

## **COLOMBIA UNDERGOING MUTATION: FROM THE CONCEPT OF POST-CONFLICT TO THE PRAGMATISM OF THE CONFLICT**

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### **Abstract**

This article aims to generate a critical notion of post-conflict in Colombia to advance the idea of a scenario undergoing transformation. The dynamics of security and conflict in Colombia were defined from the existence of a problem that transcended threat. The FARC-EP were a problem that later became securitized and scaled in the country's security agenda. Consequently, it is necessary to warn, on the one hand, that the conflict does not finish with the end of the FARC-EP process and, on the other hand, there is a secondary effect but not less important: the change of this group gave rise to the mutation of security and conflict issues in Colombia, namely, the markets of violence, the dispute over the power voids in the territory, the armed collectivities arising from the FARC-EP dissidents and the social exclusion that ex-combatants face. Taking into account the above, the "post-conflict" concept is biased, ambiguous and distorted, which in itself represents a threat to the development of conflicts in the country.

### **Keywords**

Conflict, mutation, post-conflict, "farcarización", "post-farcarización", imperfect peace

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## **COLOMBIA UNDERGOING MUTATION: FROM THE CONCEPT OF POST-CONFLICT TO THE PRAGMATISM OF THE CONFLICT<sup>1</sup>**

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### **1. Prelude**

The narratives around the Colombian armed conflict have turned the contemporary historical development into a single and exclusive actor. The FARC-EP defined Colombia as the centre of gravity and the only scenario of problems and explanations for the endless nation-building discourse. However, the events of the conflict have shown that around the armed confrontation there are actors, phenomena and dynamics that move away from any classic notion in the conception of the "farcarización" of Colombian society, a concept that will be explained here and that is vital for the development of this scientific article. The hypotheses of the gestation of the armed conflict allude to divergent points in their beginning, in their mutability and, of course, in the outcome. Thus, in Colombia, simultaneously, parallel and synchronic conflicts swarm. This thesis is different from the one that tends to point to the existence of a single conflict in whose backbone lies the beginning and end of the FARC-EP.

The conflict is necessary for the culmination of the construction of the nation. So, from the divergence, parameters and guidelines arise, converging in the materialization of nationalism, cultural identity, the exacerbation of progress, and the development of what is defined as the State. This article seeks to critically examine the notion of post-conflict compared to post-agreement, to overcome it and draw attention to the advent of constantly changing scenarios, which must be understood so that the adaptation to new security scenarios by the institutions and society is not traumatic and does not result in new forms of exacerbated violence. For the purposes of this research, the methodology used is based on a qualitative analysis and conceptual interpretation of sociological theoretical approaches. To that effect, the document focuses first on the theoretical distinction and debate between the concepts of "post-conflict" and "post-agreement". Subsequently, a hermeneutic discussion is used on the conceptual and terminological notion of the "farcarización" and the "post-farcarización" under the lens of the "imperfect peace" applied to the Colombian case. On the other hand, a notion of transformation of the conflict and reality is advanced based on the commodification of violence and the

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power void in the territory. Finally, the document closes with a series of conclusions around the question of the new security dynamics that are beginning to be glimpsed in the national panorama: the mutability and the demarcation of the FARC-EP phenomenon that defined the public agenda and the nation during the second half of the 20th century.

## **2. Between the post-conflict and the post-agreement: a theoretical distinction**

As mentioned at the end of the previous section, there is a challenge for Colombian society regarding the understanding of the scenarios that open up with the conversion of the FARC-EP to civilian life. This challenge is based on the need to clarify the difference and, in turn, the relationship between the concepts of "post-conflict" and "post-agreement", which even when treated as synonyms by public opinion and citizens in general, contain different socio-political realities that cannot be equated. Failure to understand this could endanger the peace process with this armed group, the restructuring of the entire Colombian community and the institutional response to the security issues that will remain in force after the end of hostilities with the FARC-EP.

In concrete terms, in order to understand the relationship and the difference between the concepts of "post-agreement" and "post-conflict", it is necessary to explain the political, social, security and temporal implications of the latter, which will be done in this section.

First, in the *political sphere*, the post-conflict is marked by a duality that must be addressed: first, the institutional commitment and that of the armed group in guaranteeing compliance with the agreements signed and the restructuring of the policy in the long term; and second, the change of view with regard to the "other", who no longer can be seen as an *enemy* but as a *political opponent* in the debate and in the electoral process.

As regards the first face of duality, that is, the institutional responsibility and that of the armed group in the observance of the agreements, there is also a double responsibility. On the one hand, the State has the task of guaranteeing the enactment of the agreement through laws, decrees and public policies. On the other, the FARC-EP must maintain the political will to act within the law, so that the possibility of a return to armed conflict is minimized and there is an effective restructuring of Colombian politics in the long term.

As a result, point six of the Havana agreements on "Implementation, verification and endorsement" becomes a priority, given that it proposes, among other things, a Framework Plan with a ten-year validity, which contemplates mechanisms to execute the stipulated, making reference to the legislative process, the inclusion of the points in the Development Plan, the budget items, and the national and territorial political reform, among other provisions (Government of Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016, pp. 196-197).

Likewise, there is the creation of the "Follow-up, Encouragement and Verification Commission for the Implementation of the Final Agreement (CSIVI)", which will also last for ten years and whose objective is "[...] to follow-up the components of the Agreement and verify compliance; encouragement and monitoring of the legislative implementation of the agreements; implementation of follow-up reports; receive inputs from those in



charge of implementation" (Government of Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016: 195-196). In view of this, it should be noted that the agreements are presented as the starting point for a political restructuring and not as the termination of a process. Thus, there is a first difference between the contexts of "post-agreement" and "post-conflict", given that the second has a longer duration in the long term<sup>2</sup>.

As for the other side of duality in the political sphere, one must affirm that it goes beyond institutions and norms, in terms of how those who become legal are seen politically. In this sense, given that the members of the FARC-EP will no longer be armed actors but electoral contenders within the democratic debate, the discursive construction that has been made of their image has to be changed. In other words, the change is the meaning shift from enemies to adversaries of the members of the new political movement. To understand in-depth the importance of this change, we can cite the postulates of Chantal Mouffe (1999) and her "Radical Democracy" theory.

For this author, the meaning of modern democracies is to give rise to conflict, as a peaceful and dialogical confrontation within the political community. For this reason, the ideal stance of current regimes is to allow the passage of *antagonism* to *agonism*, that is, to be the channel through which one goes from a logic of enemies to adversaries (Mouffe, 1999: 13-16). Thus, the first concept (enemy) involves the elimination of the "other", the suppression not only of his ideas but of his existence; while, in opposition to this, the second refers to the legitimacy and right of a person to defend his ideas and to be tolerated. In Mouffe's word, "[...] it means that, within the 'we' that constitutes the political community, the opponent will not be seen as an enemy to be brought down, but rather as a legitimate adversary who must be tolerated. His ideas will be fought vigorously, but his right to defend them will never be questioned "(Mouffe, 1999: 16). The distinction between these words is vital, because in it lies the possibility of building collectivities open to debate and dissent.

Following this perspective, an effective insertion of new actors in national politics can be guaranteed, avoiding future accusations against people who have left their weapons to adopt the path of constitutionality. This is important in the light of Colombian history, which has shown that, even after having become law abiding, over the years, members of former armed groups have been stigmatized as guerrillas or terrorists. An example of this is the references to former M-19members, who today are recognized democratic figures but who have been rejected due to their belligerent past.

Likewise, converting an enemy to be destroyed into an adversary to win over in political fights could prevent an assassination similar to the one the members of the Patriotic Union had to endure during the 1980s. This is in view of the fact that, for Mouffe,

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<sup>2</sup> In fact, this becomes clear when one reads sections of the document in point six, such as: "The day after the signing of the Final Agreement, the "Follow-up, Encouragement and Verification Commission of the Implementation of the Final Agreement (CSIVI) will be created", composed of three representatives of the National Government and three representatives of the FARC-EP or the political party that emerges from its transition to legal life. The duration of the Commission may be up to 10 years, with an initial period of operation being agreed until January 2019, date from which the members of the Commission will decide on its extension" (Government of Colombia & FARC-EP, 2016: 195). In this passage, it is clear that there is a difference between the process subsequent to the signing of the agreements, which does not end with the parties' demonstration of political will but opens the door to joint long-term work for the materialization of the agreement.



individuals cannot be forced to think in accordance with a political faction or to conform to the views of the community as a whole, which renders the idea of "consensus without exclusion" impossible. On the contrary, it is precisely this capacity to dissent that feeds the political element and, even more, the meaning shift of the "other" as an adversary (Mouffe, 1999: 11-12). However, this cannot be seen as an immediate change, but rather as a constant long-term process that becomes part of the post-conflict.

On the other hand, regarding the post-conflict *social sphere*, Colombian society must also undergo a process of reconfiguration, in which there is an effective and peaceful reincorporation of the former FARC-EP members. It should be noted that these logics of acceptance of new members who were previously considered a threat, are not short-term and involve a meaning shift as in the political sphere, since it is about changing behaviour, social norms, beliefs, etc.

In this regard, we can borrow from the field of sociology to size this social transformation. Emile Durkheim coined the concept "social fact" to distinguish everything that is given in society, such as norms, codes and behaviours, among others, which are external to people but govern them - even exert coercion even if one does not realize it - and through which they act and interpret the social environment in which they find themselves. In other words, "they consist of ways of acting, of thinking and feeling external to the individual, and they are endowed with coercion power by virtue of which they impose themselves on him" (Durkheim, 2001: 40-41). Therefore, it can be inferred that in the issue of the reincorporation of ex-combatants, there must be a restructuring of these social norms and, above all, of the ideas that revolve around these individuals, as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

However, the change in the "social facts" that have materialized around the conflict with the FARC-EP for more than half a century will not change in a matter of days or months. On the contrary, the work of the entire current and future generations of Colombian society is needed to break the imagined threat and the behaviour codes the ex-combatants are referred to, so that they are accepted and the stigmatization they are victims of is eliminated. In fact, Emile Durkheim himself is clear in arguing that social facts are not relegated or modified without offering resistance, given their ability to exercise coercion: "even if they are defeated [the rules] finally, they make their coercive power quite felt due to the resistance they offer" (Durkheim, 2001: 40).

So, in the political and social fields, there is a common aspect, which is the time variable that plays a transcendental role. Insofar as the political meaning shift is a far-reaching effort, in the social sphere the joint work of the members of the current Colombian society and of the Colombians who will come is required in order to break paradigms, views and treat the ex-combatants, and the imagined views that people have of the conflict and of the FARC-EP. Here is another expression of the relationship and difference between post-agreement and post-conflict: the first paves the way to the constant process the second implies.

Finally, in the *field of security*, it is also a *sine qua non* condition to understand the relationship and difference between post-agreement and post-conflict, because its misinterpretation may endanger the peace process itself. In this scope, it is important to briefly consider the concept of "collective imaginary". Although the term is ambiguous in terms of the amount of existing definitions (Sola-Morales, 2014: 5), it can be said that



they are "[...] representation schemes, mechanisms or devices, socially formed, which allow members of a community understand the surrounding world" (Sola-Morales, 2014: 8); In other words, individuals make collective everything that allows them to understand their everyday life. Likewise, to this we must add that the words are linked to the aforementioned concept, while the discourses play a role in the construction of these social realities (Palma, 2017: 54).

Making explicit the relationship between imaginaries, discourses and security is significant to interpret the national situation, where there is a media bombardment with the word "post-conflict" as its centre. The fact that this word is used singularly and absolutely gives the feeling that with the peace process with the FARC-EP, all conflicts in Colombia will disappear. This imaginary is reinforced if one examines the same question of the plebiscite for the endorsement of the agreements: "Do you support the final agreement to end the conflict and build a stable and lasting peace?"

However, falling into this imaginary is a mistake that paradoxically could endanger the peace process itself. Contrary to this collective belief that is taking shape, we must listen to sociologist Sam Richards, for whom a conflict "does not really end until its causes are solved" (Richards in an interview to *El Espectador*, 2016), which implies that "stable and lasting" peace will not come with the signing of the agreements, but with a prolonged process in which the structural causes of the social demands that first gave rise to the conflict are addressed, and which require the reconfiguration of the state, the economic model and giving space to reconciliation.

Likewise, believing that the conflict in Colombia came to an end due to the signing of the peace agreement with the FARC-EP is also a fatal error for the State because it would limit its ability to understand and respond to the new threats it faces as a result of the guerrilla's disarmament or stemming from those who remain latent despite the movement's disappearance. Faced with this, one can bring up a fact of recent Colombian history: the process of demobilization of the paramilitaries. While it is true that by 2006 a large number of groups had demobilized, the most important being the AUC, it cannot be denied that not all of them decided to leave the lucrative illegal business, so, from small strongholds and recidivists, the phenomenon that today is known as BACRIM started.

In short, in light of the various implications of the post-conflict concept, the post-agreement is only the first scenario of an introduction to post-conflict, which in turn is a much broader process of collective efforts within the time variable. Not only the agreements signed with the armed group have to be made effective, but also the institutions must be open to the mutation of the security issues that will materialize in the spaces that remain empty, after the relinquishment of weapons and reincorporation of ex-combatants into the civilian life. For these reasons, meanwhile, emphasis is placed on the importance of seeing the new scenarios and realities in Colombia under the magnifying glass of the concepts of "farcarización", "post-farcarización" and *imperfect peace*.



### 3. From "Farcarización to "post-farcarización" and imperfect peace in Colombia

The mutability<sup>3</sup> of the armed conflict in Colombia to unarmed conflict points to a socio-political structural transformation. Then, believing that with the overcoming of the weapons in the Colombian context a plenitude of annulment of rival forces is reached, is, *per se*, a contradiction. In that sense, in the near future and taking into account the social, political, cultural, and security conditions, the confidence building stage starts from a scenario of imperfection.

The FARC-EP defined a large part of Colombia's political and social agenda. For decades, the country was involved in a "farcarización" phenomenon that meant that all explanations about political instability, institutional weakness, problems and threats to security and defence, increased spending in that sector, and the negative macroeconomic factors, were rooted in the FARC-EP. Interestingly, such "farcarización" is understood under the notion of the *Sixth generation of war* (Niño, 2017), trying to understand that the use of force and the exercise of violence were channels of communication and interlocution of society, and that the State loses its capacity to respond to irregular dynamics (Niño, 2017: 38).

According to this argument, one can deepen the explanation of the "farcarización" concept, resorting to the discursive logics that gave rise to the defining role of the FARC-EP as the State and society's greatest threat, against which the institutional image and that of the "other" (enemy) to be destroyed came to the fore. Thus, it is clear that "there is no possible conflict without opponents, they are the construction of an otherness that means, from a real or imaginary point of view, risk and threat, but that at the same time is needed to sustain [...] the very reason for being [...]" (Angarita et al., 2015: 11). Consequently, what is emphasized here is that the *Farianos*, as an armed group, for a long time played that necessary role to affirm the legality.

In fact, the FARC-EP has been seen in different ways in different periods in this almost half century of armed struggle, going from "peasant self-defence groups" in the fifties, to leftist guerrilla in the sixties and drug traffickers in the eighties<sup>4</sup>, each view with a different response from the institutions. According to Angarita et al (2015), this escalated to the point that this illegal group became seen as an *absolute enemy*, that is, one that can only be considered as a threat to be annihilated, removing any quality of *political enemy* (the one that I can tolerate and with whom there can be dialogue) from it, after the El Caguán<sup>5</sup> failed peace dialogues and with the advent of the two governments of Álvaro Uribe Vélez, when they were no longer a belligerent armed group but a terrorist one (Angarita et al., 2015: 57-59).

According to this logic of "farcarización of society and institutions", the overcoming of the armed conflict with the guerrilla requires a transcendental and urgent change in the

<sup>3</sup> Ability to change shape (Oxford Dictionary, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> For additional information concerning the historical evolution of the FARC-EP, see the bibliography of sociologist and journalist Alfredo Molano, especially the texts: *Los años del tropel* (1985), *Trochas y fusiles* (1994) y *A lomo de mula. Viajes al corazón de las Farc* (2016).

<sup>5</sup> An area of approximately 42,139 square kilometres between the departments of Meta and Caquetá are cleared and demilitarized by the government of Andrés Pastrana Arango as a confidence measure for the dialogues with the guerrilla. This situation generated the military recovery of the FARC and motivated the establishment of control in that area and its own laws in the region.



collective imagination and building within imperfection spaces of trust as soon as possible, which is part of a post-conflict seen as a long-term process that begins with the post-agreement. As a result, this step depends on multiple factors, one of which advanced by Paul Collier, who argues that the main challenge is the return of many ex-combatants to civilian life as soon possible (Collier, 2004). Likewise, it is necessary to have a prolonged political and social dialogue for the effective incorporation of the armed insurgents into full legal life, and a change in the idea of the FARC-EP as an armed group to a political force within constitutionality.

The great challenge that arises is the "post-farcarización" of Colombian society and institutions, so that the dynamics of prolonged processes are understood and there is a rapid reaction of the State to the new threats that arise from the demobilization of the FARC-EP. In other words, the transformed scenarios in Colombia begin to reveal "post-farcarización" contexts. There is a change, almost mutational, in which the society and the defining construct of the nation itself, stand out in evolutionary terms from the old and erroneous notion of the conflict defined by the FARC-EP. Namely, a plausible scenario identified as the post-war society is acknowledged, which is located above the threshold of overcoming the armed conflict (Niño, 2014) and does not exclude it from being part of another atmosphere in which violence is the centre of gravity in social relations.

Taking into account the above, within the "post-farcarización", it is indispensable to notice a new context: the transformation of the threshold of violence in the State. Based on this, it is understood that violence is a factual communication vehicle in which different dynamics converge in its exercise and that is not directly proportional to a state of security. That is, a full security stage can be permeated by highly violent conditions and vice versa.

In a systemic scenario, the concept is represented in that violence is a relative anthropomorphic category that refers to surplus energy that exceeds the normal thresholds of absorption and mutation of the physical system, or psychic in the case of the individual, and the subsystems of infrastructures in the case of society (García, 2017). In Colombia, violence has been the causal motor of the conflict and not, *per se*, the causal conflict of violence. Consequently, with the "post-farcarización", the redesign of the thresholds of violence is not eliminated but transfigured.

Therefore, the construction of post-conflict spaces provokes an almost paradigmatic change in the understanding of violence. Thus, the possibilities of generalizing and perpetuating themselves in time and the social penetration of rival phenomena seem to confirm the thesis of the structural superiority of violent processes over those of pacification (Waldmann, 1999). It means that violence is located in a broad spectrum in the social life of the State. The tendency after the termination of an armed conflict is a virulent atomization and overflow of violence.

For example, a particular case in El Salvador has to do with the fact that while it is true that the 1992 Chapultepec Peace Agreement ended an internal armed conflict, it was also the starting point for the mutation of civil hostilities into an enclave of violence after the conflict (Niño, 2016). An endemic situation that shows that the new territorial battles involving members of gangs mixed between drug trafficking and extortion (*The Guardian*, 2015) dispute markets, vital spaces and occupy empty places left by the State.



In Colombia, such logic is not unfamiliar. To understand the polyhedron of violence in the transformation of the "post-farcarización", it is vital to recognise that violence is not a derivative of the exercise of the FARC-EP, it is not born with them, much less is it an exclusive credit of the said group. It is a combination of actors, phenomena, responsibilities, policies, opportunities and strategic issues that converge there. Violence in Colombia is constituted under a dynamic of multiple edges that respond to diverse natures.

In light of what has been said up to this point, in order to make the leap from "farcarización" to "post-farcarización", it is necessary to start talking about *imperfect peace* as the concept that will guide post-conflict in Colombia. This concept suggests that the resolution of conflicts is not absolute. On the contrary, it is a matter of internalizing that mutability is a characteristic of human conflict and, in this sense, it is not enough with the "cease-fire" between the parties. The end of a confrontation opens the door to new scenarios in which new problems cannot be excluded. In concrete terms: [...] the recognition of imperfection invites us to consider different favourable solutions for the parties in the context of a conflict that is not resolved completely. The fact of proposing a broad concept of peace based on the nonviolent solutions [sic.] that occur permanently in response to multiple conflicts leads us to think about the possibility of an imperfect peace revealed as a dynamic and perennially inconclusive peace (López, 2011: 90).

As a result of the above, it is an imperfect peace because, in spite of peacefully handling disputes, it coexists with conflicts and some forms of violence (Muñoz, 2004). In other words, imperfection is the perfect way to conceive the transformed scenario that Colombia is beginning to face. Namely, *imperfect peace* does not refer to a situation in which the agreements established between the rival actors are defined from a pejorative or negative angle, rather, it is ascribed to a systemic logic in which the conflict is central and separates the notion that war and conflict are symbiotic. In fact, imperfect peace is the best possible scenario for the consolidation and termination of the evolutionary character of society.

Accordingly, it is imperative to note that almost half of the peace agreements fail during the first five years of implementation (Hudson, 2011). So, the construction of a negotiated or imperfect peace is much more demanding, in political, economic and social terms, than the indefinite prolongation of war or the unilateral imposition of victory (Molano, 2016). Consequently, the need to propose the reconfiguration of Colombian society in the medium and long term (thus returning to the difference between post-agreement and post-conflict).

Finally, the suggestion of establishing the difference between post-agreement and post-conflict, and the construction of the concepts of "farcarización" and "post-farcarización", linked to *imperfect peace*, give rise to the third and last point of this research, which discusses two of the security scenarios that emerge at this crucial moment for society and the Colombian state, apart from the change of the image from *enemy* to *political opponent* that has already been discussed.



#### **4. Pragmatism of the conflict and transformation of realities in Colombia: power voids and markets of violence**

The signing of the agreement between the Government and the FARC-EP creates expectations regarding the possibility of reducing the violence associated with the armed confrontation and the illicit activities of that group in border areas (Cabrera, 2016). Under the previous premise, the "post-farcarización" leads to the appearance of empty spaces where ungoverned territories where the FARC-EP was previously present tend to emerge (Rabasa, et al., 2007). They are not, far from it, a kind of "Wild West" where only the law of the jungle rules (Molano & Zarama, 2016). They are dysfunctional territories where the State lacks any title to exercise basic functions, that is, the ungoverned territories reflect the old problem of effective territorial sovereignty (Molano & Zarama, 2016) and the contemporary view of the control of the said spaces by parastatal groups.

Certainly, the Colombian State has always had a problem to exercise control and affirm its presence in some territories within the country, a difficulty that according to Margarita Serge (2011) can be traced back to the colony period when they were treated as "wild areas" related to smuggling, and nowadays as "red zones" where illicit activities such as drug trafficking proliferate. In her words: Colombia appears as a fragmented country. A series of private armies, guerrillas and paramilitary groups dispute the state's territorial control. This situation is not, however, novel: the colonial State never managed to impose its control over the entire territory of what is now Colombia [...] They have never ceased to be "no man's land", "red zones" [...] (Serge, 2011: 15-18).

Based on the above, at first sight it would seem that the typology of "misgovernance" in the border areas proliferates when determining their nature. Namely, volatile zones in the configuration of the State, porosity areas due the natural conditions and adversities due to the geography. Still, although it is true that the extreme areas of the country lack institutional presence, the ungoverned territories can also exist in central areas and centres of power in the country.

Consequently, while it is true that the lack of state presence over vast areas of the territory, where armed actors are present and exercise power, is not a new phenomenon and goes far back in time, we must also be aware that the demobilization of the FARC-EP does not imply directly that the institutions will take those gaps that will remain after the disarmament. In contrast, with the "post-farcarización", one must understand that what will happen is a reconfiguration of the presence of actors outside the law (other guerrillas, FARC dissidents, organized crime, emerging gangs, etc.) to fill those spaces.

In fact, this territorial displacement for the control of the zones has already begun to occur. At the end of 2016, the United Nations Office for Human Rights warned the national government that "as FARC members abandon areas traditionally under their control, the State has not fully assumed its functions, leaving a power void", and, likewise, they pointed out that 61 murders of social leaders took place during that year, mostly in rural areas and after the signing of the final agreements (*El Espectador*, 2016).

On the other hand, the demobilization of the FARC-EP has not been absolute, which has left spaces in the national territory at the mercy of middle chiefs, who are motivated to remain illegal due to the income the activity generates. At the end of 2016, the FARC-EP



expelled five of its commanders<sup>6</sup> for being against the "political-military" stance of the organization and opposing the peace process, motivated by the pursuit of individual profits derived from illicit activities (*El Espectador*, 2016). Although the number of dissidents calculated by the Ministry of Defence does not exceed 200 militias, the implications in the national geography are worrisome, since much of the Amazon is under control of these structures (which can no longer be considered FARC), specifically the Departments of Guaviare, Vichada, Guainía and Meta (*Semana Magazina*, 2016).

However, the new panorama of power voids in the territory does not stop with denunciations and dissent. In fact, prior to the UN alarms and the expulsion of FARC-EP commanders, in 2015 the Peace and Reconciliation Foundation presented a report entitled "What we have achieved", which presents the Violent Post-Conflict Risk Index (done by the foundation), to "[...] identify municipalities that require greater attention in post-conflict..." (Peace and Reconciliation Foundation, 2015: 57). This index takes into account variables such as violence, social, geographic and institutional indicators, as well as the presence of illegal mining, cocaine crops and rurality index, among others. The results of this analysis are alarming: 87 municipalities are in "extreme vulnerability", 85 are at "High" level and 104 are at "Medium High" level (Peace and Reconciliation Foundation, 2015: 61) (See Map 1).

Based on the fragmentation of the territory Serge emphasizes, and the absence of institutional presence in the peripheral areas of the State, the commodification of violence became a tradable good. In other words, violence in Colombia enters a subterranean "production chain" in which illegal activities largely solve patterns of hostile behaviour that occupy the empty spaces analyzed above.

The markets of violence, for Georg Elwert (1998), generally originate in non-economic conflicts. This is the initial reason why the commodification of the phenomenon has a certain level of attractiveness by taking advantage of institutional gaps and "black holes". In fact, these markets shape fields of action and are circumscribed to physical spaces where an economic dynamic predominates, dominated by players who use violence as a resource to regulate it (Elwert, 2003).

Thus, situations where legal and illegal activities, such as mining or drug trafficking, occur, become a strategic platform and a plausible breeding ground for the origin and empowerment of these markets. One of the main characteristics of violence as a tradable good is that it involves natural factors of extraction of resources without institutional control. This scenario opens the door to irregular transactions that erode beyond the environment to escalated social conflicts. Indeed, according to Michael Reed (2012), the markets of violence create a system of durability, while the economic equation favours those who control violence (Reed, 2012).

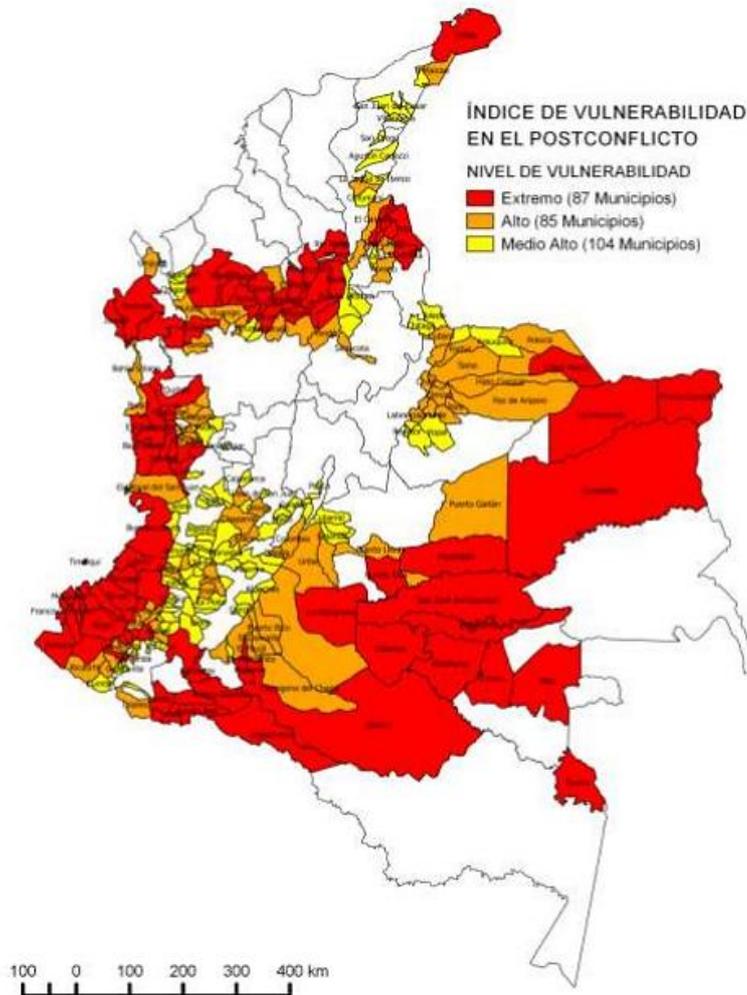
According to the above, given the lack of capacity and presence of the State, many agents are willing to use violence as a tool to regulate the supply and demand of goods and services (Reed, 2012), to stimulate social variables and to use violence as a communication medium in an underground social contract.

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<sup>6</sup> The expelled commanders are: alias *Gentil Duarte*, *Euclides Mora*, *John 40*, *Giovanny Chuspas* and *Julián Chollo* (*El Espectador*, 2016).



**Map 1: Vulnerability Index in the Post-conflict of the Peace and Reconciliation Foundation**



Source: (Peace and Reconciliation Foundation, 2015: 61)

That is to say, the transformation of the scenarios linked to the armed conflict means that contemporary violence is detached from the conflictive logic of the past decades to act in circumstances that have to do with the empty spaces, misgovernments and markets of violence. Although violence is not cancelled off by signing agreements, it does mutate due to the traceability of violence when it acquires an economic component. This violence is linked to the new actors that dispute the control of the dysfunctional territories in the periphery and the centre, the commodification of violent exercise, and the increase of public and urban security issues and problems. These are the neuralgic points of Colombia's reality that are keys to understanding post-conflict pragmatism.



#### 4. Conclusion

To draw attention to the transformations of Colombia after the overcoming of an episode that marked the notion of a country for several decades is an eminent investment on the construction of conceptual and terminological stages. The analysis of the variables of the conflict in Colombia leads to the discovery of realities according to convergent and divergent narratives. This article does not present the conflict as a stain in the history of the country but as a necessary factor for the culmination of the construction of the nation according to its definition.

Consequently, it should be noted that Colombia has been defined by a phenomenon and a highly volatile actor that absorbed a good part of the political, economic, security, social, and even psychological agenda of the State. In other words, Colombia was "farcarizada" and, from that reality, Colombian history was interpreted, as well as the dynamics of the conflict and the institutional responses.

This *farcarización* became the threshold and yardstick of the "things" that provided the explanations about the national situation. Based on the above, what happened between the Government and the FARC-EP, on the excuse of overcoming the armed conflict, has opened a "Pandora's Box" according to the issues that the "post- farcarización" brings with it. Colombia must begin to understand itself without "another" that defines it.

Thus, the aim of this article is to start the debate on the new security dynamics that are beginning to emerge in Colombia, so that the adaptation of the State and society as a whole to these new contexts is not a traumatic and violent step, and peaceful dialogue in the future can be attained.

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