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Colombia, the Resilient Survivor: DDR, Elusive Peace, and the Politics of Post-Conflict

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Colombia, the Resilient Survivor

DDR, Elusive Peace, and the Politics of Post-Conflict

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"When crimes begin to pile up they become invisible. When sufferings become unendurable the cries are no longer heard"

—Bertold Brecht

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Preface

This thesis has defined my senior year of Pomona College. When I chose to write about Colombia's armed conflict I did not know the extent to which I would become attached, detached, hopeless, hopeful, frustrated, and encouraged by what I would learn. And this was not just because the International Relations thesis is a monster. The topic itself is taxing, academically and emotionally.

At the beginning of last semester I knew with certainty I wanted to write my thesis on the post-conflict in Colombia. Peace negotiations in Havana between the Colombian state and the country's largest guerrilla group were aiming to close the chapter of half a decade of civil war. This was a pressing topic of peacebuilding and security studies. This is the conflict that had been etched in my earliest memories. This is the conflict that follows anyone who was born in Colombia regardless of where they go, regardless of whether they have spent the majority of their lives elsewhere...I felt this was my conflict.

My parents were suffocating under the weight of one of Colombia's most violent periods. They were anxious, nervous, frightened, and worried about their young daughters' future in a country where entire villages were annihilated by armed groups and kidnapping reports were common news. They wanted to leave before we would be part of the next body count in the usual kidnapping report on the news. My parents wanted their daughters to have another view of the world, to have the opportunity to see something different, and live a reality unstained by violence.

I had kept my happy early childhood memories and pushed aside the ones I didn't quite understand, or rather didn't want to understand—what would be the use, anyway? Violence would always be present and the news would always be filled with massacres, kidnappings, FARC, ELN, paramilitaries, cocaine, etc. Colombia was a paradise that always held an allure for me because of its beauty and my loving family. It was the memory of the people, landscapes, culture, and contagious vibrancy that I kept in my heart growing up in the States.

When I started the research for my thesis in September, I was ravenous for information and any time that I could spend finding more information on my topic. I was excited for the climactic academic journey of a two-semester capstone thesis project that my International Relations professors had promised. The history of the nation, the history of the conflict and of the post-conflict, the different attempts at peace, the bloody narcotrafficking, the scholarship on conflict resolution—I was determined to learn as much as I could and make my thesis the best I could. On September 23rd, the Government of Colombia announced that in six months they would sign the peace agreement with the FARC.

I knew of the violence and of the displaced victims: I recall seeing entire *campesino* families on the streets of Bogota begging for money, destitute, as they had managed to escape but only with their lives from yet another attack by the guerrilla. Hearing the personal narratives in my head at this age, not blinded by childhood, was different

however. Reading *The Heart of the War* by Constanza Ardila Galvis was the first dagger that pierced my reality, my identity, and my image of Colombia. The narratives were devastating. My blood was just as Colombian as the people in the book, yet I seemed so far removed and that pained me. Inevitably, I questioned my own Colombianness.



When I was first developing my thesis, I intended to work on a plan that included an overarching view of DDR, a three-pronged post-conflict strategy of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration that is intended for security and stability and in a post-conflict environment to transition to an eventual peace. Although I was thinking about DDR in its entirety, I was focusing on the Reintegration aspect, or the process of re-establishing ex-combatants in civilian life—the weakest link and perhaps the most important and complicated one as it involves the entire society. Because of this, I thought that perhaps I should concentrate my efforts on just this facet of DDR. To be honest, I was not really looking too intensively into the disarmament and demobilization aspects. I was becoming more interested in the “what next?” question, in the post-conflict aspect that would be so integral in determining the nation’s future—would this conflict last for another 20, 30, 50 years because of yet another inadequate agreement and the impossibility of conciliating the multiple interests into the one and only legitimate goal of peace?

Over winter break, I had the opportunity to travel to Colombia to conduct research for my thesis. I quickly understood the extent of the polarization within the different levels of society. It felt raw and tangible. Whenever I talked to anyone there were two subjects on the table: a fiasco involving a Colombian mistakenly crowned and then hastily uncrowned Miss Universe, and the peace process. People were highly vocal about both. Either you believed in the peace process or you didn’t, and those who said “*Yo? Yo no creo en la paz...no me hablen de eso*” puzzled me the most. When I mentioned my overarching thesis theme of post-conflict and DDR, people were either impressed by my audacity and probable academic rigor for addressing such a topic, or they looked at me with a look that said, “*Pobrecita, no sabe en lo que se mete*” and commented how it was an immensely complex and undecipherable topic. When I talked about the fact that I would be focusing on the reintegration of ex-combatants, someone even told me how I had chosen the wrong side and how instead I should be focusing on the victims, a much more approachable topic. Regardless of people’s opinions, the talk of peace was everywhere. Even in the movies. Before the movie trailers started, a commercial talking about the progress being made in Havana was played.

I learned so much by being in the country and talking to various people—I felt the turmoil, as well as the frustration of the citizens at not being part of the process and feeling alienated by the government. I also found widespread pessimism. Having traveled to Colombia motivated me to write the rest of my thesis this second semester, as I was able to grasp a sense of the everyday situation of civilians in the midst of this latest attempt at peace reconciliation. I realized the need for all segments of society to have a mindset for peace and a willingness to cooperate with this latest attempt. This latest

project would not come to a successful fruition lest all the different segments, including the state, the military, the victims, the receiving society, and the ex-combatants, chose to give some ground in order to reach a real settlement. I do not mean having the same perspective, but having the same goal of progressing to a state that could see an eventual peace.

Second semester came and I continued to work on my thesis, more mechanically, more stressed, and more exhausted than at the beginning of my journey, but with the impulse from my experience in Colombia. I was not just writing about theory, I was writing about the people I met. I was writing about that victim I serendipitously met in the elevator, who so graciously shared with me her story as a union member displaced by violence, looking for reparations in Bogota. I questioned the theoretical articles I had previously read because even though the policies for helping victims and ex-combatants seemed well developed on paper, in reality the red tape and incompetence in their execution was not accommodating to the people it claimed to help.

While I was getting closer to the deadline for completing my thesis, Colombia was getting closer to the deadline for completing peace negotiations on March 23rd that would end the conflict with the FARC. I *had* to write a chapter that tied the current events behind the politics of peacemaking to post-conflict. So much was happening in Colombia. Every day I engulfed Colombian news from *El Tiempo*, *El Espectador*, *Semana*, etc. Excited at first at the momentum of the situation, I quickly became drained. Colombia's news during these first few months of 2016 were not positive—they were exhausting, frustrating, *draining*. The peace negotiations looked bleak. Colombia was chaotic.

March 23rd came. With tears in my sleep-deprived eyes, I felt betrayed, powerless, frustrated, and hopeless. The long-awaited signature that would concretize a peace agreement between the FARC and the government would not happen on the planned date, March 23rd 2016. I knew it wouldn't. I knew it was for the best—A haphazard agreement between two actors still in disagreement about issues like disarmament, just to meet a deadline would be regrettable and shameful. Yet, reading this on the cover of *El Tiempo* still hurt me deeply. Why were these two parties so frustrating? I despised them for it. I despised the government for its corruption, its abandonment of the people, its lack of infrastructure, its self-interest, and its ineptitude. I despised the FARC for the fifty plus years of suffering, of killing, of human rights violations, for wearing white in Havana as if they really wanted peace and for continuing to have the audacity of claiming they were fighting for the people. I despised both parties for not having met the deadline, for not having worked within these six months to meet a deadline that they had set themselves. I despised them for not letting me write in my thesis that peace had been signed. I want peace, I really want peace, I'm exhausted, *we* are exhausted. No one had asked them for that date, yet they chose it, announced it to the world on September 23rd 2015, and took a Kodak-moment picture as a congratulatory pat in the back. Second dagger.

I continued working on my thesis, motivated by the support and advice of my thesis advisor—we were close to the end and it felt good. Then the third dagger came.

Imagine watching a marathon of horror movies in the middle of the night and knowing that everything you had seen was true. That is how I felt as soon as I put down the narrative of displaced victims *Throwing Stones at the Moon*, to grab a London Fog at the Motley coffeehouse. My hands were trembling, my heart was palpitating and my teeth were chattering. I was gasping for air and crying. A dry cry. No tears, but rather a hyperventilating cry. Dry sobs of frustration, anger, sadness, and disgust. I wanted to be strong. I thought I was. Reading account after account of murders, suffering, of real families trapped in an endless cycle of violence, is enough to destabilize anyone. I am attached to this. By curse or by blessing I was born in the same land as these people whose suffering and testament are enough to weaken your knees and leave your mouth open, aghast in horror and respect. This suffering continues. It hurts to know. I can't do anything. This fratricide continues and God knows until how long.

I don't know when this will stop. I don't know when people, who by chance were born to a poor family in the countryside, who by chance were deemed to be marginalized, who by chance became victims, who by chance became combatants, will have the same right to dignity, the same right to live and the same right to peace as any other human being, as the politicians who are disgustingly stuffing their pockets and sending the infrastructure of the country and the future of their constituents *a la mierda*.

My homeland betrayed me. It's horrifying to feel pessimistic and let go of whatever little string of goodness I saw. It's horrifying to feel ashamed of where I was born. It's horrifying to only see a country through its politics and violence, knowing that the people are more than that. It's horrifying to become disillusioned. But once it happens, it's done. The veil is gone. I see the stark reality and it's hopeless. I've read and investigated enough to taint the idealistic image I had kept in my heart, enough for bitter disenchantment. The veil of nostalgia is in tatters; I do not yearn for a glorious return nor cherish the memory of this country whose violence disgusts me.

I was writing an academic piece and had to be systematic. No more emotional attachment or else I would not be able to finish it. I am exhausted but I want to do justice to the topic. I want to do justice to the individuals who have been affected by the conflict, who in reality are all Colombians, all sectors of society, whether by violence or simply fear. We (?) have all been affected by this conflict in one-way or another. It is within our consciousness, our narrative and our blood, it hurts, it affects all Colombians, and deep within each there is nothing more than they would want than to one day within their lifetime see peace. Incorporating the narratives into prose for chapter two was one of the most difficult aspects of my thesis.

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The journey is over. This has been as much an academic journey as a personal journey. It has been humbling and exciting. It *did* prove to be the academic climax that my International Professors had promised. I am hopeful now, not as pessimistic and hopeless

as I have felt, because I know that in spite of everything, the irresistible joy and passion for living of the Colombian people will continue to keep the country alive.

## Introduction

For more than fifty years, war has become so entrenched within the Colombian imaginary that a transition to peace seems almost utopic. The internal armed conflict is not merely two-sided, but has embroiled guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, the military, and narcotraffickers. This violence has been part of a history of lawlessness, corruption, and a weak central government. Colombians have become accustomed to human rights violations and cynical about any government claims that new initiatives will end the war.

Over the years, the numerous attempts at peace, including truces, ceasefires, and combatant amnesties, have lacked solutions that prioritize a sustainable process for peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. Yet since 2003, the Colombian government has implemented and prioritized a three-pronged policy known as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) in an attempt to bundle the disparate elements that appear to be necessary components for long-term peace. Disarmament includes the collection, documentation, control, and disposal of arms; demobilization is the dismantling of armed groups and the discharge of combatants; and reintegration is a multistep process in which ex-combatants become integrated into civilian life. According to the United Nations, the main purpose of DDR is to provide stability and security in a post-conflict society so that it can develop and make a transition to peace.

The conflict's magnitude, length, and continuity render the DDR process complicated: Colombia is not yet in a post-conflict state, but rather in a *pre-post-conflict* one. Not only is it important to take into account the continued aggressions throughout

the history and evolution of DDR in Colombia, but also the complications that arise in attempting to dismantle and integrate various armed groups into a society that is not yet in a transition state. Nevertheless, the DDR process in Colombia is worthy of attention because of the current peace negotiations that could potentially end the conflict between the Government of Colombia and Colombia's largest armed insurgent group. This latest attempt at negotiations has been materializing in Havana since 2012. The end of the conflict comes at the price of impunity and compromises the definition of justice for many, polarizing a society that demands peace. How will post-conflict processes like DDR guide Colombia to a future peace amidst of the complex politics of peacemaking?

The first chapter will be a literature review that evaluates the turbulent history of peacemaking, focusing on the factors that have made peace elusive, examining the failed attempts at peace, and thus chronologically arriving at the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) processes. The second chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of the "R" in the DDR processes through a theoretical framework of cooperation, the dimensions and logistics of reintegration and a compilation of narratives. The following chapter will analyze the current peace negotiations and the winding road to a failed deadline through current events and political scandals. In this way, the political and social atmosphere into which we need to implement DDR policies will be understood so that in the fourth and final chapter possible future scenarios can be considered and analyzed.

This thesis aims to study Colombia's post-conflict processes and peacemaking politics to understand how the gap between civil society and the recently demobilized will be closed, how social institutions and community projects will help heal the wounds

of an entire nation, and how collective hate can turn into collective action to move forward. Peace is far from becoming part of the Colombian imaginary—the way in which Colombians see themselves, their country and their identity—but studying DDR processes in the midst of an elusive peace will add to the scholarship that will encourage the unity of a people.

## Chapter One: A Troubled History of Peacemaking

### I. An Elusive Peace

In order to understand the contemporary internal armed conflict in Colombia, we need to understand its history of violence, as well as the various factors that have rendered peace elusive thus far. Since the start of independence in the nineteenth century, Colombia has been plagued by lawlessness, social injustice and a weak central government. Eight civil wars shook the new nation in the nineteenth century (Kline 8). The twentieth century witnessed two more: a short period of partisan violence in 1932 and *La Violencia* in 1946 (Kline 8). Blood has become an indelible ink recording a history of incessant suffering.

The end of *La Violencia* in 1956—named thus because of immeasurable carnage—gave way to the contemporary internal armed conflict of the past fifty years. Why has a nation whose economy is one of the strongest in Latin America been in an incessant cycle of violence? Will there finally be a peace process that takes into account all the failures of the past that have rendered peace elusive? What will be the new approach that will consolidate the need for peace, the demand for justice, and the assurance that violence will become an unthinkable method with which to pursue political goals?

After the slaughter during *La Violencia* that embroiled the Conservative and Liberal parties in a civil war, conflict emerged along new lines: four guerrilla groups founded on Marxist ideologies, paramilitary groups, and drug dealers became part of a multi-front internal conflict. The four guerrilla groups included the Nineteenth of April Movement (M-19), the Popular Army of Liberation (EPL), the Armed Forces of the

Colombian Revolution (FARC), and the Army of National Liberation (ELN). Only the latter two remain active today. The FARC is the largest and oldest group—in 2003 it had about 20,000 active combatants (Kline 10). It is with the FARC that the current peace negotiations commenced in La Habana, Cuba since 2012. On September 23, 2015 the Colombian President, Juan Manuel Santos, reached a momentous deal with the FARC, which entails signing a definite peace agreement within the next six months. Only time will tell the fruition of this latest attempt at peace.

*Internal Factors: Government Structure or Lack Thereof*

Various scholars have tried to explain the factors that have played a role in the troubled history of peacemaking, focusing in great part on state capacity and political structures. First of all, from the beginning, the state lacked a strong police or military force that could enforce its decisions. The vacuum of government authority in providing state security—one of the most basic and primary state functions—has led to lawlessness and the formation of armed groups, such as “self-defense” groups known as paramilitaries. In addition to lawlessness, the nature of politics was founded on violence in such a way as to subvert any chance of changing the status quo through a democratic process without arms. From *La Violencia*, the strict partisan segmentation led to an intense partisan socialization of the masses, meaning that people were compelled to identify with one party or another. The traditional oligarchic and violent setup of the liberal and conservative parties led to a political competition that has not been limited to peaceful means. Because of the structural exclusion of the marginalized masses, they sought political transformation through violence, so peasants have been accustomed to putting



up arms to access politics instead of engaging in democratic voting processes (Kline; Derk 11). Even as the old party setups developed into the coalition of the National Front (1958-1974), the long-lasting state weakness was not altered. Although the previous partisan sectarianism had dissolved, clientelism remained and dominated the subsequent political culture.

Thus, the state has not been built in such a way as to be able to cope with conflicts because Colombian policymakers choose political survival through clientelism over long-term state-building—a tradeoff called the “Politician’s Dilemma” (Geddes 18). In other words, the priorities of political leaders have not aligned with the general interest of ensuring social justice, long-term state building, and long-term peace building, but rather with their own corrupt self-interest.

A more specific theory of the Colombian government structure by Orozco purports that the axis of conflict is not *vertical asymmetrical*, but rather *horizontal symmetrical* (2005). A horizontal conflict is a conflict between armed actors or political parties and a vertical conflict refers to the relations of power between the citizens and the state. In his study, Orozco finds different implications of the horizontal and vertical relations of power, concluding that the dynamics from horizontal relations are much more complicated. For one, vertical abuse of power is clearer than horizontal abuse of power. Horizontal symmetrical conflicts involve broader sectors of the population, have longer-lasting armed confrontations, and are difficult to bring to a concrete end. A horizontal symmetrical system thus complicates internal conflict dynamics and makes the conflict much more difficult to control.

Violence has been able to endure because of the weakness in the government structure, as well as the intrinsic violence in the political culture. The government is thus incapable of ensuring state security and of building a state that can withstand conflict. A weak state puts the nation at risk of enduring conflict. The state cannot prevent politics from turning violent—for the most part, crime intermingles with politics and corrodes state power (Roskin 2001). This intersection of violence and politics has been present at both the local and the state level, even permeating Congress at one point during the ‘parapolitics’ scandal in 2006, which “has resulted in judicial proceedings against over one-third of the 260 representatives in Congress, 324 military officers and 109 public officials, among others, on charges of colluding with the paramilitary militia” (Derks et al. 12).

Similarly, Waldmann summarizes the state’s weakness by noting that the Colombian state has remained a weak state unable to enforce its own laws and discipline its own people; its power is incapable of guaranteeing public security. Yet the state certainly exists in public consciousness like a physical and intellectual physical entity (Waldmann 2007).

The structural limitations from the regime and the national political system have been obstacles to solve the conflict—it is difficult for a government to provide a solution while a state policy is nonexistent (Restrepo 2006). According to Restrepo, it is not the lack of willingness or government incapability that impedes the formulating of effective policy in the face of conflict, but rather it is the structure and operating rules of the Colombian democracy.

### *Culture of Violence*

Emerging from studies of the political economy of war and the economic motivations of the actors involved in conflict is a body of theory positing a *culture of violence*. Linda Helfrich and Sabine Kurtenbach define this as model of behavior in which violence becomes part of the basis of life for a considerable part of the population (Helfrich/Kurtenbach 2006). They assert that when a culture of violence is present, the possibility of ending the war is diminished. In the case of Colombia, Daniel Pécaut states that violence and coercion have become so ingrained in its social and political system of order, that it cannot simply be removed—violence is another social sub-system that is continuously replicated (Pécaut 1987, 2001).

Peter Waldmann, professor of sociology, defines a culture of violence as a “phenomenon that is itself dependent on historical and social factors...[and] includes all socio-cultural structures and symbols that are connected with, produced by, and perpetuate violence” (2007: 63). In order to track this said culture of violence, he asserts, we must look for covert or indirect indications and pay attention to the conceptual and ideological settings in which acts of violence occur. In Colombia, almost every aspect of life has been affected by violence and a wide general desensitization, even tolerance, of acts of violence is present. He claims that the indicators of the presence of a culture of violence are: (1) Structural indicators that develop from the nature of violence in Colombia, including the frequency of violence, its intensity, and its diversity (2) Psychological indicators that suggest that there is a widespread propensity to violence and (3) A lack of taboos and prohibitive rules that would limit the use of violence

(Waldmann 2007: 65). In order to support these claims, Waldmann uses historical, sociological, sociocultural and anthropological observations.

For the first indicator, it is important to understand the ubiquity of violence in the country: the propensity to violence is ingrained in a sociocultural manner that goes across multiple social and historical frameworks. Furthermore, not only has violence been constant and frequent, but it has also been professionalized by the multiple armed organizations and groups that function outside the law and use violence as a means to their ends. This professionalization of violence is partly the result of the development of techniques from shared learning processes, experience, and mutual imitation. The scale and brutality of violence also illustrate the intensity of violence in Colombia. This intensity is only probable in a social context in which the limits to unauthorized use of violence have been basically removed and substituted by a “cult of annihilation of enemies” (Waldmann 2007: 66).

For the second indicator, the mental indicators that suggest that there is a widespread propensity to violence, Waldmann argues that given that violence is deep in the collective consciousness and cultural memory, we can identify a friend-foe dichotomy. This in-group/out-group framework makes a post-conflict reintegration even more challenging because it creates a “tit for tat” approach to violence. Game theorists also use the term “tit for tat,” characterizing this culture of violence as an iterated game where there is universal defection (Axelrod). Moreover, the “tit for tat” that is evident in the friend-foe model is overlaid by a discourse of honor and a need to retaliate violent acts, which results in a deleterious social labeling process that further polarizes the society. Colombian society has also become desensitized to life or death—there is little

regard for human life and human death, as evidenced by the small sums for which sicarios kill off strangers and by the little respect for and the banalization of corpses (Waldmann 2007: 67).

For the third factor, Waldmann argues for the absence of prohibitive norms that inhibit violence. Even in the media, the interest is more on the conflict narrative than on the violent acts themselves (unless they are particularly brutal). Violence is part of the everyday routine and experience, leading to a lack of public discussion and discourse on violence.

*Narcotics trade: “The fuel that feeds the conflict”<sup>1</sup>*

Drug trafficking has further aggravated the violence and conflict in Colombia. Through murders, tortures, and other human rights violations, as well as bombings in the major cities, the Medellin and Cali group “brought the nation to its knees” during the 1980s (Kline 2007: 15). According to Kline, narco trafficking had a role in undermining the rule of law, increasing violence, and more specifically in aggravating paramilitary violence. Yet the paramilitaries were not the only ones who developed relationships with the drug traffickers and became involved in this for-profit violence: Guerrilla groups became involved by first protecting their coca fields, then “taxing” them, and also by directly entering the industry. Their heavy involvement in the production and trade of narcotics has been one of the factors in “the longevity and resilience of the guerrilla movement,” especially because this indicates the shift in their motivation to fight the state from merely political to territorial and economic (Derks et al. 16). Narcotics compelled a

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<sup>1</sup> Humberto de la Calle, Colombia’s chief peace negotiator in Havana, called the illegal drug trade “the fuel that feeds the conflict” in November 2013 (Otis 2014).

profit-driven war. The money from narcotrafficking bought weapons, equipment and food for thousands of full-time combatants. The involvement of narcotics in conflict underscores an important but often overlooked feature of mass violence: war is expensive. And narcotrafficking was the solution.

Narcotrafficking also became entangled in the political sphere, both in the national congress and in the presidency (Kline 2007: 17). Various scholars agree that the drug production and trade has led to a situation where violence has crossed into the political realm and opened the door for violence to become more pervasive in all areas of society as an instrument for enforcement and power (Pécaut 2001). Waldmann concludes that narcotrafficking has allowed for violence to become more conventional and banal—further normalizing the violence of the conflict.

The drug trade did not end at the dismantling of the Medellín and Cali cartels. New smaller groups have continued to quench the increasing global demand for narcotics. In fact, Geoff Simons argues that the international community is partly to blame for Colombia's problems because the highest demand for cocaine comes from the US and Europe. Likewise, both the chemicals used in the process of turning coca into cocaine and the laundered money come from the U.S. and Europe (Simons 2004: 250). The drug problem is the responsibility of both the supply and the demand sides.

### *External Factors*

Other literature points to external factors perpetuating the conflict. Scholars such as Helfrich and Kurtenbach have argued that if powerful states in international community do not have an interest in the resolution of the conflict at hand, violence could

rage for years (2006). Consequently, it is important for these external members to be invested and interested in a strategic and long lasting peace. If powerful members of the international community intervene to advance their own commercial and geopolitical interests, then their involvement in turn could be seen as perpetuating or even worsening the conflict.

The role of external forces in Colombia's armed conflict is emphasized in Geoff Simons' book, *Colombia: A Brutal History*. He argues that American control, involvement, and presence, politically and economically, have complicated the internal conflict by making Colombia dependent and thus further increasing wealth inequality and social injustice. He concludes that after *La Violencia*, the internal armed struggle continued partly because of the involvement of the United States. As in other nations, the U.S. fueled civil turmoil to advance its larger Cold-War agenda. Specifically, he points to U.S. involvement in the creation of *Plan Lazo*, which was a counterinsurgency strategy that involved American training for Colombian civilian and military personnel to perform counter-propaganda and counter-agency functions to take action against known communist proponents (Simons 48). He also points to the *Alliance for Progress*, which was a program pushed by the Kennedy administration to "provide money, expertise, and technology to raise the standard of living for the people of Latin America, which would hopefully make the countries stronger and better able to resist communist influences" (*History* 2007). Gradually, Colombian agriculture, economic assets and armed forces were brought under US control. Over the decades U.S. pressure rose even more, as involvement increased during the drug wars. In fact, it can be contended that during the

Clinton administration, the U.S. was using the drug issue as a cover-up for military involvement, pouring arms and military tactics into the hands of paramilitaries.

The U.S. was even leading a campaign of spraying the Colombian jungles and plantations aerially with herbicides such as glyphosate, which was not only destroying coca cultivation, but also poisoning other crops, destroying local economies and propagating resentment among the local populations. During the Bush administration, the military aspects of *Plan Colombia* were pursued more intensely and preferred over any kind of peace dialogue—the U.S. government kept injecting arms and troops and eschewing peace dialogues despite the consequent prolonged suffering, displacement, massacres, poisoning of the land, and even more disillusioned people. American involvement with the “thumbs-up” from the Colombian government was yet another U.S. instigated dirty war in Latin America (Simons 2004).

In her article “Colombia-Estados Unidos: Alcances Y Limitaciones,” Arlene B. Tickner does not ascribe instrumental blame for violence to U.S. involvement so vehemently as Simons, but rather focuses on problems with its scope and limitations. She presents U.S. involvement in a more objective and historical manner and emphasizes the commitment that the U.S. has had in regards to the long-lasting armed conflict. Nevertheless, she recognizes the negative effects from the way in which the U.S. wrote and implemented *Plan Colombia*. She even refers to the relationship with the U.S. as an “aggressive subversion” that has led to an increased American interference in Colombian internal affairs, and has negatively affected Colombia’s relationship with other states in the region (Tickner 2006). Furthermore, she acknowledges other results, like the gradual



strengthening of the military forces and the assurance of limited funds to jumpstart processes of institutional strengthening and development.

### *Failed Attempts at Peacemaking*

Without including the current peace dialogues, in the history of the conflict, there have been five rounds of negotiations: (1) Under the presidency of Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) with FARC, M-19, ADO (Autodefensa Obrera), and EPL (Ejército Popular de Liberación) (2) Under the presidency of Virgilio Barco (1986-1990) first with the Coordinadora Guerrillera Simón Bolívar, and then with the M-19 (3) Under the presidency of Cesar Gaviria (1990-1994) with EPL, Quintín Lame, PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores), the Coordinadora Guerrillera Simon Bolivar (FARC, ELN), and CRS (Corriente de Renovación Socialista), a division of the ELN (4) Under the presidency of Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002) with FARC and ELN (5) under the presidency of Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010) with the AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia) (Helfrich/Kurtenbach 2006).

To understand the failures of the processes, Kline uses a framework based on themes present in the negotiations. These themes include the *lack of unity*, the *lack of government continuity*, the *symbolic imperial presidency*, the *Politician's Dilemma*, and "*the devil is in the details*" (2007, 22). In terms of *lack of unity*, he argues that there has been division between the government and the civilians, and between the president and the military. He similarly argues that both the guerrillas and the paramilitaries lacked a unified voice, as did levels of the state at national and regional levels. For the *lack of government continuity*, he notes that elections are every four years and so there is a

change in the negotiating team that undermines the negotiating power of the government. For *symbolism and the imperial presidency*, he notes how any opposition to what the president says is seen as disloyalty. Likewise, Colombian presidents are more preoccupied in making their place in history, leading to unwise decisions, dangerous posturing and an over-centralization of negotiations. An inability to accept responsibility and blame others is also a subtheme within the government and armed groups. For the *Politician's Dilemma*, he discusses how politicians have prioritized political gains over nation building or long-term peace processes. The last theme "*the devil is in the details*" mentions that accords and negotiations have lacked necessary details leading to a difficulty of interpretation (Kline 2007).

Although each peace process or negotiation has had different factors that have made it unsuccessful, this thematic framework combines commonalities present in the Colombian government and society. Consolidating these themes allows a uniform and observational approach to understanding why the attempts at negotiation have been futile.

Furthermore, when formulating the negotiations, the parties that have been in the conflict rarely take into account long-term work on the origins of the conflict, or the construction of appropriate social contexts, norms and institutions that count with the previous structural conditions to be peaceful. Instead, for many governments "peace" is simply disarmament and the cessation of fighting, prioritizing short-term measures over long-term measures. Likewise, for some actors continuing with the system of violence is more simple and profitable (Helfrich/Kurtenbach 2006, 17). In other words, these attempts at peace have lacked solutions that prioritize a sustainable process for peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

## II. Arrival at DDR

### *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration*

Taking into consideration the failures of the past peace processes, we arrive at a three pronged-approach ubiquitous in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding—*Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration* (DDR). Disarmament includes the collection, documentation, control, and disposal of arms; demobilization is the dismantling of armed groups and the discharge of combatants; and reintegration is a multistep process in which ex-combatants become integrated into civilian life. The international community has developed DDR programs as a response to the perceived risk to revert to violence if ex-combatants are not successfully rehabilitated and reintegrated into the community (Schulhofer-Wohl and Sambanis 2010). According to the United Nations, the main purpose of DDR is to provide stability and security in a post-conflict society so that it can develop and make a transition to peace (Theidon 2007).

In global terms, DDR has been implemented in over 25 countries in a span of over 25 years (Global DDR Summit 2013). These cases include operations that have been implemented into UN peacekeeping missions that extend back to 1989, while programs without international assistance even date back to 1953 (Malan 5; Schulhofer-Wohl and Sambanis 1). The 2010 report “Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Programs: An Assessment,” divides the DDR programs in two categories: those that have included external assistance and those that have not. According to this assessment, DDR programs have been implemented “in a total of 51 civil wars that were active during the

period 1979 to 2006” (1)<sup>2</sup>. For civil wars that have ended since 1994, DDR programs have been related to 38 post-civil war contexts, demonstrating the upsurge in new DDR programs from the middle of the 1990s on (Sculhofer-Wohl and Sambanis).

The School for a Culture of Peace, which works on issues like human rights and the analysis of conflicts and peace processes, published comparative analyses of the DDR process and its evolution on a yearly basis between 2006 and 2009. Although each report is different in format, each analyzes the components of DDR, as well as the specificities of each program according to the contexts of each country. Comparative reports such as these afford a better understanding of Colombia’s place in the global context of DDR.

Colombia has a long history of demobilization and dismantlement of armed groups followed by the reincorporation and reintegration of their members. In fact, by looking at Sculhofer-Wohl and Sambanis’s data, it can be inferred that processes that include components of DDR go back to 1953 for *La Violencia*. Colombia is one few nations that has conducted DDR processes without external assistance—from the six selected cases without external assistance it is actually the one with the earliest DDR process (48). Through structural and political changes, the DDR-like processes have evolved throughout the years to become *the* labeled DDR process for which Colombia is known today.

According to Derks et al., four DDR processes have taken place since the 1980s. He divides the DDR processes into four specific moments: (1) A general amnesty for

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<sup>2</sup>It is important to note that in Table A.2: Civil Wars and DDR Programs Conducted without External Assistance, Selected Cases, they list two processes whose DDR years go back further: China (1954–1958) with the PLA conflict and Colombia (1953–1953) with *La Violencia*.

guerrillas in 1982 (2) A DDR process for guerrilla groups including the M19 and the Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL), which reached a peace agreement with the government in the first half of the 1990s (3) A third DDR process that has been running since 1994, with a focus “on individual deserters from the guerilla movement, and to a more limited extent from other illegal armed groups that have not signed up to the ‘collective’ DDR initiative” (4) A larger process of DDR through the demobilization of the paramilitary forces from 2002 to 2006 (Derks et al 2011, 17-20).

DDR in Colombia had been implemented within a military/security framework, so although a DDR process was present after the 1990’s negotiations, national reconciliation and a system for long-term sustainable transition to peace was not achieved (Theidon 2007; Jaramillo 2009). The weaknesses of the DDR framework were evident in the previous efforts of demobilization. For example, under the Betancur administration (1982-1986) the legal environment reflected blanket amnesties in exchange for ‘peace and stability’ and the government did not consider what would happen to ex-combatants after demobilization (Theidon 2007). Thus, the demobilized guerrilla members enjoyed complete amnesty and were deprived of institutional support as they reintegrated themselves into society.

Since 2003, the Colombian government has been implementing a reintegration policy that has been based on experience from post-conflict processes in other countries. It has focused more on long-term solutions that emphasize the post-conflict societal integration (DDR Summit 2013). This focus on reintegration has been part of the most current DDR rhetoric and implementation. In fact, the dynamics, goals, and framework of the DDR process have greatly evolved and developed since 2003, since the groups

with whom the demobilization process occurred, as well as the presidential administration, have changed. More literature and analysis have also emerged that have been able to better analyze the pitfalls and relative successes in this 10-year DDR process. This current DDR process has received financing from other countries including the United States, Canada, Spain, the Netherlands, and Japan, and it has been monitored by the Organization of American States' Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP-OEA) and supported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (Prieto 29).

During the Uribe administration, a collective demobilization began with members from the paramilitary group AUC (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia); the dialogue began in 2003 and materialized in the signing of the Santa Fe de Ralito Pact by the federal government and the AUC. This occurred under Uribe's 'Democratic Security Policy,' in which he promoted the consolidation of state control over all of Colombia's territory. Following this policy and the demobilization of the paramilitaries, the violence against civilians decreased—Colombia was no longer the most violent country in Latin America (Derks et al. 11).

After this effort at collective demobilization, there has been individual demobilization and reintegration of combatants without a formal peace agreement between their former group and the Colombian government (Jaramillo 2009). He argues that this has posed great challenges in the transitional DDR process because it is difficult for an assurance of truth, reparation, and justice to exist when there are multiple negotiated agreements with individuals. Without a uniformity of policy measures that

dictate the path for DDR processes for all ex-combatants, it is more difficult to establish and control the guidelines of transitional justice.

In 2006, the process of reintegration reached an important point: “Reforms carried out in 2006, leading to the creation of the High Council for Reintegration (Alta Consejería para la Reintegración – ACR), rekindled expectations in DDR and reoriented the process towards a business-friendly strategy of securing employment for ex-combatants” (Derks et. al 8). While this new approach seemed to address the concerns for a more sustainable reintegration of former combatants, it failed to address the economic reality in the country, rebuild social capital in communities that had been scarred by decades of conflict, and increase business interest to the demobilized. Instead, it created a dependent population of demobilized combatants that is “locked into attending reintegration courses, shuns society, and is increasingly exposed to the temptations and violent intimidation of new criminal groups” (Derks et. al 4).

In his literature, Jaramillo focuses on the demobilization effort during the Uribe presidency, analyzing the DDR process in 2009. He brings some clarity on the earlier DDR efforts and their gaps and contends that the DDR needed to be more specific and specialized for different populations, such as women and children. Likewise, DDR was not specialized for specific regional and municipal needs, failing to consider the local dynamics in which the DDR processes would be implemented. In order for a DDR process to be successful, Jaramillo further concludes that it is necessary to have the cooperation and involvement of local authorities, have a long-term income-earning strategy for the demobilized, have psychological and legal assistance, and have an education strategy that allows the recently demobilized to be competitive in the

workforce—all of these factors were missing from the DDR process as of 2009.

Reintegration is key in this post-conflict process and strong legislation that responds to the needs of the demobilized and the victims is key. Moreover, according to him, a successful long-term reintegration program is based on reintegration and not on reinsertion and should accomplish three main goals: “(1) effectively return demobilized persons to civilian life; (2) break the cycles of violence; and (3) reconcile members of society” (Jaramillo 2009, 21).

Other literature points to the importance of focusing on the “R” of DDR. Reintegration is a long-term and complex process that must include community involvement and follow-up programs—consequently it is usually the weakest link in the DDR process (Faltas 2004). The “R” is not only the most important part of the process, but it is also one of the more expensive and difficult parts. If suitable planning for reintegration process is absent, it is likely that the disarmament and demobilization will not be successful (DDR Summit 2013).

To address the reintegration component, Kimberly Theidon focuses her research on the reintegration of demobilized combatants. She argues that the DDR has to be implemented at multiple levels, including ensuring a comprehensive reintegration for ex-combatants. It is imperative for DDR programs to include concrete, local-level transitional justice initiatives that address the needs of both the ex-combatants and the receiving society.

In the report by the Peace Security and Development Network, entitled “A Community Dilemma: DDR and the changing face of violence in Colombia,” Derks, Rouw and Briscoe conclude that in order for reintegration to be successful, community



involvement needs to be at the center. They argue for the need for greater local involvement and freedom to cater DDR to local needs and dynamics to better serve the ex-combatants and the receiving community.

*Is it Worthwhile to continue?*

In order to address the gaps in the DDR process and have a strong framework that guarantees a successful transition to peace, Colombia has had two international collaboration events: the first one in Cartagena in June 2009, the Cartagena International Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Congress (CIDDDR), and the second one in Santa Marta in December 2013, the First Global Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (GDDR) Summit. During both conferences a consensus was reached around the importance of international collaboration with states that have faced or are facing security development (DDR Summit 2013). The overarching goal was to create a space for discussion and exchange of knowledge that would contribute to reintegration programs worldwide, while promoting South-South cooperation. According to the official report of the summit, these two summits contributed to the discussion and understanding of DDR processes and experiences internationally. The report makes it seem like Colombia is at the vanguard of the DDR process globally. What the report lacks is a more critical view of the current DDR process, as well as concrete evidence on how exactly the state will have the capacity to implement all the needed measures and norms discussed in detail. Nevertheless, the collaboration and the findings included in this report provide great detail on the challenges and strategies for knowledge sharing, as well as an overall comprehensive break-down of what a successful DDR process entails. Likewise, it provides a view of the goals, as well as the policy stance, of the Colombian

government in regards to the implementation of DDR. The years of failed attempts have led to the need to prioritize this key three-pronged post-conflict process.

Additionally, this report highlights six lessons learned from the ten years of implementation and development of DDR in Colombia: (1) Time is integral and initiatives should have a defined time frame within the context of state capacity (2) All sectors of society, including all levels of government, the international community, academia, and the private sector need to have a shared responsibility established (3) Policy leaders have to prioritize reconciliation that accounts for the reintegration of demobilized combatants into their native communities (4) Guaranteeing the security demobilized combatants is necessary (5) Legal mechanisms that ensure the legal security and judicial stability for demobilized combatants must be implemented (6) Finally, permanent and strong institutional systems that ensure the long-term implementation of reintegration policies must be created (Global Summit 2013, 8). Taking into account the efforts of the Colombian government at initiating global conversations on DDR and formulating a detailed plan of action, could it be contended that this time the DDR process will be successful and will play an integral role in breaking the cycle of violence?

Another consideration for the success of the DDR process is the continuation of the conflict. It is challenging to implement mechanisms of transitional justice, reparation and reconciliation when the conflict is ongoing and armed groups continue with the violence. Rather than being in a post-conflict state, Colombia remains in a 'pre-postconflict' context, which creates an unfavorable security context for successful reintegration (Theidon 2007). Within this 'pre-postconflict' state, ex-combatants cannot fully escape from the stigma of war. Some government entities, like the DAS (Security

Administration Department) have used DDR as a counter-insurgency tool rather than as a tool for sustainable peace, offering incentives for ex-combatants to give information on the positions of their previous armed groups (Derks et al. 46). Ex-combatants consequently become targets for threats and intimidation from armed groups, as they are seen as informants. Without a doubt, the priority of creating sustainable peace is superseded by counter-insurgency efforts. The 'pre-postconflict' context also means that a total ceasefire is not yet in place, which means continued killings, attacks, and displacement.

Not having a defined end of the conflict complicates the transition from a violent state into a state without violence—how can ex-combatants and victims find respite and a new life when the conflict continues? However, some transitions into post-conflict are not indicated by clear accords, but instead by a low-level protracted conflict and ambiguity (DDR Summit 2013). As a result, it could be said that studying DDR is even more important and of greater interest because of the unique and critical condition of the Colombian situation. Studying and understanding DDR will be greatly important to the current peace negotiations under the Santos presidency—perhaps DDR will make these peace accords different and they will eventually break the cycle of violence. Only time will tell.

In summary, the different factors that explain the troubled history of making peace point to the need for a different approach that considers past failures and considers long-term consequences. Given the range of options for a post-conflict (or rather pre-post-conflict) transition into peace, the evidence suggests that a DDR process is necessary.

## Second Chapter: Reintegration

### I. The “R” in DDR

*“Societies are made up by human beings whose minds are not tabula rasa. It is in this sense that the impact of any program oriented towards social change must take...[it into account], as an alternative to keeping a fall back into an eternal yesterday, characterized by the persistence of mental models that favor violence, authoritarian forms of relationship and illegality” (Casas and Guzman, 80)*

Within the post conflict agenda, reintegrating ex-combatants back into society is one of the most difficult and crucial steps of the DDR process: *difficult* because it is a learning process that requires the cooperation of multiple segments of society, as well as implementing a complex and costly multi-step plan that needs to take into account the individualities of each ex-combatant and his receiving community; *crucial* because it determines whether the society will effectively break with a previous reality to have a chance at a peaceful post-conflict reality. The reintegration process has also been one of the weakest parts of the DDR process because of the multiple challenges and gaps present.

According to the ACR, reintegration is defined as “the return of demobilized people and people detached from the armed conflict to society and legality” (ACR Infographic). Reintegration simultaneously affects institutional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal dimensions of the human experience. The institutional dimension is about DDR being a mechanism of transition between *institutional* universes; the interpersonal dimension refers to surpassing the *social dilemma* of reintegration, as well as to the institutional legitimacy needed for political reintegration; and the intrapersonal dimension refers to the emotional investment, the incentives for reintegration, and the values that

influence “attitudinal responses towards political and social order” (Casas and Guzman, 2010, 55).

The responsibility for the national reintegration policy has been under the Colombian Reintegration Agency (ACR) since November 2011 (ACR 2016). Before this agency was created, the Program for the Reincorporation into Civilian Life (PRVC) under the Ministry of the Interior, with the support of the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, was in charge of designing and coordinating the Program for Reincorporation. The PRVC however, lacked the long-term vision needed for a successful reintegration program. In 2006, the High Office for Reintegration is created, becoming a milestone in the history of DDR since it marked the transition from a short-term *reincorporation* program to a long-term *reintegration* program (ACR 2016).

The change in terminology was important for reaffirming the long-term implications of this process. Albeit reincorporation and reintegration appear to be synonyms, their etymologies reveal the importance of the choice of terms. *Reincorporate* means to join something again with something that already exists, to put something into the body of something else, whereas *reintegrate* means to make whole again, to unite, to bring together different parts to make a whole. When the focus is placed on *reintegrating* ex-combatants, rather than *incorporating* them, a long-term and sustainable process is suggested: Reintegration implies that every segment of society will come together to make a whole, a new post-conflict society where all citizens are integrated into civil life in equality. Reincorporation would consequently mean that ex-combatants are just being inserted into a different body or context, removing the responsibility of ensuring that ex-combatants become part of the society—a long-term process.

The reintegration process must consider long-term implications and consequences that guarantee its sustainability and effectiveness. It is the first phase in long-term process of social and economic integration (CONPES 61). Its long-term goals are (1) To encourage demobilizations and a peaceful exit from the armed violence (2) to consolidate the advances in terms of security and to contribute to the construction of peace because of the disarmament and the demobilization of ex-combatants (3) to prevent that the demobilized returns to a life of arms and (4) to guarantee that violent acts will not be repeated and that there will be a reduction in victims from armed violence in the country, which is a fundamental component of reparation and the peaceful coexistence of Colombians (CONPES 26). In order for these goals to be met, both the ex-combatants and the receiving communities need to cooperate in the process.

### *Understanding Reintegration through the Prisoner's Dilemma*

The mutual cooperation between the ex-combatants and the receiving communities is more difficult to occur if both sides feel that they are forced to make concessions in the midst of violence or continued armed struggle. It will seem futile to cooperate when the government has not succeeded in engaging in formal agreements with all the armed groups. In fact, currently, there are no formal agreements for the cessation of violence with other armed groups besides the one that will supposedly materialize in Havana with the FARC and the one that will be starting with the ELN, as of May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Even though the pre-post-conflict aspect would make it difficult for both the receiving community and the ex-combatants to cooperate, this cooperation is integral to

prevent reintegration from becoming a social dilemma “in which the demobilized and the society coexist in violent and non-democratic contexts” (Casas and Guzman 74).

Casas and Guzman use Axelrod’s Prisoner’s Dilemma (1984) to model the dilemma of mutual cooperation in reintegration.

A non-sequential simultaneous game is considered, because reintegration is explored under a local perspective, that is, from the interdependency relationship resulting from the moment the demobilized actor enters the community in a given neighborhood and starts interacting with his neighbors. In this type of game, actors’ responses are characterized by a non-futuristic vision and the maximization of personal benefits (71)

In this model, the “basic problem occurs when the pursuit of self-interest by each leads to a poor outcome for all” (Axelrod 7). They also conclude that this interdependency relationship between the demobilized and the receiving society is dependent on mutual cooperation and consent and thus becomes a collective dilemma. In the model, the two actors are society and the demobilized and their two options are cooperation and non-cooperation (Fig. 1).

*Figure 1: The Reintegration Dilemma, modeled from Casas and Guzman*

|             |                  | The Reintegration Dilemma |                  |
|-------------|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
|             |                  | Society                   |                  |
|             |                  | To cooperate              | Not to cooperate |
| Demobilized | Not to cooperate | (3,3)                     | (1,4)            |
|             | To cooperate     | (4,1)                     | (2,2)            |

The top left quadrant of the Prisoner's Dilemma square represents the optimal result, when both society and the demobilized cooperate. According to the explanation, this mutual cooperation is when "society and the demobilized citizens cooperate to advance towards reintegration...[to favor] the construction of democratic and non-violent contexts and [strengthen] the legitimacy of Colombian institutions" (Casas and Guzman 73). In this (3,3) scenario, society would be receptive to the reintegration of the ex-combatants, becoming part of a dialogue of peace and reconciliation and assuming the societal costs. These costs would not necessarily be only monetary, although use of public resources on the process would be measurable and would result in some tradeoffs against other possible social goods. The costs entail accepting a margin of impunity and risk of at least some limited residual violence from demobilized citizens or psychological trauma from ex-combatants' presence in society. Cooperation from the ex-combatants would mean that they would follow the steps of the reintegration process, abandoning violence, legitimizing social institutions and making an effort to construct a society where violence is not accepted. The top right quadrant represents a situation where the demobilized choose cooperation and society chooses non-cooperation (Casas and Guzman 73). In this (1,4) scenario, although ex-combatants would cooperate and agree to reintegration, society would not be willing to undertake the costs of receiving members who once belonged to an armed group and follow a reconciliatory path. Presumably, ex-combatants would be displaced or assassinated by hostile neighbors. This in turn would hinder the ex-combatant's willingness to cooperate with the reintegration process. The bottom left quadrant represents a situation where the demobilized citizens choose non-cooperation and society chooses cooperation (Casas and Guzman 73). In this (4,1)



scenario, society would be receptive to the reintegration process, while the demobilized citizens would not be willing to commit to the reintegration phase and they would revert back to violence, *recidivism*. This would be counterproductive to the post-conflict process, as it would weaken the possibilities of societal cooperation since the efforts they made would be in vain and ex-combatants would continue to be stigmatized as the out-group and the victimizers of society. The bottom right quadrant represents a situation where both actors choose non-cooperation (Casas and Guzman 73). In this Nash equilibrium (2,2) scenario, neither the society nor the demobilized combatant is willing to undergo the costs and sacrifices of reintegration, which would be detrimental to peacebuilding.

When using this model to illustrate reintegration, it is necessary to understand that society is not monolithic. In this instance, although the Prisoner's Dilemma is a collective dilemma between society and the ex-combatants, it can be understood as a collection of multiple Prisoner's Dilemmas repeating themselves in multiple instances. The set of motivations and incentives differ by community and individuals because their perceptions of ex-combatants vary depending on the way in which the group to which the ex-combatant belonged has affected them, whether directly or indirectly. Each individual in society will have her own Prisoner's Dilemma, which will allow her to judge her interaction with the ex-combatant on an individual basis, rather than by using the fifty-year history of conflict to determine whether to cooperate or defect. Individual interactions "allows one to handle interactions with many individuals without having to treat them all the same, thus making possible the rewarding of cooperation from one individual and the punishing or defection from another" (Axelrod 95).

Theoretically, how is it possible to ensure that individuals, from both the receiving community *and* the ex-combatant side, choose cooperation in their individual games? What could incentivize individuals to cooperate with a perceived adversary? In the short run, it is better to defect whether the enemy is doing damage or not, because for both sides weakening each other will promote survival, meaning that their specific interests will be prioritized (Axelrod 75). Likewise, the fifty-year history of victim and victimizer has established what Axelrod calls “a powerful ethic of revenge...a question of doing what seemed moral and proper to fulfill one’s obligation to a fallen comrade” (85). Translated to reintegration, what Axelrod calls an “ethic of revenge” could be translated to not wanting to receive ex-combatants into a community because of their previous connection to an armed group and because it would be unjust to a victim, friend, or family member affected by an armed group, a “fallen comrade,” to receive these perpetrators of violence as if nothing had happened. Yet the receiving communities and ex-combatants will have repeated interactions, multiple iterated Prisoner’s Dilemmas, which makes defection an unstable strategy, and on a more optimistic note, according to Axelrod:

When the conditions are present for the emergence of cooperation, cooperation can get started and prove stable in situations which otherwise appear extraordinarily unpromising...friendship is hardly necessary for the development of cooperation. Under suitable conditions, cooperation based upon reciprocity can develop even between antagonists (22).

Cooperative exchanges of mutual restraint based on TIT FOR TAT retaliation could change the preset nature of interactions between two enemies because experiencing sustained mutual cooperation can change their payoffs and compel them to “care about each other’s welfare” and value mutual cooperation more than before (Axelrod 85). For cooperative exchanges of mutual restraint to occur, an incentive is necessary to propel

positive behavior change. What then could incentivize the start of these cooperative exchanges?

In the case of soldiers in World War I trenches, the soldiers made an effort to show to their enemy soldiers that they could retaliate mutual restraint, if necessary, because their lives depended on it (Axelrod 79). These soldiers were in an active state of war, but members of receiving communities and ex-combatants are in a civilian state, where mutual cooperation generally does not equal life or death—at least in the short run. Intrinsic motivations for behavior in communities need to be part of what propels a cooperative interaction. According to the economic paper, “When and Why Incentives (Don’t) Work to Modify Behavior,” shifting “from no incentive to a positive incentive can dramatically change the framing of the interaction” (Gneezy et al. 2011: 200). By having a positive incentive, both ex-combatants and members of receiving communities will see their interaction as contributing to the construction of a common goal—peace. In this framework of incentives, peace could be understood as the *public good*. Therefore, the interactions of society and the demobilized could be pro-social behavior that contributes to this public good. Yet why would individuals feel compelled to have a pro-social preference to contribute to this public good? Even having a pro-social preference is not sufficient for obtaining a level of contribution that could be deemed socially optimal (Meier, 2007). Socially optimal would undoubtedly be mutual cooperation in the reintegration process. Karl Dieter Opp presents a *cost proposition*, stating that “the higher the costs of contributing to the provision for the public good, the less likely is contribution” (Opp 50, 2009). But what if the public good is greater than the high costs of cooperation? In the case of Colombia, it would seem that the high costs of accepting a

margin of impunity and social integration, for civilians and ex-combatants respectively, would be less than the prospect of an eventual positive peace.

Furthermore, if cooperative exchanges do arise, it would be necessary for cooperation to remain stable—that is for both parties to consistently cooperate in the process, not for the actors to discriminately choose how and when they are going to cooperate. In other words, the decision to cooperate or not to cooperate must remain stable and constant. A discriminatory cooperation would augment the already present mutual mistrust and skepticism. Stable cooperation will in turn allow a greater trust to be formed, for each actor will be able to form a positive expectation of the other's move, in what would become an iterated prisoner's dilemma where TIT FOR TAT will equate to a social process of giving and receiving for the greater benefit of the community. Axelrod notes that a process of familiarization allows cooperation to remain stable (80). Thus, a type of socialization conducive to familiarization is necessary for each group to trust each other to cooperate and retaliate accordingly. Familiarizing one group with the other will normalize the social interactions and contribute to the building of a *tejido social*.

The potential success of the reintegration process is dependent on the success of the latest peace attempt at Havana with the FARC. A cooperation-cooperation scenario in the peace negotiation, where the two actors are the Government and the FARC (Fig. 2) would be conducive to a cooperation-cooperation scenario in the reintegration prisoner's dilemma since it would signal a concrete end to the engagement of violence for FARC ex-combatants. The following section will briefly apply Axelrod's model to the peace negotiations, to illustrate the connectivity of a bottom-level Prisoners Dilemma (the reintegration process) to a top-level Prisoner's Dilemma (the peace negotiations), and the

impact of the latter on the former.

*Figure 2: The Peace Negotiation Dilemma*

|      |                  | The Peace Negotiation Dilemma |                  |
|------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
|      |                  | Government                    |                  |
|      |                  | To cooperate                  | Not to cooperate |
| FARC | Not to cooperate | (3,3)                         | (1,4)            |
|      | To cooperate     | (4,1)                         | (2,2)            |

The top left quadrant would be the optimal result, where both the Government and the FARC would cooperate. In this (3,3) scenario both parties would continue the negotiations without delays or ulterior motives and would abide by the agreed concessions for the sole purpose of peace building. The government would act to the best of its ability to withhold from corruption and politicking, as well as act in virtue of the general interest and of a long-term improvement in the social and economic development of the nation. The FARC would in turn withhold from any form of violence or violence inducing acts during and after the negotiations, demonstrating a commitment to peace and to legitimizing democracy and the government institutions. The top right quadrant

would mean that the FARC chooses cooperation and the government chooses non-cooperation. In this (1,4) situation, the government would not uphold its side of the concessions and act in a way that would diminish the possibilities of the successful implementation of a peace agreement. This would include engaging in corrupt actions that sabotage the process and stimulate societal polarization, being unwilling to uphold the concessions delineated in the agreement, and neglecting to support the demobilized population after an agreement is signed. If the government opts for non-cooperation, the FARC would reinforce its suspicion and rejection of the government institution, hindering a possible end to the conflict, as the armed group would find motives to reengage in their acts aggression. The bottom left quadrant represents a situation where the FARC chooses non-cooperation and the government chooses cooperation. This (4,1) scenario would illustrate yet another failed attempt by the government to negotiate with an armed group, and it would be an insult and ridicule on this different, more diplomatic approach to ending the conflict—similarly to what occurred during the Pastrana administration's attempted peace talks with the FARC in 1999 through 2002. Pastrana's disastrous decision to pull the military out of a large portion of area where the FARC operated led to historically high records of victimization. And, the FARC did not even show up to the negotiations. In the short-term of this (4,1) scenario, the government would undoubtedly disappoint the public, and in the long-term the Colombian society as a whole would incur the costs because it would continue to be embroiled in a never-ending turbulent conflict and any possibilities of future peace agreements would be weakened. Non-cooperation from the FARC would mean that they would refuse to disarm, continue to recruit and to engage in acts of aggression that sabotage the process,

and ultimately abandon any possibilities of reintegration. The bottom right quadrant represents a situation where both actors choose non-cooperation. In this Nash equilibrium (2,2) scenario, neither the government nor the FARC is willing to continue with the negotiations or follow-through with the agreed concessions. Again, this would have harmful consequences for the future of the nation. The mutual cooperation in this *Peace Negotiation Dilemma* is key to ensuring that the country can eventually commence a reintegration process within a true post-conflict environment.

Placing both the reintegration process and the peace process under the lens of the Prisoner's Dilemma demonstrates the possible outcomes of a process, like the reintegration process or the peace process, that requires cooperation from both parties for the optimal results. The results of the Peace Negotiation Dilemma will undoubtedly influence the behavior of individuals in the Reintegration Dilemma: a non-cooperation from either party could potentially delay the signing of any agreement, dissuade the other party from continuing with the negotiations and disincentivize bottom-level cooperation in the Reintegration Dilemma. In the mutual cooperation quadrant (3,3) the benefits for both parties would be maximized and the society would benefit overall. In both the (1,4) and the (4,1) quadrants, the actor who does not cooperate receives the highest benefit—explaining why an actor would be incentivized to opt for non-cooperation when the other actor cooperates. In the (2,2) Nash equilibrium, “the payment matrix shows that the players are in a situation called Nash's equilibrium because no one can unilaterally improve his payoff. That is, cooperation from the other is needed so as to get a better payoff” (73).

## II. The Eight Dimensions of Reintegration

As previously mentioned, society is not an entity. The individual experiences, motivations and incentives of victims and victimizers add to the complexity of the reintegration process and the willingness of each party to cooperate. Using Axelrod's Prisoner's Dilemma framework and economic literature on behavior change and incentives allows a better understanding of not only the possible actions, but also of the optimal actions of individuals in the post-conflict phase. Mutual cooperation and a pro-social behavior will strengthen the reintegration process. Through a shared narrative of suffering, trauma and hope, the following section will use the voices of victims and ex-combatants to illustrate the eight dimensions of reintegration and demonstrate the complexity of achieving the optimal cooperation-cooperation scenario at the bottom level, the community and the individual level.

The reintegration process has eight dimensions: personal, productive, family, habitability, health, educational, citizen, and security. Through these eight dimensions, the ACR plans to develop a life plan for each ex-combatant, which is a scheme that agrees with the individual's options and life project. A life project is catered to an individual's needs and is essential to an individual's reintegration route (ACR 2015).

### *Personal*

In the personal dimension, the priorities are mental health and establishing social, interpersonal and group relationships that improve the ex-combatant's quality of life. The person's life experiences or the way in which she interprets her reality affect her interactions in her civil context. Ex-combatant narratives point to experiences of



desolation, poverty, suffering, violence, abuse, and a lack of a stable family structure. Upon reflection on her motives to join the guerrilla, ex-combatant Alejandra states, “A combination of my wretched life, their initial speeches, feeling that I wasn’t alone and that they would protect and support me, moved me to say ‘yes’ to the guerrilla” (Ardila Galvis 176). In fact, according to the first-hand narratives of female ex-combatants in “Voces de jóvenes excombatientes,” various women joined the armed groups because they had been abused sexually and/or emotionally by family members, others had had problems with their boyfriends, and others thought that by joining the guerrilla they would have the opportunity to travel, see new places, meet new people and escape from their dismal realities (Keairns 48). While in the armed groups, ex-combatants experienced gruesome realities filled with routine, abuse, death and desolation (Keairns 25-27). The life experiences of ex-combatants before having joined an armed group and their experiences as active combatants add to a baggage of trauma that must be considered and addressed as part of the personal dimension of reintegration, since it affects their mental health and their future interaction with receiving communities, which will most likely include victims.

Like ex-combatants, victims have been traumatized by violence and are trying to conciliate their past horrors to a present where they have to interact with members of the armed groups responsible for their suffering, distressing memories and current realities. The harrowing narratives of victims in *Throwing Stones at the Moon: Narratives from Colombians Displaced by Violence* are a testament to the carnage and pain in the lives of many Colombians. Their insurmountable strength is admirable. In this personal dimension of reintegration, considering the personal experiences of ex-combatants and

victims, it is difficult to fathom a cooperative scenario where interpersonal relations are developed. Neither side's trauma nor pain can be dismissed.

### *Productive*

In the productive dimension, the goal is to ensure that ex-combatants strengthen their skills and capacities to have the means of generating sustainable incomes within a legal framework. Some ex-combatants are not interested in the prospect of working and are unwilling to assume working conditions, like 34-year-old male ex-combatant noted:

There are people who were in the group because of laziness, vengeance, convenience, so [in the reintegration phase] they continue to do similar things. In the program there are people who don't want anything, they prefer to do what is easy (Mejía 124)

A lack of job opportunities and a lack of marketable working skills also pose problems for the productivity dimension. An ex-combatant from the FARC and the AUC said that without job opportunities and with a family to feed and a landlord about to kick them out, some demobilized individuals “go sell vice and do whatever” (Mejía 124). For ex-combatants, generating sustainable incomes is also challenging because of the high unemployment and lack of opportunities in Colombian society overall.

### *Family*

In the family dimension, the ACR aims to empower the ex-combatants and their nuclear family to build up a family support system. Familial links are indispensable in helping the ex-combatants remain in legality in the long term. Yet often within family narratives of ex-combatants, divided loyalties and changing relationships are found (Keairns 29). Unstable family relationships not only led to childhood traumas, but also

impelled ex-combatants to join the armed forces, so conciliating with family ties is delicate. Socorro, an ex-combatant whose family was threatened by the guerrilla (ELN) and was eventually displaced before joining an armed group, is in solitude without a strong family unit to support her pain. She acknowledges:

Pain repentance, embarrassment, solitude and orphaned children is all I have left from a struggle of less than virtuous means, I was also left with the pain of us women who are neither widows nor married. We are half-married, half-widows, half-dead, half-alive. My children are the children of a disappeared man...They're children of a half-dead, half-alive, half-assassinated, half-disappeared man. They're children abandoned without love (Ardila Galvis 45).

Civilians, like fifty-five year-old Carmenza Gómez, had her family torn apart by violence, as one of her sons was shot within the “false positive” scandal and another was killed as he tried to investigate his brother’s death (Brodzinsky 191-209). Whether having had complicated family relationships or having had their family torn by violence, both sides, civilians and ex-combatants, have stories of pain and cry for family support.

### *Habitability*

The habitability dimension was designed to encourage the ex-combatants and their families to recognize the importance of maintaining decent living conditions and develop their capacities to improve their living conditions in accordance to their cultural and socio-economic context. Transitioning from having lived in the jungle for years to living in an urban context is difficult. Ex-combatants reported that access to housing was a key element of the reintegration process, since they felt that housing would generate greater stability to their return to civil life and legality (Mejia 112). Within the various accounts of ex-combatants and victims in *The Heart of the War*, one of the common themes is a desire to have land, to have a house, to have property to call their own.

### *Health*

The health dimension refers to the development of a healthy lifestyle. An armed conflict greatly impacts an individual's physical, mental, and social health. Female ex-combatants for example, had their reproductive health conditions forcefully monitored while they were part of armed groups—they were forced to take contraceptive injections, they were the ones responsible for not becoming pregnant, and if they did, they were forced to abort (Keairns 27). Stepping into civil life will change the health practices of ex-combatants hopefully for the better, since maintaining a healthy lifestyle is necessary for the development of anyone's life project (ACR 2016).

### *Educational*

With the educational dimension, the ACR looks to encourage the abilities of the ex-combatants to pursue educational levels that allow them to be productive members of society and pursue the development of their desired life projects. Education is pivotal for ex-combatants to enhance the productive dimension of the reintegration process, as most have but a basic elementary education, if any. Various ex-combatants had to choose between helping their family and studying, and according to accounts of young female ex-combatants, family needs were prioritized over education (Keairns 42). Overall, it seems that structural factors, such as having to walk long distances to school without having had breakfast, and family obligations, such as having to take care of siblings or sick family members, contributed to quitting school (Keairns 41). Many ex-combatants note that the access to education through the reintegration process has been positive and key for their self-improvement and their adaptation into civil life (Mejia 108).

### *Citizenship*

The goal of the citizenship dimension is to ensure that ex-combatants are able to integrate themselves as members of civil society in community contexts. According to the evaluation of the results of the politics of social and economic reintegration for people and armed groups operating outside the law in Colombia, 97% of ex-combatants said that to be completely reintegrated, it was important for them to feel like they were an active part of their respective communities (DNP, 2010). For ex-combatants to become part of civil society, they have to contribute to the creation of spaces of reconciliation between communities and themselves by serving eighty hours of community service (ACR). Providing community service will also enable the development and improvement of interpersonal relations with the receiving communities, as civic involvement will increase trust from civilians and will promote a positive image of ex-combatants.

### *Security*

Finally, in the security dimension, the reintegration process aims to strengthen the ex-combatants to prevent recidivism and victimization (ACR 2016). Security is a post-demobilization issue that threatens both receiving communities and ex-combatants. Ex-combatants are in a “delicate personal security situation” because of their “often problematic relation to local communities and their earlier experiences with violence” (E. Nussio 581). They are a threat to security as well as targets of violence. Recidivism occurs without a concrete end to the multilateral armed conflict in Colombia. Carmen Rodriguez, a cook from Antioquia, reveals how demobilized individuals in her community return to violence. She noted:

In 2005, right after my son started studying, the gang members participated in the Héroes de Granada paramilitary bloc demobilization ceremony. They went to demobilize in the municipality of San Roque and came back even fiercer because the government paid them and they could arm themselves even more” (Brodzinsky 136).

This is an instance of recidivism that threatens the security of civilians. In other instances, the security question victimizes ex-combatants themselves. An ex-paramilitary from Barrancabermeja said that he felt insecure being an ex-combatant because “almost always when they kill somebody, it’s a demobilized guy” (E. Nussio 580). The guerrilla, the paramilitary, or regular security forces may pose a threat to the lives of demobilized individuals. In the following quote from an ex-combatant, the uncertainty of the security threat is exemplified by the use of “they” to depict danger:

‘Oh my God, they are going to kill the demobilized people!’ You feel afraid then, it makes you feel pretty insecure thinking they may come and kill you... You can never be trusting. Thinking that the guerrilla, another paramilitary group, or your own paramilitary organisation may [ . . . ] That creates an uncertainty so that you always have to watch out (E. Nussio 588).

The voices of victims and ex-combatants give insight to the throbbing human dimension of the conflict and the multidimensionality of reintegration. Implementing reintegration policies in a society where violence has desecrated the lives of many, regardless of the side of the conflict on which they are, will be difficult.

### III. Logistics and Steps of the Reintegration Process

For the reintegration process to be sustainable, it is important that the individual understands that he/she is being equipped with the tools, training and knowledge with which to become a self-sufficient citizen. Ensuring the development of self-sufficiency or autonomy is important for the success of the process as a *transitional* program. As

part of the DDR transitional post-conflict process, the reintegration process is not meant to be a set of welfare policies on which the demobilized individual has to depend his entire life (CONPES, 2008: 65).

When ex-combatants are self-sufficient they are able to “understand that it is possible to materialize their life aspirations in legality” (*ACR* 2016). Once they become part of the legal framework and mechanism of society, they are able to become active citizens with the same civil rights, duties and capacities as any other Colombian citizen. This self-sufficiency will likewise enable the long-term socioeconomic development of the country since it will allow ex-combatants to be part of a productive working force. In terms of government expenditure on the process of reintegration, self-sufficiency would also allow the state to have a greater budget for state building and other areas of peacebuilding.

Regarding specific goals, the national policy for reintegration states that it aims to (1) identify and promote the resolution of the legal situation of the demobilized for them to be able to socially and economically reintegrate themselves, (2) support the formation of self-sufficient and responsible individuals through psychosocial care and balanced management of free time, (3) promote healthy lifestyles through access to the General Health and Social Security System, (4) promote the continued attendance in the formal educational system, (5) contribute to the construction of skills and abilities that allow ex-combatants to successfully integrate themselves in the labor market and generate their own income (6) promote social harmony, reconciliation, and socially strengthen the receiving communities, (7) and strengthen the state policy for reintegration (CONPES 2008).

The reintegration process is both complex and costly. In a study conducted by Bank of America Merrill Lynch Global Research, the implementation cost of a peace agreement with the FARC would be at least 1.1% of the GDP (approximately \$5.3 million dollars) at most 3.8% of the GDP (approximately \$18.8 million dollars) over the span of ten years (Cosoy 2015). From this expected budget, reintegration would supposedly be the least expensive out of the three components included in this cost estimation: victims, agriculture reform and rural reconstruction, and ex-combatant demobilization and reintegration. According to the ACR, the attention brought to ex-combatants for a year requires \$5 million Colombian Pesos, which is less than \$2000 US Dollars, and the process takes on average about 6.5 years (Cosoy 2015; ACR website). The 2015 ACR budget was approximately \$60 million dollars to serve 30,000 people. If 36,000 people demobilized from the FARC at the possible signing of a peace agreement, the total cost of their reintegration would be about \$468 million dollars (Cosoy 2015).

Before entering the reintegration phase and receiving the benefits obtained by an individual undergoing a reintegration process, an ex-combatant has to receive a CODA (*Comité Operativo de Dejación de Armas*) to certify his status as a *desmovilizado*. To receive this certification, an ex-combatant must first report to a civil authority, hand over weapons, enter the PAHD (Programa de Atención Humanitaria al Desmovilizado), receive housing, food, clothing and health care, and move to *Hogares de Paz*. These *Hogares de Paz* are temporary shelters administered by the Group for Demobilized Humanitarian Attention of the Ministry of Defense (GAHD) and provide psychosocial attention, training, identification documents, legal advice, health evaluations, sports and recreation for the demobilized individuals and their family group (ACR 2016). If the



demobilized individual is able to undergo this pre-reintegration phase, he obtains the CODA. The CODA is his passport into receiving the benefits of reintegration from the ACR since it states the demobilized condition of the individual.

After obtaining the CODA the demobilized citizen officially enters the route for reintegration through the ACR (*ACR* 2016). The second step is health, where the ACR makes sure the ex-combatant and his family become covered by health insurance. The third step is psychosocial care, where individuals undergo activities that allow them to feel better with the people around them. The fourth step is education, where the individual and his family are given the means for education. The fifth step is job training, where the ultimate goal is for the individual to emerge with a stable job or his own business. The sixth step is economic insertion, where the ACR can invest to help them start their own business, continue their studies, or buy their own house. The seventh step consists of legal help, which means that the ACR helps the individual with the paperwork that they need to receive their legal benefits. After these steps, it is the end of the reintegration route. These steps would work through a federal budget (*Presupuesto ACR* 2016).

The steps of the reintegration process are not merely steps in a checklist that if followed ensure a successful reintegration into a new environment. It is important to understand that each ex-combatant's lived experience is unique and his or her new reality will vary depending on the people with whom they interact and their own personal attributes, such as their internal dispositions to change, their attitudinal responses to rejection, stigmatization and challenges, and their willingness to break with a past that will continue to follow them internally and externally. These members of society are

entering a new reality where they will not necessarily be welcomed with open arms. They are entering a polarized context that is wounded and is searching for justice—a subjective and difficult concept that is often punitive and retaliatory. This is often not the most nurturing environment for ex-combatants, or rather *ex-guerrilleros*, *ex-paramilitaries*, *desmovilizados*. The labels alone are capable of silencing a conversation and evoking hate, fear, and disappointment in the government. Needless to say, the reintegration process, as noble as it might seem and as integral to a sustainable peace as it is, experiences some challenges.

#### IV. Challenges

The challenges of the reintegration phase induce great skepticism among citizens weary of war and wary of both insurgent groups and government brokers of peace. For one, as aforementioned, the conflict has not ended. This poses one of the greatest challenges to the success of the reintegration process. Colombia is not in post-conflict, but rather in *pre-post-conflict*, which further encumbers the ex-combatant's adaptation to a new reality. This difficulty is evident when considering the conditions that a person in process of reintegration finds in the sociocultural context that receives him once he abandons an illegal armed group (GAI). The social context is one in which the demobilized confronts various adversities, like unemployment, poverty, a culture of *inmediatismo económico*, social inequality, delinquency and the constant offers of illegality coming from his former armed group or from emerging illegal armed groups (Mejia 9).

How is it even viable to reintegrate individuals who once belonged to armed

groups into a society that continues to be at war with other—or perhaps the same—armed groups? Taking this in mind, if an ex-combatant did not formally belong to a group that has made a formal agreement, how can he feel safe from repercussions if he decides to desert and join civil society? On the side of civil society, how can we expect the cooperation and willingness of the receiving communities, selling them a post-conflict concept, when they do not see a concrete end and perceive continued aggression from the other armed groups as a signal that the state has not effectively defeated violence?

### *Danger of Recidivism*

In this pre-post-conflict phase other challenges that arise because of the continuation of armed illegal groups is the “the availability of resources or income from illegal drug trafficking, with which armed groups can be financed” (Casas and Guzman 54). The availability of financing continues to strengthen these groups, lessening their incentives for engaging in DDR processes. Additionally, the continuation of an illegal gun market not only hinders the Disarmament part of the DDR process, but also complicates the reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society. The availability of illegal resources, like money from drug trafficking and a market for arms, reverses the efforts of ex-combatants to break-off from violence because it incentivizes them to return to violence—these illegal resources are saboteurs that can affect the process of reintegration and can create parallel institutional universes where violence is the means to solve problems (CONPES 25; Casas and Guzman 79).

Recidivism, or the reengagement in violence and the entering into criminal structures by ex-combatants, is one of the challenges of a DDR process that occurs amidst continued violence (FIP, 2014: 5). In fact, the research team of the organization

Foundation Ideas for Peace (FIP) conducted a study about the return to legality or recidivism of ex-combatants. Based on their results, they created a combined index with three measurements for whether ex-combatants reverted into violence: [ex-combatants] never approached [by armed groups], approached but not tempted, approached and tempted. The index showed that 20% of the ex-combatant population in Colombia is completely reintegrated into civil society, 42% is at a low-intermediate risk, 14% has a medium-high risk and 24% is recidivist. The FIP concluded that among the ex-combatant population there is a group of recidivist ex-combatants, a group of ex-combatants that have reintegrated successfully into civilian life and another group that is “potentially vulnerable to recidivism or recruitment, or vulnerable to falling into the gray zone of non-recidivism.” The research affirms the importance of promoting and offering ex-combatants relations, social capital and networks in the reintegration process. Consistent involvement in the reintegration program is crucial to prevent recidivism.

A risk factor that increases the danger of recidivism, as well as victimization, of ex-combatants is continuing in geographic zones with FARC, Bacrim (criminal bands), or narco-trafficking (ACR 2016). This risk factor demonstrates that being an ex-combatant attempting to find a new life in a violent context defeats the purpose of reintegration. In a context that continues to de-legitimize the state institutions and continues to favor violence as an alternative to democracy, where violence at a macro and micro level remains the undisputed status quo, reengaging in violence seems like a rational course of action for an ex-combatant who wants to maximize his short-term gains and utility. With the continuation of armed groups amidst attempts of reintegration, the state’s legitimacy and control is put into question. The cultural rule has been to resort to

violence to assert one's legitimacy, rather than resorting to the state institutions, so when the state has not clearly ruptured with war in a macroscopic scale, it has not effectively broken the cycle of violence or mistrust in Colombia's democracy.

Other obstacles include the ex-combatant profile. The demobilized has an uncertain judicial situation, since he does not have civil registration or a civil identification (CONPES 19). He also has little to no job experience and training, which makes it difficult for them to enter a workforce with already scarce opportunities. In terms of lack of opportunities, the private sector does not assume the social responsibility of increasing employment opportunities by supporting productive initiatives that link all the actors from armed violence to a civil life (CONPES 22).

## V. Key Aspects of the Reintegration Process

Taking into account the various challenges and gaps of the reintegration process, it is important to consider certain key aspects. The psychological and education components are some of the most important areas because they ensure that the process is sustainable and contributes to long-term peace building. Furthermore, building a skillset for joining the workforce is integral to the economic strategy of reintegration, since the construction abilities and the development of job skills and entrepreneurship is necessary for the ex-combatants to successfully enter the labor market and become autonomous (CONPES 29).

Because of the transitional nature of the reintegration process, it is also key for the programs to have the support of regional and local politics to ensure effective implementation of the policies and the cooperation of the receiving communities

(CONPES 65). This support of the receiving communities is part of the idea of *corresponsabilidad*, in which all segments of society need to be linked and assume responsibility to be able to build relationships based on trust, conciliation and reciprocity. *Corresponsabilidad* is “an interdependent and dynamic development requiring the cooperation of the entire social group to thrive” (Croll 2003: 50). As shown in the Prisoner’s Dilemma previously, the cooperation of the receiving communities is key for the reintegration process, and so the process must also prioritize the rehabilitation of society to guarantee receptiveness. Although the ex-combatants are subjected and given the tools for a transition of realities, “the social is not” (Theidon 2007: 77). Reintegration not only requires that the ex-combatants cooperate, consent and are willing to learn, but also requires that the society learns “to live with those who have participated in the conflict” which places this situation as a problem of collective action (Casas and Guzman 72). Effective reintegration implies a qualitative change in the receiving communities and this is only possible if crucial aspects of the host communities, including local cultures, psychology, and in-group/out-group dynamics, are considered (Casas and Guzman 59).

### Third Chapter: The Politics of Peacemaking



*Source: Eltiempo.com*

Symbolic handshake between President Santos and FARC's leader, Timochenko, mediated by Raul Castro.

In the larger context of peace making, no analysis of DDR is complete without understanding the politics of peace making, especially in the case of Colombia, when the FARC and the government have held peace dialogues in Havana since 2012. The dilemma of reintegration and peace negotiations is interconnected, as the policies of DDR are dependent on the politics at the table in Havana. Likewise, DDR policies are not being nor will they be implemented in a vacuum—they are subject to national politics and events, which also affect the politics of the peace negotiations. Thus, to better

understand the theory and the policy behind DDR, we must examine the interconnectivity of the politics of peacemaking with national politics and events. This permits a more realistic view on the complexity of DDR implementation, as Colombia is in a scenario of conflicted interests and high political stakes. The following chapter will examine the current peace negotiations and the winding road to a failed deadline through current events and political scandals.

### I. The Motives Behind the March 23<sup>rd</sup> Deadline

Half a century after the start of Colombia's civil war, President Santos and the FARC would sign a peace agreement on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 that would be remembered in history. Six months before, the President and the leader of the FARC shook hands in Havana promising Colombians that by that date a peace agreement would be finalized, followed by disarmament sixty days later. The handshake in Havana occurred amidst debates about impunity in Colombia and a continued high distrust of the FARC: 93% of Colombians have an unfavorable opinion of the FARC (Gallup 2015). This sudden announcement begged questions about the motivations and the tangibility of such an ambitious deadline when the distance between the actors in certain issues and certain points within the peace agenda remained evident.

The decision of the negotiators to announce a concrete deadline for the signature of the peace agreement at that specific point in 2015 could also be due to diminishing public opinion of the peace process and diminishing presidential approval ratings. In other words, the government's performance and public opinion could have prompted such an announcement and a willingness to expedite the process.



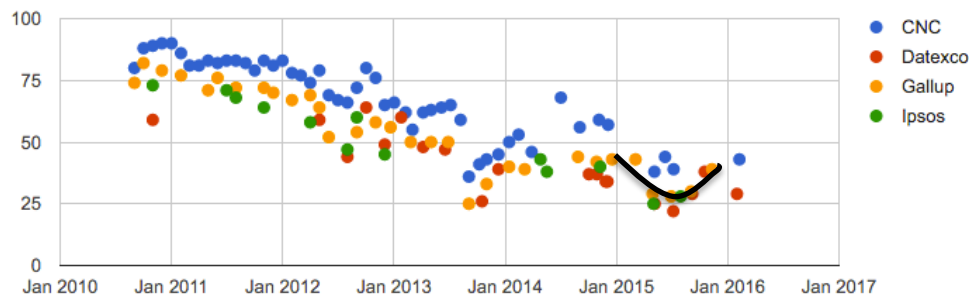
Regarding public opinion of the process, in the latest poll made by Gallup, by June 2015, 62% of Colombians did not believe that an agreement with the FARC that ended the armed conflict could be made, while 33% believed it was possible. Although the results showed that 54% of Colombians agreed with having started the peace negotiations with the FARC, this was the lowest number since the beginning of the dialogues in 2012. 73.4% of Colombians believed that the peace process was heading in the wrong direction and only 18% believed that it was on a good path (Gomez 2015). Moreover, 45% of Colombians believed that peace dialogues were the best option, while 46% believed that a military offensive is necessary to defeat the guerrilla, which can be related to the fact that 77% saw the situation with the guerrilla worsening, while 12% said that it was improving—the first time since the negotiations in 2012 that the public favored a military strategy over peace negotiations.

This low point in the opinion of the peace negotiations was due to a critical series of events in 2015 that, according to Jorge Restrepo, “meant a crisis for the process” (*BBC Mundo 2015*). In May 22, 2015 the military attacked the FARC, killing 26 combatants, to which the FARC responded by ending the unilateral ceasefire agreed in the negotiations: in less than a month the FARC started targeting and killing military members again and intensified their attacks against civilian infrastructures (Lafuente 2015). One of the most shocking attacks was the FARC’s surprise attack on an army patrol in Cauca, in which they killed eleven soldiers. In light of this attack, the entire nation “expressed its dismay and indignation in light of such a bloody and incomprehensible ambush that no one has been able to explain...in any case, everyone coincided in that the [peace] process had been seriously wounded”(Semana 2015). After

this attack and others, before the Gallup poll was conducted in June, the overall opinion of the peace negotiations, the belief in the end of the conflict, and the public's trust had plummeted. It is clear that the public was not able to digest this latest return to violence despite the fact that the conflict had been previously deescalating.

Public opinion of Santos has dropped mightily since he took office in 2010. According to a graph in *Colombia Reports* based on data from CNC, Datexco, Gallup, and Ipsos, Santos' approval rating has plummeted, with public ire directed at the peace negotiations, the economy, and his overall management of the government. By looking at the various data we can see that across all four one can see a dip from around May 2015 to after September 2015—meaning that across all four, the approval rating was on an overall steady decline and then it rose up somewhat after on the dates after the announcement of the March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016 deadline, even though it has continued to decrease afterwards. A poll from Gallup also revealed the unfavorable opinion that the public holds of the president: by June 2015, 66% of Colombians disapproved of the work that the President had done, while only 28% supported his work, which could explain why the presidency was eager to demonstrate progress in the peace dialogue by setting a deadline.

Santos Approval Rating



The government aimed to inject optimism and trust into the public's minds—a symbolic action that would reinvigorate a lengthy and exhaustive peace process that was depleting people's patience. Regardless of the motives, setting the date renewed the hope of many, the hope that this process, which has polarized the country, would be different and effective instead of one more disappointment deriding the government and people. However, the deadline was not met.

*From a Democratic Security Policy to Peace Negotiations in Havana*

After success in reducing violence during the Uribe administration with the Plan Colombia, the change in presidency led to a change in policy intended to end a stalemate and initiate a new plan of action that would take advantage of the FARC's weakening. The government of Uribe had been highly successful in the military fight against the FARC, to the point that in 2008 talk of post-conflict arose. The reduced numbers of guerrilla, the reduced homicides and kidnappings during the Uribe presidency indicated that the war was being won militarily were the reduced (Leech 2005). According to Air Force General Juan Carlos Gomez, the government had been successful in the democratic security policy and had eradicated and eliminated the guerrilla in many regions of the country, debilitating them to the point of making them irrelevant, thus enabling the government to advance in the politics of post-conflict to guarantee that this violent and terrorist phenomenon would not affect our country ever again (2016). At the end of his second term President Uribe passed the baton into the hands of the Minister of Defense at the time, Juan Manuel Santos. Yet Santos dramatically changed the course of action from a hardline military strategy to a peace

dialogue negotiation—a shift in policy that many people in Colombia considered treasonous. When Santos entered the presidency, the military’s effectiveness had been dropping, while that of the guerrilla had been increasing; the conflict was reaching a stalemate with its military strategy (Anselma 2014). Nevertheless, why would Santos, a member Uribe’s own party, curtail the strategy that had not only weakened the FARC, but had also maintained Uribe between a 68% and 86% performance approval rating?

During the years before the beginning of the 2012 peace negotiations, various important FARC leaders died, which led to changes in leadership and the weakening of the FARC. This factor, which might have caused the FARC to be more willing to negotiate and contemplate a peace agreement, is known as *actor transformation*. According to theorists of conflict, actor transformation is part of five generic transformers of protracted conflict that explain the ways in which conflict transformation takes place, positing that when a shift in leadership occurs, a change of direction resulting in a new delineation of policies, goals, and perspectives is inevitable (Ramsbotham 176). In 2008, Manuel Marulanda, also known as Tirofijo, one of the FARC’s main leaders and founders, died of natural causes. Tirofijo’s death created uncertainty and debilitated the group’s prospects for future endeavors (Nullvalue 2008). Two years later, in the “Operation Sodoma,” the armed forces killed a top FARC commander Victor Julio Suárez Rojas, also known as Mono Jojoy (*El Tiempo* 2010). The next year, in 2011, the leader who had replaced Tirofijo, Alfonso Cano, was killed in a military raid. This death had a great psychological impact for the FARC because he had been the their second commander-in-chief. President Santos called it “the most devastating blow to the group in its decades-long insurgency and urged it to disband”

(McDermott 2011). Keeping this actor transformation in mind, as well as the military successes, the beginning of the peace negotiations seemed to be at a ripe moment.

One of the principal reasons for retrenchment on military pursuit of the FARC was the rising level of human rights violations. During Uribe's Democratic Security Policy, tens of thousands of civilians were killed or victimized and millions were displaced (Anselma 2014). The False Positive scandal, a controlled crime of systematic execution, tainted the military strategy of the Uribe administration in the eyes of the nation and the world.

Between 2002 and 2008, army brigades across Colombia routinely executed civilians. Under pressure from superiors to show "positive" results and boost body counts in their war against guerrillas, soldiers and officers abducted victims or lured them to remote locations under false pretenses—such as with promises of work—killed them, placed weapons on their lifeless bodies, and then reported them as enemy combatants killed in action. Committed on a large scale for more than half a decade, these "false positive" killings constitute one of the worst episodes of mass atrocity in the Western Hemisphere in recent decades (Human Rights Watch 2015).

President Santos was the defense minister when the False Positive Scandal, came to light in 2008. Between 2002 and 2009, more than 3,000 extrajudicial executions occurred due to the commencement of the Uribe's Democratic Security Policy. Civil organizations and the family members of the young men killed in the False Positive scandal considered that these crimes were attributable to the government's policy of compensating military forces as an incentive to fight against the guerrilla. They held Juan Manuel Santos as one of the perpetrators of the crimes and thus said it was unprecedented for him to be in the presidential elections of 2010 (*El Espectador* 2010). Furthermore, since Santos stated that he put an end to this type of executions, according to the columnist Felipe Zuleta, it demonstrated that the False Positives was a crime whose

execution was controlled and obeyed a criminal enterprise that was finitely established. In one way or another, whether he was actually one of the culprits or not, President Santos was implicated in this massive human rights violation scandal, something detrimental for his image, as well as the trust of his constituents. Changing the course of Uribe's military democratic security policy would be Santos' chance of eradicating any link he had had with the scandal—changing from a military offensive to a peaceful dialogue, from a violent tactic to a peaceful one, would establish him as a groundbreaking peacemaker in the eyes of the nation and the international sphere.

### *Short-lived Optimism*

A year after the beginning of the peace talks in Havana, María Vicoria Llorente, director of the Foundation of Ideas for Peace (FIP)—a Colombian foundation created to increase awareness, to propose resolutions to the armed conflict and to build peace by keeping in mind the people's human rights, supremacy and plurality—stated, “The FIP considers that this peace process is, probably, from all the processes with the FARC, the one that has major elements with which to sign an agreement that will lead to disarmament” (Llorente 2013). Early on, the FARC's willingness to negotiate for peace was illustrated by their statement in August 2013, in which they recognized for the first time in their history that they are partly responsible for the thousands of victims in the conflict, suggesting that steps be taken for the relief and compensation of the victims (AFP 2013). Needless to say, this latest peace attempt by the Santos administration seemed to be different. Talks of post-conflict policy and implementation seemed not only appropriate but also progressive and promising, elevating the Colombian effort to

the world stage and garnering support from international actors, such as the United Nations, the European Union, and the United States.

### *The Winding Road to the Deadline*

Since the announcement of the deadline, the road has been turbulent. Recent events leading to March 2016 have demoralized the country and demonstrated a lack of commitment to peace and nation building from various segments of society. The conditions in the country have not been conducive to cooperation, which in turn has made Colombians pessimistic. Less than a fourth of the population considers that the country is going in the right direction, and this pessimism is demonstrated in the negative opinion that they have of Juan Manuel Santos' image and his government, the credibility of institutions and the expectations of the peace process (*Semana* 2016, C). The results from a study conducted by *Semana* reveal the negative and chaotic moment that Colombia is experiencing amidst this latest critical peace agreement: economic decline, corruption scandals, political polarization and acts of armed politics by the FARC.

First, the economy is faltering. Exports fell by 36.6%, unemployment is in the double digits at 11.9%, the dollar is high, the minimum wage was badly set, consumer and inflation is over 6%, Real GDP has been decreasing since 2013, and the value-added national tax, the IVA (Impuesto de Valor Agregado), rose from 16% to 19% (Hernandez 2016; World Bank 2016; *Dinero* 2015). The increase in the IVA, according to experts, will affect the prices of products in the basket of goods, at a critical moment in the economy (*Dinero* 2015). The Colombian government is looking for a structural tax reform to increase its revenue for its 2016 policies, including post-conflict policies (*Bluradio* 2015). The peace process and the subsequent post-conflict are being used as

motives for the needed revenue and thus the necessity of increasing the IVA. But Colombians are not enjoying this revenue game, as their belief in the legitimacy and feasibility of the peace process is faltering, which would consequently make this increase unnecessary.

As the deadline approached, the economic situation frustrated and disillusioned Colombians, prompting doubt in the effectiveness of the Santos administration. In March 17, 2016 the apparent public discontent on the economic situation was manifested in a series of protests around the country: thousands of Colombians took to the streets to protest President Santos' economic policies at a crucial time in the peace negotiations, the final stretch or rather what seemed to be (Lafuente 2016).

The demonstrators also decried the “recent sale of state-owned electric company Isagen and the scandal over massive cost overruns in the modernization of the Reficar oil refinery in Cartagena” (*EFE* 2016). The sale of the state-owned Isagen to the Canadian company Brookfield, in which the Minister of Finance was involved, occurred at moment when the country is on the verge of an energy shortage. This privatization, the largest in Colombia in almost a decade, raised questions about the regularity and the legality of the transaction (*América Economía* 2016).

Another corruption scandal erupted in January 2016, when the Office of the Comptroller General of the Republic exposed the high costs and the poor execution of the upgrading of Reficar, in which execution errors doubled the expected costs in less than five years. During the construction of this project, delays in the operations and corruption in contracting practices led to a dramatic fall in the expected profitability and



losses of millions of dollars to Reficar and to the state, since the refinery belongs to the primary petroleum Colombian company, Ecopetrol (*Semana* 2016, D).

A male prostitution scandal involving the Colombian National Police and Congress was yet another corruption scandal in 2016 that undermined the legality of Colombian government institutions—more specifically, that continued to taint the public’s opinion of the Santos administration and thus of the peace process. In this scandal, General Rodolfo Palomino, resigned from his post as the general director of the National Police after months of allegations and accusations for the possible illegal monitoring and interception of journalists, the unjustified increase of assets, and the creation and operation of a prostitution network that supposedly operated within the Congress and the police department (Cosoy 2016). These scandals have reiterated the government’s incompetence and corruption—they have unraveled what continues to be a common theme in Colombia’s government at an inconvenient moment when national unity and public credibility is in danger. The nation is polarized.

The peace process has divided the nation between *Santistas* and *Uribistas*—those who support the Santos administration and his plan of combatting the nation’s conflict through peace dialogues and those against Santos who rally behind the hard-liner President Uribe who calls the peace agreement an “Agreement of Impunity.” President Uribe has tapped into the “current fear and opposition to negotiations” and the fact that “many people want FARC guerrillas prosecuted for their crimes and thrown in jail, not let off if they admit to what they have done” (Partlow 2015). The accusation and the capture of Uribe’s brother, Santiago Uribe, for aggravated homicide and conspiracy related to an illegal armed group deepened the division between Santos and Uribe (*El*

*Tiempo* 2016). President Uribe claims that Santiago Uribe was politically persecuted simply because of being his brother. He even denounced the capture to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, claiming that his family was being “persecuted.” Uribeistas allege that this is evidence of a deliberate political persecution, while the government assures that it was an autonomous decision of the Prosecutor.

The path to the signing of the peace agreement has not only been complicated by government scandals and polarization, but also by actions of the FARC. In 2015, according to the UN, the FARC was responsible for the largest percentage of displaced Colombians: from the estimated 166,000 Colombians displaced, 37% fled from the FARC, as opposed to 31% from the ELN, and 13% from criminal gangs (Victim’s Unit 1; “Forced Displacement...” 4). Closer to the deadline, an episode of armed political proselytism in the town of Conejo on February 2016 reflects the continuing differences between the FARC and the government, as well as the FARC’s unwillingness to cooperate with the concessions in the peace agreement. A delegation of the guerrilla, led by Ivan Marquez, met at Conejo. The meeting was problematic because it took place in the urban area of the municipality in the presence of both civilians and guerrilleros, and also because according to the government, it violated the agreed concession of not mixing arms and politics under any circumstance (Molano 2016). The FARC took this opportunity to make political speeches and to criticize the concessions that President Santos had been offering them in Havana (Molano 2016; *Semana* 2016, B). Needless to say, this untimely event in Conejo unleashed criticism on the government’s concessions with the FARC in Havana, pointing to the need to clearly define the parameters of political exercise, pedagogical work and the relation between the guerrilla and civil

society (Molano 2016). The motives of the FARC in the peace process were likewise questioned, as their actions were considered an “institutional challenge” (*Semana* 2016, B)

The winding road to March 23<sup>rd</sup> accentuated the differences between the FARC and the government, between peace process supporters and non-peace supporters, between Santistas and Uribistas, between policy and politics. At a time when the country was supposedly nearing a historic agreement, the previous examples reaffirmed the complexity of Colombian politics and social structure. Colombia might have a latent capacity and willingness to undergo a post-conflict phase and resolve a prolonged conflict where violence, corruption, and narcotrafficking have asserted themselves as the immutable status quo. Yet being pessimistic (or perhaps realistic), the turbulent winding road to March 23<sup>rd</sup> show that once again, Colombia’s political, social, and economic inherent structure continues to hold it hostage in a cycle of violence and disappointments. Signing a peace agreement is not an easy task, and the efforts of those at Havana to create policy on which the government and its longest nemesis can agree is commendable, but will the policies coincide with the politics? The FARC’s idea of a satisfactory end of the conflict continued to differ with the government’s idea—and to a greater extent, with the public’s idea—within mere weeks of signing the definitive deal. It is not surprising that the deadline was changed.

## II. Failure to Meet the Deadline

On March 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, the promise of a signed peace agreement on the 23<sup>rd</sup> seemed elusive: the government and the FARC, respectively, issued statements saying

that they were willing to set a new deadline to ensure that the agreement was optimal for everyone (AFP 2016; Pereira 2016). President Santos noted, “Despite the shared interest of reaching a definitive act that leads to the reincorporation of guerrilla members into the civil life of the country, I would not sign an agreement with the FARC that would not be a good agreement for Colombians”(Redacción Paz 2016).

The symbolic and saccharin handshake at Havana had been futile. Allaying public disappointment, the government recognized the impossibility of having met the deadline when major differences between the FARC and the government remained—differences critical to peace. The differences stemmed from disagreements on disarmament deadlines, the entry of the FARC into politics and civil life, the concessions of the zones of concentration, and security guarantees. Overall they were all related to disarmament.

### *The Distance that Remains*

The most crucial disagreement on disarmament that prevents the signing of the peace agreement is the differing opinion of disarmament as a prerequisite to the FARC members’ entry into politics and into civil life. The government demands a set and concrete date to end the process of disarmament, since it sees legality as a prerequisite for the FARC to potentially engage in politics, circulate in national territory, and enter civil life. The head of the Government delegation, Humberto de la Calle, insisted on “a process of disarmament with fixed deadlines, without any gray zones, without the mix of arms and politics, a disarmament that will take place for the international stage in complete transparency. There can be no doubt about the decision of the disposal of

arms” (Molano 2016). The FARC, however, wants disarmament to be a gradual process and wants to be able to engage in politics and civil life once the agreement is signed, not after a set date of disarmament (Redacción Paz 2016). Alluding to the necessity of arms, Timochenko warned that the FARC was going to enter political life and needed a guarantee to stay alive in order to do so (Molano 2016). Disarmament can be seen as a security issue.

Furthermore, the FARC and the government’s views on *zonas de concentración* continue to differ. These zones are temporary location areas that will enable the FARC members to transition into civility and legality, as they will report here after the accords are signed to carry out the processes of disarmament, demobilization and the special measures of justice until the government determines the end of the process. The government intends to have eleven zones, limited to at most ten square kilometers in size, in regions with the least population possible, without schools and with community police free to carry out their functions (Monsalve 2016). The government will restrict the carrying of arms to 5% in these zones and hand over the rest to an international body. Within these areas, the arrest warrants against the FARC members would be null, and for the FARC to be able to exit them, they would require permission from the government and the UN (Molano 2016).

The FARC disagreed with the government’s guidelines for the disarmament procedures in the *zonas de concentración*, and this disagreement was augmented when the government forbade the FARC from conducting any meetings with civilians within the *zonas de concentración* and from engaging in political proselytism without permission from the Executive. Instead, the FARC’s idea for these zones is for them to

be located within villages with communication and water supplies and defined by “geographic accidents”. They want to be able to hold meetings with civilians with at most 300 people. Likewise, the arms should be identified through technical processes, with a percentage deposited in warehouses within the zones, a percentage handed over to the UN, and a percentage given to ex-combatants to ensure their security (Molano 2016).

Continuing to disagree on disarmament will undo the progress that has been made during these four years, as arms are at the core of this fifty-year conflict. For the FARC, disarmament is a delicate issue, as it is through arms that they have been able to conduct their operations and remain powerful, so succumbing to the government’s demands is not a simple task as it strips them of the means through which they have been able to enforce their legitimacy/existence. The FARC is also worried about the security of its demobilized members at the latent threat of the paramilitary.

Yet, disarmament is a condition for post-conflict and the cessation of violence. The elimination of arms will ensure that violence will cease to be a method with which to enter politics. The signature of a peace agreement or the beginning of a comprehensive post-conflict phase without eradicating the instruments that allowed it to endure is inconceivable—without disarmament, reintegration, the aspect of DDR that ensures a long lasting peace, is unfeasible. The FARC might fear reprisal from paramilitary forces, but entering civil life in legality requires no arms.

Colombia has been undergoing a pre-post-conflict stage without a concrete end of the conflict, but if the FARC and the government are aiming for a peace agreement,

disarmament must be a priority and a condition for the benefits of a reintegration process for the FARC.

### *The Aftermath of the Failed Deadline*

According press statements, for both the government and the FARC the failure to meet the deadline is not synonymous to the end of the process. Ivan Marquez, the chief guerrilla negotiator, promised that they meant “to arrive at the construction of a good agreement to make 2016 the year of peace” (*Minuto30* 2016). Likewise, close sources to the negotiations estimated that the final agreement with the FARC would be signed on the last week of June 2016, which would mean that the FARC would start disarmament at the beginning of September (Gomez 2016). After the change of the first deadline, general skepticism is inevitable over whether a few more months will be sufficient to resolve the deep differences that remain.

Seven days after the government announced its intention of extending the deadline of the peace process with the FARC, President Santos announced his government’s intention of beginning a peace process with the second largest guerrilla group, the ELN. In the press release, he reiterated that although each process would be different from that of the FARC, “the end of the conflict is one” (Gomez 2016). Since the ELN is weaker than the FARC, it may be interested in going further and faster than the FARC—they do not have the same strength with which to bargain concessions with the government. This announcement was coincidentally made two days before the much publicized Uribista protests of April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Through social networks, Uribe and his followers made a call to take to the streets to denounce the Santos presidency for its

corruption and its waste of money, to make clear that Colombians do not want the FARC to engage in armed politics while talking of peace in Havana, and to demand respect from terrorists and the government (Caracol Radio 2016). The announcement of the peace negotiations with the ELN did not prevent, nor quell the protests.

On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, in Bogota and twenty-two other cities, thousands of Colombians heeded Alvaro Uribe's call. A man in the protests said his anger stemmed from the fact that the deceitful fraud [Santos] was going to give the country not only to the FARC, but now to the ELN as well" (Semana 2016, A). Instead of the ELN announcement giving a surge of hope, it seemed to augment the disappointment in the Santos government. These protests were not just peaceful protests organized by the people, but they were politicized. In other words, they were led and encouraged by ex-president Uribe and his political party, Centro Democrático, and directly attacked the Santos presidency and politics. In Bogota, amidst whistles and bugles, chants of "No más Santos" and "Uribe, Uribe, Uribe" emerged from the sea of people (Semana 2016, A). The politicization of the protests only deepens the social and political polarization of the country. And, as evidenced by Colombia's history, political polarization leads to painful and catastrophic consequences. The post-conflict process will not be the only one harmed.

### *A Critical Success for a Critical Transition to Peace*

Within the turmoil, the success of a peace agreement seems even more distant, yet this turmoil also demonstrates the cry for change, the cry for peace, and the cry for the success at Havana. A successful peace agreement in Havana will restore societal trust, will set the precedent for any future peace agreements with other insurgency groups, like the ELN, and will ultimately determine the way in which the post conflict policies will



materialize. A cooperation-cooperation scenario in the peace agreement prisoner's dilemma will in turn increase the possibilities of having a cooperation-cooperation scenario for reintegration. If both the government and the FARC cooperate and agree to peace, both the receiving communities and the ex-combatants will be more willing to cooperate in their own prisoner's dilemma. The receiving communities will be more trusting of ex-combatants who belong to a group that has ceased to be a threat of violence to the state and has agreed to collectively demobilize, disarm, and reintegrate; the ex-combatants will be more willing to cooperate if they belong to a group that is no longer active and no longer poses a threat to their desertion and reintegration into civil society. Delineating an actual end is key for ex-combatants to be able to undergo the reintegration process. Albeit a success in Havana does not mean peace, it is one step closer to bridging the gap between a state of pre-post-conflict and one of post-conflict. The cessation of violence with the FARC assures that the policies of DDR with this armed group will be able to be implemented and enforced in a more realistic manner. And perhaps, it will unify the country once more

## Chapter Four: Conclusion

The incertitude of the peace processes amidst political and social turbulence in Colombia undoubtedly will affect the implementation of DDR measures. Colombia is a unique case of DDR because it is not in a true post-conflict state, but rather in a *pre*-post-conflict state. A clear-cut armistice that, would usually indicate the entrance into a state of post-conflict, will not be what propels the DDR processes in Colombia. DDR has already been initiated and will continue to be implemented regardless of whether violence continues. The definite end of violence in Colombia is unknown. Yet, through an examination of the fifty-year war in Colombia and the elusive attempts at peace, the need for DDR processes is clear. These processes must be employed to ensure that the return of ex-combatants into society will not engender new conflicts, so that a long-lasting peace can be a future possibility.

Within the DDR processes, reintegration is the most complex step because it involves cooperation from multiple segments of society. It is also the key step to secure a positive peace, as a successful reintegration process will guarantee that violence becomes an unthinkable method with which to pursue politics, as ex-combatants, victims, and receiving communities will have to work together for peacebuilding. Since the success of the reintegration process is contingent on the cooperation of individuals at different levels of society, it is also the most difficult step because politics will have an effect on the success of the policy implementation.

Considering the current situation in Colombia—a peace agreement whose completion is uncertain, the announcement of a second peace agreement with another

armed group, corruption scandals, a faltering economy, and policies of post-conflict within a context of ongoing violence and public distrust of government—two scenarios for the future can be imagined: a negative scenario where prospects for peace become more distant and a positive scenario where people will insist on an end to violence and achieve incremental steps toward domestic peace.

#### I. Least positive scenario: Peace is not imminent

Today, worrisome signs include continued violence from insurgent groups and increased coca production. Despite any possible post-conflict attempt, the nation remains ridden with violence: insurgencies and organized crime threaten the national security and continue to perpetrate acts of terrorism, massacres, forced displacement, environmental harm, sexual violence, child soldier recruitment and other crimes against humanity (Matta 2016). These continuing violent structures impact the public's belief in a peace or post-conflict. The main active insurgency groups that add to the ongoing conflict are the ELN, the EPL group, and bands like “los Urabeños,” “Bloque Meta,” and “Libertadores del Vichada,” all of which add up to 3,580 combatants and together operate in 70% of the country.<sup>3</sup> In urban areas, there are 1,883 bands of organized crime dedicated to extortion, selective killings, drug and arms trafficking, illegal mining, and larceny (Matta 2016).

The cultivation of illicit drugs has fueled the armed conflict. According to the White House, Colombia's coca production has increased, instead of having decreased as was expected because of a supposedly imminent peace agreement. Since the start of the

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<sup>3</sup> Even if they agreed in March 30 to officially start peace talks, they had continued their regular attacks against the military and the police on a regular basis until weeks before the announcement.

peace negotiation in 2012, the cultivation of coca has risen from 78,000 to 159,000 hectares in 2015. This is close to the coca cultivation levels in the early 2000s, when the FARC was at its peak military strength and when Colombia was said to be nearing the status of a failed state (*The White House* n.d.). During this time, when President Pastrana was attempting peace talks with the FARC, the flow of drug income strengthened the FARC and they “made almost no effort to seriously negotiate a peace treaty” (Otis 2014).

The current surge in coca production has given the country once more the number one position for coca production while peace is being discussed in Havana. According to Colombian and U.S. officials, the FARC and other armed groups have been encouraging farmers “to plant more coca in anticipation of the peace deal and the new government aid” (Miroff 2015). It is counterintuitive for a group who is expecting to sign a peace negotiation and enter civil life to increase the cultivation of coca. By using the ceasefire agreed to in the negotiations to solidify and build up their finances, the FARC could use the increased coca production to revive the drug trade, regain strength and start “a new chapter in the 50-year conflict” (McDermott 2015). It would seem that the FARC is betting on the failure of the peace process. Taking advantage of a ceasefire, the end of aerial sprays, and the country’s attention in Havana, they could be using the peace negotiations as an opportunity to amass one of their most powerful weapons—coca. In fact, according to Insight Crime, the FARC controls about 60% of the coca fields in Colombia and could be said to earn well over \$200 million dollars per year from a mix of coca production and selling activities (Otis 2014)

These threats to security, the continued violence and the increase in coca cultivation, discourage any positive outlook on the presidency. The de-legitimization of Santos and his peace policies could continue, greatly affecting the attempts at post-conflict policies. The protests of April 2nd could be just the beginning of an intense social division, as a continuation of uprisings could further polarize and politicize the public into definite *Uribista* and *Santista* camps. However, Santos will most likely not step down from his presidency, even if it is something that the public has demanded. Throughout the history of Colombia, despite the violence, presidential succession has been democratic and peaceful. Institutions of civilian government have endured and retained legitimacy. Yet, a continuation of public discord, economic turbulence, and political disagreements could destabilize government and social structures even further, worsening the conditions for peace and making cooperation from any segment of society even more difficult to incentivize. A divided and disillusioned society facing chaos and violence might threaten these pillars of stability. In an extreme case, it could offer a window for the rise of an autocratic and charismatic leader. Until now, the military continues to favor the presidency and institutional channels of political contestation, so the possibilities for a military coup would be low (Interview with J.C. Gomez). In a worst case scenario, the latest peace negotiations would become another instance of renewed violence, a failed peace on a long road toward an elusive peace that Colombians know so well.

## II. A brighter scenario: Peace is possible in increments

Ideally, peace would be achieved by a government-FARC agreement at the Havana talks in 2016. With the renewed support of the United States, as illustrated by

the meeting between U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry with Timochenko and its pledge to give \$450 million dollars to the plan “Paz Colombia,” for the necessary investments in the post-conflict process, the peace negotiation could have been strengthened and steered towards completion (EFE 2016). In this scenario, peace is achieved through a successful top-down approach.

Nevertheless, taking into account the turbulence in current politics and events and the shaky state of negotiations in Havana, a more realistic possibility is for peace to originate from outside elite politics, from bottom-up enclaves of peace-building.

After a chaotic start of 2016 and an unpromising government-mandated solution to peace, the best prospects for peace are islands of reconciliation that are built and maintained by civil society. Despite the fact that violence and corruption have been deafening forces in Colombian life, multiple people are committed to peace and post-conflict processes—throughout society, enclaves of people who want to pull the country out of this void of conflict have been and *will* continue to work for peace. After all, the perpetrators of violence are a small percentage of the overall Colombian population and do not reflect the strong desire for peace found within the consciousness of society.

The efforts of people committed to peace are reflected in the work of NGOs dedicated to the day-to-day and territorial facets of post-conflict. These Colombians work towards a vision of peace, which is only attainable through post-conflict work. Colombia might not have a concrete end of the conflict, but post-conflict efforts must be implemented because a post-conflict is the every-day reality of certain individuals and communities.

Organizations like Organizacion de Paz Territorial and Asociación de Víctimas de Minas y Munición sin Explotar del municipio de Barrancabermeja (AVICMAP) are working in the Magdalena Medio region in Colombia to address the needs in their communities, support all levels of society, and foment a vision of peace. Their efforts to peace in this region are commendable. Magdalena Medio is a volatile area, home to the largest oil refinery in the country and at the crossroads of numerous conflicts and massacres. It also borders a jungle zone that has a high concentration of guerrilla and paramilitary zones. Tensions between victims and ex-combatants and high social mobilization are the common reality. The co-president of Organización de Paz Territorial, the President of AVICMAP, and the coordinator of AVICMAP proposed various arguments for the success of a peace process. By compiling their responses, various points of peace can be made: The multiple levels of society must be involved, all segments of society are equally responsible for peace without a victim and victimizer dichotomy, and the development of peace should be contextualized depending on the region.

(1) The multiple levels segments of society must be involved: Whether directly or indirectly involved in the conflict, the success of a peace process would be in involving all sectors and levels of society; the failure would be in excluding certain sectors, like other armed groups who would gain strength if ignored. The model of peace that is created at a national level must be taken to all levels and must be an agreement developed with everyone in mind—an agreement that clearly specifies the actions of all segments of society, an agreement for everyone.

(2) All segments of society are equally responsible for peace without a victim and victimizer dichotomy: The co-president of the Organización de Paz Territorial emphasized that his organization does not distinguish, nor does it create social differences among the different groups in the conflict. In a peace process neither the victims nor the victimizers are the principal actors of the conflict, every citizen is equally responsible and should be equally involved. A model of peace dichotomized between victims and victimizers cannot be constructed because one is an actor of power and the other does not have any incidence in politics of the state. A dichotomy also takes away the responsibility that all segments of society have in building a new Colombia, creating a sentiment of indifference from other parties.

(3) The development of peace should be contextualized depending on the region: Parallel and simultaneous processes to the national level peace negotiations need to be developed. The conflict has engendered specific socioeconomic fractures in each region and territory and those specific fractures have in turn created different conflicts. Because of this, peace processes that take into account the unique problems of each region need to be prioritized. National peace will be possible through the concretization of territorial peace. It will be a holistic national process, one where the national peace will be possible through territorial peace. This is part of the success of peace, linking the national level with the territorial level. It will fail to the contrary.

The efforts of these NGOs offer hope. Individuals at the community level *are* mobilizing and *are* betting on peace. Their statements also offer multiple lessons for the implementation of peace and post-conflict policies: Individuals at the community level (bottom level) are better equipped to address the needs of their community and spearhead



supportive measures conducive to peace, and since the community members and the ex-combatants are the ones who actually live the post-conflict, they are the ones who have it in their best interest to cooperate in their individual Prisoner's Dilemmas, meaning that cooperation is more effective if it starts at the bottom level.

### III. Recommendations

#### *Bottom-Top approach to post-conflict*

To recapitulate, peace needs to start at the bottom level. The progress achieved in one region could be imitated by neighboring regions. From archipelagos of peaceful coexistence, we can hope to achieve a national-level peace—a bottom-top approach to peace. Ultimately, it is at the community and territorial level where strength and commitment to peace originates. DDR processes will function more effectively if they are focused on this level.

#### *Education*

The social paradigm of violence needs to be changed to one of peace, cooperation, and reconciliation. This change starts with the younger generations, as they are the ones who can carry a new narrative of hope and strength into the imaginary of a future Colombia, they are the ones who will hopefully see a real peace starting to materialize in their lifetimes and who will carry out the DDR processes into posterity.

*The power of forgiveness and reconciliation*

The moral cost of DDR and peace comes from the moral trade-off of the victims, who have to jeopardize their dignity and sanity by accepting a margin of impunity and by living alongside people who might have displaced them or even murdered their families. Looking at other post-conflict processes like the one in Rwanda, we can learn about achieving social harmony through forgiveness and reconciliation. Immaculée Ilibagiza was a victim of the Rwandan genocide, the sole survivor of her family, who found her family's killers and forgave them. Her message of forgiveness and reconciliation has made her an important speaker of faith, hope and forgiveness around the world. In an interview with the Colombian newspaper *El Espectador*, she was asked whether she thought that Colombian victims could forgive after a war that has lasted more than half a century. She responded:

What I can say is that if I was able to forgive, everyone can do it. Even though violence has left wounds and hate, life always improves. Pain and hate must be healed, because they don't leave us anything if they aren't. And we will always find good reasons to find forgiveness: I wanted a future, do something good, and so I made everything change. Forgiveness is a choice, is leaving behind that anger and transforming it into something positive. What I tell Colombians is that you yourselves have to find that forgiveness, because only you can understand the pain that you have suffered...I have prayed for the victimizers because at the end they are also victims. We do not have to compete with evil...[and] we have to talk about what happened so that it is not repeated. In my country, we understand that nothing is gained by hurting others, that war only produces madness and hate, which is an interminable chain.

The power of forgiveness is stronger than a history of hate and violence. Life continues and regardless of what has occurred in the past, a future will always come. Immaculée Ilibagiza is an inspiring life example of this, demonstrating that the path to peace lies in acceptance, reconciliation and forgiveness. We can look to other countries

and other individuals to learn from their successes of transitional justice and their coping mechanisms to move forwards—ultimately, moving forward is all we can do. We cannot change the past. Colombia's history is already stained. But Colombia can hope to change the future in the decisions that individuals take to leave a painful past behind and pursue a life of dignity and inner peace.

### *Unity*

The polarization that has characterized Colombian politics is unfortunate for any post-conflict or hopes of a peace process. Colombians can only hope to achieve peace through DDR processes if they are unified. National unity must be emphasized. Peace will *never* be achieved within a polarized nation. Polarization leads to the politicization of interests and it detracts from the ultimate goal of peace. All segments of society have a right to peace, but they also have a duty to build it—corresponsibility will close the gap between peace and justice. But, all segments must work together and leave politics behind. Peace is not a political party. Politicization initiates conflict.

### *Changing the structure of society*

The structure of Colombian society is at the root of the conflict in Colombia. Nevertheless the conflict has halted social development. The war has prevented the nation from developing its social, economic, and infrastructure potential. In other words, the conflict and the social structure have been mutually related in endogeneity, where one has impeded the other one from improving and vice versa. If Colombia hopes to attain peace, the structural issues must be addressed as part of a peace process and DDR. Post-

conflict policies will not thrive inasmuch as there is still corruption and social structure issues in Colombia. Yet again, without a peaceful atmosphere, it is challenging to focus and address issues like corruption, social inequality, and unequal land distribution, so achieving peace is prioritized and structural issues are set aside. This seems to be the current political and social situation in Colombia—a situation detrimental to the peace efforts, as a structural crumbling has led to division and mistrust. And, as previously mentioned, unity and support are indispensable for peace. What is the order of priorities? Peace then structure? Or structure and then peace? The complexity of the conflict leads us to believe that they must be addressed in a parallel way. The current social momentum and discontent in the country's politics must be turned into a positive force, peaceful social mobilization, to change the norms of corruption, inequality, and violence. Initiatives for social and structural change need to be linked to initiatives for peace and post-conflict resolution. As evidenced by the efforts of the NGOs in Magdalena Medio, individual communities are spearheading organizations for change. Social institutions and non-government organizations, regardless of the conflict, have continued to function in Colombia.

This latest agreement might be part of another failed agreement, but it should not be archived in the long list of failures in Colombian politics. Colombians want peace. Colombians will not tolerate further corruption and scandals. We need to take advantage of this window in Colombia's history, of the volatile and forceful impetus for change. Because of the endogenous nature of the conflict and the lack of structure, both must be simultaneously addressed, which can only be possible with the corresponsibility and the peaceful mobilization of every segment of society.

*Focusing on the progress*

The conflict in Colombia seems endless, but Colombia is not in a hopeless situation. We must focus on the progress that has been achieved to propel future actions and decisions. First of all, in terms of domestic affairs, Colombia is an example of urbanism: its capital and its second largest city, Bogota and Medellin, are success stories. Urbanism has been a form of social justice that has allowed these cities to prosper despite of violence.

Home to Pablo Escobar, Medellin was once known as the murder capital of the world. Since 1991, the murder rate has fallen by more than 80% (Bowater 2015). Medellin is now one of Colombia's main cultural centers, as well as an international example of innovation and social projects. Social programs, participatory budgets, and transport and education projects have transformed the lives of the most disadvantaged citizens in Medellin. Medellin not only hosted UN Habitat's World Urban Forum in 2014, but it has also won international recognition, such as being part of the top thirty-three cities of the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities project (Brodzinsky 2014). The city of eternal spring is an example of how social reform and restructuring can occur while addressing security issues.

Bogota is an example of sustainable transportation. The transport efficiency has enabled greater social integration, linking the southern poorer areas to the rest of the city. Bogota has more than 186 miles of bicycle lanes extending from the capital center to the slums and the suburbs (Dac&Cities 2014). The implementation of the TransMilenio affordable rapid bus system has revolutionized the mass transit system in Bogota, and "it is a particularly successful and applicable model in developing cities where

municipalities have finite resources and face numerous challenges” (Hutchinson 2011). This bus system model has been implemented in more than 100 cities around the world. On Sundays, Bogota is car free and uses public streets as a large public park with free activities, incentivizing families to attend (Dac&Cities 2014).

Taking the urban successes of Medellin and Bogota gives a better perspective of Colombia’s capabilities in terms of infrastructure. Yes, Colombia has a lack of infrastructure; yes, it has corruption within its various levels of governance; yes, it has networks of violence within its urban and rural areas. But, violence has not destroyed innovation. Innovation gives hope. Colombia has been able to restructure its cities while coping with a civil war. It is possible for Colombia to move forward and simultaneously build its social structure while engaging in peace building. Colombia is not yet a failed state.

In terms of foreign policy, Colombia has been a regional leader, always promoting democracy and peaceful accords. According to the Country Study Handbook on Colombia published by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, “Colombia's approach to security issues has been characterized by a willingness to settle disputes peacefully through recourse to international law and regional and international security organizations” (Hanratty 1990). This approach continues to this day. Colombia has been an active member in the United Nations since it was founded and it has been a leader in the Organization of American States (OAS), promoting the peaceful resolution of conflicts in states like El Salvador.

With regard to its acrimonious relationship with its neighbor Venezuela, Colombia has opted for diplomatic solutions. Six years ago, when both countries were on

the brink of war—as Colombia presented proof of guerrilla presence in Venezuelan territory to the OAS and Chavez moved military troops to the border after breaking relations with Colombia—President Santos met with President Chavez to agree to resolve their problems through diplomacy rather than through violence (Reyes 2015). In the fall of 2015 another border turmoil between Venezuela and Colombia threatened to embroil both sides in military conflict: After Venezuela blamed smuggling for chronic gasoline and food shortage in the country, it closed the border crossings, forced 1,500 Colombians from their homes and caused about 20,000 Colombians to flee Venezuela through river borders. However, both presidents reached a diplomatic agreement and decided to gradually normalize relations by reopening border crossings and reinstating national ambassadors in each country (Spear 2015). Colombia's effort to conflict resolution through diplomacy is commendable because it establishes Colombia's efforts in maintaining regional peace.

In terms of DDR, as mentioned in the first chapter, it must be reiterated that Colombia is a world leader, seeking to establish a collaborative network with different actors, nations and transnational organizations and agencies, who work in post-conflict and peacebuilding efforts (Interview with Alejandro Eder). Colombia is seeking to exchange experiences with other nations, setting an example and a precedent of moving forward as an international community towards a future where members will use other's failures and successes to improve the road to internal peaceful coexistence. In this way, peacebuilding processes worldwide will be more effective and efficient.

#### IV. Final Remarks

The research in this thesis points to four main conclusions:

- A DDR process is the key to a transition to peace.
- The ‘R’ of DDR, Reintegration, is the most difficult and most important, as it involves the cooperation from all segments of society and it is the key to a long-lasting peace.
- To be successfully implemented, DDR processes must take into account the politics of the country.
- Whether the peace attempt with the FARC is yet another elusive attempt at peace or whether it is the initiator to a road of peace, Colombia has been able and will be able to achieve peace through its archipelagos of peace at a community level.

Colombians are all victims of a narrative of non-inclusion and disregard for life. This narrative is the past. The present offers the opportunity to start a new narrative of inclusion and unity, where life is an incentive to move forward and to continue to survive. As Gabriel Garcia Marquez said, “La vida no es sino una continua sucesión de oportunidades para sobrevivir.” Colombia, the resilient survivor.



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