways in which state's repression influences paramilitary violence. I have already demonstrated some empirical support for the hardcore of my argument, namely for the hypothesis that paramilitary violence increases with the intensity of state's repression. Nevertheless, the intuition suggests that apart from quantitative changes in the intensity of paramilitary violence we should also observe the changes in the structure of paramilitary violence provoked by state's repressive actions. How different is the structure of paramilitary violence under state's fully-fledged repression from "equilibrium" paramilitary violence — perpetrated irrespective of the actions of law enforcement authorities? The present case offers an interesting opportunity to address this issue given the huge variation on repression variable both within and between regions and across time periods. In the present section I will examine how paramilitary violence structure (measured in its three characteristics: lethality, average number of victims per attack, and victims' profiles) changed with the intensity of state's repressive action. Such a comparison seems possible given the established plausibility of the repression hypothesis as an explanation to the regional heterogeneity of paramilitary violence dynamics in 2001-2012.

To investigate the structure of paramilitary violence and its crackdown-related changes I coded three periods of anti-paramilitary crackdown's intensity (low, medium and high) for each department-level observation in my data (N=120). Then I checked how structural characteristics of paramilitary violence (lethality, number of victims per event, and victims' profiles) varied with the transition from one intensity period to another. I also controlled whether the sequence of these transitions mattered independently of the levels of intensity observed in each repression period. The repression periods were coded using National Police operational statistics which report the number of paramilitaries arrested in a department per year (the first operationalisation of repression variable

from previous section). To illustrate the coding process, I coded low-intensity repression period as the years 2001-2002 for all the analysed departments. Medium-intensity crackdown was coded as the years 2003-2005 for the departments of Chocó, Nariño, Valle del Cauca (Pacific Coast), and Vichada (Eastern Plains); and as the years 2007-2012 for the remaining departments: Arauca, Casanare, Guaviare, Meta (Eastern Plains), Cauca, and Putumayo (Pacific Coast). High-intensity crackdown corresponds to the years 2003-2005 for Arauca, Casanare, Guaviare, Meta (Eastern Plains), Cauca, and Putumayo (Pacific Coast), and to the years 2007-2012 for Chocó, Nariño, Valle del Cauca (Pacific Coast), and Vichada (Eastern Plains). I excluded all the observations from year 2006 given its rather deceptive peacefulness related to the successful conclusion of paramilitary demobilisation and state's temporal cessation of most of anti-paramilitary actions. Figure 7 shows that there were two trajectories of anti-paramilitary crackdown in the departments under study, let us call them “shock” (the sequence of low, high, medium repression periods) and “gradual” (the sequence of low, medium, high repression periods) treatments. It needs to be pointed though that my repression's intensity coding does *not* refer to the actual counts of paramilitaries' arrested in

Figure 7: Anti-paramilitary repressive strategy per time period, 2001-2012.



each department per year, but reflects the relative repression's intensity levels with different reference baselines for each of the two analysed regions. In this way I did a sort of "standardisation" of the observations relative to two different regions in order to guarantee their less problematic comparability.

Repression and lethality of paramilitary violence

Having coded three levels of anti-paramilitary repression for all the departments, I wanted to check how they vary with certain structural characteristics of paramilitary violence observed in each repression period. How did paramilitaries react to the changes in repression's intensity in terms of modifying their modalities of violence? To examine this question I classified the modalities of paramilitary violence into three categories: lethal (homicides, disappearances), non-lethal (injuries, torture, sexual abuse, arbitrary detainment, displacement, abduction), and indirect (threats) ones. Table 3 shows the prevalence of these modalities in each repression period (representing years of

Table 3: The modalities of paramilitary violence per repression period, 2001-2012.

Type of violence		Period 1	Period 2	Period 3
Shock treatment	Lehtal	58.53 (223)	65.81 (433)	42.32 (193)
	Non-lethal	17.59 (67)	15.50 (102)	17.11 (78)
	Threats	23.88 (91)	18.69 (123)	40.57 (185)
	Sub-total	100 (381)	100 (658)	100 (456)
Gradual treatment	Lehtal	47.84 (111)	59.69 (117)	50.35 (290)
	Non-lethal	27.59 (64)	12.76 (25)	19.44 (112)
	Threats	24.57 (57)	27.55 (54)	30.21 (174)
	Sub-total	100 (232)	100 (196)	100 (576)

Note: T-test: $p < .00$. Frequency in parenthesis. Source: Noche y Niebla (author's elaboration).

low, medium, high crackdown's intensity) for two groups of departments: one subject to the shock treatment, another to the gradual one. The comparison reveals that the proportions of certain violence modalities tend to change along with the transition from one repressive period to another in somehow systematic manner. We can observe that under both shock and gradual treatment the proportion of lethal violence increases with the intensification of repressive intervention after the initial period of uniformly low-intensity crackdown (transition to medium or high intensity). In the wake of the subsequent transition (from medium to high, or *vice versa*) the percentage of lethal violence drops significantly (either due to incapacitation effect, or in response to underworld stabilisation). It needs to be noticed that under shock treatment the drop is so substantial that the percentage of lethal actions in the third period constitutes only roughly two thirds of this proportion in the first period. Under gradual treatment the drop in lethal violence is less pronounced and the lethality of paramilitary violence in the final period surpasses its value in the initial one (even if not dramatically). What these findings might suggest is that the sequence matters. The lethality seems to depend less on the intensity of repressive action and more on its sequence: intense shock crackdown followed by the successive moderation of repressive intervention appears to diminish the lethality of violence in the long-run. The same is not true for gradual repressive treatment which somehow exacerbates the most extreme forms of insecurity in the long run.

What does it tell us about the trade-offs between shock and gradual repressive strategies and their impact on the paramilitary governance? Before answering the question I shall recall Falcone (1991) and Gambetta's (1992) arguments where they claim that even the most criminal of extra-legal governance providers (such as the Sicilian mafia) prefer to limit their use of violence if possible, especially its most costly modalities such as homicidal violence. Both arguments implicitly suggest that threats should be considered as extra-legal governance providers' preferred modalities of disciplining people subject to their ordering. Having said that, one can argue that a diminished proportion of lethal violence combined with the significant increase in the relative

frequency of threats may actually reflect paramilitaries' strengthening rather than their weakening. As a result, from state's perspective the gradual repressive strategy seems more successful than the shock one at least in terms of destroying the stability of extra-legal governance and possibly recuperating some private ordering markets. At the same time, gradual repressive strategy brings publicly undesired outcomes, such as an increase in the most feared forms of insecurity (homicides and disappearances), and therefore, not surprisingly, remains highly unpopular.

Repression and magnitude of paramilitary violence

In the next step I repeated the analogical analyses checking whether there is any relationship between the number of victims per paramilitary attack and anti-paramilitary repression's intensity. I coded the number of victims as an interval variable yielding 1 if an attack involved no more than two victims; 2 if the number of victims per attack fell between three and ten victimised individuals; and 3 if a single victimisation act affected more than ten people. Table 4 shows that the number of

Table 4: The magnitude of paramilitary attacks per repression period, 2001-2012.

Number of victims per attack		Period 1	Period 2	Period 3
Shock treatment	1 to 2	64.79 (184)	84.86 (471)	82.50 (297)
	3 to 10	29.93 (85)	12.61 (70)	13.89 (50)
	Over 10	5.28 (15)	2.52 (14)	3.61 (13)
	Sub-total	100 (284)	100 (555)	100 (360)
Gradual treatment	1 to 2	65.24 (107)	75.31 (122)	81.04 (359)
	3 to 10	18.05 (46)	19.14 (31)	16.48 (73)
	Over 10	6.71 (11)	5.56 (9)	2.48 (11)
	Sub-total	100 (164)	100 (162)	100 (443)

Note: T-test: $p < .00$. Frequency in parenthesis. Source: Noche y Niebla (author's elaboration).

victims per attack seems to decrease with the intensity of repressive action. The repression intensity sequence does not appear to matter in this case. Nonetheless, there are few important reasons to be cautious in interpreting this finding. To begin with, when we exclude massacres with over 100 victims, which significantly inflate means, we find that on average there were 1.96 victims per event in Eastern Plains and 3.18 in Pacific Coast. The baseline difference may be explained with different community structures in both regions. Pacific Coast is the region with the more significant indigenous presence, which hosts a large number of collective territories either of indigenous or afro-Colombian populations (Vasques and Vargas 2011; Barreto Henriques 2009). Despite the hostile law enforcement environment and an increased need for secrecy among irregular armed groups in the region, Pacific Coast paramilitaries may find atomised victimisation not always feasible given the nature of communitarian life prevalent in the area. For these reasons, the cross-regional conclusions about the relationship between repression's intensity and the scale of an average paramilitary attack should be read with special caution.

Repression and paramilitary victims' profiles

Finally, thanks to the detail of the NN data in slightly more than half of the registered violent events I was also able to identify some basic characteristics of victims' profiles. NN adds a short descriptions to registered violent attacks which characterise a victim by its profession or by any other labour-related etiquette (e.g. politician, unionised worker, street vendor, judge, journalist, school teacher etc). I decided to analyse only two characteristics of the victims retrieved from NN raw sources: general and case-specific one. The general characteristic regards victims' working status (salaried worker, informal/precarious worker, entrepreneur, and freelance professional). Case-specific characteristic concerns only this sample of the victims' population who dedicated themselves to active anti-paramilitary fight. Among all paramilitary victims recorded in the NN data

a relatively large share (26.37 per cent) belong to the category of victims whom I call “prosecution advocates”. Prosecution advocates include those individuals who participated in legal prosecution of paramilitary members (such as justice operators, or victims’ families), those whose job was to reveal paramilitary crimes (e.g. human rights observers), as well as those who conducted public campaigns insisting on paramilitary prosecution from their own private initiative (e.g. journalists, educators). I coded four categories of prosecution advocates victims dependent both on their status in legal prosecution process (if they were directly engaged in paramilitaries’ prosecution) and on their resources (if they were engaged indirectly). These resulting categories go as follows: (1) justice operators (judges, magistrates), (2) victims’ families (plaintiffs), (3) human rights NGOs (organised denouncers), (4) civic society representatives (private denouncers). Analogically to the previous two sub-sections I am going to see how the proportions of some specific classes of paramilitary victims changed with the transitions from one level of anti-paramilitary repression’s intensity to another.

Table 5.1: Victims’ profiles per repression period (I), 2001-2012.

Victims’ working status		Period 1	Period 2	Period 3
Shock treatment	Salaried	35.42 (34)	42.71 (82)	24.43 (43)
	Precarious/informal	54.17 (52)	44.27 (85)	64.77 (114)
	Entrepreneur	8.33 (8)	9.90 (19)	9.09 (16)
	Freelance profession	2.08 (2)	3.12 (6)	1.70 (3)
	Sub-total	100 (96)	100 (192)	100 (176)
Gradual treatment	Salaried	37.65 (32)	52.58 (51)	29.10 (78)
	Precarious/informal	48.24 (41)	41.24 (40)	60.07 (161)
	Entrepreneur	3.53 (3)	5.15 (5)	7.84 (21)
	Freelance profession	10.59 (9)	1.03 (1)	2.99 (8)
	Sub-total	100 (85)	100 (97)	100 (268)

Note: T-test: $p < .00$. Frequency in parenthesis. Source: Noche y Niebla (author’s elaboration).

Table 5.2: Victims' profiles per repression period (II), 2001-2012.

Type of "prosecution advocates"		Period 1	Period 2	Period 3
Shock treatment	Justice operators	19.51 (8)	21.62 (16)	24.30 (26)
	Victims' families	14.63 (6)	18.92 (14)	8.41 (9)
	Human rights NGOs	60.98 (25)	51.35 (38)	64.49 (69)
	Individual denouncers	4.88 (2)	8.11 (6)	2.80 (3)
	Sub-total	100 (41)	100 (74)	100 (107)
Gradual treatment	Justice operators	8.82 (3)	20.83 (5)	14.00 (14)
	Victims' families	8.82 (3)	20.83 (5)	29.00 (29)
	Human rights NGOs	55.88 (19)	54.17 (13)	49.00 (49)
	Individual denouncers	26.47 (9)	4.17 (1)	8.00 (8)
	Sub-total	100 (34)	100 (24)	100 (100)

Note: T-test: $p < .00$. Frequency in parenthesis. Source: Noche y Niebla (author's elaboration).

My comparisons shall begin with the analysis of victims' working status. Table 5.1 reports the proportions of victims sorted by their employment status in each of the three repression periods for both shock and gradual treatment groups. There is no evidence of sequence-related impact of state's repression on the categories of workers targeted by paramilitary violence. What is more, the type of most frequently targeted workers do not seem to depend on the level of repression's intensity neither. The common changes between the first and the third periods, such as relatively diminished proportion of salaried workers (proxy for unionised workers), or relatively increased proportion of informal/precarious workers and entrepreneurs among paramilitary targets, appear related to the long-run effects of persistent anti-paramilitary actions rather than to repressions' intensity levels. Why is it so? One can expect that paramilitaries under prolonged siege will loose many areas of their traditional influence, either in labour unions, or in large employment centres (see Garzon 2008; CIT 2009). Coherently with this explanation, I learn from the qualitative reading of NN data that since 2007 downtrodden paramilitary groups (especially in Pacific Coast) have

often abandoned their aspirations to impose extra-legal governance within such milieus as unionised working environment (NN). Instead, they have begun to select targets which were easier to threaten and coerce, such as small firms and independent labourers (street vendors, mechanics, unregistered taxi drivers, phone-sharing persons²⁴, shoe cleaners).

Lastly, I would like to demonstrate a plausible relationship between victimisation patterns among prosecution advocates and the intensity of state's repression against paramilitary groups. Table 5.2 shows that the transition from low anti-paramilitary repression to any of its higher levels of intensity occurred along with a non-negligible relative increase in the victimisation of direct prosecution advocates (justice operators and plaintiffs) compared to the victimisation of indirect prosecution advocates (social organisations and journalists). It all makes sense given the fact that determined anti-paramilitary crackdown encouraged denunciations and all sorts of legal actions against paramilitary groups, which since 2003 must have multiplied enormously. Two of the more specific changes in the victimisation patterns related to repression's intensity are worth mentioning here. Table 5.2 demonstrates that victim's families became most exposed to paramilitary violence during the highest levels of repression's intensity, while justice operators had their toughest times during medium-intensity crackdown. Again it seems very reasonable. Because of heavier police presence and intensified intelligence work in all "sensitive" environments, high-intensity repression made it hard for paramilitary groups to victimise important justice operators. In this situation, paramilitaries decided to terrorise more frequently the second most important participant in their legal prosecution processes, the plaintiffs (victims' families). When the surveillance relaxed and state's appeared less cautious about its key officials, paramilitaries took the risks to threaten or eliminate some justice operators given the major benefits accruing to such actions compared to

²⁴ So-called *minutos* service, which works in the following manner. Phone sharers let other people use their mobile phones and charge for each minutes of effectuated call (usually between 150 and 200 Colombian pesos per minute). In order to avoid mobile's theft they keep their phones chained to their belts, which prevents minutes-buyer to distance himself/herself from the phone's owner.

plaintiffs' elimination. There is no doubt that justice operators constitute more serious threat to paramilitaries' impunity than the families of their victims — usually unable to read and write, and badly in need of assistance in order to formulate denunciation which might lead to paramilitaries' prosecution.

CHAPTER FOUR: Sub-Regional Heterogeneity of DDR Outcomes

So far I have demonstrated that between-regional analyses yield the results strongly supportive to the central argument of this chapter demonstrating the plausibility of the positive relationship between state's repression and paramilitary violence. However, there are few critical issues which need to be addressed before one can be certain about the robustness of such claims. First of all, it is entirely possible that I overestimated the socio-economic similarity between analysed regions using mainly qualitative information coming from various data sources which may not necessarily be perfectly comparable. Even if it happened not, I could have not accounted for within-regional socio-economic heterogeneity. What is more, the correlations discovered in the data which pools both regions' observations (Figures 6.1 and 6.2) might not hold if I repeat analyses for each region separately. Finally, departmental analyses may suffer from the aggregation problem. Since my argument does not make claims about the populations' characteristics but about individuals or groups of individuals' actions (paramilitary purposive acts of violence), using highly aggregated data to explain the micro-dynamics of paramilitary violent behaviour seems excessively risky and may potentially obscure numerous micro-level complexities.

To address these issues, I am going to redesign my comparative framework in order to pursue within-regional comparisons of paramilitary violence heterogeneity for Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains separately. I am going to determine why some areas of Pacific Coast/Eastern Plains regions experienced increasing paramilitary violence rates in 2003-2009 while others saw significant reduction in paramilitary violence in the same period. Instead of annual departmental observations as the basic units of analysis I am going to turn to municipal-level comparisons. As a result, the socio-economic regional characteristics will be measured at municipal level and, as such, I should be able to address their within-regional variability. Moreover, I am going to use more

advanced statistical methods which allow me to introduce lag structures to my analyses, and to control for the possibility of reversed causality. For within-regional analysis my dataset covers the years 2003-2009²⁵, the period since the beginning of DDR process until three years after the conclusion of its “DD” components (disarmament and demobilisation). It coincides with the period of two terms of Álvaro Uribe’s presidency holding constant fundamental policy orientation. In sum, the above outlined research design follows a new civil conflict research agenda proposed by Humphreys and Weinstein (2009) who suggest to observe the changes in a single security milieu at the sub-regional level within possibly limited time period.

Modelling Paramilitary Violence Dynamics

To begin with, I will test statistically the main proposition of the previous two chapters — whether paramilitary violence increases in response to state’s anti-paramilitary repression. The initial analyses will proceed with Pacific Coast data only. Analogically to the previous chapter, paramilitary violence is defined here as an unilateral attack against any type of human civilian target, which includes actions varying from homicides and disappearances to arbitrary detainments and rapes. The organised crime theory laid out in theoretical section does not make any specific predictions about the modalities of organised crime violence most likely to occur in response to law enforcement crackdown and therefore I pool all violent events together. Dependent variable (DV) in all the models proposed in this section is a count of paramilitary unilateral attacks registered in a municipality during each year in 2003-2009 period. DV’s distribution is characterised both by an excessive number of zero counts and by an over-dispersion. Zero-inflated negative binomial (ZINB) model seems the most appropriate estimation technique for this kind of response variable (Cameron and Triviedi 1998). Firstly, ordinary least squares regression cannot be employed for count DV

²⁵ CERAC municipal data is not available for 2010-2012 period.

since it may lead to negative predicted values (King 1988). More importantly, the ZINB model may account for the fact that zero observations in my response variable can be generated in two different ways (Long 1997). On the one hand, there may be no paramilitary violence in municipality A at time t simply because there were no paramilitaries there at t (paramilitaries had no interest in the locality at that moment, or had been pushed out of the place by a competing group or law enforcement authorities). On the other hand, there may be no paramilitary violence in municipality B at t because the relations between local population and paramilitary groups were good throughout a year and there happened no significant breakdown in these relations which could get registered in NN data. In the case of municipality A we should speak of so-called “certain zero” observation which has to be explained in a different way than zero observation relative to municipality B.

The ZINB regression combines two separate models. In the first step, an inflation (logit) model is generated to predict whether a municipal observation falls into “certain zero” group or not. I use two instruments to single out “certain zero” cases at this stage. The first one comes from CERAC conflict dataset and measures paramilitary municipal presence on binary scale yielding 1 if any paramilitary group was present in a municipality during a year, and 0 otherwise. I noticed that in 59 municipal observations where CERAC dataset declares no paramilitary presence I still find evidence of violent events attributable to paramilitary groups. For this reason I add the second variable to the inflation model which uses the cumulative score of my DV. The logic behind the inflation model goes as follows: a municipality with no paramilitary violence at time t is likely to be a “certain zero” case if there is no evidence of paramilitary presence in the municipality at t , and if no previous paramilitary violence had been registered there since the beginning of the analysed period until t .

In the second step, the ZINB regression generates a negative binomial model in order to estimate the intensity of paramilitary violence for those municipalities which are not predicted as “certain zero” cases. For this part of the ZINB model I try three nested specifications. Firstly

(Model 1), I use two simple explanatory variables that criminologically-oriented studies usually associate with the intensity of organised violence in Colombia. Garzón (2008) suggests that the majority of paramilitary violence today may stand for within-paramilitary fighting which follows AUC's dissolution (2003-2006) and the fragmentation of remaining and newly-emerged groups. In this argument violence begets violence because of its endogenous escalation dynamics which spirals out until "the [paramilitary] winner is decided" and the conflict can finally subside (see Gaviria 1998, 12). To account for this escalation dynamics, Model 1 uses two variables: the cumulative score of DV and its square transformation (*Escalation* and *Escalation Sq.*). The two terms capture escalation and attrition processes, and as such they should have positive and negative effect on DV respectively (see Morselli, Tanguay and Labalette 2008, 157). The econometric literature on crimes in Colombia finds that the levels of violence both political and criminal, organised and not,²⁶ are strictly related to the quality of public justice system, policing included (Gaviria 1998; Gaitán 2001; Sánchez, Solimano and Formisano 2005). In order to see whether the relationship holds for paramilitary violence, the model includes the variable which measures paramilitary members arrests rates (*Arrests*). I calculate it dividing the number of paramilitaries arrested in a department of reference each year (National Police statistics²⁷) by yearly counts of departmental crimes attributed to paramilitary groups (my dataset estimates). Because of the variable's over-dispersion I use its logarithm in the model. I expect it may have either positive (Smith and Varese 2001) or negative (in accordance with Howe et al. 2010) effect on DV. Nonetheless, any significant result should be interpreted with caution given the already discussed aggregation issues (see Chapter Two).

The second model (Model 2) combines the already described explanatory variables with the information about conflict-related dynamics that could have shaped extra-legal governance

²⁶ Duncan (2005) and Gaitán (2001) convincingly claim that analytical distinctions between political and criminal violence, organised or not, can hardly fit the complex criminological reality observed in Colombia.

²⁷ Consulted at: www.policia.gov.co.

environment in the analysed regions. The first conflict-related variable (*Repression*) tests the central proposition of the paper. It measures state's anti-paramilitary repression on binary scale scoring one if there was any military clash between state's armed forces and paramilitary groups in a municipality during a year, and zero otherwise. I use the word "repression" rather than "confrontation" because we have good reasons to believe that in the vast majority of the cases paramilitaries had *not* initiated these military disputes (Granda, Restrepo and Vargas 2009, 28). I hypothesise that the repression variables has a positive effect on DV. Model 2 introduces also another two conflict-related variables to test whether contemporary paramilitary violence follows the counterinsurgency logic of the past (see Romero 2003). The first variable (*Guerrilla_clashes*) indicates the incidence of guerrilla-paramilitary combats at the municipal level yielding one if there was any confrontation during a year, and zero otherwise. The second variable (*Guerrilla_presence*) measures guerrillas' municipal presence scoring one in case of any insurgent activity during a year, and zero otherwise. Most paramilitary groups operating in Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains after 2003 (both rearmed and non-demobilised ones) explicitly claim they continue to fight against the rebels (e.g. NN, Putumayo, 11.11.2004; Nariño, 20.03.2007). Although many studies disbelieve in counterinsurgency character of contemporary paramilitaries, they still admit that the criminal competition between guerrillas and paramilitary group may be the reason of persistently high levels of organised violence in some parts of Pacific Coast (Vásques and Vargas 2011, Barreto Henriques 2009, 554-8). I expect that both guerrilla dummies may have a positive effect on DV. All the conflict-related variables discussed in this paragraph were coded thanks to CERAC conflict database.

Finally, in Model 3 I keep all the predictors from Model 2 adding three time-invariant controls to account for baseline differences in the levels of paramilitary violence attributable to municipalities' individual characteristics. The first variable (*NBI*) controls for poverty level using the percentage of municipal population living with basic needs unsatisfied (source: Departamento

Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, DANE²⁸). Although the poverty is usually associated with lowering opportunity costs and increasing the returns from participating in organised violence (Dude and Vargas 2013), I do not think it correlates positively with municipal paramilitary violence. Local poverty means less economic exchange and therefore its high levels may actually discourage paramilitary type of extra-legal governance which most probably targets the areas with multiple economic transactions (see Bandiera 2003). For this reason I expect *NBI* may have a negative effect on DV. The second control variable (*ICOFIS*) uses institutional coverage index which takes into account 16 instruments to measure the presence of public institutions and the quality of public infrastructure at the municipal level (source: Departamento Nacional de Planeación, DNP²⁹). The index is measured on continuous scale scoring between zero and one, with lower scores indicating worse institutional coverage. *ICOFIS* can be interpreted as a static proxy of state's capacity at the municipal level, and its effect on DV should be negative (see Howe et al. 2010). The last variable (*Resguardo*) controls for the presence of indigenous collective territories (*resguardos*). It scores one if there is any *resguardo* within municipal administrative borders, and zero otherwise. I coded this variable using the list of legally recognised *resguardos* published by Ministerio de Ambiente, Vivienda y Desarrollo Territorial (MAVDT).³⁰ Indigenous communities are famous for self-governance which includes the maintenance of their own self-defence forces (Verdad Abierta 2014), and the management of independent justice (Reyes 2014). Consequently, they maintain rather conflictual relations with any alternative governance providers (Barreto Henriques 2009), and thus their municipal collective presence may have a positive effect on paramilitary violence.

Apart from already described variables, all models include the log of population's size (*Population*) as semi-exposure variable (source: DANE), and year dummies which control for

²⁸ Consulted at: www.dane.gov.co.

²⁹ Consulted at: www.dnp.gov.co.

³⁰ Consulted at: www.minambiente.gov.co.

regional conflict dynamics characterised by occasional large-scale events that affect the extra-legal governance in the entire Pacific Coast. Such events comprise three waves of collective paramilitary demobilisation, coca eradication operations, international investments, the arrival of new extra-legal governance actors, or signing and breaking of alliances between irregular armed groups operating in the region. Number of observations, mean, and standard deviation of each variable can be consulted in Table 6.1 for Pacific Coast sample and in Table 6.2 for Eastern Plains one. Unfortunately, the variables coded with CERAC dataset have a lot of missing data and for this reason many municipal observations get dropped from the final analyses. To understand the size and direction of a possible missing data-related bias, Tables 6.1 and 6.2 reports DV's descriptive statistics both for the entire population of municipal observations and for the subsample effectively used in the analyses (with no missing CERAC data). Not surprisingly, the observations with missing CERAC data regard few

Table 6.1: Descriptive statistics for variables in Models 1-3. Pacific Coast sample.

Variable	Observations	Mean	Standard deviation	Source
Arrests	1274	3.162	6.213	National Police
Repression	746	.181	.385	CERAC, v.5.2
Guerrilla_clashes	746	.177	.382	CERAC, v.5.2
Guerrilla_presence	746	.714	.452	CERAC, v.5.2
NBI	1274	.495	.235	DANE, population census 2005
ICOFIS	1169	.289	.141	DNP, 1999
Resguardo	1274	.187	.390	MAVDT, indigenous census 2005
Population (2005)	1274	43,984	164,398	DANE, population census 2005
Dependent Variable	1274	.51	1.95	Noche y Niebla
Dependent Variable (analysed sample)	746	.82	2.47	Noche y Niebla

Table 6.2: Descriptive statistics for variables in Models 1-3. Eastern Plains sample.

Variable	Observations	Mean	Standard deviation	Source
Arrests	441	11.18	22.65	National Police
Repression	283	.385	.486	CERAC, v.5.2
Guerrilla_clashes	283	.208	.407	CERAC, v.5.2
Guerrilla_presence	283	.717	.451	CERAC, v.5.2
NBI	441	.491	.248	DANE, population census 2005
ICOFIS	420	.247	.129	DNP, 1999
Resguardo	441	.159	.366	MAVDT, indigenous census 2005
Population (2005)	441	23,207	49,117	DANE, population census 2005
Dependent Variable	441	1.50	4.63	Noche y Niebla
Dependent Variable (analysed sample)	242	1.50	3.41	Noche y Niebla

almost complete municipal panels which experienced minimal levels of paramilitary violence throughout the entire analysed period (e.g. out of 528 Pacific Coast observations only 24 were different from zero). Their exclusion from the analyses should not bear on the results since the municipalities they represent probably fell beyond the interests of any organised violence actors, at least in 2003-2009 period.

Testing the association between paramilitaries violence, state's repressive actions, and insurgents' activities poses substantial methodological difficulties because of the endogeneity problem. In fact, any relationship between paramilitary violence and state's repression (or insurgents' competition) may work in both direction — with the latter being either the cause, or the consequence of the former. Carey (2006, 7) argues that the problem can be solved by using lagged values of all the endogenous explanatory variables. In my case it means that paramilitary violence at

time t can be predicted by state's repression (and insurgents' competition) at $t-1$ which excludes the possibility of reversed causality. The application of the procedure seems straightforward and I embrace it in all the above specified models. Finally, since my data is gathered both between panels and across time I cluster standard errors at the municipal level in order to correct for within-panel autocorrelations.

Results

Table 7.1 reports the results of all three models run on Pacific Coast sample. Since my theoretical interest lies in understanding the dynamics of paramilitary violence where paramilitary kind of extra-legal governance effectively existed, I discuss only the results for negative binomial part of the ZINB models.³¹ As expected, I find strong evidence that the intensity of paramilitary violence is driven by the escalation dynamics — once triggered the violence becomes self-perpetual. *Escalation* effect is highly significant and positive across all models, but concordant with the logic of attrition it subsides after surpassing certain violence threshold (negative coefficient of *Escalation Sq.*). This finding confirms the anecdotal evidence that within-paramilitary fighting explains the occasional escalation of post-DDR paramilitary violence (Vásques and Vargas 2011). Nevertheless, the escalation alone provides only partial explanation to the heterogeneity of violence dynamics in the region. By using Akaike information criterion (AIC) we can see that the inclusion of additional variables in the model significantly improve its estimation results. Respective AIC

³¹ The results of the inflation model are concordant with my expectations. The odds of being a “certain zero” observation are 3.2 to 3.9 (dependent on model's specification) for each municipality where no paramilitary presence could be confirmed at the time, and which experienced no prior paramilitary violence. Any increase (or discrete change) in the variables included in the inflation model (DV's cumulative score and paramilitary presence dummy) has a highly significant negative effect on these odds.

Table 7.1: The intensity of municipal paramilitary violence in Pacific Coast (2003-2012) Zero-inflated negative binomial (ZINB) models.

Dependent Variable: Paramilitary violence			
	Model 1-PC	Model 2-PC	Model 3-PC
Escalation	.113*** (.017)	.102*** (.016)	.094*** (.014)
Escalation Sq.	— .0009*** (.0002)	— .0008*** (.0001)	— .0008*** (.0001)
Arrests (log)	— .003 (.014)	— .007 (.014)	— .019 (.015)
Repression		.549** (.226)	.431** (.215)
Guerrilla_clashes		— .171 (.230)	— .070 (.205)
Guerrilla_presence		— .388 (.242)	— .444** (.216)
NBI			.351 (.553)
ICOFIS			— .727 (1.138)
Resguardo			.470* (.240)
Population (log)	— .101 (.108)	— .103 (.110)	.111 (.144)
Constant	.128 (1.082)	.765 (1.271)	— 1.549 (1.499)
N	644	492	477
Wald	203.22***	309.90***	344.76***
Degrees of freedom	9	12	15
AIC	1,109	960	932

Note: * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$. Coefficients reported only from the negative binomial part of the ZINB models. Robust standard errors clustered on municipalities (in parentheses). Year fixed effects not reported.

scores tell us that Model 1-PC is 4.4×10^{-33} times as probable as Model 2-PC to minimise the (estimated) information loss, and 3.7×10^{-39} times as probable as Model 3-PC.

What new do we learn about paramilitary violence dynamics from the latter two models?

Most importantly, they demonstrate that the intensity of paramilitary violence increases substantially in response to state's anti-paramilitary repression. Other things equal, Models 2-PC and 3-PC predict respectively 73 and 54 per cent more paramilitary violence per year for the municipalities with immediately prior repressive intervention compared to the ones with no repression at the same time. The magnitude of this effect seems big enough to attract policy-makers' attention. Model 3-PC shows also that indigenous collective presence constitutes an important factor which may account for a baseline differences in the experience of paramilitary violence attributable to municipal-specific characteristics. Other things equal, the municipalities with *resguardo* within their administrative borders are expected to experience on average 60 per cent more paramilitary violence per year compared to the municipalities with no *resguardo* at all. The explanatory power of this variable remains limited to between-municipal variation.

One of the most unexpected results of the analyses is the non-significance of *Guerrilla_clashes* variable. Yet, the fact of not finding a relationship should not be interpreted as equal to finding that there is no relationship. My models might not have captured the effect of guerrilla-paramilitary clashes on DV because they measure these confrontations on binary scale instead of reporting the exact counts (unfortunately not available at the municipal level in CERAC dataset). It need not be overlooked, though, that analogically measured *Repression* dummy still yields significant results in all models. I would argue with Granada, Restrepo and Vargas (2009, 28) that the long-run consequences of state's repression on paramilitary violence outweigh the ones provoked by paramilitaries' confrontations with insurgent groups. Surprisingly, controlling for guerrilla-paramilitary disputes and keeping all other variables at mean, I find that paramilitary violence at time t is on average 36 per cent lower in the municipalities with insurgents' presence at $t-1$ compared to the ones which registered no rebel activity at the same time (Model 3-PC). Although these results are mixed (in Model 2 the coefficient of *Guerrilla_presence* is not significant

at .10 level), they render some plausibility to the hypothesis that nowadays paramilitary groups more often collaborate with guerrillas in drug-trafficking activities (by dividing territories) than wage counterinsurgency war against their “support base” (see Thoumi 2009).

Let me examine the results for Eastern Plains sample now. Analogically to the previous section, Table 7.2 reports the coefficients for negative binomial part of the ZINB models.³² The results confirm the claim that paramilitary violence dynamics are driven by escalation and self-reinforcement logic. *Escalation* effect is highly significant and positive across all models, and — similarly as in Pacific Coast region — it subsides after surpassing certain violence threshold (negative coefficient of *Escalation Sq.*). Again the escalation alone cannot fully explain the heterogeneity of violence dynamics. Akaike information criterion (AIC) shows that the inclusion of additional variables in the model significantly improve its estimation results, although the improvement between Models 2-EP and 3-EP is not as evident as in Pacific Coast sample. It may suggest that the structural characteristics bear less on violence dynamics in Eastern Plains than in Pacific Coast.

Quite surprisingly, I do not find almost any evidence in support for the central proposition of the thesis which claims that paramilitary violence is a function of state’s anti-paramilitary repression. The repression variable in the present analyses is highly insignificant both in Models 2-EP and 3-EP, and its sign remains negative. The very weak support for repression hypothesis could be found in Model 3-EP which shows that — *ceteris paribus* — paramilitary violence in Eastern Plains increases with the intensification of paramilitaries’ arrests. Even though the model yields coefficient significant at the 5 per cent level, the magnitude of the effect seems rather small. The

³² The odds of being a “certain zero” observation in Eastern Plains sample are between 9.3 (Model 1) and 3.9 (Models 2 and 3) for each municipality where no paramilitary presence could be confirmed at the time, and which experienced no prior paramilitary violence. Equally as in Pacific Coast models, any increase (or discrete change) in the variables included in the inflation model (DV’s cumulative score and paramilitary presence dummy) has a highly significant negative effect on these odds.

Table 7.2: The intensity of municipal paramilitary violence in Eastern Plains (2003 Zero-inflated negative binomial (ZINB) models.

Dependent Variable: Paramilitary violence			
	Model 1-EP	Model 2-EP	Model 3-EP
Escalation	.073*** (.013)	.071*** (.012)	.074*** (.008)
Escalation Sq.	— .0006*** (.0001)	— .0006*** (.0001)	— .0006*** (.0001)
Arrests (log)	.020 (.023)	.033 (.027)	.036** (.018)
Repression		— .004 (.247)	— .009 (.231)
Guerrilla_clashes		— .193 (.156)	— .121 (.184)
Guerrilla_presence		.594** (.242)	.562 (.355)
NBI			.006** (.003)
ICOFIS			— .899 (.843)
Resguardo			— .699** (.315)
Population (log)	— .050 (.074)	— .032 (.080)	.121 (.140)
Constant	.111 (.707)	— .020 (.867)	— 1.984 (1.630)
N	242	193	186
Wald	737.21***	761.40***	1740.08***
Degrees of freedom	9	12	15
AIC	405	376	369

Note: * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$. Coefficients reported only from the negative binomial part of the ZINB models. Robust standard errors clustered on municipalities (in parentheses). Year fixed effects not reported.

scale of anti-paramilitary crackdown measured as paramilitaries' arrest rates can explain no more than 22 per cent difference in the intensity of paramilitary violence between municipalities located

in the departments with the highest paramilitaries' arrest rates and those with the lowest arrest rates.

What is more, Model 3-EP shows that indigenous collective presence accounts for baseline differences in the experience of paramilitary violence also in Eastern Plains region. Contrarily to Pacific Coast results, the indigenous collective presence has a negative effect on the amount of violence perpetrated by paramilitary groups in this region. Other things equal, the municipalities with resguardo within their administrative borders are expected to experience on average 50 per cent less paramilitary violence per year compared to the municipalities with no resguardo at all. It needs to be reminded that the variable accounts only for between-municipal variation, and do not explain within-municipal escalation/de-escalation observed across time. Among other structural controls I also find support for municipal poverty effect. Other things equal, Models 3-EP predicts 6 per cent more paramilitary violence per year for each 10 per cent point increase in the proportion of population living with their basic needs unsatisfied. The magnitude of this effect seems big enough to attract policy-makers' attention.

Eastern Plains analyses confirm the non-significance of *Guerrilla_clashes* variable. Still, while I control for guerrilla-paramilitary disputes and keep all other variables constant, I find that paramilitary violence at time t is on average 81 per cent higher in the municipalities with insurgents' presence at $t-1$ compared to the ones which registered no rebel activity at the same time (Model 2-EP). This is the exact opposite to what we have seen in Pacific Coast case. Does it mean that Eastern Plains paramilitaries may be less incline to cooperate with guerrillas than Pacific Coast ones? In Chapter Six I will demonstrate the plausibility of this *ad hoc* explanation showing that Eastern Plains paramilitaries developed much more complex forms of extra-legal governance in 2003-2009 than Pacific Coast groups. The wider range of paramilitary governance means the higher probability of reaching out to guerrillas' dominiums. Since extra-legal governance can be considered as a natural monopoly and as such remains indivisible, the higher complexity of paramilitary ordering in Eastern Plains may explain their more tense relations with regional

insurgent groups. Having said that, although the effect of *Guerrilla_presence* variable is very strong, it does not seem to be robust for changes in the model specifications. As we can see, Model 3-EP fails to reproduce the variable's significance even if the magnitude remains largely the same. Since negative binomial models are particularly sensitive to specification errors (see Oppenheim et al. 2013) I would rather be cautious with an interpretation of this effect.

Discussion

The analyses presented in Chapters Three and Four demonstrate that there exists a positive relationship between state's repression and paramilitary violence. Nevertheless, the relationship holds for Pacific Coast only, and not for Eastern Plains. How can one explain the macro differences between regions then? I have argued that initial anti-paramilitary repression was not correlated with groups criminal characteristics, but was driven by political motivations and targeted those groups which did not participate in paramilitaries' political outfit, AUC's union. In Eastern Plains the state targeted then Autodefensas Campesinas de Casanare (ACC), while in Pacific Coast it concentrated its repressive efforts on two paramilitary factions associated with Norte del Valle criminal organisation, Rastrojos and Machos. The initial crackdown was much stronger in Eastern Plains than in Pacific Coast, but waned off spectacularly just two years later along with a substantial decrease in paramilitary unilateral violence. In Pacific Coast the crackdown's intensity in 2012 doubled its initial volume since 2004 — a period in which paramilitary violence was all but diminished (see Figures 4 and 5). How come did law authorities bring such spectacular success in one region and not in the other? Why did anti-paramilitary repression aggravate security in one region and improved it in another?

I believe that the answer to these questions lies in the qualitative differences in repressive strategies applied in each region. Generally speaking, there are two types of state's repression of

extra-legal governance providers: partisan and nonpartisan ones (Morselli, Tanguay and Labalette 2008). Partisan repression means targeting either weaker, or stronger criminal group(s). In the former case law enforcement authorities aim at regulating criminal conflict, while in the latter case they try to recuperate criminal markets (p. 161). The most important characteristic of nonpartisan crackdown concerns its perpetual character related to the fact that nonpartisan repressive intervention — theoretically speaking — leaves no room for any extra-legal governance provider to monopolise destabilised private ordering markets which usually means an increase in extra-legal governance-related insecurity and, consequently, reinforced state's repression deployment (see Olson 1993).

With such distinction in mind one could hypothesise that the success of anti-paramilitary crackdown in Eastern Plains (measured in terms of observed security improvements) might have had something to do with the type of repressive strategy adopted there. Even though the intensity of partisan repression in Eastern Plains coincided with huge volumes of paramilitary violence at its heights in 2004, it did not contribute to the increase in insecurity in the long run because the situation seemed characterised by self-containment. There are good reasons to believe that the partisan crackdown adopted in Eastern Plains brought immediate security dividends simply because it succeeded in relatively quick elimination of targeted paramilitary group (ACC). Law enforcement authorities in Eastern Plains managed to eliminate the ACC in a relatively short period of time largely thanks to the active help of ACC's paramilitary enemies (González 2007, CIT 2009). Once the crackdown's primary goal had been accomplished the state left private ordering market in the region to become prey of its former paramilitary allies belonging to Bloque Centauros group, later renamed as ERPAC. In sum, I hypothesise that the qualitative differences between partisan and nonpartisan crackdown strategies determined the persistence of anti-paramilitary repressive actions in Pacific Coast and their self-containment in Eastern Plains. I believe that persistent nonpartisan crackdown in Pacific Coast pushed regional paramilitaries towards survival based on resource-

substitution and organisational adaptations favouring predatory tendencies (Hypotheses 1 and 2 from Chapter Two). Having said that, what I expect to find in the next two empirical chapters is the confirmation that *only* nonpartisan crackdown provokes organised crime violence. If empirically supported, such finding could reveal some of the most significant implications of the present study for organised crime theory in general and anti-organised crime policy in particular.

The final extension to the present discussion could introduce a question asking why the state adopted partisan crackdown in Eastern Plains and not in Pacific Coast given the advantages accruing to such strategy. Were Colombian public authorities unaware of possible consequences of partisan and nonpartisan strategies? Unfortunately, this issue cannot be fully addressed in this thesis and I believe that it may require an independent research effort. Few hypothetical explanations can be sketched though. Anticipating the evidence from the qualitative analyses presented in the next two chapters, one could argue that the decision of partisanship or nonpartisanship of state's anti-paramilitary crackdown did not lie in state's hands at all. It is more probable that the choice between partisan or nonpartisan repression stemmed from the criminal embeddedness of each region's "dissident" paramilitary groups. In Eastern Plains, the "dissidents" (ACC) were not the strongest paramilitary group in the region and remained in the conflict with the majority of powerful paramilitary factions operating in the area, especially those participating in AUC union. When law enforcement authorities decided to get rid of ACC, the group already seemed to be on the verge of elimination from the panorama of paramilitary governance in Eastern Plains because of their conflict with regional AUC's units (CIT 2009, 106; González 2007, 265).

In Pacific Coast, on the other hand, the dissidents (Rastrojos and Machos) turned out to be the strongest paramilitary groups in the region. Even though in violent conflict between themselves, they happened to be well embedded in the underworld of Pacific Coast and belonged to numerous criminal networks in the region. Hardly any AUC or ex-AUC's rearmed paramilitary faction wanted to join the state in the fight against them (at least until 2005-2006). Not finding any paramilitary

allies who would have helped law enforcement authorities to eliminate Rastrojos and Machos, the state did not achieve any tangible repression's success in the short run and struggled on with its crackdown observing regional insecurity skyrocketed. As a consequence of that, the state saw itself under heavy criticism from public opinion which attributed regional security crisis to state's historical tolerance of paramilitarism in the area (see Peceny 2006; HRW 2010; GMH 2013). Upon that pressure to terminate any non-belligerent relations with Pacific Coast paramilitaries the state abandoned the initial partisanship of their anti-Rastrojos and Machos crackdown and opted for an equally repressive treatment for all paramilitary groups in the region (HRW 2010, 83).

Summing it all up, the analyses presented in this chapter clarified many aspects of President Uribe's paramilitary demobilisation programme and partly explained its variable contributions to regional security improvements in post-demobilisation Colombia. Apart from solving a good share of my original puzzle, the discussion at the end of the chapter introduced some new hypotheses which need to be verified empirically before one can unambiguously evaluate the achievements of this partial conflict resolution scheme. In the subsequent two chapters of the thesis I am going to look more closely at the qualitative characteristics of distinct repressive strategies adopted in Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains. I will try to evaluate their respective consequences for extra-legal governance in each region using case studies methodology. Thanks to these qualitative analyses I will be able to test the hypothesised mechanisms which drive the relationship between paramilitary violence and state's repression. Quantitative evidence presented so far does not offer any straightforward answer to the question *why* repressive intervention shall intensify paramilitary violence. All of these yet unanswered questions and newly emerged hypotheses will be discussed at length in the last two chapters of the thesis.

Part III: Post-Demobilisation Paramilitary Governance. Case Studies

CHAPTER FIVE: The Logic of Paramilitary Violence (I). Qualitative Evidence from Pacific Coast

The regional differences in post-demobilisation public security records are widely attributed to the more or less successful de-paramilitarisation of organised violence which varied across Colombian regions (Howe et al. 2010; Restrepo and Muggah 2009). In Chapter Three I showed that such de-paramilitarisation should not be defined simply as a reduction of paramilitary population actively operating in particular regions. The number of paramilitaries engaged in extra-legal governance was reduced both in Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains, but in the former region no security improvement occurred given the fact that remaining paramilitaries became more violent than before. Quantitative analyses helped me to address this puzzling outcome revealing that paramilitary violence dynamics in 2003-2009 depended on the persistence of anti-paramilitary crackdown. The persistent repressive intervention contributed to the reduction of paramilitary population in many Colombian regions, but in some cases it also provoked behavioural changes among those paramilitaries who survived state's offensive and developed greater propensity to use violence.

At the end of Chapter Four I have speculated why the intense media coverage of publicly acclaimed decision to exclude two Pacific Coast paramilitary groups (Rastrojos and Machos) from negotiated peace process along with the deployment of heavy repressive apparatus in the region left Colombian state with virtually no alternative but to launch fully-fledged and determined war against

all forms of paramilitarism in Pacific Coast. The concentration and persistence of anti-paramilitary repressive action, however, cannot fully account for macro-level insecurity crisis observed in the region. I argue that there were particular outcomes of state's repression which permanently influenced the use of violence among Pacific Coast paramilitaries. To put it in another way, the analyses so far have not yet explained *why* state's crackdown sustained paramilitary violence in Pacific Coast in the long run (which, in turn, might have reinforced state's persistence in repressive action).

The quantitative analyses largely support the proposition of state's repression's positive effect on paramilitary violence in Pacific Coast, however they do not give much opportunity to understand which mechanisms drive this relationship. The present chapter attempts to fill this gap by examining two hypotheses laid out in the theoretical section. I argue that there were two specific outcomes of state's military repression which intensified paramilitary violence in Pacific Coast — so-called resource and risks shocks. There are reasons to believe that these shocks triggered resource substitution processes in which paramilitaries used violence in order to recuperate losses in other crucial resources, such as reputation, advertising and intelligence (Hypothesis 1). It is also possible that crackdown-related shocks provoked paramilitaries' organisational adaptations which reinforced their predatory tendencies and contributed to violence escalation (Hypothesis 2). In the subsequent chapter I will show that these repression's side-effects were largely absent in Eastern Plains which constitute very good candidate for the explanation of between-regional differences.

To address these hypotheses I am going to use the qualitative data collected during the research. It includes NN's descriptions of reported violence (e.g. testimonies from victims, observers, law enforcement authorities, or presumed perpetrators), official and NGOs' sources, Colombian press, and secondary academic literature. The qualitative nature of the collected data will allow me to account for the already discussed nuances of repression and paramilitary violence

association answering why the relationship holds for one region and not for another. While I find some evidence to support each of two hypotheses outlined above, it needs to be said that given the anecdotic nature of the data the following discussion cannot be fully conclusive. The majority of available qualitative data (NN publications apart) regards only DDR-failure areas (municipalities with increasing rates of paramilitary violence) telling close to nothing about DDR-success ones. As a result, the basic standards of social science comparisons (counterfactual logic) cannot be guaranteed. Rather than testing the hypotheses, the chapter establishes their plausibility and indicates the issues which should receive greater attention in the future research.

The chapter is organised in the following way. I begin with historical discussion of paramilitary presence in Pacific Coast, trying to establish the structure of paramilitarism in the region and to identify its key figures. I outline state's repressive intervention against Pacific Coast paramilitary groups showing the relative impartiality of the crackdown and the consequent fragmentation of paramilitary governance in the region. Then I address directly both hypotheses laid out in the theoretical section of Chapter Two. Firstly, I will show the evidence that paramilitaries in those parts of Pacific Coast most affected by state's repression tended to substitute their non-violent resources with coercion. Then I will portray the organisational changes and the governance strategy shifts observed within one of the main paramilitary organisations in the region explaining how the documented adaptations influenced the predatory tendencies of this particular and other paramilitary groups operating in the area. The following chapter (Chapter Six) will repeat the same analyses for Eastern Plains describing its regional paramilitary groups in order to show that none of the repression's negative externalities observed in Pacific Coast can be demonstrated in Eastern Plains. It will reinforce the soundness of the argument and confirm the plausibility of the hypotheses addressed in this part of the thesis even though all the conclusions from Chapters Five and Six should be interpreted with caution given the potential visibility bias intrinsic to qualitative data on violence (see Kalyvas 2006, 48).

The History of Paramilitary Governance in Pacific Coast

The first forms of post-Violencia paramilitary governance in Pacific Coast appeared as early as in 1970s (Verdad Abierta 2012a). The final consolidation of paramilitarism in the region dates back to late 1990s which coincided with the arrival of AUC *bloques* (battalions; Guzmán and Moreno 2007, 175). The first paramilitaries in Pacific Coast comprised two independent self-defence movements. The first one, “a group of peasants of indigenous origin from the township of Ortega”, emerged at end of 1970s in response to violence exercised by FARC against indigenous communities of the region (Verdad Abierta 2012a). At the end of 1990s Ortega paramilitaries fought against much stronger guerrilla group, ELN, which made them desperately looking for allies. They were claimed to have asked Bloque Calima of AUC, recently dispatched to Pacific Coast by Castaño brothers, to support their counterinsurgency efforts — a request embraced enthusiastically by AUC leadership. The Ortega group disarmed in 2003 and some of its components were incorporated into AUC paramilitary factions (Ibid.). The second oldest paramilitary group in Pacific Coast emerged in Sevilla municipality, Valle del Cauca department, in the end of 1980s. Analogically to Ortega paramilitaries, they waged counterinsurgency war against FARC and ELN which gained them financial support of 3 million Colombian pesos from AUC’s leadership who decided also to send AUC troops to help Sevilla paramilitaries militarily (Ibid.). In 1999 Sevilla *autodefensas* joined one of the Bloque Calima’s fronts and became immersed into AUC structures (Ibid.).

The actual arrival of regular AUC forces into the region dates back to the end of 1990s. There were three independent AUC bloques which operated in the region since then. The biggest group, Bloque Calima (BC), operated in Northern parts of Valle del Cauca, majority of Cauca and

central Nariño departments roughly since 1999 (Guzmán and Moreno 2007). Another one, Frente Heroes de Chocó of Bloque Pacífico, established paramilitary governance around 2001 in Southern Chocó, Western parts of Valle del Cauca and few areas in Cauca's territories. Some sources claim that Bloque Pacífico was actually a part of BC (see Verdad Abierta 2011). The third AUC bloque in Pacific Coast, Libertadores del Sur of Bloque Central Bolívar (BLS), operated in Nariño, Southern Cauca and above all in Putumayo departments. BLS were the oldest AUC's structure in the region since their presence in Putumayo dates back to 1997 (although at that time they denominated themselves as Frente Sur del Putumayo). Despite frequent territorially overlapping governance, there is no evidence of internal fight between those AUC structures. They were said to have collaborated without serious disruptions in cooperative relations (Guzmán and Moreno 2007).

Before I discuss the changes in paramilitary governance following the first applications of DDR programme in 2003 and the disruption of non-belligerent relations between Pacific Coast paramilitaries and public forces, I would like to present more detailed descriptions of Pacific Coast AUC's structures. It will help us to realise how profound were the changes in regional paramilitary organisations after 2003. Let us look more closely at the biggest AUC bloque in the region, Bloque Calima. The initial group counted 54 armed men who installed themselves in Cauca department from where they launched almost immediate conquest of Valle del Cauca territories (Verdad Abierta 2012b). In 2000 the structure established its centralised command with "39" as the head commander, later replaced by "HH". Bloque's exponential growth led to the creation of its five fronts:

Central (located in Tuluá and its neighbourhood), Pacific (located in Buenaventura and some coastal municipalities of Cauca), Cacique Calarcá (located in some municipalities of Valle del Cauca and Quindío), La Buitrera (located in Palmira and its neighbourhood) and Farallones (located in various municipalities in Cauca) (Verdad Abierta 2010).

Bloque Calima's fronts maintained strong presence both in rural and urban areas. The key area of their activities lied in Valle del Cauca department where they controlled three areas: Cordillera central, Buenaventura port and its connecting routes to big urban centres and the Southern regions of the department (Guzmán and Moreno 2007, 180-2). BC worked together in BLS in Southern Cauca but operated largely independently of Frente Heroes de Chocó which occupied some territories contingent to Bloque Calima's strongholds in Northern Valle del Cauca (Verdad Abierta 2013).

The motivations of AUC's arrival into Pacific Coast are not clear. Carlos Castaño, the leader of AUC at the time of paramilitary conquest of Pacific Coast, argued that the arrival of AUC to the region followed the strengthening of guerrilla groups which progressively dominated this part of the country (Aranguren 2001). Having said that, there is no doubt that there existed drug-trafficking interests hidden behind AUC's expansion. At the end of 1990s the region constituted the second biggest centre of coca cultivation(second only to Eastern Plains; see UNODC 2011). What is more, after the fall of Pablo Escobar's Medellín Cartel (mid-1990s), Pacific Coast became the hub of the most sophisticated Colombian drug-trafficking organisations (Peceny 2006, 101-10). In fact, the history of paramilitarism in general and Pacific Coast in particular is strictly related to the history of Colombian drug-trafficking (Medina Gallego 1990). Given that, guerillas' strengthening in Pacific Coast might have brought AUC's attention because it posed serious threats to paramilitaries' drug monopolies in the region. In fact, there were rumours that Pacific Coast drug-traffickers themselves asked Carlos Castaño for help when their drug businesses became seriously threatened by guerrillas' advances:

One hypothesis which sets investigation about AUC's arrival in Valle del Cauca is that

drug-traffickers gave birth to AUC's entry [in the department] and for that reason AUC did not confront them as potential competitors in the territory (Verdad Abierta 2011b).

Norte del Valle Cartel, and drug-trafficker Diego Montoya in particular, financed the arrival of paramilitaries [in Valle del Cauca] in order to launch attack against guerrillas, especially in the central zone. Nonetheless, the cartel did not permit paramilitaries to enter into Northern parts of the department where armed groups at their service maintained already sufficient territorial control and where guerrillas' presence was not notorious (Guzmán and Moreno 2007, 215; see also Verdad Abierta 2011c).

AUC's entrance into Pacific Coast markets was marked more by co-opting some of the established extra-legal governance operators in the region, than by taking over their businesses.³³ It was said, for example, that in Northern parts of Valle del Cauca department AUC's paramilitaries decided to share territorial control with Norte del Valle Cartel's armed forces and then rigidly respected the negotiated division of influence in order to avoid potentially conflicting situations (Guzmán and Moreno 2007). Some sources argued that similar regional alliances reached beyond mere extra-legal governance market-sharing, reporting that Norte del Valle Cartel effectively bought Bloque Calima's protection (Verdad Abierta 2011b). The significance of these rumours should not

³³ Yet, it was not always all that easy for newly arrived paramilitaries to cooperate with smaller criminal units operating in the region. The gangs which ran extortion racket and controlled few illicit markets appeared unwilling to let paramilitaries into their territories, and a mixture of violence and negotiations were necessary to establish peaceful relations between them and AUC groups.

The confrontation between gangs and "paras" was of such magnitude that according to some number of sources quoted by Fiscalía [Prosecutor's Office] between January and September 2001 168 persons died in a violent manner [due to that fighting]. In the wake of these events paramilitaries organised two meetings with young gangsters. In the first meeting, around 120 gang members participated, along with their families and other people from the municipality (Verdad Abierta 2012b).

be over-interpreted though. In reality most drug-traffickers and paramilitaries were almost indistinguishable group of people in Pacific Coast. We know, for instance, that Bloque Calima most probably sold some of its fronts as franchises to key drug-trafficking leaders (VR 2006, 16). Other sources claimed that bloque's entire structure depended on "Don Berna", at the time the leader of Medellín Cartel (Verdad Abierta 2013). Bloque Pacífico, on the other hand, was allegedly bought by another powerful drug-trafficker of the region, Diego Montoya (Ibid.). Moreover, Carlos Jiménez alias "Macaco", the commander of Bloque Central Bolívar and its front operating in Pacific Coast (BLS), became paramilitary leader only when he purchased Frente Sur del Putumayo from Rafa Putumayo thanks to his considerable drug-trafficking revenues (Verdad Abierta 2010b). Before the demobilisation of his entire bloque "Macaco" allegedly franchised some of its military units to Rastrojos group which could not participate in the peace process (Garzón 2008, 41). In sum, Pacific Coast paramilitarism and regional drug-trafficking remain enormously intertwined phenomena. Paramilitary leaders of the region used to sell their paramilitary units to resourceful drug-traffickers when they needed to dedicate themselves to those forms of drug-trafficking which did not require the maintenance of military structure (e.g. international commercialisation, Camacho and López 2008), only to buy back the franchised armed structures later on when those again turned out vital for the protection of their businesses. Paramilitary and drug-trafficking nexuses started to dissolve only in the eve of the first waves of Uribe's demobilisation programme when some of the most recognisable drug-traffickers could not present themselves as the leaders of their respective paramilitary groups and had to cede the leadership to less notorious paramilitary commanders (Garzón 2005, 3-4).

In the end all AUC bloques operating in Pacific Coast demobilised voluntarily under Uribe's peace process. The first to demobilise were four fronts of Bloque Calima. On 18 December 2004 564 BC soldiers put down arms and entered DDR processes (Garzón 2005). "HH" presented himself as the commander at the demobilisation ceremony. Bloque Libertadores del Sur

demobilised on 30 July 2005. According to various sources between 677 to 689 paramilitary soldiers disarmed on that occasion led by “Macaco” (HRW 2010; Garzón 2005; GN 2005). The last Pacific Coast bloque to enter DDR scheme was Frente Heroes del Chocó commanded of Sebastian Guevara and on 23 August 2005 its 150 soldiers laid down arms (Verdad Abierta 2013). Many sources documented the numerous irregularities of these demobilisation processes. According to many analysts, Colombian state tried to hide the fact that the real leader of Bloque Pacífico, “Gordolino”, was one of the most powerful drug-traffickers of that time, largely famous for its long delinquent career. To avoid the scandal, the state allegedly allowed Bloque Pacífico to present some less controversial figure as their head commander (Garzón 2005). Other irregularities cast more doubts about the actual achievements of the process.

[S]everal sources reported to Human Rights Watch that the Bloque Libertadores del Sur engaged in fraud during the demobilizations, inflating their ranks so as to allow portions of the paramilitary networks to remain intact. Local authorities said that for two or three months before the demobilization, paramilitaries were recruiting young men to participate in the ceremonies. Authorities heard reports from citizens who said they saw buses full of young men arriving in the area to have their hair cut and put on uniforms like the paramilitaries. “Not all the paramilitaries demobilized, and not all those who demobilized were paramilitaries,” said one local official. The same official described how, a few weeks before the demobilizations, he ran into a group of young men in a rural area who told him that they had received an offer to enter the process so they could receive the government stipend available to demobilized paramilitaries (the minimum wage for 18 months) (HRW 2010, 78).

As I have already said before, two significant paramilitary groups could not participate in the peace process because of the state’s refusal. These included Autodefensas Unidas del Valle, also

called Machos, and Rondas Campesinas Populares or Rastrojos. Duncan (2005) argues that the reasons behind DDR refusal in relation to these groups were linked to their historical association with big drug-trafficking organisations of the region, especially Cali Cartel and their direct descendants, Norte del Valle Cartel. Various authors stressed the paradox of such exclusion (Duncan 2005, Thoumi 2009). Almost every single front demobilised under AUC's umbrella had profound connections with Colombian drug-trafficking which could hardly be excused with a necessity created by war waging costs. In fact, in the latter parts of the chapter I am going to show that the refusal to demobilise these two leading paramilitary groups led to dramatic consequences for Pacific Coast security.

To begin with, the two DDR-excluded groups gave birth to the neo-paramilitary phenomena in Pacific Coast which from its very origins maintained war-like relations with law enforcement authorities in the region. Since AUC's dissolution Rastrojos and Machos almost immediately started to pursue the violent conquest of the Valle del Cauca's underworld. What made it especially violent was the fact that the two groups remained in bloody dispute between themselves since 2003 when Machos allegedly appropriated coca cargo that belonged to one of deceased Rastrojos members (VR 2006, 35). Until AUC's demobilisation AUC blocques partly succeeded in mediating between conflicted parties, managed to reduce tensions and limited the belligerent actions between the groups. After that Rastrojos and Machos fighting intensified. Guzmán and Moreno (2007, 216-7) claim that in 2003-2006 Rastrojos were more militarised than Machos and maintained classic army-like organisation, relatively centralised command and clearly defined structure. Machos, on the other hand, were composed of separate bands loosely allied to each other which, nevertheless, used the same organisation's name and shared the same leader, Diego Montoya. Initially Rastrojos' ranks did not surpass 100 individuals, against approximately 120 Machos's soldiers. The dispute between these groups led to hundreds of deaths before demobilised paramilitary leader of BLS, "Macaco", successfully mediated between the warring parties suggesting Rastrojos to move out of Valle del

Cauca and conquer some of the territories dominated previously by his bloque (Verdad Abierta 2009). In the end, Rastrojos embraced “Macaco’s” suggestions and decided to expand to Chocó, Cauca and Nariño, where AUC’s demobilisation left enormous void at private ordering markets — which no paramilitary faction wanted to be filled by guerrillas’ governance. Machos, on the other hand, maintained control over large swaths of Valle del Cauca department with the plan to dominate this historical cradle of Pacific Coast paramilitarism (Prieto 2013). Rastrojos’ conquest soon proved very successful since they managed to establish a strong presence in many sub-regions with scarce state’s presence and huge trafficking opportunities.³⁴ Their expansion reached as far as to Putumayo territory (Ibid.). Their exponential growth allowed them to recuperate Valle del Cauca in few years and defeat Machos who at the end of the day accepted an incorporation into Rastrojos’ ranks.

State’s Repression and Paramilitary Violence in Pacific Coast

The already famous refusal to demobilise two paramilitary groups in Pacific Coast (Rastrojos and Machos) set the precedent in the entire demobilisation process. Some paramilitary factions in other parts of the country turned down an offer of DDR participation but none of those

³⁴ Having said that, it should not be overlooked that Rastrojos’ expansion had had to overcome some serious obstacles related to neoparamilitary competition. In Nariño they had to face strong competition from Nueva Generación and their secessionist faction sometimes referred to as Águilas Negras (HRW 2010, 76-92). The Rastrojos’ final success over Nueva Generación was facilitated by the fact that the latter group developed an old-style paramilitary organisation which made them especially vulnerable to law enforcement authorities’ action, finally launched against the group in 2008 (HRW 2010, 83). In 2012 Rastrojos continued to fight with some paramilitary competitors in Nariño, Cauca, Valle and Chocó, but by the time they had managed to establish themselves as by far the biggest extra-legal governance provider in Pacific Coast (guerrillas excluded). At that time Urabeños were their main competitor, with fighting between two organisations concentrated in Chocó and Valle del Cauca department. In 2011 Rastrojos and Urabeños “signed a peace treaty” which, nevertheless, was nullified one year later as a result of Rastrojos’ internal divisions (ISC 2014, INDEPAZ 2013).

groups which expressed their will to disarm was rejected such opportunity except Rastrojos and Machos. The refusal to demobilise the latter two groups equaled the declaration of “war” against them. Their pacification plan was designed as D6 operation (Arias Ortiz 2012). From its very beginning, the strategy seemed rather poorly trimmed to the specific Pacific Coast paramilitary environment. More particularly, it appeared inadequate in combating the groups such as Rastrojos and Machos whose support base comprised an extended network of protégées, paramilitary collaborators, local elite clients, drug-trafficking partners and paid informants (VR 2006, Duncan 2005, Garzón 2008). Rastrojos and Machos’ paramilitary success did not bear so much on their military capacities as in the insurgents’ case³⁵, and therefore many of D6 repressive instruments turned out simply out of place in Pacific Coast (Granada, Restrepo and Vargas 2009; Granada, Restrepo and Tobón 2009).

D6 Operation appears to be a good offensive plan against guerrillas, but hardly adequate to fight against Bacrim³⁶ given their local networks (political and institutional) preserved since paramilitary era. Moreover, D6 implies the collaboration of civil society [...] without taking into account fear and mistrust which persons feel towards public institutions (Arias Ortiz 2009, 7).

³⁵ We should remember that the Colombian guerrillas are the ones which Weinstein (2007) would call “economically endowed” armed groups. What distinguishes such groups is the fact that they do not build their political success from the grass-root level. Quite contrarily, the guerrillas use violence and intimidation instead of adopting consensual social relations with civilians who live in the areas of their influence. Their support base, thus, is very limited and their perception among the larger population remains highly negative at least since late 1990s (see Gutiérrez 2008; Gutiérrez and Baron 2006; Kline 2007).

³⁶ This is how public authorities refer to post-demobilisation paramilitary groups.

Even though state's anti-paramilitary repression in Pacific Coast was poorly designed to combat socially and criminally embedded paramilitaries, it still made their lives harder (Garzón 2008). First of all, it forced them to abandon some of their "political" functions (a point to be developed later in this chapter). Secondly, downtrodden groups needed to adapt themselves to the new hostile environment, to become less visible, and to resign from elaborate forms of territorial control (discussed in depth later). Not every paramilitary group followed such adaptations. One of the exceptions was Nueva Generación (NG), which felt relatively safe at the outset of state's anti-paramilitary crackdown, and consequently developed an organisation more similar to the traditional paramilitary model (Granada, Restrepo and Tobón 2009, 475). That error costed them almost complete annihilation when law enforcement authorities finally decided to repress them.

Various sources told Human Rights Watch that in 2006 and 2007, sectors of the Colombian army, particularly the Boyacá Battalion (the same battalion that allegedly helped the BLS enter the state in 2002) appeared to be tolerating NG. But in 2008 the 19th Mobile Brigade of the army entered the region and began to confront NG, and police officers killed Nene. According to the Nariño Secretary of Government, Fabio Trujillo, the regional government had called on public security forces to carry out actions against NG, especially after a massacre in Leiva in late 2007. NG is reported to have been significantly weakened, though in mid-2009 sources living in the region said that NG remained active in the mountains, with a new commander known as "El Tigre" and with about 200 men operating between the municipalities of Cumbitara and Policarpa (HRW 2010, 83).

The anti-paramilitary repression in Pacific Coast began in 2003-2004 and changed all the relations between the state and paramilitary extra-legal governance providers (even the rearmed DDR-participant units which elsewhere in the country enjoyed a relative tolerance on the part of

law enforcement authorities). Before that Colombian armed forces were famous for favouring regional paramilitaries' interests and seemed rather non-belligerent towards Pacific Coast drug-traffickers. "According to one demobilized BLS commander, the BLS first entered Nariño with the support of the Boyacá Battalion of the army in 2002, and the BLS conducted joint operations with the battalion" (HRW 2010, 78). There is evidence that the state tolerated paramilitaries and drug-traffickers' armies for the sake of terminating ever more threatening expansion of FARC or ELN in the region (Guzmán and Moreno 2007). At the same time, the army and local police's support for paramilitary coalition in Pacific Coast helped them to dominate the regional extra-legal governance markets and to minimise the violent competition among paramilitaries who had not adhered to AUC union and its allied forces. Even before AUC's arrival in Pacific Coast law enforcement authorities supported Cali Cartel in order to pacify the regional underworld and maintain relative peace in the region (see Peceny 2006). Yet, such a strategy ended with the demobilisation of the AUC's Pacific Coast bloques and state's decision to repress their close allies in the region (Rastrojos and Machos).

The crackdown resulted in an inevitable fragmentation of paramilitary governance in Pacific Coast with most of the remaining groups forced to divide and become more discreet for the sake of their immediate survival (Garzón 2008, Ch. 1). Why should it provoke violence escalation among paramilitaries of the region? I will try to respond to this question testing two hypothesis formulated at the begining of Chapter Two. They ask about the relationship between extra-legal governance provider's violence and law enforcement repression against him. The first hypothesis suggests that anti-paramilitary repression in Pacific Coast and its consequent resource shocks (destruction of paramilitary intelligence networks, supression of their advertising channels, along with constant undermining of their reputation and credibility as extra-legal governance providers) might have triggered resource substitution processes in which paramilitaries used violence in order to recuperate losses in some crucial resources, such as reputation, advertising and intelligence. The second hypothesis, on the other hand, indicates that crackdown-related fragmentation of the

surviving paramilitary groups in Pacific Coast could have provoked their organisational adaptations which reinforced their predatory tendencies and contributed to generalised violence escalation. I am going to address each of these hypotheses in turn.

Hypothesis 1: Resource Substitution

Human Rights Watch's ethnographic work shows that in some parts of Pacific Coast post-DDR paramilitary groups are no longer recognisable locally (HRW 2010, 88). It stands in sheer contrast to the reputation paramilitaries enjoyed in the region just few years before (see Guzmán and Moreno 2007). Undoubtedly, the lack of recognition affects their advertising capacities and minimises social acceptance for their extra-legal governance. Most paramilitaries in Pacific Coast transit between municipalities on the continuous basis, and at the arrival in a new place, they have to organise community meetings where they introduce themselves to local residents and "advertise" own services. "They [Rastrojos]'re in Santa Cruz a couple of days at a time and then leave. They come in and tax the businessmen. It appears that they sometimes confront guerrillas and other times the Black Eagles [Águilas Negras] and New Generation [Nueva Generación]. They identify themselves as Rastrojos... They've done two meetings with the community in Santa Cruz and say that they're Rastrojos. They set schedules..." (HRW 2010, 85). Given the lack of recognition paramilitary newcomers usually resort to violence as a way of advertising. It allows them to demonstrate own "usefulness" and to warn those who may be unwilling to accept their services. "[W]e kill useless ones, thieves, violators, drunkards, all of this, you understand? This is a part of the organisation. But we do this for example when we reach a neighbourhood or a town of many thieves, marihuana addicts..." (ex-paramilitary soldier in Medina Arbeláez 2009, 115).

The recognition problem is linked the fact that very few paramilitaries in the region maintain contingent territorial control. The biggest groups may control some distant mountainous regions but

their prevalent disposition is mobility (see VR 2006, 46). Most paramilitaries in Pacific Coast avoid areas with good institutional coverage, and the majority of their actions “takes place among the populations where one can arrive only via rivers or roads in terrible condition” (Verdad Abierta 2011d). In the areas of better institutional coverage they do not wear uniforms, stay dispersed and live among civilians occupying their homes (HRW 2010, 75, 83; DT 2011, 50). Apart from advertising difficulties, discontinuous territorial presence affects paramilitaries’ intelligence capacities. They cannot, for instance, avoid free-riding problem:

There was a gasoline trader from Ecuador who had to pay “protection money” to the group in order to realise his travels via Mira river, at that time the territory under group’s [Rastrojos] domination. But during one of those travels they asked him for more than had been agreed on and he disobeyed and since then used another route to transport his products (NN, Nariño, 15.01.2009).

For this reason, even the most resourceful groups prefer to operate in very restricted areas such as poor neighbourhoods in port towns and other hubs of drug-trafficking activities (ISC 2014). In these localities they try to control civilian movements and often prohibit walking between neighbouring parts of the towns (NN, Nariño, 24.03.2012). If such rule gets violated, paramilitaries do not hesitate to victimise the transgressors (NN, Nariño, 14.03.2012). They resort to pre-emptive violence since they lack more efficient tools to discriminate between collaborative and defective behaviour of their “protégées” (people living in their control zones). A person who visits neighbouring part of the town may in fact be rivals’ informer, but more probably his movements have nothing to do with criminal activities. If the latter is true, paramilitaries incur unnecessary

costs by punishing him. Inefficiencies apart, violence remains a handy substitute for deficient intelligence capacities and continues to be performed in this function in some parts of the region.

Reputation for violence is the third crackdown-affected resource which many Pacific Coast paramilitaries substitute with actual coercion. Consider a following situation: a paramilitary rank-and-file recently released from prison wants to take revenge for his sentence on a female lawyer threatening her on the bus. The attacked woman disdains his threats replying: “*Señor*, I am sick, let me go. I can’t talk, put down these things [gun]”. The soldier responds shouting that he is “*Urabeño*” [member of paramilitary group in Pacific Coast], but the woman seems not to care and alights from the bus where originally planned (NN, Cauca, 20.12.2012). In this case paramilitary membership did not suffice to effectively intimidate the woman. She decided to “test” the credibility of her victimiser’s threats because she had a strong suspicion of having to do with a fake. This situation was not an isolate case when paramilitaries’ seriousness was put to “test” in Pacific Coast recently. In Chocó paramilitaries lamented that people were refusing them any help, pain killers included (NN, Chocó, 04.05.2004). Elsewhere a taxi driver declined to give a lift to a small group of paramilitary soldiers (NN, Nariño, 30.01.2009). Most of those situations ended with bloodshed and the available evidence lends support to the hypothesis that paramilitaries reacted in this way to reaffirm their reputation for violence.

For Pacific Coast paramilitaries, individual defections are less of the problem than the collective ones. Collective defections cancel the negative externalities of extra-legal governance (Gambetta 1992) and may seriously damage organised crime activities. Qualitative reading of NN data confirms that paramilitaries fear any forms of collectivity which they cannot control (“we can’t let them organise *themselves* [author’s highlighting]”; NN, Nariño, 15.02.2010). Since 2006 Pacific Coast experienced unprecedented quantity of collective resistance against paramilitary rule. NN reports an event when a death of a villager triggered spontaneous outrage of local community, which ended up with eight paramilitary killers lynched to death and the flight of remaining group

members (NN, Nariño, 09.12.2012). It was not the only occasion when the entire village defected against Pacific Coast paramilitaries:

The three people they killed were good neighbours... The [killers] were paras [Rastrojos]. They had entered the town before and the town had a meeting telling them they couldn't enter or stay there. The paras took weapons from people in town and went around as civilians. The town is strong and when they heard shots they went to look for paras but by then the paras had left... (HRW 2010, 90)

In yet another place, NN reports the emergence of so-called “unidentified” groups of local youth determined to fight paramilitaries on their own. An arrest of two members of such a group in Guapi municipality triggered a “generalised strike” of town’s population who demanded their immediate release (NN, Cauca, 03.02.2012). Along with various forms of community defections Pacific Coast saw significant anti-paramilitary resistance led by indigenous groups (NN, Cauca, 13.01.2007, 28.09.2008). The indigenous were not the only ones to collectively defy paramilitaries in Pacific Coast: student organisations (NN, Valle del Cauca, 21.04.2008), associations for displaced people (NN, Cauca, 27.01.2008), agriculture workers unions (NN, Nariño, 04.10.2006) followed the pattern. NN data confirms that all quoted instances of collective defections were related to paramilitaries’ reputation loss. Not surprisingly, paramilitary groups punished them with extreme severity in order to reaffirm their local authority.

Defections plague does not mean that populations of Pacific Coast no longer need extra-legal governance. I believe that, more plausibly, it reflects the generalised dissatisfaction with *particular* extra-legal governance providers who operate in the region. Vargas (2004) demonstrates that in the late 1990s paramilitary groups triumphed over guerrillas as extra-legal governance providers in Putumayo because they were more flexible there — allowing demand and supply to fix

the price of illicit commodities, and permitting local intermediaries to operate independently in the underworld as long as they paid tributes to paramilitary leaders. Guzmán and Moreno (2007, 190) find that guerrillas' retreat to Pacific Coast extra-legal governance market coincides precisely with the decline in those competitive advantages on the part of paramilitaries. Having said that, Nussio confirms the continuous demand for private security services recalling his conversation with one demobilised paramilitary soldier: "[he] testimonies that community members perceive his as someone who provides private security services [...] as someone who can help in case of some inconveniences, some problems" (Nussio 2009, 227). Despite guerrillas retreat, paramilitaries are still the dominant actors at private ordering market in Pacific Coast, but the fierce competition among their fragmented factions prevents the monopolisation and pacification of the market (HRW 2010, 76-91; MAPP 2009; CNRR 2007, 45). For this reason, paramilitary violence often serves also as an instrument of discrediting competitors. Competing groups not only kill each others, but also target non-criminal individuals who presumably agreed on rival's protection. Groups kill or harm their rivals' protégées in order to make them realise the mistake of purchasing inefficient protection and to convince the survived one to switch sides (NN, Cauca, 13.05.2001; see also Pérez 2011, 124). In sum, violence serves both the purpose of one's reputation building, and rival's reputation damaging.

Yet another facet of paramilitaries' reputation loss is the generalised disbelief in the quality of their services and in the credibility of their commitments. Few testimonies reveal these concerns: "They use many young people to deliver the drugs and receive money and when they return they kill them so they don't have to pay" (HRW 2010, 87). "They threaten the girls and propose that they go as prostitutes for them. In Madrigal [Nariño], three girls went, and they killed one of them... The other two have disappeared..." (HRW 2010, 84). Even in drug industry, Pacific Coast paramilitaries' are not perceived as credible guarantors. They charge for protection of coca cultivations, which they cannot deliver in face of US-sponsored anti-drugs campaigns (see Thoumi

2013). In case of cultivations' damage caused by aerial eradication, paramilitaries simply leave the area and invest in coca cultivations elsewhere (see Sánchez, Vargas and Vásques 2011).

Hypothesis 2: Predatory Turn

Garzón (2008) argues that state's crackdown provokes organisational adaptations within those paramilitary groups which manage to survive it. I will illustrate this process with an example of Rastrojos, a paramilitary group which, according to non-governmental sources, at least towards the end of analysed period operated in the majority of Pacific Coast municipalities most regularly affected by state's repressive interventions.³⁷ Rastrojos took their name from the armed wing of Norte del Valle Cartel transformed into paramilitary organisation (called Rondas Campesinas) in the early twenty first century. After 2005 the group hired a significant portion of demobilised ex-AUC's members who took control of its command structure (VR 2006, 27-8). Since the beginning of state's anti-paramilitary crackdown, Rastrojos experienced numerous changes in their hierarchies as a result of law enforcement activities including imprisonment and extraditions of group's key leaders (e.g. Juan Carlos Calle alias "Armando" and Diego Pérez Henao alias "Rastrojo"; see Verdad Abierta 2012c; ISC 2014). The repetitiveness of the situation and the obvious setbacks of organisational centralisation led Rastrojos to introduce more horizontality to their organisation and rely more heavily on its mid-level commanders (ISC 2014). Once the changes were put in practice, Rastrojos' fragmented factions started to operate semi-independently with minimum cooperation among themselves. Not surprisingly, it created intraorganisational conflict and continuous dilemma of decentralised predation. "Following a disarticulation of the command nucleus — with imprisonment or death of most important leaders — [Rastrojos'] structures [...] entered into

³⁷ To establish this fact I consulted yearly reports of municipal paramilitary presence (disaggregated by group) at: <http://ediciones.indepaz.org.co/>. Unfortunately they are available only since 2008.

internal competition, falling in disputes about the markets, territorial domination, trafficking corridors, and the leadership of the remaining structures” (VR 2006, 17).

The situation of persistent repression and intraorganisational instability affected Rastrojos’ relations with local populations subject to their extra-legal governance. We know that the crackdown dealt a serious blow to their revenues: “Testimonies indicate that they had gone for more than four months without pay” (Garzón 2008, 41). These financial problems pushed Rastrojos to look for alternative revenue sources which included the intensified recurrence to predatory and extortive practices. While it seems clear that group’s members recognised the new risks of paramilitary job, it should not surprise that they become more concerned about immediate rather than future rewards (VR 2006, 19). In practice it meant that Rastrojos started to impose their governance in the extortive manner targeting easy-to-monitor individuals rather than those who might effectively need their services. For example, “[t]hey ask for the *vacuna* (tax) and if there is cattle or a chicken, they take it. [...] It’s very high ... in a very poor area” (HRW 2010, 87). What Rastrojos demand most frequently today are the payments in cheap electronic devices (television, radio, mobile phone), basic alimentary products (flour, bread, milk, vegetables) or medicine (see NN, Cauca, 10.02.2007, 27.11.2010; Chocó, 04.05.2004). Those demands are predatory because they cannot be exchanged with real services, such as the regulation of local competition or contracts enforcement, and usually involve substantial doses of coercion. One paramilitary soldier tried to justify his predatory actions in the following manner: “the things are hard here, and if one doesn’t defend himself, he dies” (NN, Cauca, 20.12.2012). I will demonstrate the evidence in support for this argument at length in the rest of the present chapter presenting the case study of Pacific Coast biggest paramilitary group, Rastrojos, and its organisational adaptations since the end of state-paramilitary non-belligerent relations in the region in 2003.

Rastrojos' Case Study

In the final year of my study, 2012, Rastrojos were the largest paramilitary group in the country operating in the record number of *all* Colombian departments (INDEPAZ 2013). At that time Rastrojos' influence stretched over Colombian borders reaching Venezuelan and Ecuadorian territories (Verdad Abierta 2012c, ISC 2014). The actual number of the groups members in its climax years, 2010-12 are not precisely known. Various sources quote different numbers and the disparity between those estimates is quite large and therefore the number of Rastrojos' members in 2012 may fall anywhere between 1200 and 1600 individuals (INDEPAZ 2013, ISC 2014). At the time of the writing Rastrojos may no longer be the largest operating paramilitary group in Colombia. There are rumours that they became surpassed by Urabeños (ISC 2014). Law enforcement authorities' sources report that the number of Rastrojos members fell approximately by 20 per cent in the wake of the escalation of intraparamilitary conflict with Urabeños and the intensification of state's crackdown against the groups' principal bosses in 2012 (Ibid.).

The name of the group, Rastrojos, comes from the Spanish word which means "the cut stalks of cereal plants left sticking out of the ground after the grain is harvested" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2009). In a figurative way, "rastros" means "waste", "remains" or "leftovers". Such a name probably refers to group's origins. Rastrojos descend from Cali Cartel, which was dismantled by Colombian law enforcement authorities in the mid-1990s. After the cartel's defeat, some of its survived members reorganised themselves within Norte del Valle Cartel (NVC; Garzón 2008). At that time, Rastrojos along with Machos became NVC's main paramilitary associates and served as the armed wings for the organisation. The dissolution of NVC at the beginning of twenty first century left Rastrojos and Machos as fully independent paramilitary factions who managed to take over the bulk of the cartel's drug-trafficking. In early 2000s Rastrojos renamed themselves as Rondas Campesinas and enlarged the already established collaboration with AUC paramilitaries, more particularly with Bloque Calima and Bloque Libertadores del Sur. As I have already

mentioned before, in 2004 the group (along with Machos) was excluded from peace process and consequently returned to its old name (Garzón 2005). Since then, Rastrojos started their organisational growth from advantaged position of being the biggest paramilitary “leftover” in the entire country after the conclusion of demobilisation process. Due to that fact they were privileged to recruit all sorts of petty delinquents, drug-traffickers, ex-AUC demobilised paramilitaries disappointed with reintegration programs, and all those who did not participate in DDR scheme. In 2005 Rastrojos might have appeared as the most serious employer in Pacific Coast for all those individuals looking for an opportunity to (re)enter into organised delinquency.

Until 2010 Rastrojos became the biggest neo-paramilitary organisation (*banda criminal*) in the entire country. The group's underworld success followed totally different dynamics from standard paramilitary expansion model observed in case of AUC in the late 1990s. Rastrojos' internal growth and territorial conquest were based on new type of extra-legal governance, facilitated by very different organisational solutions. In fact, we can observe fundamental changes in the group's internal organisation which occurred somewhere between 2003 and 2006. The adaptations happened gradually and therefore they cannot be dated with precision. However, I will do my best to link these changes to state's intensified repressive actions against the group in the wake of Rastrojos' exclusion from paramilitary peace process. The following analyses will support the argument of the intensification of predatory violence perpetrated by the group as a result of crackdown-related organisational adaptations observed within Rastrojos' organisation since 2003.

Organisational Model

To begin with, I will delineate organisational model adopted by Rastrojos since 2003. More specifically, I will show organisational horizontality as one of the crucial characteristics in Rastrojos' hierarchies and describe the peculiarity of their division of labour. I would argue that

many of the described elements are typical for organised crime groups dedicated to “the control of trafficking” (see Zhang and Chin 2003; Sciarrone 2014) insofar as they create rather limited and commodity-oriented type of governance. The present section focuses exclusively on group’s organisational features which, as I argue at the end of the section, are the by-product of governance strategy adopted by the group in response to state’s crackdown. To put it in another way, I will claim that given group’s almost exclusive focus on drug industry any other organisational model would be impractical for Rastrojos’ criminal enterprise.

Rastrojos’ membership follows very specific recruitment strategy. The hardcore of Rastrojos in post-demobilisation period (2007-2012) was composed of their long-term associates and ex-members of other organised violence groups (especially ex-paramilitaries and drug-traffickers). The long-term Rastrojos associates comprised retired or dismissed police officers, the most illustrative example of whom was the group’s most important leader (until his death in 2008), Wilmer Varela “Jabón”. Ex-police officers seemed precious associates especially from the intelligence point of view:

It needs to be stressed that a good share of Norte del Valle Cartel’s members, starting with Wilber Varela, are the agents and other officials retired from the public law enforcement forces, who in many cases stay in touch with their previous institutions which permits them to establish contacts and hire services from these institutions (VR 2006, 53).

The majority of demobilised paramilitary soldiers who returned to their previous occupation via membership in Rastrojos belonged to the two demobilised Pacific Coast AUC groups: Bloque Calima and Bloque Libertadores del Sur (ISC 2014). The reasons why so many demobilised ex-paramilitaries decided to join Rastrojos regarded security problems linked to the presence of FARC in the area and the lack of adequate round-the-clock state’s protection, scarce occupational

opportunities, and growing illegality in marginal zones of Pacific Coast cities (HRW 2010, 80; Guzmán and Moreno 2007; Ávila Martínez 2011; Villarraga 2013). It is hard to establish the exact number of ex-paramilitaries in Rastrojos' structures. Some national-level police estimates based on the prosecution statistics indicate that in 2009 post-demobilisation paramilitary groups were composed of approximately 17 per cent of ex-AUC members (CNRR 2009, 5). Nevertheless, there are reasons to believe that Rastrojos could have incorporated more than 17 per-cent members with paramilitary precedents which I am to discuss in detail in later parts of the section.

The high percentage of ex-paramilitary recruits among Rastrojos ranks guaranteed a lot of expertise in group's command structures which had to manage the rapid organisational growth of the group after 2005 (HRW 2010, 79). One of the main characteristic of Rastrojos' recruitment since then was a high turnover among its lower ranks (Garzón 2008, ISC 2014). Given the type of governance exercised and the considerable mobility of the group (to be discussed in the next sub-section) Rastrojos did not care about the experience and local-level recognisability of its lower-rank personnel. In the face of hostile law enforcement environment (described at length later in this section), turnover was not so much the inescapable consequence of organisational management inefficiencies but actually seemed quite desirable and strategically motivated outcome. Some of the mechanisms of constant staff's turnover included physical elimination of those group's members who were no longer needed in the organisation and their immediate replace with new staff via coercive recruitment (HRW 2010, 84).

In Alto Baudó, Rastrojos imposed an economic blockade at the length of Catrú and Dubasa rivers. 'We're receiving threats from all illegal armed groups' says indigenous leader of the area. 'They also want to recruit our children. For this reasons it is preoccupying that not all displaced people have been registered by the government in the past.' (Verdad Abierta 2014).

The exact Rastrojos' command is very difficult to identify because of its fragmentation and already mentioned turnover (which reached also the mid-ranks of the group). Since Rastrojos' founder and its longest standing leader, Wilber Varela "Jabón" was killed in Venezuela in 2008, supposedly by his associates and allies, the group abandoned clear hierarchical organisational model (Garzón 2008, 40; ISC 2014). After Varela's death there was no Rastrojos' leader who would have guided the entire organisation. Among the most visible and most powerful Varela's successors one should name "Comba" brothers or Diego "Rastrojo". All of them did not operate in the group's highest ranks for long. One of the "Comba" brothers was captured by the police in July 2012 in Ecuador (Verdad Abierta 2012c, INDEPAZ 2013), while another one few months later handed himself to justice authorities (ISC 2014). Diego "Rastrojo", the boss responsible for group's security apparatus, was captured in 2012 (Ibid.). "Loco Barrera", known from his prominent role in drug industry around the country, was rumoured to have collaborated closely with Rastrojos' highest command in facilitating international drug-trafficking until his arrest in 2012 (INDEPAZ 2013, 10). The subsequent series of crackdowns and internal assassinations led to the elimination of other relatively important groups' members: "Sebastián" (killed in 2011 by his security guards; Verdad Abierta 2011e) and "Caballo" captured by the police in November 2010 (NN, Nariño, 29.03.2011). What we observe in this picture is an endless successions in Rastrojos' hierarchies and group's virtual impossibility to establish a stable command structure.

As a result of leadership's turmoil, the group remained fragmented and poorly coordinated among its various factions since 2003. It was organised in a horizontal manner with far-reaching autonomy of its peer factions, and high level of conflict among them (VR 2006, Garzón 2008). An unquestionable characteristic of Rastrojos' organisation was the diversity of criminal profiles among Rastrojos' multiple bosses. Some of them were claimed to be above all criminal entrepreneurs (as "Comba" brothers) determined to avoid law enforcement authorities' attention (Verdad Abierta 2012c). They reinvested their illicit revenues in the legal economy and there is evidence of some

small and medium-size businesses in textile industry in Ecuador run with Rastrojos' capital (Ibid.). Others leaders were famous for their audacity in inflicting violence (as "El Cholo") whose revenues were above all supplied by the returns of large-scale violence-rife predation (forced misappropriations of land or occupation of immobile properties; NN, Nariño, 06.12.2009). The group had autonomous bosses in different parts of the country. Garzón (2008, 40) argues that since Varela's death they were loosely connected and cooperation among them had to be limited to large-scale drug trafficking.

What was the reason of poor cooperation among fragmented structures? Vicepresidencia de la Republica claims that the poor cooperation within Rastrojos organisation could be explained with its adoption of "grapple" hierarchical model which made all the structures loosely dependent on the central entity but rather unconnected among themselves. It should not surprise that once the central entity had been eliminated there existed no coordination hub to concert actions of semi-independent Rastrojos' factions.

[The groups was characterised by] 'grapple hierarchy' with a coordination hub and a series of criminal organisations under the same delinquent project — in this case drug-trafficking. From that perspective, we can understand the case of Cali Cartel [and their descendants Norte del Valle Cartel, and finally Rastrojos]. Following a disarticulation of the command nucleus — with imprisonment or death of most important leaders — their structures [...] entered into internal competition, falling in disputes about the markets, territorial domination, trafficking corridors, and the leadership of the remaining structures (VR 2006, 18).

While in the past there existed a leadership responsible for coordinating various Rastrojos' franchises (ISC 2014), the recent dissolution of central command provoked numerous disputes among competing Rastrojos' factions. The potential for conflict stemmed from the fact that the

majority of Rastrojos' franchises opted for an individual involvement in drug trafficking and as such they preferred ad hoc short-lived and fluid task-oriented alliances with either fellow Rastrojos units, or other extra-legal governance providers (e.g. guerrillas; see Cubides 2005, Garzón 2008).

Another unquestionable characteristic of Rastrojos' organisation since 2003-2006 was their military weakness. Various sources seem to agree that Rastrojos are no longer army-like structure which they used to maintain roughly until 2004. The differences lie in the doctrine (VR 2006, 46), command (ICS 2014), and iconography (Duncan 2005, 30). Post-DDR Rastrojos became more similar to urban gangs than to irregular army. What made them still different from gangs were their extensive networks, geographic dispersion, and incredible resourcefulness. Granada, Restrepo and Tobón (2009, 478, 492) classify Rastrojos as the group on the margin of neo-paramilitary phenomena, calling them "pandillas criminales" or "annexed criminal forces". "Their military capacity is scarce, with weaknesses in terms of training, doctrine and command. Rastrojos maintain some sort of [territorial] control in the Cañón de Garrapatas mountains and show a disposition which permits them to have certain mobility" (VR 2006, 46). My own data sources suggest that the claims about Rastrojos' weakness and their disaggregated structure may be slightly exaggerated. In NN publications I found numerous examples of Rastrojos' wearing military uniforms and moving between territories in an army-like disciplined manner. There is also evidence that on some occasions they used AUC's anti-subversion discourse (NN, Cauca, 04.11.2009). Moreover, they continued to use the same tactics of population control as old style *autodefensas* which included road blocks and the vigilance of many transportation routes (NN, Cauca, 27.11.2010). It happened that their leaders were largely recognisable figures in some localities, far from representing no-name criminals without any ties with the territories of their influence (NN, Nariño, 06.12.2009). In many cases, the violence perpetuated by Rastrojos followed traditional AUC's modality. Forthcoming violent attack was publicly declared and immediate military targets individuated. Unless to-be victims had complied with group's threats (e.g. to abandon their community) they were

severely punished. Even though, I found a lot of evidence that Rastrojos organisation after 2005 became characterised by less internal cohesion than the one observed among pre-demobilisation paramilitaries associated with Norte del Valle Cartel, the group still appeared more disciplined than local criminal bands, *sicarios* [pay-as-you-go hitmen] groups and urban gangs.

In sum, I argue that Rastrojos' organisational transformation should be interpreted as a programmatic decision, which did not reflect its organisational inability to impose stricter cohesion among its structures but represented the adaptations required by modified extra-legal governance environment. If we were to believe in disarticulation hypothesis (Rastrojos falling to pieces because of their organisational instability), there would be no explanation of their exponential growth, persistence and non-incorporation into other criminal groups. In the rest of the section I am going to summarise the descriptive findings from the above presented discussion trying to show (a) why I believe that Rastrojos' organisational adaptations should be attributed to state's repressive action against the group, and (b) why I claim that these adaptations conducted to the intensification of risk-driven increase in violence perpetrated by the group (in other words how they led to organisation-level predation).

Above all, the present section demonstrates that risk increase triggered two major changes in Rastrojos' organisation which reinforced their predatory tendencies in Pacific Coast. The first one was the introduction of greater clandestinity and mobility into the organisation, which diminished its monitoring and territorial control capacities. I have shown that Rastrojos no longer maintain army-like structure with unified command, doctrine and iconography (VR 2006, 46; Duncan 2005, 30). Their military weakness is well illustrated in a testimony which recalls a situation when Rastrojos prohibited anyone to leave guerrilla-surrounded town and attempted to melt themselves into the crowd in order to avoid military confrontation with the rebels (NN, Cauca, 27.11.2010). Granada, Restrepo and Tobón (2009, 494) classify Rastrojos as "annexed criminal forces", a group on the margin of new paramilitary phenomena. They avoid areas with good institutional coverage,

and the majority of their actions “takes place among the populations where one can arrive only via rivers, or via roads in terrible condition” (VA 2011d). In the areas of better institutional coverage they do not wear uniforms, stay dispersed and live among civilians occupying their homes (HRW 2010, 75, 83; DT 201, 50). The lack of territorial dominium led them to another organisational adaptation which increased use of violence (via intensified predation).

The second organisational adaptation favouring predatory turn among Rastrojos paramilitaries was the increased independence of their mid-level commanders. Risk increase was not equal for each paramilitary member. The media coverage of anti-paramilitary crackdown created a pressure on law enforcement authorities to present public opinion with positive results. Capturing rank-and-files could not have earned the same public applause as high paramilitary commanders’ arrest, and it hardly contributed to dismantling an entire criminal group. For these reasons, high paramilitary commanders became the primary targets of law enforcement authorities’ actions. In order not to expose the central command (especially liable to police crackdown and especially important for groups’ survival) the analysed Pacific Coast paramilitaries introduced horizontality in their organisational model, which precluded the strict control over predatory violence, frequently exercised by their quasi-independent factions. Since the beginning of fully-fledged crackdown Rastrojos suffered from imprisonment or killings of their key bosses: Wilber Varela, Comba brothers, Diego “Rastrojo” etc. “Following a disarticulation of the command nucleus - with imprisonment or death of most important leaders - [Rastrojos’] structures [...] entered into internal competition, falling in disputes about the markets, territorial domination, trafficking corridors, and the leadership of the remaining structures” (VR 2006, 17). The internal conflict and high risks of centralisation led to the introduction of organisational horizontality and to the heavy reliance on midlevel commanders (ISC 2014). It created a dilemma of decentralised predation, in which everyone intensified his own looting because he was aware of the fact that whatever he leaves behind would undoubtedly fall prey to his fellow predators (Easterly 2006, 309). What is

more, in face of the above presented empirical material there are reasons to believe that decentralised Rastrojos' structures intensified their use of violence because it served also as a mechanisms of advancement in criminal hierarchies for ambitious mid-level commanders.

Extra-Legal Governance Model

Rastrojos' expansion strategy in 2005-12 did not resemble the traditional paramilitary conquest. As I have said before, following the decision of Rastrojos' exclusion from Uribe's DDR programme, Carlos Jiménez "Macaco", demobilised paramilitary leader of Bloque Central Bolívar of AUC, suggested to Rastrojos to transfer the majority of their actions from Valle del Cauca to adjacent departments of Chocó, Cauca, Nariño and Putumayo (Verdad Abierta 2009). The decision turned out to become a strategically brilliant move. It resulted in group's consolidation in the entire Pacific Coast territory and led to the exponential growth of the organisation thanks to the "recycling" of previously demobilised paramilitary soldiers from the region. From 2006 onwards Rastrojos started to spread to various parts of the country outside Pacific Coast (INDEPAZ 2008-2013, ISC 2014). In an arch of few years they managed to establish their own underworld governance in some parts of Caribbean Coast, San Andrés islands and in the corridor between Urabá and Norte del Santander departments (Ariaz Ortis 2009, 10). The common characteristic across all those places regards their strategic position in Colombian drug-trafficking networks. First of all, the regions host ports where drugs are normally embarked on big vessels with the destination to Central American countries. Urabá corridor, on the other hand, is one of the most frequently used route to transport drugs in small speedboats from Colombia to Panama, from where they travel by road until El Salvador or Honduras. Norte de Santander department allows to export drugs across Venezuelan border, while Nariño department (the Rastrojos' expansion's endpoint in Southern

Colombia) has good connections with Ecuador and its port cities. Putumayo's extreme scarcity of institutional coverage facilitates drug transportation along the rivers with final destinations in Brasil passing via Leticia river port town in the middle of Amazonian jungle (*El Tiempo* 2005).

One of the peculiarities observed in Rastrojos' expansion strategy regards the fact that they did not necessarily maintain control in conquered municipalities for long time (INDEPAZ 2013). When controlling these municipalities turned out no longer beneficial (e.g. aerial sprayings destroyed most of coca cultivations in the area), the group did not wait to abandon such territories (see Torres 2012; Vásquez and Vargas 2011). Rastrojos expansion followed new trafficking opportunities, while the group remained in charge for longer period only of those territories which proved most rentable. INDEPAZ (2013) reports that in 2012/2013 Rastrojos were present in all Colombian departments. Despite the impressive number of departments with Rastrojos' presence, one should not overestimate group's territorial coverage since they maintained very limited presence within many of the majority of Colombian departments. Given the high costs of controlling extensive areas in the situation of hostile law enforcement and intense extra-legal governance competition volatile territorial control seemed more profitable option from the economics of crime perspective (see Chojnacki and Metternich 2008).

How far does Rastrojos' governance resemble the governance provided by other criminal groups in Colombia and around the world? The new criminological literature tries to classify organised crime and related phenomenas by organising them along some type of extra-legal governance continuum (Varese 2010). There are various ways to measure criminal governance but probably the most useful classification for the problem at hand could be represented by the continuum stretching from extra-legal governance based on territorial control to extra-legal governance based on the control of trafficking (Sciarrone 2009, 2014; Zhang and Chin 2003). In the present sub-section I am going to show Rastrojos as the representative of the latter form of extra-legal governance, focused on the control of trafficking. There is no threshold which divides

territorial-control governance from trafficking-control one. In general, the nature of extra-legal governance can be described by its complexity which ranges from the regulation of markets for specific illicit commodities (e.g. gambling, prostitution, loan-sharking; see Haller 1971, Graebner Anderson 1979) to the regulation of broad range of socio-economic exchange (e.g. landlord-tenant disputes, street commerce, non-public transportation, private disputes; see Chu 2000, Varese 2001). The more complex the governance the closer it approaches territorial-control organised crime model (so-called “power syndicate”, Blok 1974). The historical studies relative to Rastrojos organisation found evidence of highly complex forms of extra-legal governance exercised by the group in pre-demobilisation period which, nevertheless, have not been observed since 2003.

[They used to] intervene as a third party in disputes among community members, in other words, they [used to] offer justice services [...] eliminate thieves and bear the duty of public security provider. [...] By and large, they assumed the role of traditional violent intermediaries in the region and converted themselves in some form of the State (Duncan 2005, 31).

[T]heir activities d[id] not impose big costs on the society and, contrarily, they dynamise[d] local economies with inversion of illicit capitals via purchases of extensive land properties, employment creation, financing public constructions, among other activities, which turn[ed] out to be beneficial for the populations [...] and convert[ed] the mafias into “State within the State” (VR 2006, 9).

The above quoted characterisation of Rastrojos’ extra-legal governance is no longer true. After 2005 the group radically reduced the complexity of its extra-legal monopolies. They limited themselves to the regulation of very few markets for illicit commodities (especially drugs), and showed very scarce interest in governing any other forms of local socio-economic exchange. As a consequence, in the period under study the main part of Rastrojos’ revenues came from drug-

trafficking. The peculiarity of Rastrojos' drug trade involvement was related to their apparent laxity of trafficking control, and relatively low level of monopolisation of the market. For example, Rastrojos allowed independent operators to negotiate prices and collect "taxes" from cultivators (Torres 2012, Vargas 2004) and collaborated with various illegal armed groups (such as FARC and ELN guerrillas; see Cubides 2005, Garzón 2008, 121).

They are different from some of Colombia's other criminal groups in that they do not necessarily try to control every part of the drug distribution chain, operating instead via strategic alliances. These alliances include working with rebel groups and former rightwing paramilitaries to move their product. They also concentrate their forces along embarkation points, specifically the border with Venezuela, and the Pacific Ocean. Both points give them enough control over the drugs they are shipping or the chemicals they need to bring into the country (ISC 2014).

Not surprisingly, Rastrojos' most intensive territorial presence could be observed in the biggest ports towns of Pacific Coast, such as Buenaventura and Tumaco. It also shows that their special interests lied in controlling the final stages of drug-trafficking process, such as transportation and commercialisation of cocaine. Duncan (2005) argues that the similar division of labour in drug-trafficking process has its roots in the fact that non-paramilitary illegal armed groups (such as guerrillas) remained prevalently concentrated in Colombian rural areas which could not offer very convenient access to drugs embarkation points.

Another part of Rastrojos incomes during the analysed period came from extortions. The group asked for money from small and medium entrepreneurs, as well as big extraction sites, such as oil plants or gold mines (Ávila Martínez 2011). They also taxed some of the properties which were not necessarily destined to the commercial use, such as *rancho*-like properties, speedboats,

(which might be used commercially for transportation or livestock enterprises), and luxurious houses (which could probably not, if not in the hotel industry; see Verdad Abierta 2010c). The typical targets of Rastrojos extortions consisted of small shops, entertainment spots, street vendors (milk and cheese sellers), *minutos* vendors, taxi drivers, or garages. Rastrojos mixed their extortive activities in those sites with pure pillage. Below I present few illustrative examples. “Recently there have been reports on extortions from cheese and milk producers [...]. The responsible ones were Rastrojos” (Verdad Abierta 2012d).

In the way-out of Pasto there are Rastrojos. Inside Tumaco — Águilas Negras. In the rural zones, along the rivers, there are FARC. As for now, they are taxing all the world, coming to receive *vacunas* [illegal taxation] from the owners of entertainment spots or simple shops. All the world sees them” (Verdad Abierta 2010c).

Following Varese’s definition, extortion can be understood a solicitude of a payment in exchange for the services promised but not delivered (Varese 2010). It gets often confounded with organised crime protection. According to Varese, the difference lies in the actual delivery of the service. Frye (2002) suggests that protection can also become extortionist if the security services provided by an organised crime group would not have been needed if the very group had not operated in the area. There is another service which extra-legal governance providers can deliver to their “tax-payers” — extra-legal regulation of markets. Gambetta (1992) gives example of the Sicilian mafia regulating fruit and vegetable market in Palermo by limiting the number of market participants, blocking new entrants and protecting the (non-)competitiveness of those already operating at the market. Chu (2000) shows Hong Kong triads regulating street vendors and private transportation companies in a very similar manner. Such a regulation may occur in the markets that are already regulated by the state, although unsatisfactorily, or when there exist relatively

generalised incentives for collusion (e.g. fixing high prices; see Gambetta and Reuter 1995). The other markets potentially in demand for such extra-legal regulation are the ones excluded from state's regulation for the sake of their illegality (Haller 1971; Graebner Anderson 1978). In Colombian case, coca cultivators may need to have some form of extra-legal regulation of this type in order to guarantee minimum predictability of their illicit activities (Torres 2012). What I am going to do now is to see whether Rastrojos' extra-legal taxation should be interpreted as merely extortionist — whether it was not exchanged with some real (and at least in the minimal measure useful) services.

It seems that the real services delivered in exchange for the tributes imposed by Rastrojos in the period under study remained relatively limited. In most of the cases of post-2003 Rastrojos' "taxation" we could speak of extortion not exchanged with any services. To begin with, their security "tax" paid for the protection against guerrillas' incursions can be classified as extortionist because in case of the actual insurgents' raid Rastrojos were often quicker to escape the place rather than to effectively protect its residents (NN, Cauca, 27.11.2010). Almost all the group's protection (against law enforcement and other organised violence groups) was concentrated on drug infrastructure (ISC 2014). Rastrojos protected coca processing laboratories, access routes to the plantations and the movements of the people in coca areas (Ibid.). The relative mobility of the coca industry because of Plan Colombia-related crackdown (US-sponsored drug eradication campaign) made protection services volatile and less tied to specific territories. Even in the drug trafficking milieu, Rastrojos were perceived as "*patron duro*" [hard master] because they imposed themselves at the markets relatively organised prior to their arrival and flooded with skilful extra-legal intermediaries. It made Rastrojos' presence in these territories rather redundant but still unavoidable (Torres 2012). The biggest security-building effort attributed to Rastrojos since 2005 concerns the "social cleansing" campaign which consisted of group's declaration of war against all marginalised individuals who supposedly threatened local security (e.g. NN, Valle del Cauca, 29.08.2008;

01.03.2011, 26.07.2012; Nariño, 15.05.2008; 18.07.2008; 27.07.2010). It included actions ranging from physical harassment to homicides and disappearances of common delinquents, drug addicts, prostitutes, beggars, homeless, alcoholics, transvestites.

Other group which was identified in the paramilitary court of Cauca were Rastrojos. In an arch of 2012 they sent various threatening leaflets to the communities in the Northern part of the department. In one of them they announced that in response to religious people's request "the Central Command ordered patrols to end up with delinquency". Equally, they threatened people who dedicated themselves to drugs cultivation or processing (Verdad Abierta 2013b).

The extent of these practices is not known. There is an evidence of some demonstrative killings of drug addicts, prostitutes, homosexuals, transvestites and petty criminals in 2005-2012 (NN, Nariño, 27.07.2010; Cauca, 27.01.2009) but it remains unclear whether these actions represented systematic commitment to some coherent security-building project, or whether Rastrojos promoted social cleansing campaign to justify group's atrocities committed for other instrumental purposes.

Apart from largely bogus protection, Rastrojos offered some real services to their "tax-payers" in the form of occasional markets regulation. In fact, they regulated the market of unauthorised natural resources extraction in Bajo Cauca (Antioquia), Valle del Cauca, Chocó and Nariño obliging any interested extractors to purchase mining "licences" (Ávila Martínez 2011). It prevented illegal mining from becoming flooded with too many entrepreneurs who could have attracted law enforcement authorities' attention or pulled down the prices. In this milieu Rastrojos might actually be perceived less extortionist than elsewhere, but the pool of beneficiaries of their services still reminded extremely limited given the nature of illegal mining labour (with alleged slavery-like system; Ávila Martínez 2011) and its concentration in very rare and restricted areas. The group's relations with small agricultural entrepreneurs, on the other hand, reveal very different

side of their markets regulation. Rastrojos used to block movements of fruit and vegetable vendors who transported their goods via rivers and prohibited them to carry commercial goods of a value exceeding 40,000 Colombian pesos (roughly 15 euros at the time of writing; NN, Chocó, 17.02.2003). This form of economic blockade was not intended to benefit the participants of local fruit and vegetable markets but served Rastrojos to limit the traffic in strategically important corridors so as to facilitate the transportation of drugs hidden under their own fruit and vegetable cargos. Their disproportionate focus on cocaine distribution made Rastrojos increasingly unpopular in the region because they dealt with the drug for exportation purposes only. While bringing few benefits for local communities (scarce labour opportunities), cocaine processing and transportation imposed huge costs on social life in various Pacific Coast localities. For the purposes of safe transportation of drug cargos Rastrojos imposed evening curfews in both rural and urban areas, which badly affected “communitarian and social activities, such as juvenile groups’ reunions, street-corner lingering, religious events” (DT 2011, 50)

It would be wrong to say that Rastrojos were uniquely extortionist. “They maintained, as happened in Norte del Valle, a complex structure which at times offered protection services, both for external agents and for their own clan, and at times delivered coercion — creating a social environment which propitiated and stimulated illegality” (VR 2006, 24). The difference between Rastrojos and traditional paramilitary groups in Colombia could be summarised in the following way: Rastrojos’ protection was available only to big, organised and resourceful actors such as illegal mining entrepreneurs or commercial cultivators (and thus very different from the usual beneficiaries of paramilitary governance in other parts of the country; see Gutiérrez and Baron 2006; Vargas 2004). Rastrojos’ limited territorial control did not enable them to successfully settle small-scale disputes. Gaining legitimacy among low-level economic stratas (by delivering them genuine extra-legal governance services) was of no importance for the group, because its volatile and ever-changing territorial presence. For the lack of the incentives for grass-root legitimacy building,

Rastrojos turned to more extortionist practices of governance and exchanged payments with real services on the rare occasions when they considered it beneficial — when dealing with big criminal or semi-criminal actors whose influence extended beyond local or regional level.

In sum, it seems that the recent change in Rastrojos extra-legal governance strategy symbolises another form of organisation-level adaptation provoked by anti-paramilitary crackdown dynamics. Any extra-legal governance providers, such as Rastrojos, may gain a certain level of acceptance by delivering genuine services (e.g. protection, dispute settlement, regulation of competition, agreements enforcement) in the context of generalised demand for private ordering (Gambetta 1992), or may be perceived as extortionist or predator if it imposes services where they are not in demand or where they are efficiently provided by other actors (see Varese 2011). It is reasonable to assume that each paramilitary group would prefer to diversify its governance-related tributes and ensure stability of its revenues by providing governance to a wide variety of socio-economic exchange, rather than to remain highly dependent on one income source (drug industry). Such a group should also prefer to build a certain level local legitimacy of its governance which guarantees it lower defection rates and less frequent need to resort to violence. I argue that Rastrojos did not achieve neither of these outcomes because of the pressing need to minimise own exposure to law enforcement authorities in Pacific Coast. In short, I believe I have convincingly demonstrated that state's repression dealt a blow to Rastrojos legitimacy as governance providers and caused free-riding problems along with the fall in groups' revenues (Garzón 2008, 50). It should not surprise that in order to compensate for the losses Rastrojos resorted to violence-rife predation.

CHAPTER SIX: The Logic of Paramilitary Violence (II). Qualitative Evidence from Eastern Plains

The evidence presented in the previous chapter lends support to both hypotheses linking paramilitary violence with state's repression. Nonetheless, the qualitative results may suffer from visibility bias which means that the available qualitative data that permitted me to address the hypotheses empirically regards only those parts of Pacific Coast which experienced deterioration of security situation since 2003. If I want to make sure that the mechanisms driving the association between repression and violence in case of Colombian paramilitaries have been correctly individuated, I shall be able to demonstrate that they did not take place in Pacific Coast sub-regions which improved their security record since 2003. Unfortunately, such verification of the argument is not possible because of the biased data. Nevertheless, the robustness of my qualitative findings can still be double-checked via the case-study analysis of Eastern Plains with equally biased data. The region did not experience repression-driven escalation of paramilitary violence and for this reason it may be informative to check if there is any evidence of resource substitution or predatory intensification phenomena among regional paramilitaries. In case of positive results, there would be every reason to doubt that the individuated mechanisms do in fact explain the observed association between paramilitary violence and state's crackdown in Pacific Coast. The idea behind this comparison goes as follows: if the preliminarily confirmed hypotheses cannot account for between-regional differences in violence dynamics they might not correctly explain within-regional heterogeneity in Pacific Coast.

In sum, what I am expecting to find in the present chapter can be summarised in two points. First of all, I believe that there is hardly any evidence that Eastern Plains paramilitaries were forced to exchange non-violent resources with the actual use of coercion (Hypothesis 1) since the outset of

anti-paramilitary crackdown which — as I have already suggested — spared dominant groups operating in the region. Secondly, I think that qualitative evidence relative to Eastern Plains will confirm that long-lasting paramilitary organisations operating in the region did not change their organisational models and extra-legal governance strategies in such a way to reinforce the predatory incentives among their members (Hypothesis 2). To prove my expectations right, I am going to begin the chapter with historical reconstruction of paramilitary panorama in Eastern Plains. Then I will describe anti-paramilitary crackdown launched by the Colombian state in 2003 stressing its particularities with a special attention to demonstrate the repression's partisanship. After having addressed both hypotheses in short, I will move to a detailed case study of Eastern Plains biggest paramilitary group since 2006, Ejército Revolucionario Popular Antiterrorista Colombiano (ERPAC) explaining its considerable restraint in the use of violence with reference to state's tolerant behaviour towards them.

The History of Paramilitary Governance in Eastern Plains

The history of paramilitary governance in Eastern Plains started with the original colonisation of the region in the second half of the twentieth century. The first self-defence units appeared there along with the arrival of Liberal refugees which had suffered from Conservatives' persecution during the late 1940s and early 1950s (Zamosc 1986). Paramilitary boom in the region, however, dates back to late 1970s when Buitrageños family created Autodefensas Campesinas de Casanare (ACC) and Victor Carranza established his group called Los Carranceros. Both of the groups were founded by emeralds traffickers and became later unified under the common name of ACC (González 2007, 251-6). Apart from ACC and its allies, in the late 1990s AUC coalition decided to branch out into Eastern Plains (Pérez 2011) with the biggest transplanted group,

Urabeños, led by Vincente Castaño, the third of the Castaño brothers — the highest commanders of AUC. A lot of sources claim that around 1997-1998 Vicente Castaño sold his Eastern Plains paramilitary franchise to drug-trafficker, Miguel Arroyabe (Pérez 2007, 77-8). Since then Urabeños rebranded themselves as Bloque Centauros of AUC and created two fronts: Meta and Guaviare. Roughly at the same time the most extreme parts of Eastern Plains towards Venezuelan border saw the emergence of a group called Autodefensas Campesinas de Meta y Vichada (ACMV) led by Guillermo Torres.

During 2003-2004 period paramilitary governance in Eastern Plains experienced fierce conflict between some regional factions (Pérez 2011, González 2007). After the period of initial uncertainty about the competitors' alliances, all paramilitary forces of the region converged into two large blocks. The first one was composed of “native” paramilitary groups, mainly ACC and Carranza's *autodefensas*. Their enemies included Bloque Centauros and few minor groups: ACMV, Frente Vichada of Bloque Central Bolívar (led by already known “Macaco”) and Frente Vencedores de Arauca (appeared in the region in the end of 1990s and led by Mellizos brothers). “Paramilitary war” in Eastern Plains ended with a defeat of ACC-Carranza coalition (González 2007). Despite winning, AUC-supported coalition suffered from a serious blow when Bloque Centauros' leader Arroyabe got killed almost immediately afterwards. Since then the group fragmented into three smaller units: Heroes de Llanos (led by Jorge “Pirata”), Heroes de Guaviare (led by Pedro “Cuchillo”) and so-called Leales (led by Vincente Castaño). While the first two factions collaborated between themselves, the third maintained non-belligerent but far from cooperative relationship with both of them.

The successful demobilisation of almost all Eastern Plains paramilitary groups occurred between 2004-2006. During that time five paramilitary structures were effectively disarmed (see Figure 8). Those who failed to demobilise included Autodefensas Campesinas de Casanare, whose defeat in Eastern Plains paramilitary war did not mean they had disappeared from regional

paramilitary panorama. Still the Colombian state did not insist on their demobilisation given their marginal role after 2004. There were some rumours that Martin “Llanos”, ACC’s leader, became an ally of Heroes de Guaviare Bloque which demobilised eventually within Uribe’s DDR scheme in 2005 (Garzón 2005, 128). The successful demobilisation of Eastern Plains paramilitaries involved nearly 4,000 soldiers. It did not mean, though, the disappearance of paramilitary phenomena from the region. Those that ended up demobilised returned to arms in large numbers and formed or joined various newly-emerged paramilitary groups.

Figure 8: Demobilisation statistics in Eastern Plains.

Date	Place	Demobilised Structure	Number of Demobilised
06/08/2005	Puerto Gaitán (Meta)	Autodefensas de Meta y Vichada (AMV)	209
03/09/2005	Yopal (Casanare)	Bloque Centauros (BC) o los ‘leales’	1.134
24/09/2005	Cumaribo (Vichada)	Frente Vichada (FV) del Bloque Central Bolívar (BCB)	325
23/12/2005	Tame (Arauca)	Frente Vencedores de Arauca (FVA)	548
11/04/2006	Puerto Lleras (Meta)	Héroes del Llano y Héroes del Guaviare	1.765

Source: reproduced from CIT (2009, 105).

Three groups of this kind managed to recruit enough soldiers to be considered a real security problem: Paisas, Macacos and Llaneros (CIT 2009, 105-6). Paisas represented a transplanted paramilitary group from Antioquia department closely linked to Urabeños. Their leaders included “Don Mario”, “HH” and “El Aleman”, although most of them operated from the distance (predominantly from Antioquia department). Paisas employed roughly 180 people recruited from Leales faction, the third descendants of dissolved Bloque Centauros. They occupied the Northern Meta with its urban centre in Villaviciencio, and controlled Piedmonte area in Casanare (CIT 2009, 106). Macacos, on the other hand, were formed from the remaining part of Leales who did not join Paisas and from demobilised members of Frente Vichada of Bloque Central Bolívar. They were led by “Macaco” whose interests evidently stretched from Pacific Coast to Eastern Plains. The group counted approximately 400 men and occupied the area between Puerto Gaitán in Meta until Vichada department (Ibid., 106). The strongest post-demobilisation groups in Eastern Plains were called Llaneros led by “Cuchillo”. They occupied the Southern parts of Meta and Guaviare department. Their initial recruits came from demobilised factions of Heroes de Guaviare and Frente Vencedores de Arauca. The initial number of Llaneros members did not exceed 400 individuals (Ibid., 106).

Having three poorly coordinated paramilitary factions, Eastern Plains did not have to wait long for violent intraparamilitary conflict to outbreak. It lasted since 2005 until 2007 when the fighting ended with a definite and complete victory of “Cuchillo” group, Llaneros (CIT 2009, 106; ICG 2012, 5). The advantages of “Cuchillo’s” men included the knowledge of the territory and military experience. “The defeat of both groups was due to the fact that “Cuchillo” had better prepared soldiers who knew the terrain well” (Ibid., 106). Llaneros were well equipped for the fight and, above all, they could be considered as true natives in the region (compared to transplanted Macacos and externally commanded Paisas). It gave them strategic advantage and facilitated local coalition building. “Loco Barrera” and Jorge “Pirata”, two resourceful drug-traffickers of the

region, supported “Cuchillo’s” group during the conflict since they considered Llaneros as the most credible and stable ally for the future re-organisation of illicit trafficking in the region (ICG 2012). After the final victory over competing groups Llaneros renamed themselves as Ejército Revolucionario Popular Antiterrorista Colombiano (ERPAC). Their territorial dominium was immediately extended to Northern Meta, Casanare and Arauca to the North, as well as to Vichada and Guainía departments to the South-East. “Cuchillo’s” group established nearly indisputable monopoly on extra-legal violence in Eastern Plains. It helped them to minimise even the confrontations with guerrilla groups. “Rather, the groups have sought to avoid disputes in order to escape government attention and reduce mutual damage. Territorial competition has not prevented some FARC fronts from cooperating with ERPAC in drug-trafficking activities” (ICG 2012, 6). In 2011, following “Cuchillo’s” death, the group apparently demobilised, but the next year its members were seen operating in the region within two new paramilitary *bloques*, Metro and Libertadores del Vichada (ICG 2012). It renders paramilitary future in Eastern Plains rather uncertain.

State’s Repression and Paramilitary Violence in Eastern Plains

The beginning of state’s anti-paramilitary repression in Eastern Plains coincided with the first intraparamilitary conflict in the region, “paramilitary war” between Bloque Centauros and Autodefensas Campesinas de Casanare. González (2007, 265-9) claims that the most important factor in Bloque Centauros’s victory over ACC was the help of the military forces which became “the part of the conflict rather than guarantors of the state” and concentrated their anti-paramilitary actions on ACC group. It is true that Bloque Centauros possessed more local allies (ACMV and other two AUC’s fronts) and were more resourceful due to Castaño brothers’ generous support. Nevertheless, ACC enjoyed better territorial embeddedness and their governance were partly

legitimised locally among various social stratas (including political and economic elites). Bloque Centauros' commander, Miguel Arroyabe, used to admire Martín "Llanos" and his ACC unit for their grass-root work, relatively large social acceptance and complex governance services which included the regulation of various both legal and illicit highly profitable markets (see Pérez 2011). González (2007) seems sure that what decided of the outcome of ACC-Centauros contest had less to do with each group's initial endowment and more with state's anti-paramilitary intervention which targeted almost exclusive ACC's members:

For the leader of ACC, the declaration of war by Bloque Centuaros was supported by public military forces. That is how "Llanos" explains Operation Sanctuary ordered by the Army Commander Martín Orlando Carreño in the first half of 2004, principally against ACC. The operation coincided with one of the most intense moments during the confrontations between ACC and Bloque Centauros. "Llanos" considers General Carreño as Arroyabe's personal ally (González 2007, 265).

Apparently, state's anti-paramilitary repression in Eastern Plains did not finish with ACC's virtual elimination. Law enforcement authorities kept medium-intensity crackdown roughly until the end of the second intraparamilitary conflict in the region, three-sided contest between Llaneros, Paisas and Macacos (see Chapter Three). Repression relaxed when Llaneros, rebranded as ERPAC, defeated their paramilitary competitors and won control over most of private ordering markets in the region. What made it possible that ERPAC established relatively complex extra-legal governance monopolies in such short time? The evidence from many sources point to the importance of public forces' partisan behaviour: "The defeat of both groups [Paisas and Macacos] was due to "Cuchillos's" collaboration with some sectors of public forces which furnished them with information and helped in logistics" (CIT 2009, 106). ERPAC's success was possible not only

thanks to army's intelligence and monitoring support. Probably the biggest contribution came from the fact that the army decided to directly crack down on ERPAC's paramilitary rivals and actually offered military protection for "Cuchillo's" men. Good relations between state's forces and ERPAC persisted long after group's consolidation as the leading paramilitary actor in Eastern Plains. Thanks to these relations the group managed to avoid outward repression despite the fact that their organisation grew in size, became visible and continued AUC's legacy of territorial control characterised by extra-legal regulation of social, economic and political life in the region.

Ties to the security forces were crucial for maintaining the position of "Cuchillo". He reportedly paid bribes to members of the police, the military and DAS (the now disbanded presidential intelligence agency, the Administrative Department of Security) in order to conduct his activities and repeatedly elude capture. In 2008, President Uribe publicly rebuked the military for its failure to pursue ERPAC and discharged three generals of the 4th army division, including its top commander, General Guillermo Quiñónez Quiroz (ICG 2012, 6).

In sum, state's anti-paramilitary crackdown in Eastern Plains can be interpreted in twofold manner. On the one hand, it may be judged as corrupt and bogus since paramilitary governance seemed somehow strengthened after two waves of anti-paramilitary repression than it had been before. On the other hand, state's move can appear as a very intelligent one from public security perspective since it saved a lot of state's effort in "de-paramilitarising" civil conflict in Eastern Plains. Military support to Bloque Centauros and ERPAC was not exchanged only with bribes for few corrupted officials (see ICG 2012). Both groups "repaid" the state by effectively destroying the entire regional paramilitary opposition to Uribe's peace process which facilitated the successful conclusion of the programme. If ACC or Carranzas had been left non-demobilised and operating in the region, they could have turned themselves into the peace process' threatening spoilers (as

Rastrojos and Machos in Pacific Coast). For example, they might have re-shaped the actually observed re-emergence of paramilitary phenomena after 2006 by reincorporating the first disappointed DDR-participants and continuing their fight with AUC's paramilitary "leftovers". As a result, the region could have experienced less security improvements in exchange for lesser penetration of mafia-like organisations into social, political and above all economic life of Eastern Plains. What would have been worse is open to debate.

My role here remains limited to analyse whether state's partisanship can actually explain the observed security improvements. In Chapter Four I have already shown that state's intervention in Eastern Plains did not provoke the escalation of paramilitary violence. If this finding is true, I should be able to demonstrate that none of the hypothesised mechanisms linking anti-paramilitary repression with paramilitary violence were present in the region between 2003-2012. In other words, I should find that Eastern Plains paramilitaries did not substitute their non-violent resources with coercion (Hypothesis 1), nor did they adopted organisational solutions activating latent predatory tendencies (Hypothesis 2). If, in fact, there is no evidence of such mechanisms being at work in post-2003 Eastern Plains, it does not only confirm quantitative results presented in Chapter Four, but also indirectly validates my casual model increasing the plausibility that the hypothesised mechanisms correctly explain the link between repression and violence.

Hypothesis 1: Resource Substitution

To begin with, I would like to examine the present state of reputation for violence among Eastern Plains paramilitaries and its possible deterioration during the period of anti-paramilitary repression since 2003 until 2012. According to my argument, I should not find any substantial evidence in support for such reputation deterioration in contrast to what we observed in Pacific Coast. In fact, the non-violent resources of Eastern Plains paramilitaries seem not to have suffered

any significant loss since 2003. As we remember, state's anti-paramilitary actions in the region were always partisan in a sense of tolerating either Bloque Centauros or ERPAC as the biggest paramilitary groups in the area. It cemented their local monopolies and disincentivised their potential competitors (CIT 2009). Pérez (2011, 16-7) observes that denunciations against ERPAC's members to the police might have stigmatised a denouncer as "subversive compliance" and might have resulted in his/her victimisation. Military forces did not seem to intervene to reverse this perception. In fact much of the paramilitary post-demobilisation violence was recorded in highly militarised areas of Arauca which reinforced the image of the regional agreement between Eastern Plains paramilitarism and the state.

Similarly, in Balconcitos, another small town in Vistahermosa, a woman said: We lived under the pressure of the guerrillas [and] then the army came. [It left] and then the paramilitaries arrived in November 2008... When the paramilitaries arrived in November they said they were self-defence forces. They entered houses by force and said people had to let them stay.... Eight people were displaced. [The paramilitaries] didn't do much. They would arrive and ask how many guerrilla troops had been there, what they were doing. They left on December 22 and the army arrived on the 24th. We didn't tell the army... They say they're with the army and their boss will know if someone talks about them... It's the law of silence (HRW 2010, 75).

What about other facets of Eastern Plains paramilitaries' reputation since 2003? International Crisis Group's report on the paramilitary situation in the region in 2010 (2012, 5) notes that paramilitaries in Eastern Plains were not only feared but also respected. Firstly, the leader of the biggest regional group, ERPAC, was allegedly perceived as a sort of sorcerer. What is more, ordinary people were reported to have approached him with micro credit requests in case of financial shortages. His economic support to Eastern Plains residents arguably made him credible

and well-advertised *patron* as well as regionally desirable business partner. “ERPAC’s narco-business gave it a stable social base, but it also capitalised on “Cuchillo’s” charisma and capacity to intimidate, reportedly including manipulation of local fears of black magic. Some rural parts of Mapiripán (Meta) were virtually dependent on him economically. This allowed him to cast himself as a social benefactor” (ICG 2012, 6).

In the period under study, ERPAC’s paramilitaries were also easily recognisable in Eastern Plains departments and did not suffer from identification problems. NN sources indicate that in many Eastern Plains communities the group was not perceived as newly created paramilitary faction and people continued to call them Bloque Centauros of AUC. They wore uniforms and held AK-47 rifles in groups’ strongholds, such as Mapiripán, Puerto Concordia and San José del Guaviare, and in various rural localities (ICG 2012, 5). They became more discreet, though, in more urbanised areas: “Before you know who is who, you know who was a commander, who gave orders [...] now one doesn’t know whom to talk to when he receives a threat, verbal or written one, which orders him to keep his mouth shut or to leave the town” (CIT 2009, 114). ERPAC’s intelligence capacities were undoubtedly reduced compared to ACC and Bloque Centauros who controlled the region between late 1990s and early 2000s. Nevertheless, the group reminded still far more resourceful in monitoring its territories than Pacific Coast paramilitaries described in the previous chapter. In sum, there is substantial evidence to support a claim that Eastern Plains have not intensified their violence since the beginning to state’s crackdown in 2003 because their non-violent extra-legal governance resources have been dramatically affected case and they have not had to substitute them with actual coercion. I argue that it happened so because of state’s crackdown’s evident partisanship which left some paramilitary groups unworried about the stability of their governance which incentivised them to adopt more consensual relations with the governance-subjected populations.

Hypothesis 2: Predatory Turn

My second hypothesis links paramilitary violence with state's crackdown via the mechanism predation's intensification. One way to measure paramilitary predation is to observe their extra-legal governance's complexity and legitimacy. In fact, paramilitary governance in Eastern Plains did not seem to change after the re-emergence of local paramilitary groups dissolved within DDR program (González 2007, 240-1; Pérez 2011). González (2007, 272) shows that paramilitary ordering in the region historically went far beyond production and commercialisation of coca. In the period under study Bloque Centauros, later substituted by ERPAC, used to capture significant oil-associated rents, a fraction of local administrative budgets, and received a lot of protection money from big and small economic entrepreneurs and agricultural workers. Their private protection services were never limited to any single economic activity, territory or social class of clients. Eastern Plains paramilitaries "extend[ed] their private security offer to the regions of medium or small land properties, peasant and colonisation economies included" (González 2007, 271). "On one hand, ERPAC extort[ed] big companies, on the other, the companies offer[d] them money in exchange for security [...] and for the regulation of various types of labour and social conflicts" (CIT 2009, 123). What is more, both Bloque Centauros and ERPAC were famous for investing in regional and local development which historically guaranteed the impressive social support for paramilitarism in the region. The investments included infrastructural development (e.g. transportation improvement), promotion of commercial agriculture, sponsoring producers and agriculture workers' associations, and maintenance of public vigilant structures (González 2007, 272). Those activities created numerous job opportunities "in an area where jobs in the legal economy and efficient civilian state institutions were traditionally scarce" (ICG 2012, 6).

The lack of defections- and competition-related preoccupations made it more profitable for Eastern Plains paramilitaries to invest in long-term relationships with their social environment (becoming “stationary bandits”; see Olson 1993) and to minimise their actual use of violence, contributing to the *pax mafiosa* observed today in the region (NN, Arauca, 21.04.2012; CIT 2009). These two relatively centralised paramilitary organisations prevented individual predatory initiatives originating among its insubordinate factions (usually outsourced groups of hit-men called *sicarios*) to become generalised and to undermine group’s rather positive reception at the level of local society and regional politics.

Yet, the hypothesised “predatory turn” among paramilitary groups usually happens when law enforcement authorities’ actions provoke paramilitaries’ organisational adaptations, such as increased clandestinity and command’s decentralisation, responsible in turn for the explosion of violence-rife predation. As a matter of fact, I find no evidence that any of post-2003 organisational adaptations undermined traditional self-restraint in predation among Eastern Plains paramilitary factions which survived state’s repression. The dominant group, ERPAC, maintained by and large organisational structure of their original paramilitary unit, Bolque Centauros of AUC (CIT 2009, 108; Granada, Restrepo and Tobón 2009, 492). The charismatic leader from military background, Pedro Guerrero “Cuchillo”, safeguarded the internal cohesion of the group until his death in 2010. His authority guaranteed that ERPAC’s outsourced parts did not rebel against the highest command and followed the central directives (avoiding decentralised predation dilemmas; CIT 2009, 108).

Analogically to the previous chapter, in order to validate these preliminary conclusions I am going to describe the biggest paramilitary group in Eastern Plains in 2003-2012 period, ERPAC, in more depth in the rest of the chapter. I will pay a special attention to its organisational solutions and discuss at length group’s extra-legal governance strategy. To anticipate the main findings, the case study that follows confirms the central argument of this thesis where I claim that state’s anti-

paramilitary repression provokes intensification of paramilitary violence only if it is administered in relatively nonpartisan and therefore persistent manner. Crackdown that spares some paramilitary groups while defeating others (as happened in Eastern Plains) does not produce such negative externalities as resource substitution and reinforcement of predatory tendencies, and may in fact strengthen the remaining paramilitary governance providers by eliminating their internal competition problems and communicating their “semi-legal” authority.

ERPAC’s Case Study

In the period immediately after the conclusion of Uribe’s demobilisation programme in 2006, ERPAC was one of the most resourceful and probably the best organised paramilitary group in Colombia (CIT 2009, ICG 2012). Since the disarmament of its original paramilitary structure, Bloque Centauros of AUC, they needed only three years to double their initial fighting force from 250 to 500 individuals. The group experienced very rapid membership growth also in the subsequent period. In 2009 between 700-750 paramilitary soldiers worked for ERPAC which made them one of the three biggest neo-paramilitary groups in the country at that time (CIT 2009, 107). Moreover, various sources estimate that in 2010 ERPAC employed between 1000 and 1200 individuals (the lower bound refers to inherently optimistic police estimate; Ibid., 106). In 2011, following the death of its maximum leader, the group decided to demobilise within a special DD³⁸ program offered by the government of Juan Manuel Santos. Some sources claim that the group is still active in the region despite the fact that it most probably split into two rival factions (Bloque Metro and Libertadores del Vichada; see ICG 2012, 12).

³⁸ DD stands for disarmament and demobilisation. This time the government refused to include “R” or reintegration component (accommodation, paid training, financial bonuses) into ERPAC’s demobilisation scheme (ICG 2012, 9-12).

The rest of the chapter follows in the two-step order. The next sub-section discusses the characteristics of ERPAC's organisational model. More precisely, it describes group's command structure, recruitment practices and division of labour. I believe that many of the described elements are typical for the traditional territorial-control paramilitary model known in Colombia at least since late 1970s (Medina Gallego 1990). This discussion will introduce us to the following sub-section where I am going to show how most of the elements of ERPAC's organisational structure were functional to the specific forms of extra-legal governance exercised by the group in Eastern Plains territories. I conclude by placing the present discussion in the context of the full explanatory model proposed throughout the thesis.

Organisational Model

During the initial phase of ERPAC's organisational growth, there were rather well documented rumours that the group recruited predominantly from the pool of ex-paramilitaries demobilised within Uribe's DDR programme. The percentage of ex-AUC's soldiers within ERPAC ranks seemed higher than in any other paramilitary groups operating in Colombia at the same time (ICG 2012, 5; CIT 2009, 106). This fact may actually explain their rapid expansion throughout Eastern Plains. Ex-AUC soldiers were obviously more experienced to guide paramilitary conquest than recruits without paramilitary past. More importantly, those individuals belonged to relatively close-knit social networks which comprised numerous individuals potentially keen on delinquent careers and ready to join paramilitary ranks. In short, initial ex-AUC recruits facilitated ERPAC's massive and rapid recruitment. Pedro Guerrero alias "Cuchillo", the founder and the leader of the group until his death in 2010, recruited the hardcore of ERPAC among his ex-subordinates from Heroes de Guaviare Bloque of AUC. In fact, various sources report that he managed to conscripted almost immediately between 250 and 300 people in a similar way (CIT 2009, 106).

The skilful recruitment allowed ERPAC to enter organised violence markets in Eastern Plains almost immediately as the dominant and most powerful paramilitary actor in the region. It might seem puzzling how “Cuchillo” managed to recruit so many ex-paramilitaries who only few months earlier had voluntarily abandoned paramilitary profession via the participation in DDR programme. What makes it even more puzzling is that fact that DDR participation consisted of numerous individual benefits such as: accommodation, financial benefits for the period of one year and a half, job training, as well as one-shot transfers of the equivalent of 1,000 dollars in cash (Porch and Rassmussen 2008, 526-9). Villarraga (2013) tries to address this puzzle explaining the phenomena with reference to various often non-material hardships faced by the demobilised combatants during their reintegration period (already discussed at the end of Chapter One). For demobilised paramilitaries, one of the remedies to the situation included an immediate comeback to armed activities which, paradoxically, might have seemed the most secure and at the same time relatively profitable option. “Cuchillo” proved to be aware of these post-demobilisation dynamics and knew how to benefit from them.

Unfortunately, there is no detailed information (gender, age, social status) about the composition of ERPAC recruits. We know that there is a considerable number of female soldiers (CIT 2009, 108), which seems a novelty in paramilitary recruitment strategies, since in the past women constituted an absolute minority in paramilitary ranks (Arjona and Kalyvas 2008). The vast majority of ERPAC members who did not belong to the category of demobilised ex-AUC rank-and-files were predominantly young (CIT 2009, 108). What we may learn from such age composition of the group is the rather evident fact that “Cuchillo” targeted impoverished urban youth with scarce occupational possibilities other than delinquency. For these individuals, joining ERPAC constituted an attractive labour opportunity, since it offered paradoxically more stable and more predictable occupation than unorganised or gang-type delinquency. In fact, in the next sub-section I am going to show that the favourable extra-legal governance environment allowed ERPAC to avoid the

outbursts of violence and made the group the most secure employer in the criminal markets in Eastern Plains.

ERPAC's hierarchy was organised around the figure of its founder and unquestionable leader, Pedro Guerrero "Cuchillo". "In Eastern Plains people say he [was] new Pablo Escobar" (CIT 2009, 107). The comparison between "Cuchillo" and Pablo Escobar, the biggest drug-trafficker of all the times in Colombia, may be just casual, but it may also reflect the generalised perception of ERPAC's leader. Dismantling Escobar's metaphor we find that "Cuchillo" was perceived as a resourceful man with connections to the local and possibly regional politics, law enforcement authorities, economic elites, who operated as intermediaries between those social stratas which normally do not cooperate nor even communicate between each other (Ibid., 106). "Cuchillo" was the most visible leader but not the only leader of ERPAC. "Loco Barrera" occupied the second most important figure in ERPAC's organisational hierarchies. His role was to maintain group's hierarchical structure (with all faction being close to their visible leader) and at the same time to think how group's territorial influence could be extended without the risks of internal fragmentation (Ibid., 107). In other words, "Loco Barrera" had to guard the organisational unity within the group which controlled the territory of the size of Spain and characterised by very poor transportation infrastructure. The task proved manageable thanks to an intelligent division of labour and skilful intermediation among relatively independent sub-structures.

In the period under study, ERPAC's organisational structure showed high levels of specialisation and complex division of labour among its members. There existed various categories of "employment opportunities" within the group: full-time soldiers, part-time members, collaborators, "outsourced" informants and other services' providers. What is more, most of ERPAC's members could hold another job apart from paramilitary duties (also in the formal job market) and could participate in reintegration programmes within DDR scheme (CIT 2009, 108). The idea behind such solution was twofold. On the one hand, in order not to expose themselves to

law enforcement authorities, newly recruited ERPAC's members divided their time between criminal and DDR-related activities. On the other hand, the group wanted to bind its recruits by mutually profitable interests rather than by time-consuming ideological training. Such training might not have been available anyway because of the changed paramilitary environment (ERPAC could no longer operate freely in Eastern Plains territories and must have avoided becoming too visible to less tolerant law enforcement authorities).

[Demobilised soldiers] can participate in the group's activities on full-time basis — according to the rank they had before demobilisation — and work as informants or spies in the neighbourhoods, urban centres, critical venues; or they can be responsible for specific activities such as recruitment of new members, extortions, transportation of chemicals, firearms and other military devices, at the same time being employed at the formal labour market. There are also people who participate in reintegration programme and continue to be parallelly involved in illegal activities at urban or rural level (CIT 2009, 108).

As we have already seen, the group largely adopted organisational solutions drawn from earlier paramilitaries' experience, especially from Bloque Centauros of AUC, while adding some significant novelties to them. One of these novelties included the distinction between organisational models in urban and rural areas.

In ERPAC there exists division of labour and clear differentiation between urban activities (intelligence, information gathering, control of micro drug markets, extortions, recruitment, intimidation, paid assassinations) and rural ones (vigilance of critical venues, protection of coca and chemicals transportation, patrols). In this way the group maintains organisational

structure of Bloque Centauros, however with smaller number of members, organically divided in three factions (CIT 2009, 108).

ERPAC's leadership correctly observed that both kinds of territories (rural and urban) allowed for rather different modalities of paramilitary governance. It made it beneficial then to create groups specialised in dealing with governance exercised in each type of terrain. For example, ERPAC's rural groups were better quipped military, being prepared for the possibility of unexpected combats, especially with guerrilla's forces.

They operate in groups of five to ten individuals (maximum squad), not necessarily wearing uniforms, with rifles or handguns, to monitor critical venues such as those offering access to river and land routes, the entries to viewing points and pathways historically controlled by paramilitaries which reunite in resguardo areas [indigenous collective territories] (CIT 2009, 109).

At the same time, urban squads maintained greater secrecy since their operations depended more on the intelligence work rather than on physical confrontations with armed groups (Ibid., 109).

It is important to stress that the population did not always possess discriminating tools to learn the exact structure of ERPAC's local factions, which stood in sheer contrast to AUC's times. The command was not known, the hierarchy kept secret. "They are not easily recognisable as in the case of AUC's members, but remain undercover in urban centres, wear civilian clothes, not necessarily carry arms and stay very discreet" (CIT 2009, 107). The territorial control was exercised on the impersonal basis. It seemed less "bureaucratized" and did not allow for many informal solutions. In the past Eastern plains communities could come to paramilitaries commanders to negotiate punishments and ask for favours, which did not seem to be the case in ERPAC's era:

Before you knew who was who, you knew who was a commander, who gave orders [...] now one doesn't know whom to talk to when he receives a threat, verbal or written one, which orders him to keep his mouth shut or to leave the town (CIT 2009, 114)

As noted before, a big part of ERPAC's structure was composed of outsourced parts. ERPAC's most frequent outsourcing applied to external hit-men or intimidators, so-called *sicarios*, contracted for one-shot operations. The other outsourced functions in ERPAC organisation included: "collection agencies [a type of extortion/protection racket], bodyguards, intelligence units, automobile logistics managers" (CIT 2009, 109). These people were not linked to any paramilitary structures on a permanent basis. Having done their job, they usually became free to pursue their own businesses. ERPAC contracted those *sicarios* on the base of their reputation for violence in various localities of Eastern Plains. By selecting those who were feared locally, the group hoped to avoid the actual exercise of violence, achieving its goals via the combination of fear-driven obedience and limited intimidation in case of defiance. In other words, ERPAC allowed local criminal actors to operate independently as long as they did it in compliance and in co-ordination with the group's particular objectives (HRW 2010, 72-6).

Extra-Legal Governance Model

In 2006 ERPAC started as a group of around 250 individuals concentrated mainly in Guaviare department. In the course of group's rapid growth it expanded its activities to the territory of all five departments constituting Eastern Plains region.³⁹

ERPAC is present in urban centres, especially in degraded neighbourhoods in Villavicencio, San Martín, Granada, Puerto López, Puerto Gaitán, Mapiripán, Puerto Rico, Puerto Concordia (Meta), San José del Guaviare, El Retorno, and Calamar (Guaviare). On the other hand, interviewed sources indicated that they can also be present in municipalities of Vichada, Casanara and Guainía, even though it is not sure if they entered urban areas there (CIT 2009, 114).

In the first place ERPAC's territorial expansion covered almost all territories of prior paramilitary influence. It managed to enter into the areas previously controlled by Bloque Centauros, Autodefensas de Meta y Vichada, Bloque Central Bolívar (BCB), and some traditional niches of Autodefensas Campesinas de Casanare's governance. At the same time ERPAC extended its control also to border zones where AUC had never reached before other than via intermediaries (CIT 2009, 110). The new frontier localities, including some parts of Arauca, Vichada, and possibly Guainía, were contiguous to those where ERPAC's presence had already been firmly established.

³⁹ Some sources claim that ERPAC operated also in the sixth department usually treated as a part of Eastern Plains region, Guainía, at least since 2009 (Prieto 2013, 5). Nonetheless, my NN sources do not report any paramilitary activity in this region. It may not be surprising given the fact that Guainía department covers rainforest area with minimal strategic significance other than hideout or emergency transit zone.

Map 1: The territory of Eastern Plains.

Source: reproduced from ICG (2012, 22).

Human Rights Watch report (2010, 74) warned of “the consolidation of the expansion project of the paramilitary group known as the “Cuchillos” [other name for ERPAC] ... in a strategy that has focused on cutting the territorial, economic, and transit circuit considered strategic.” In general, ERPAC’s expansion appears to have been based on two principles. To begin with, the contingency between new and already held territories mattered. Contrarily to ERPAC, other paramilitary groups operating in Colombia at the same time more frequently opted for discontinuous expansion strategy (Prieto 2013, 5). The second prerogative of ERPAC’s territorial expansion seems related to communication opportunities offered by newly conquered territories. The groups wanted to control areas historically deficient in terms of public infrastructure which,

nonetheless, still possessed some rudimentary transportation facilities. How did the accomplishment of both expansion principles influence ERAPC's governance in Eastern Plains?

In the early twenty first century the highest leader of Bloque Centauros and "Cuchillo"'s superior, Miguel Arroyabe, expressed his full admiration for Martin "Llanos", the leader of the biggest paramilitary group in Eastern Plains until 2003, Autodefensas Campesinas de Casanare (ACC), for the manner in which he exercised paramilitary governance in the region. Arroyabe admired "Llanos" because he justly observed that ACC's leader was more skilled in managing complex extra-legal governance than an average paramilitary commander, drug-trafficker, or organised criminal. During the long years of his group's domination in Eastern Plains "Llanos" established a complex paramilitary governance characterised by diversified revenues (coming from drug-trafficking, public contracts' manipulation and "quasi-institutionalised" extended extortions machine) and by generalised social support among almost all Eastern Plains social stratas. Arroyabe saw "Llanos" as an example of extra-legal governance provider who combined three achievements rarely observed simultaneously in a criminal-like enterprise: rapid self-enrichment, stability of one's businesses and wide supporting coalitions (Pérez 2011, 30). Admiration apart, Arroyabe along with his Bloque Centauros' soldiers proved to be very good observers and quickly learnt ACC's lessons. In order to defeat Martin "Llanos"'s organisation, they actually decided to imitate their extra-legal monopoly in Eastern Plains in which they partly succeeded (see Pérez 2011, González 2007).

Bloque Centauros' objectives had not fully materialised until 2006 when ERPAC took over paramilitary governance in Eastern Plains. Following Arroyabe's footsteps, "Cuchillo" and his men tried to mirror ACC's paramilitary achievements. The group was said that "as in the cities as in the countryside they have concrete interests — either economic (rents control), military (consolidation of mobility corridors, information gathering and new members recruitment), or social ones (intimidations of individuals and collective actors, populations' confinement)" (CIT 2009, 124). In the rest of this sub-section I am going to characterise ERPAC's governance in more detail. I will

pay attention to an analytical distinction between group's economic and "political" activities. Among the latter ones I am going to describe those activities which did not directly earn them money, but at the same time had a fundamental significance for the stability of group's governance and its long-run profitability.

Unfortunately, there exists no precise quantification of ERPAC's economic activities. The most detailed account available includes an examination of the structure of ERPAC's finances cited by González (2007, 272). The largest share of their revenues came from drug-trafficking. The importance of drug-trafficking for ERPAC's finances could be well illustrated by the regional distribution of coca cultivation and its coincidence with the most concentrated group's presence:

ERPAC keeps presence in four out of ten municipalities with the biggest area dedicated to coca cultivation in the country (Cumaribo, El Retorno, Mapiripán y San José del Guaviare), which amounts to 12.2 per cent of national cultivations, or 9,866 of 81,000 hectares (ha). At the same time, ERPAC operates in minimum seven out of eleven Meta municipalities with coca cultivations, which equals 94.1 per cent of total departmental areas. In Guaviare, despite the reduction of coca cultivations between 2006 and 2008 (from 9,477 ha to 9,299 and 6,629 ha), ERPAC keeps urban and rural presence via informants, sicarios and coca paste buyers in San José del Guaviare y El Retorno, municipalities which concentrate the biggest cultivation area in the department with 2,143 and 2,145 ha cultivated respectively (equivalent of 68.8 per cent of the departmental territory) (CIT 2009, 111).

Some sources claim that ERPAC presence in drug industry might have been limited to the role of "a security contractor and owner or protector of cocaine laboratories, rather than directly controlling coca cultivation or international trafficking" (ICG 2012, 7). In Varese's analytical scheme (2010) ERPAC could be placed closer to mafias rather than other organised crime groups or gangs. It

seems that the group not only aimed to monopolise the actual provision of certain illicit commodities (by having them managed directly by its own members) but also searched to monopolise the market indirectly by imposing their own rules and order on other independent drug-traffickers. In other words, ERPAC did not pretend to be the only group to work in the drug industry in Eastern Plains, but it pretended to be the one who organised the market, imposed its order, decided who could operate in the market and who could not. The second biggest share of ERPAC's revenues, on the other hand, came from the extortions of big oil extraction companies (Pérez 2011). Both types of activities — drug-trafficking and extortions in oil industry — needed a powerful military apparatus capable of using violence which evolved with ERPAC's already described expansion. The difficulty in managing these activities lied not in identifying the targets, but in being able to impose one's will and to get oneself respected.

Protection and extortion of small and medium agricultural, industrial or service entrepreneurs constituted group's third revenue source.

ERAPC continues to extort cattle ranchers in the regions in Southern Casanare and has repeatedly threatened them for being the accomplices of Autodefensas Campesinas de Casanare. They repeat this practice with small organisations of fishermen who, apart from paying [extra-legal] taxes, have to inform about their movements and about the movements of public forces. The same happens with merchants from San José del Guaviare y San Martín (CIT 2009, 122).

Diversification of extortion/protection revenues (collecting them from various classes of entrepreneurs) was especially important for the group from the point of view of their firm territorial presence in Eastern Plains. Thanks to the widespread control over various forms of socio-economic exchange, the group became more recognisable, feared, and therefore obeyed locally. ERPAC

created a network of individuals and enterprises dependent on them in terms of credit availability, private security (protection against common delinquency or guerrilla's ambushes), social and labour disputes settlement, and contracts enforcement. For example, Eastern Plains' employers used ERPAC intimidatory power against their disobedient workers, trade unions, or communities when those protested. In some sense, the group could count on some of their clients as their accomplices or supporters who facilitated group's intelligence activities, or organisational reproduction (e.g by advertising recruitment among family members; see HRW 2010), and alarmed them in face of law enforcement authorities movements. It is well illustrated in the quote below:

The principal objective [of territorial control] is to obtain rents from micro illicit cultivation markets, prostitution networks and legal sectors through extortions and/or facade enterprises (entertainment spots and hotels for example); co-opt networks, hit-men and gangs which operate as paid assassins; and recruit new members (demobilised ones during reintegration process, demobilised ones who no longer participate in the programme or have been expelled from it; and children and adolescents) (CIT 2009, 113).

In sum, I believe that group's economic activities can be divided into those which brought the gross revenues (such as drug-trafficking and oil companies extortion) and those which helped them to build a complex extra-legal governance system privileged to settle disputes and to enforce all sorts of collusive agreements (Pérez 2011). Given the nature of their governance, it would be wrong to see ERPAC as the continuation of AUC paramilitaries whom Mauricio Romero (2003) defined as the guardians of status quo (conservatory, unequal and exclusive). It seems that ERPAC became more "democratised" offering services both to small and medium-size entrepreneurs: "ERPAC extended its "security offer" towards regions of medium or small rural properties, peasant economies and colonisation areas included" (González 2007, 271). Nevertheless, ERPAC's

protection services, from time to time *offered* to local entrepreneurs without any obligation to accept them, in most of the cases were *imposed* on Eastern Plains entrepreneurs without any possibility to reject them. In the following paragraphs I am going to show that the group found it beneficial not only to exercise the less lucrative economic activities, but also to occupy themselves with activities which apparently brought them no material return while incurring quite considerable costs.

In fact, ERPAC not only earned money but also spent them, or — to put it more precise terms — invested money. I would argue that these expenditures or investments represented ERPAC's costs of maintaining social support and reinforcing group's legitimacy as extra-legal governance provider. Let us recall that "ERPAC's narco-business gave it a stable social base, [...] Some rural parts of Mapiripán (Meta) were virtually dependent on him ["Cuchillo"] economically. This allowed him to cast himself as a social benefactor in an area where jobs in the legal economy and functioning civilian state institutions have been traditionally scarce" (ICG 2012, 6). González (2007, 272-3) shows that ERPAC's expenditures covered small local investments as well as macro regional development projects such as:

- Active linkage with local and regional economic development dynamics, through huge projects and participation in the entrepreneurial activities in the areas of agriculture, agro-industry, commerce, land/river/air transportation, services, and infrastructure.
- Purchase of [...] school materials and alimentation.
- Participation and creation of the units of social and entrepreneurial management, such as cooperatives, producers' associations, corporations for development, associations of peasants, displaced populations, agriculture workers, small cattle ranchers.
- Support for the military structure, beginning with patrolmen and squad leaders, to bloques' commanders and members of the high command.
- Medial assistance to public troops.

Why shall I consider these expenditures as “political” rather than economic activities of the group? Why do I treat them as costs rather than investments? Of course, some of the expenditures could bring both “political” and material returns. A good example of such situation came from large infrastructural investments realised by ERPAC-affiliated construction companies. On the one hand, the works definitely benefited some local communities by building them roads or by extending the closest electricity network to reach their settlements. On the other hand, those investments let paramilitaries lay their hands on government-sponsored *regalias* or other generous public subsidies. The idea behind *regalias* was to speed up infrastructural development in Eastern Plains in the wake of oil extraction opportunities discovered in the region in the late 1990s (Pérez 2011, 20). The government knew that the region might attract many lucrative investments on the condition that some basic facilities necessary for extraction to operate could be guaranteed (Garay and Salcedo 2012). Pérez (2011, 21) shows that in fact a great part of those development-directed subsidies were actually captured by ERPAC-affiliated enterprises.

Nevertheless, not all ERPAC’s “political” activities turned out so profitable in purely financial terms. They exercised a vast range of charity-like activities. For example, they provided food and health assistance to local communities and ran associations for the handicapped (suffering from violence-related physical or mental handicaps, displaced, or impoverished ones; see NN, various entries). Those forms of ERPAC’s community support may appear a little bit paradoxical given the fact that a great majority of associated handicapped people found themselves in that miserable condition at least partly as a result of previous paramilitary violence. What seems even more puzzling is the fact that I do find a lot of evidence that social organisations such as handicapped or displaced associations were actually the constant targets of paramilitary victimisation since 2003. How can one explain the fact that ERPAC supported these types of organisations whom they (along with other minor paramilitary groups in Eastern Plains) were most

likely to persecute according to NN data? Reuter's (1984) analysis may be helpful to understand the paradox of the situation. His argument regards the Italo-American mafia in New York, however it seems applicable to the case at hand. Reuter claims that Italo-American mafiosi did never repress organised forms of resistance or collective bargaining as long as they could have assumed the leadership of those initiatives or movements (Ibid., 56). The same mechanism appears to have been at work in ERPAC's case. The group promoted social organisations in order to be able to control and channel the expressions of social protest. At the same time, they severely repressed any similar initiatives which escaped their control (e.g. NN, Meta, 02.04.2005).

The last not strictly profitable group' "political" activity consisted of supporting national army and local police forces — either with terrain knowledge, equipment or even staff. In fact, law enforcement authorities and paramilitaries in Eastern Plains were said to have conducted coordinated actions against petty criminals, drug addicts, prostitutes and other "bad reputation" individuals in 2006-2010 period (e.g. NN, Guaviare, 12.09.2011, 17.12.2011; Casanare, 24.04.2009). How can we explain similar collaboration? One answer is to see ERPAC's initiative as aimed at demonstrating their taste for order in Eastern Plains region. Counterintuitively, extra-legal governance providers do not usually operate in the territories characterised by excessive anarchy and disorder. The likelihood of their success is oftentimes described as a U-shape function of public order observed in the territories of their interest, with both minimum and maximum levels of order making it close to impossible to establish extra-legal governance (see Tilly 2003; Shortland and Varese 2014; Centeno 1997). An alternative explanation of ERPAC's costly support for the benefit of local law enforcement authorities might suggest that those services were tacitly exchanged for greater benevolence and tolerance on the part of police and the army towards paramilitary governance in the region.

In general, the reasons why ERPAC decided to embark on "political" activities as well as those for maintaining some less profitable sources of their economic syndicate seem related to

group's strive for strict territorial control. Why was this control so important? ERPAC found couple of reasons which justified their investments in socio-political milieu which did not bring direct financial returns. The first one was the need to reduce the actual use of violence. The efficiency of mere intimidation is the function of group's reputation for violence and the credibility of its threats (Gambetta 1992, Falcone 1991). The very fundamental prerequisite to build such a reputation is to be visible and criminally recognisable — which means in practice to maintain relatively firm presence in the territory. ERPAC seems to have understood this lesson and developed such territorial presence with an aim of minimising its actual use of costly violence: "To manage communications over a vast and sparsely populated terrain, it established a chain of informants ("puntos") in strategic locations. This also ensured its integration in the community, reducing the need for armed intimidation" (ICG 2012, 7). The quote points to another reason for costly investments in tight territorial control — to make drug-trafficking safer and faster. Having a variety of secure and monitored transportation channels, traffickers become less predictable and more difficult to intercept by law enforcement authorities.

Both of these reasons come to the same thing if we think of them from another perspective. They were all about the stability of groups's extra-legal governance. On the one hand, for extra-legal governance providers the surge in violence always means a loss. The "paramilitary war" in Eastern Plains (2003-2004) shows how uneconomical it was to fight. For example, in an aftermath of that intraparamilitary conflict both competitors lost a good portion of their influence in local-level politics (Pérez 2011, 31). On the other hand, organised crime analysts such as Sánchez-Jankowski (1991) or Akerlof and Yellen (1994) always stressed the importance of extra-legal governance providers' "safe heavens". It was in those places where gang members or mafiosi encountered benevolence and supportiveness of local communities who stayed on their side in case of law enforcement authorities' actions against the delinquents. Following the logic, the multitude

of ERPAC's "safe heavens" made their job all the easier, more beneficial and more stable, and it might have seemed reason good enough to invest in them.

CONCLUSION

The thesis addressed the problem of conflict resolution and post-conflict risks with reference to the ongoing Colombian civil war. I analysed puzzle of the heterogeneity of paramilitary violence dynamics in the two Colombian regions of Pacific Coast and Eastern Plains since the beginning of the partial (paramilitaries-oriented) peaces process initiated in 2003. In Chapters Three and Four I demonstrated quantitatively that the presence of state's anti-paramilitary repression during and after the application of President Uribe's resolution scheme increased the intensity of municipal paramilitary violence at least by 54 per cent each year in Pacific Coast, but apparently had not such effect in Eastern Plains. These divergent results invited me to reconsider the dynamics of paramilitary violence in the context of anti-paramilitary repression paying greater attention to very specific mechanisms driving the relationship between violence and repression. The qualitative analyses from Chapters Five and Six clarified the between-regional heterogeneity in paramilitaries' response to state's crackdown. They suggest that repressive intervention in Pacific Coast fuelled paramilitary violence by triggering resource substitution processes and creating predatory incentives — the outcomes largely absent from Eastern Plains paramilitary panorama. The absence/presence of these negative externalities of anti-paramilitary intervention was found dependent on the partisanship/non-partisanship of the crackdown.

It needs to be stressed that the aim of anti-paramilitary repression in the two analysed regions was not to eradicate the social roots of private ordering markets but only to destroy their main actors. A resident of one Pacific Coast municipality recalls: "Before the Rastrojos, we had NG. The army attacked NG about a year ago...The army stayed three weeks. They left, and a few days later the Rastrojos entered Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz. The NG did too, but as Black Eagles.... The Rastrojos do checkpoints in Santa Cruz.... The Black Eagles and Rastrojos are fighting over

territory” (HRW 2010, 85). The quote illustrates why military interventions cannot guarantee everyday order in the long term (quelling demand for private ordering) and why they cannot prevent the arrival of new extra-legal governance providers nor the retreats of previously defeated ones (quelling supply of private ordering). As a result, Nussio (2009, 227) finds that the defeat (disarmament) of particular paramilitary group does not affect local demand for paramilitary ordering, and he shows that community members still perceive paramilitaries as those “who provide private security services [...] who can help in case of some inconveniences, some problems.” What has changed since the outset of anti-paramilitary repression in Pacific Coast region — but not in Eastern Plains one — was the kind of regional governance paramilitaries could and wanted to offer. Rastrojos’ case study demonstrates that the state’s repressive intervention dealt a serious blow to the group, but not serious enough to eliminate them from regional extra-legal governance markets. Rastrojos remained operating in Pacific Coast but had to adapt organisationally and strategically to the new hostile environment. The result of these adaptation was group’s greater propensity for predatory violence which explains the non-improvement of regional security records in post-demobilisation era.

Implications

I believe that the thesis offers important policy implications for the ongoing peace process with the biggest Colombian guerrilla group, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). My study suggests that the security outcomes of insurgents’ future DDR may largely depend on the behaviour of law enforcement authorities in extra-legal governance markets abandoned by demobilised FARC — an issue notably neglected in the existing forecasts (e.g. Nussio & Howe 2012). A positive message of the present research is the one that the success or failure of future FARC’s demobilisation lies largely in state’s hands. Empirical data from the past

conflict resolution achievements shows, for example, that the heterogeneity of “de-paramilitarisation” of violent conflict in Pacific Coast can hardly be explained with the argument of the weakness of the state. As a result, my initial preoccupations with the scarcity of public institutions to manage post-conflict reality in Colombian peripheries may be less of a problem than I hypothesised at the end of Chapter One. In fact, in Chapter Four we have seen that within-municipal variation in paramilitary violence does not seem to diminish with improved policing as implied by Howe et al.’s study (2010). I would argue that the concept of state’s capacity needs to be disaggregated in order to understand which weaknesses and which strengths may contribute to the perpetuation or reduction of insecurity. The thesis shows that the structural forms of state’s weakness (widespread private ordering) cannot be fixed with emergency instruments (military repression) in order to bring immediate security dividends, but at the same time the structural forms of state’s weakness should not automatically translate into failed security improvements in post-war Colombia.

State’s reactions aside, the present study shows that the re-emergence of many demobilised insurgents to extra-legal governance markets in an aftermath of FARC’s disarmament can be taken for granted. Compared to paramilitaries, insurgents are more strongly indoctrinated and less prepared for civilian life (Oppenheim et al 2013). Their education, on average, is lower than paramilitaries’ one (Arjona and Kalyvas 2006). It all makes their reintegration into the society even harder than in the case of demobilised paramilitaries. Nussio and Howe (2012) argue that the insurgents’ return to organised violence can be different from paramilitaries’ one due to the diverse nature of their respective organisations. Guerrillas groups are highly centralised and characterised by internal cohesion and strict discipline (Gutiérrez 2008). As such, there is every likelihood that they are going to suffer from frenzy fragmentation once their central command gets dissolved. More importantly, when we take into account the fact that law enforcement authorities today are strongly opposed to negotiated solution with insurgents (Nussio and Howe 2012, 60), it seems almost certain

that ex-rebels' entrance into private ordering markets will be accompanied by heavy repressive actions. Additionally, because of their lack of social embeddedness (Villarraga 2013), ex-insurgents are very unlikely to build complex extra-legal governance monopolies (see Gribaudi 2009, Brancaccio 2011). In short, their post-demobilisation re-emergence is more likely to occur according to the same model as in Rastrojos' case, which will reduce their non-violent resources and disincentive even the highest commanders to impose restraints on predatory tendencies. All the empirical evidence considered, I believe that the forthcoming peace accords with the biggest Colombian guerrilla, FARC, may bring short- or medium-run escalation of violence rather than security improvements.

There are few theoretical implications from the present study for organised crime research. Firstly, my work illustrates the trade-offs inherent to anti-organised crime actions and the role of public opinion in determining anti-criminal policy choices. Paradoxically, it seems that in case of anti-organised crime fight the least painful repressive solutions are usually those which are met with the biggest public criticism. The Colombian case shows that it happens so because activists, journalists and all sorts of so-called neutral observers (e.g. pro-legality associations, human rights organisations) try to condition law enforcement authorities' strategies by making public opinion rage, for example, at state's alleged tolerance towards criminals (which may in fact be strategic). If massive, the similar public campaigns can force political leaders to adopt more radical forms of anti-organised crime fight which bring such negative externalities as increased insecurity or the escalation of the most lethal forms of organised crime violence. In the end, it turns out that some expressions of civic commitment to rule of law (no matter how highly appreciable *per se*) unconsciously promote repressive interventions associated with the highest costs for citizens.

Secondly, the thesis demonstrates that there is diminishing utility of the military strategy in face of resourceful criminal groups which are usually very quick to adapt to the new situation. This finding echoed a common conviction that mafias cannot be completely defeated with military

strategy alone (see La Spina 2008). The problem is well illustrated in a comment on anti-mafia military repression adopted by Italian general Dalla Chiesa:

Dalla Chiesa makes only one error. The one of vanity. In fact, he remained a soldier and, thus, above all, an orator. He liked to transform any challenge in an open war, with all vain glories of the combat: flags, tambourines, proclamations, applauses, popular love demonstrations. All of that against an enemy who was always underground, a mortifying, threatening knot of snakes which could be anywhere, at any time under his feet; which could be sitting next to him at the stage during national celebrations, shaking his hands, offering him greetings and congratulations (Fava 1983).

This thought leads us to the last tempting question which still remains unanswered at the end of this work: did Colombian state do well to launch fully-fledged crackdown against paramilitaries in Pacific Coast instead of mildly repressive solution adopted in Eastern Plains? Undoubtedly the intervention has had its high costs, but were not they actually inevitable? Smith and Varese (2001, 364-76) argue that “[t]he level of violence observed by citizens actually increases precisely at the moment when the State is supplying better policing to the community [...] Violence is unavoidable consequence of fighting organised crime [...] from a public policy perspective, these instances of violence are signs of success, rather than failure.” This quote reminds us that what looks like a failure from the perspective of conflict resolution practitioner could be judged in a positive manner by organised crime analyst.

Having said that, military repression of Pacific Coast paramilitaries resulted in rather excessive volumes of violence in the region. Given that the main goal of anti-paramilitary offensive was to improve public security, the repressive strategy appears more of a failure. High levels of violence in Pacific Coast are too persistent to treat them as ordinary outcome of anti-criminal

action. What is worse, the consequences of the military crackdown in Pacific Coast may stretch beyond the insecurity crisis (already evident), possibly contributing to the slowdown of regional economic development. As I have demonstrated in the empirical section, law enforcement authorities' actions in Pacific Coast led to the emergence of decentralised predation system. Easterly argues (2006, 309) that while all forms of predation are bad, the decentralised one is especially harmful to economic growth and development. Probably, the greatest mistake of Uribe's administration in Pacific Coast was the hazardous meandering between negotiated and repressive anti-paramilitary solutions which made each of them less effective than it could have been if applied with consistency.

On the other hand, was the all-encompassing negotiated strategy applied in Eastern Plains more successful? Undoubtedly, security improvements in the region after 2006 were overshadowed by the discovery of public administration's profound infiltration by criminal actors, which reinforced the perception of criminals' impunity and undermined already scarce trust in public institutions. Its shortcomings aside, the local and regional state in Eastern Plains managed to maintain political, economic and social order. For this reason I shall argue, along with Shortland and Varese (2012, 16-7), that the states engaged in fighting organised crime may still find it more opportune to negotiate with some forms of organised crime as long as they "provide effective governance to local communities", even if such move is bound to become highly unpopular among voters.

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