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Economy of organized crime**
06/05/2011

FERNANDO ESTRADA

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Heuristic Schelling: Economy of organized crime

Fernando Estrada

Abstract

This article proposes a reading of the armed conflict from an evolutionary design that takes into account the concept of private protection agencies in the works of Schelling. Their aim is to assess the dynamics of conflict and changes from its author's scientific output. A context of conflicts that includes new expressions of violence and the relative failure of the paramilitary reintegration involves using new analytical models (argumentation, game theory and inconsistent information). The recent evolution of emerging gangs and their expansion into areas that were paramilitary camps requires monitoring not only of the government and the authorities, but those investigating the conflict in the present tense. The author provides heuristic research support from Schelling's theory of strategy, recent contributions to the relationship between organized crime and drug cartels.

Keyword: Colombia, Government, Civil War, Latin America, Security, Protection Agencies.

INTRODUCTION

According to Schelling¹, conflict theories can be classified into those that see the conflict as a pathological state and study its' causes and treatment, and those that accept the conflict as a fact and analyse the behaviour which arises out of it. This last category is then divided into those theories that comprehensively analyse, in its full complexity, all those that participate in a conflict (rational and irrational conduct, calculi and motivations), and those theories that consider the actors that act rationally in a conflict (competition, generalised beneficial end and means of achieving this end).

¹ Like few authors, Thomas C. Schelling (1960) has managed to propose an original strategy theory that, due to its simplicity, has overcome the complex formulation of the conventional game theory (Newman/Nash). Recently Schelling has highlighted the historical and geographical circumstances which led to the formation of his model, please see: Jean-Paul Carvalh, "An interview with Thomas Schelling", *Oxonomics* 2 (2007) 1 - 8. The graphic diagram that we use is also valid (with small differences) according to Nozick, 1974 and Gambetta, 1993.

The latter category is known as *conflict strategy*. This article will explore Schelling's notion of conflict strategy with relation to the Colombian conflict for three reasons: a) as analysts ourselves, we are taking a position in the conflict; therefore, we want to know for what reasons the actors rationally perpetrate violence; b) we have an interest in understanding what types of changes and phenomena the principal actors experience; c) it is possible that we have a certain degree of influence (direct and indirect) over the behaviour and the social representations that spring from the conflict, and for that reason, it is important to understand the variables which restrict possible action.

Rational conduct is the fundamental factor to be considered in this article. Indeed, Schelling's diagram suggests that conflict strategy can be understood by analysing various characteristics of rational behaviour: the micro behaviour of an individual, the meso behaviour of a soldier within an armed group or macro behaviour of the armed group in general. Individuals' actions' are motivated by incentives that can be quantified, ranging from basic salary, bonuses and awards for successful operations, to goods collected for threat, extortion and blackmail. These explanatory elements can be used to construct a coherent account of the rationality for joining one of the armed forces (as observed the individual's motivation may not be violent). In any case, motivation to act is not considered in moral terms when analysing the complex structure of rationality.

Limiting conflict studies to strategy theory reduces the understanding of field of action solely to rational conduct (as opposed to irrational conduct motivated by passion); which is to say, not only to intelligent conduct, but also to conduct motivated by a utilitarian calculation of advantages and inconveniences. Within an armed group this is based on a coherent system of values, such as obedience, the benefits of lying, punishment, incentives etc. This limited perspective has its advantages: it allows for the development of a theory of conflict strategy based on rational choice.

Assuming the existence of the conflict and contending that each armed actor has to "win" does not necessarily imply that the actors' interests are in opposition. Only in a theoretic case of a pure conflict are the interests of the antagonists in complete opposition and the goal is total extermination of the adversary. However, coalitions of otherwise enemy armed forces may form to access economic resources, control drugs production and the main transportation routes, protect the population to gain local support, negotiate, etc. As such, competing actors have a common interest. This is especially the case in Colombia where there are a plethora of armed groups

competing in a diverse geographic landscape. Therefore, gains in the language of a conflict do not necessarily translate into gains with respect to the adversary, but gains with respect to one of the systems of values (micro, miso and macro). Within the context of a conflict, there must always exist the possibility of a solution. The possibility of a solution and the common interests between the various armed factions creates a mutual inter-dependence. This mutual inter-dependence allows for a diverse range of tactics, such as intimidation, threat, disarmament and negotiation, which continually change the dynamics of the conflict, specific to time and territory.

The mutual inter-dependence has a psychological element. In one region some armed factions may be friends, in another they may be foes, but in either case the various groups will never have comprehensive information concerning the others. For example, they will not know the quantity and quality of their arms, their territorial control, their resources or the size of their cultivations. Much of the information that they do receive is based on rumour. The asymmetric and incomplete information provides breeding ground for psychological warfare. Strategy does not have to refer to the use of force, but to what Schelling denominates: “the exploitation of potential force”. Due to the lack of information concerning the other armed groups, a threatened group to some extent can only hazard a guess at whether a threat can actually be followed through. This strategy affects both the enemy and those who form part of the alliance because the aim of the strategy is to deliver a solution that is mutually beneficial for all the participants, whether that be negatively avoiding harm or positively gaining a benefit.

In terms of the game theory, the most interesting conflicts are not those which add up to zero, for example in the Cold War where the enemy forces knew that they had equal and opposite power in the form of nuclear weapons which resulted in a strategic tie, but those in which the competing factions have asymmetric and incomplete information concerning the other, and in which one side does not have to win, but both groups can simultaneously gain from a conflict through their common interests. In this study, the exploitation of potential force is understood to compare how strategies are developed within an organisation (rationality, inter-dependence, friend-enemy, and means of achieving an end) and how competitive strategies (threat, intimidation, extortion, fines and taxes) between different groups are developed, in key territories.

Threatening the opposition is an important strategy. The use and style of threats has been developed in such a way that it now delivers profitable results. Time has taught that for a threat to be successful then it must be believable, and its credibility depends on the implied risks and actions to be complied with by the threatening party. As such, the efficiency of the threat depends on the rationale of the adversary. For example, the threat of mass destruction can only intimidate an enemy if first, that enemy believes that those threatening them have the capacity to mass destruct, and second, that there equally exists a possibility not to destruct. In the case of Colombia, the threatening party must be able to take preventative measures to stop the confrontations from escalating. Agreements between the government and the paramilitaries have intended to limit the capacity of the FARC and the ELN to threat and extort².

The process through which the idea of conflict strategy has been developed has been considerable slow. The existent theory is very vague and there is little literature that applies the theory to the case study of Colombia. Methodology has not been developed concerning the use of threat and the related literature does not provide possible solutions to the immediate problems. Why has there been a lack of theoretical development? The answer lies in the fact that the military services, in contrast to almost all other important professions, lack an identifiable academic counterpart. Both the military and the interest groups fail to recognise the relevance of the problem.

What would a theory concerning conflict strategy in Colombia address? Which questions would it try to answer? Which ideas would it try to group together, clarify or communicate in a more effective manner? To start with, it would have to identify the key elements of the conflict and create a typology of the various conducts employed by the armed parties (for example the government and the para-state groups). The objective of strategy is to influence the actions of an adversary and to induce a desired behaviour, but what system of values provides for the credibility of a threat? All of these questions demonstrate that there is sufficient material to create a theory that would help to give greater understanding of the Colombian conflict. This paper will try to answer these questions and will integrate various

² We presented a preliminary paper concerning the roll of indirect communications in typical cases of threat and bribery to the First Congress of Political Science, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Noviembre de 2008, (Estrada Gallego, Fernando, *El Soborno y la Amenaza en las Guerras Civiles*, La Universidad de la Valle, Departamento de Economía, Cali, Colombia, 2008)

perspectives into the analysis, such as the game theory, inconsistent information, argument analysis and collective decision-making.

According to the Conventional Game Theory, violence perpetrated in an armed conflict is rationally or irrationally motivated. Some orthodox writers believe it is exclusively one or the other. However, it is dogmatic to sustain that violence is only rationally motivated because there is no optimal level of rationality used for applying violence. Likewise, violence cannot only be motivated by passion because enemies will rationalise the best means of achieving benefits, such as drugs production, and this may involve an alliance with otherwise enemy forces. Lets say for example that soldier A is threatening the family of an enemy soldier B. B may pay soldier A not to harm his family out of fear, which is a passion, or because he rationally deduces that A always follows through with his threats. A more nuanced understanding of strategy contends that violence is both rationally and irrationally motivated, that which Schelling names an *inter-dependent decision theory*. There is psychological dependence between the various groups, and their actions towards each other are both rational and irrational. For example, the para-state groups use dates and facts, information and estimations concerning the enemy to strategise and the government uses expected behavioural patterns attributed to insurgents, paramilitaries and organized criminals.

The assumption that, during a conflict, strategic decisions are made using a rational framework, implicitly affirms a rational utilitarian theory of action. Many of the critical elements than are integrated into the model of rational conduct can be typified as rational or irrational. This premise obliges us to consider what irrationality means. Irrationality is defined as an incoherent and disordered system of values that may lead to miscalculations. Information systems, collective decision-making or the parameters by which the possibilities of error are represented or loss of control can be considered as an intent to formalize the study of irrationality.

The apparent limitations that are imposed by starting from this premise of rationality are revealed by two observations: (a) an otherwise unstable or irrational enemy can often be intuitively understood as strategic; and (b) an explicit theory that considers rational decision-making and its strategic consequences unequivocally demonstrates that acting rationally does not necessarily constitute a universal advantage in conflict situations. Many of the factors of rationality suppose adverse factors in certain strategic situations, that is to say, it can be rational not to be rational. Additionally, there are defences that in strategy theory could be seen as deteriorations of

rationality. This also demonstrates that in the face of a threat, it is not always advantageous to have an efficient system of communication, to have complete information regarding the adversary or to find oneself in the position of power to provide all and freely from one's own goods.

To resume, the focus taken in this article that addresses conflict strategy is an analytic extension of Thomas C. Schelling's work (1960). The strategy theory is conceived in relation to mutual inter-dependence. In a conflict, the behaviour of soldiers that compete for control of zones and territories with economic benefits is regarded as sufficiently rational (Collier/Skaperdas). In this article, the strategy is related to incentives and motivations: money, salaries, drugs, arms, women etc. The geography of the country reduces local populations to military or political objectives by the principal agents of the conflict. Also the strategy follows patterns of logic in terms of communication and violent discourse. Information exchanged during a war, including the use of arms, the communication of motives given for an attack or a defence, is significantly strategic (Lakoff).

CONTEXT

Analysing the Colombian conflict calls for a certain degree of commitment on the part of the researchers. This occasionally creating a danger for them: too much curiosity kills. One persistent research problem is that when explaining the way that the para-state organisations operate, normally only inchoate information can be found. However, with the consolidation of the nexus between national organisms and international institutions, more valuable information has been uncovered regarding the mechanisms they employed. The confessions of the head drugs traffickers and evidence divulged in the prosecutions against members of criminal organisations in the trials lead by the attorney general also provide us with leads³.

It is possible to work from information collected from official judicial reports of the paramilitary and drugs trafficking trials. The accused is rewarded with benefits for declaring their illegal activities, crimes and the massacres

³ Research problems regarding sources and quality of information of civil wars have presented a fundamental difficulty for various reasons: first, because an *unbiased* researcher will not have sufficient information to analyse the principal perpetrators. Second, factual information is always discovered *ex post*, after the events have occurred; therefore, motives, causes and circumstances are reconstructed in accordance with the narrative and interests in hand. Thorough research always should consist in a scrupulously diverse range of sources and reliable testimonies. See: (Estrada, 2007a).

that they have participated in. These confessions are valuable for our analysis. Jorge 40, Mancuso, and Don Diego, all prosecuted in the United States under charges of drugs trafficking, gave details in their confessions that paint a more complete picture of their individual front's activities and paramilitary strategy employed over the last few decades.

Generally, the sources used in recent research what are predominantly descriptive in character. However, in our case we have opted for using research initiated a decade ago, consisting in a referential mark based on argumentation theory, non-cooperative games and asymmetrical information. When argumentation techniques and rational structures are used to explain violence, it is demonstrated that the para-state organisations operated by forming coalitions in strategic territories for drugs production and trafficking. The aim of this project is to advance research of these new strands of the conflict⁴.

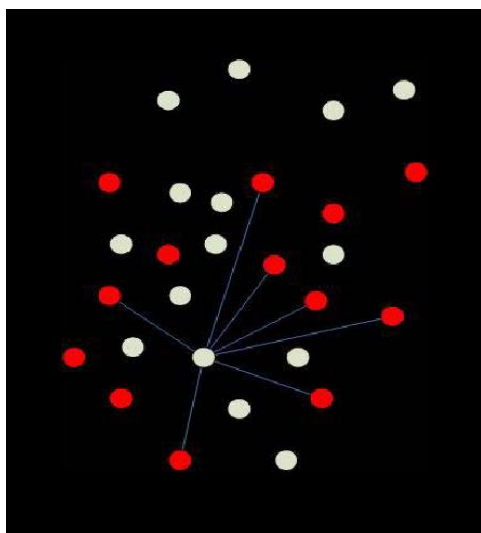
An aspect of the armed conflict which we focused our reserach on was the reconstruction of the phenomena of rumors. Kowalski's and Strojnowsk's graphic models show that the location of threatened populations can be used to explain spacial ties between the armed actors and the expansion of information (Estrada, 2007^a). Using their models, the network of information can be visualised as a natural, progressive and non-lineal expansion. The information spreads through a sequence of cuasal relationships and disperses in accordance with the force of individual and collective beliefs in a particular social network.

The relationship between information and snitching, *prima facie*, falls into the domain of rumours. Often people are quick to tell on their neighbours so as to obtain benefits or protection and security. The accusations take on various forms, one of these being rumour ("they say that", "some people are saying", "its been said that"). The character of a rumour allows for little alterations or discrepancies to be made as it passes from ear to ear. The consequences, even on a global scale, can be regrettable. The rumours are

⁴ My investigative work undertaken between 1998 - 2004 concentrated on strategic aspects of the armed conflict using argumentation logic. The results identified discursive structures of a violent actor which were used to justify para-state acts. Analytic instruments facilitated the study of ideological differences and the process of mutual learning adopted by both the guerrillas and the paramilitaries. A relatively original aspect in the methodology which was employed was the relationship between the discourse, ideology and the armed conflict in Colombia. Please see in particular: "La retórica del paramilitarismo", in *Revista Análisis Político*, Instituto de Estudios Políticos y Relaciones Internacionales, IEPRI, Bogotá, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, vol. 44, pp. 39 - 57, 2001; The book: *Metáforas de una guerra perpetua, pragmática de la argumentación en el conflicto armado en Colombia*, Fondo Editorial Universidad Eafit, Medellín, 2004, contains a good part of this period of investigation.

motivated by perverse collective and personal interests: first, the interests lie in the perks received by the informer; second, the interests relate to the strategy of terror which is used to intimidate victims and those who are close to them.

The pieces of information that correlate with rumour are not always collected within completely structured conditions. What does that mean? As such, certain pieces of potentially key information are chosen and related to strategic points of the network that are in charge of reproducing information in adjacent areas. Así, un nodo que contiene potencialmente información clave puede relacionarse con puntos estratégicos en la red que se encargaría de reproducir la información en áreas adyacentes. Explain more. Out of a collection of known information, keys pieces are chosen and related to one another so as to justify strategy. The direction that the information takes is not linear but follows capricious diversions. In other words, rumors are formed by interactive relationships and have evident faults: gaps in information, distortion and cases of individuals in a network behaving indifferently. This can be observed in the following diagram:



Graphic 3. Adaptation of: Efficient adaptive dispensing, against omission failures, Darek Kowalski, Michał Strojnowsk. The dispersion of rumour and information are found to determine efficient strategic nodes. However, communication faults can be observed in the gaps of information, effecting duration and efficiency, (Estrada, 2007^a).

Even more than investigating the relationship between information and rumour affected by the armed conflict, the aim of our research was to discover the conceptual structures that underlie conflict discourse. Based on interviews and statements given by paramilitaries and insurgents (Carlos Castaño, Alfonso Cano, Comandante Gabino), reports and both printed and digital disclosed information, we were able to design

cartography for the metaphors and analogies employed by the violent actors. The research made use of Lakoff's (1999) and Facounnier's theories with application to the Colombian context⁵.

HEURISTICS

In the context of this nature is required to work on the subject with conceptual tools of greater density. Academic's on the phenomena described are supplemented in our perspective with the following components:

1. The idea of explaining the war in Colombia taking as basis the evolution and development of private protection agencies has been linked to the progressive generation of a potential market that starts with farmers and entrepreneurs in the Middle Magdalena and Puerto Boyaca, pervades the political geography of the Pacific Coast, between smugglers and local politicians in border areas, the corridors of Urabá from investments in oil palm cultivation, the departments of the South: Caquetá and Putumayo, with vast fields of coca, and extending into the areas north of Valle, Cauca and Nariño, triggering retaliation violent organization with a tradition since the '60s.⁶

⁵ Works: Estrada, Gallego, Fernando, "Metáforas del Poder Político", *El Estado y la Fuerza*: v.1 fasc.1 p. - ,2001; Estrada, Gallego, Fernando, "La información y el rumor en zonas de conflicto: estrategias por el poder local en la confrontación armada en Colombia", *Análisis Político* v.- fasc.60 p.44 - 59 ,2007; Estrada, Gallego, Fernando, "Rumor e información. Estrategias por el poder local", *Revista Semana* pp.22 - 24 ,2006; Estrada, Gallego, Fernando, "El Lenguaje de la Guerra y la Política en Colombia", *Reflexión Política*, Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga, pp.71 - 79, 2000; Estrada, Gallego, Fernando, "Discursos de una Guerra Perpetua", *Revista UIS Humanidades*, v.31 fasc.2 p. - ,2002; Estrada, Gallego, Fernando, "La Retórica del Paramilitarismo", *Análisis Político*, v.44 fasc. pp.39 - 57 ,2001; Estrada, Gallego, Fernando, "Metáforas del Discurso Político en Colombia", *La Historia Contemporánea y las Ciencias Sociales*, pp.198 - 220 ,2004; Estrada, Gallego, Fernando, *Los nombres del Leviatán*, Análisis de discursos de la Guerra en Colombia", *Revista Semana*; Estrada, Gallego, Fernando, *Las metáforas de una guerra perpetua: análisis de la pragmática del discurso en el conflicto armado en Colombia*, Fondo Universitario Editorial Eafit, v.1, 2004; Estrada, Gallego, Fernando, "Propagación del rumor y la información en las guerras civiles": III *Simposio Internacional sobre analice do discurso*, Universidad Federal de Mina Gerais , p.1 - 56 , v.III , 2008.

⁶ Illustration done on the impact of clusters on the property and paramilitary land tenure, redistribution of resources by departmental and regional transfers: (Estrada, 2007, Valencia, León, 2009; Kalmanovitz, 2001). Are not valued enough to have had the impact displacements stratification and population mobility. The social and economic costs of these phenomena: Estrada, Fernando, Alberto Castillo, Gonzalez, Jorge Ivan, *La función Pública del Estado*, Bogota, DANE Departamento de Estadística, 2008, Alejandro Reyes Posada, *Guerreros y campesinos. El despojo de la tierra en Colombia*, Bogotá, Editorial Norma, 2009.

2. Our research on private security agencies in emerging conflicts between their original sources is the work of Robert Nozick: *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974). The analytical merits of the concept are related Nozick be fully explained in the main components of private protection agencies in a market model⁷. Besides putting the strategic conditions of the agencies within the evolutionary process of a political contract incomplete. The structure of competition for private protection in a society with irregular conflicts triggered an increasing spiral of further violence by their actors. The work we do has made progress in a complementary direction⁸.
3. Another reference in the field of strategic games and logical behavior in irregular conflicts have been the work of Thomas Schelling: *The Strategic of Conflict* (1960) and *Choice and Consequence* (1984). In both works we find ideas to understand the correlations between organized forms of crime with informal forms of the economy. A theory of indirect communication which plays a key role in cases such as threats and bribery. Successful coalitions between paramilitaries and drug cartels after 90, or links between smugglers and dealers insurgency (FARC, ELN) reflect aspects of organized crime on an original conflict between causal reasons.

⁷ The phenomenon is only beginning to be explored in Colombia on systematization of national and international sources. With known as: CMSP, private military security companies. E, the topic of private protection agencies *a la* Nozick came into full force in Colombia.

⁸ Some publications of the author: Estrada, Gallego, Fernando, "¿A dónde ir? Un análisis del desplazamiento forzado". *Análisis Político* Bogotá, Iepri, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, v.65 pp.146 - 151, 2009. "Guerra Civil y Contractualismo Político Incompleto". *Analítica Premium*, 2008; "Estrategias por el poder local y conflicto Armado en Colombia". *Analítica Premium*, pp.17 - 25, 2007; "Estado Mínimo, Agencias de Protección y Control Territorial", *Revista Análisis Político*, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, v.56, pp.115 - 131, 2006; "El Escudo de Aquiles, Seguridad, Estado y Nuevas Guerras", *Revista Semana/Editorial Planeta*, pp.124 - 156 , 2003; "El Soborno y la Amenaza en las Guerras Civiles", Primer Congreso de Ciencia Política, Bogotá, Universidad De Los Andes, 2008; "Agencias de Protección y Poder Político Local", Primer Congreso de Ciencia Política, Congreso de Ciencia Política Bogotá, Septiembre 30 - Octubre 4 de 2008; "Estrategia de Comunicación y Paramilitares en Colombia, *Investigar la Comunicación Retos Científicos y Compromisos Sociales*, 2007; "Concentración de Tierras y Desplazamiento Forzado en Colombia, Caso Antioquia", *Dinámica del Conflicto Armado en el contexto de la política de Seguridad Democrática*, Bogotá, Universidad Externado de Colombia, 2007; "Economía Política del Conflicto Armado en Colombia", XXII Congreso Nacional de Estudiantes de Economía, Bucaramanga, 2007; Análisis Actualizado del Conflicto Armado en Colombia", *Mataron a Gaitán, Celebración 60 años*, Bogotá, Universidad Nacional en Colombia, 2008.

4. Research by Diego Gambetta on the *Sicilian Mafia* (2003) analytical framework partially meets Schelling / Nozick within targets relevant to the investigation of the Colombian case. We want to explore the direction taken by the work of Gambetta basically the following: (a) the idea of the protection industry as a potential markets, (b) provides comparative relationships between markets and market protection ordered disordered. The work we have elaborated on the information and rumor in conflict areas (Estrada, 2006), are complemented with the idea developed in the trademarks Gambetta and mechanisms of communication and information used by criminal organizations.

A wide variety of prejudice has gained ground among proponent's comments on links between clusters paramilitary and drug cartels [hypothesis (3), (5)]. A widely accepted belief is that the protection and security are marginal to the objectives of the armed conflict. This idea suggests a fragmented version of illegal markets in which each business unit operates independently of the others. The boss in the chain of the conflict only indirectly, since its objectives are focused on the delivery routes, money laundering or the business of smuggling at the borders. However, relations between the posters with the paramilitaries or between the cartels and the guerrillas, as well as the relationships they have minor criminal organizations with links in the chain, they agree on many goals⁹.

In Gambetta (2003) the case of the *Sicilian Mafia* that private protection is a "central activity of a well-ordered mob. Those who receive protection may be fussy, but not usually considered useless, and many more times than you think in general, are actively seeking". This observation in the Colombian case is given the apparent objections lawlessness among emerging groups, but some disorder in the form of business does not mean that the ways in which security operates a business does not represent high profitability. In fact it is possible to verify how the conflict with struggles over the monopoly of illegal businesses in municipalities and regions.

The reason's for this confusion is related to studies that focus on aspects of the problem prone to spectacular. The categories and core concepts to define the conflict still within a sphere comprised of platitudes. We need to go far

⁹ This hypothesis of correlations and shared interests between the paramilitary's groups and State Robert Nozick expresses originality in works reviewed (Nozick, 1974). While it is important to note that the case studies, as in Colombia, offering obvious limitations. The change in policy or strategic positions taken by key actors, betrayal, money laundering, concealment of information, makes the trajectory of research in an open challenge to solve several problems: how to keep the illegal drug trade with agencies different?, Who assure safety on the routes of transmission of drugs?, how corrupt institutional representatives both within and outside the frontiers?, When coalitions are required and with whom?.

enough with less journalistic study structures. Another bias underlines the absence of armed conflict; some analysts invoke magic solution to this formula. "Organized Crime", "emerging bands," "guerrillas" or "paramilitaries" are used as denominators to describe in many cases the same thing. The basic problem is complicated by the difficult nature found in the sources. A variety of reasons in the Colombian case requires a restructuring and work on materials that have been "kicked by the angels" (John L. Austin, Philosopher).

There is first the need for a separate conceptual framework for agents, organizations, cartels, suppliers and buyers of protection. And recognize that in half a century of shared activities, paramilitary groups have managed to bring an illegal market has its own dynamics among large investors. How have they affected the regional circuits of the illegal market of the customs protection of each region in Colombia: mayors, city councils, legal trade? A proper understanding of these differences also reflects a fundamental issue of political economy: how they have incorporated the private protection and illegal markets to the general structure of formal economy in Colombia [Problems controvert the assumptions (1), (2), (3), (5)].

CRIMINALS BANDS

The political disintegration of clusters paramilitaries is one of the most difficult to address. Should we say des-ideological? Take up arms against the state? Or use the State to "fight those who oppose the State? This double movement triggers a misleading way of posing the problem. If politics is lost in the conflict, what are the reasons? It was argued by many analysts is that the drug trade and drug trafficking explain everything. Again, this means putting everything in one basket.

And is it not so? The social have worked with differences? Mono-causal question is as flawed as its response, *ceteris paribus*, explanations that place within the same level: strategies, objectives, policy, armament. The need to differentiate and develop a reclassification (by regions, territories, incentives, resources and power), is essential. The changes provided in locations such as Puerto Boyacá Puerto Triunfo and after the paramilitary reintegration program are sufficient to understand that we were wrong to simplify the conflict and its resolution.

Is it the rearmament of paramilitary? Pure drugs business? Who are their leaders less "spectacular"? Who pays? What area of political / military project? Questions whose require questions of critical geography and logical

extension in the localities. The explanations are divided between those positions in emerging bands fragmented expression of common crime and organized crime, or who were concerned to rearm and consolidate in former territories of the paramilitaries. The picture is cloudy. The truth, however, is that the actions of urban crime in border towns and illegal businesses, they reveal a strategic expansion whose geography has not been studied yet.

Part of conventional geography has been used in order to divert attention from critical areas of conflict. Exploit the fears and hostility feeds. Depending on the source providing the information is abused mapping to develop interpretations. A map is presented as reality; however, the maps are not reality. It is possible that further studies of critical geography teach us, by example, not only in what regions or areas of the country there is expansion of emerging bands, but to contribute to better define the dynamics of transition and learning the paramilitaries groups. If paramilitary gangs are emerging should be able to expose what updates or changes its projections territorial behavior and strategic¹⁰.

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of the paramilitaries, have you failed? Being negative response, what explains the return of member's combatants to areas that were predominantly paramilitary? There are many concerns expressed serious institutional difficulties to handle a problem of dimensions that transcend the boundaries of government. However, in the Colombian case, the gaps in the program seem to respond to original conceptions of the process with severe limitations. Veterans do not surrender all their weapons. Businessmen, traders and, in general, economic sectors gave no support to the expectations of employment and occupation. And gradually the incentives of the program have been giving their way to new demands and proposals on the protection market. The negative influence of these factors, coupled with retaliation and crimes of ex-playing elements that deserve consideration.

If government policy is to confuse emerging drug gangs, there are reasons to test their hypotheses. The emerging bands, it is claimed, do not have a counter-ideology that separates the paramilitaries. The paramilitary groups that were formed and evolved from Puerto Boyacá during the '80s, until the fronts of the Calima Bloc, dominant in the Pacific region, "were organized around a program counter? It is not clear. First, because their structures are

¹⁰ A test that evaluates in an international context the emerging gang problem: Hoffman, Michael H., "Emerging combatants, war crimes and the Future of international humanitarian law", *Crime, Law & Social Change* 34: 99-110, 2000. The reflections are concerned with the need to distinguish combatants and to degrade and paramilitaries groups and design problems arising from limited categories of international humanitarian law,

not preserved uniformity of command (each front emerged and responded to specific demands of those who financed their creation). Second, its members did not share resources from a single supplier. Third, their statements and not ideologically conceived. The "paramilitary ideology" was really more an artifact¹¹.

Some works have explored the relationship between paramilitary groups and regional powers¹². Documentation found in computer files and papers (bills, notes or receipts book) makes a clear influence on contracting mechanisms, and resource transfers and municipal departments. Injected capital flows to regional economies by drug traffickers were protected by the warlords¹³.

CONCLUSIONS

Far from being ordered in accordance with strategic plans of a single organization, emerging bands have become increasingly common, despite the hostility caused by the Uribe administration and the propaganda has proved devastatingly effective. The ideology that mobilizes its actions in regions such as Córdoba, Cauca, Valle, Nariño and La Guajira, not politics, not even be described as a counterinsurgency strategy, but rather a specific narrative of unmet basic needs. It is possible to believe that in conditions of desperate unemployment, for example, will become an effective policy¹⁴.

¹¹ Cubides, Fernando: *Burocracias armadas*, Bogotá, Norma, 2006. The rhetorical force that had insufficient paramilitary commanders (Carlos Castaño, Salvatore Mancuso and Jorge 40) to demonstrate the ideological program was offset by the academic services provided by some Argentines and Colombians. Cubides carried elements related to the analysis of this phenomenon.

¹² León Valencia, Op. Cit.; Alejandro Reyes Posada, *Guerreros y campesinos. El despojo de la tierra en Colombia*, Bogotá, Editorial Norma, 2009.

¹³ López, López, Andrés, *El cartel de los sapos*, la historia secreta de las mafias del narcotráfico más poderosas del mundo: el cartel del norte del valle, Bogotá, Planeta, 2008.

¹⁴ In the words of the same drug traffickers this seems like a fable, but they are common components of speaking about the reasons given by some groups to join paramilitary: "As the people remain child poverty, corruption, unemployment, lack of opportunity and is in the drug's only chance of escaping poverty, the tentacles of crime and drug contagion bacteria without remedy, "ibid., p. 311. As heroes, drug traffickers are presented in television series and media publishers. This is the case of Andrés López whose book: *El cartel de los sapos*, Bogotá, Norma, 2008, as a libretto adapted for television, has just won an honorable prize India Catalina in Cartagena, Colombia.

This interpretation of suffering violence will shake if focuses on a guilty (the State) which in turn can isolate the causes of violence casually addressing the problem. These narrative units are offered as a means of justifying causes quite far from their origins. The emerging bands, paramilitary, guerrilla and criminal organizations have enough speech in favor of its strategic objectives. If suffering is seen as natural or without cause shall be considered a misfortune instead of injustice and produce resignation rather than rebellion. Therefore, mafia, guerrillas or paramilitaries claimed its causes in speeches that seek to prosecute, rather than assuming the status of perpetrators.

It happened with the FARC from its origins in Marquetalia, with the AUC of Magdalena Medio, with the MAS (Death to Kidnappers), with the paramilitaries in Cordoba and Antioquia Urabá, with paramilitaries under Ramon Isaza and the Black Eagles under the command of Don Mario, every one of the main actors of the conflict is delivered to a discourse of guilt. Interpret the actions of their enemies as crimes, inserting an all-encompassing discourse on monstrosity of his actions. Outreach campaigns and territorial dominance, population displacement and destruction in the regions should be observed also by creating a myth that will help sustain the conspiracy.

Demonizing its enemies and responsible for the atrocities of the war not only helped to neutralize the scruples to kill peasants and Indians ("guerrillas dressed in civilian clothes," said Jorge 40 and Carlos Castaño). He allegedly also helped intensify recruitment for their cause. If the regions where groups did not operate in a limited way-or-with a legitimate presence of state agencies, the opportunity was unique to invoke the need for his presence, and the discipline imposed on populations. The enemy was seen as a destroyer of peaceful coexistence, the state as indifferent and insulated to the center. This was the condensation of their ideology. But the causes alleged hidden interest in the discourse of higher crime and criminal scope.

The ideology had abdicated her political identity. Shares of emerging bands seem to be defined instrumentally by the drug economy and the dominance of strategic geography. The recruitment of youth and adolescents preferably made in depressed areas of Bogota, Medellin, Cali, Bucaramanga and Barranquilla, basically show that the conviction is not doctrinaire. For some emerging rescue their unemployment and poverty, incorporating the main workforce at little risk. We have passed since the violence of the 60s classic, low imperatives disguised by the discourse of the Cold War, into a product of the first decade of the century, where conflicts of interest between groups paramilitaries, is reduced to the drug markets and drug trafficking.

What we sought in this review of research on the conflict in Colombia is to hire our work with some of the assumptions most influential among the public. In no way were completed articles or books released in the last decade, nor in his fullness we have examined the authors dealing with conflict. The hypothesis we have proposed as predominant versions, have been outlined leaving out details that do not affect the whole. In the introduction we said that these are not caricatures, but strongly held belief among those who put their theories about the Colombian conflict.

We show, contrary to the hypothesis, which indeed we have reason to be wary of rumors about the end of armed conflict and the final dismantling of paramilitary groups. The facts of war are striking and show us that the FARC, though diminished in their action, remain structurally intact. And the paramilitaries were able to sell at a relatively low price the idea of reintegration, in fact, maintained camps Vicente Castaño and rear with new heads of emerging bands (Don Mario, stubble). The armed conflict in Colombia has taken on new faces, like Clausewitz's metaphor

An explanation of the armed conflict has been complemented in our approach from a theory of the Schelling strategy / Nozick. We believe that addressing the conflict from the strategies and territorial geography promises less simple observations. New wars do not necessarily mean radical breaks with the strategy of violent actors of the 60s, but no doubt that incorporate aspects such as drug trafficking and smuggling, are variables whose explanation is more complex. Game theory and asymmetric information and discourse analysis contribute substantially to improved research methods.

There are sufficient aspects of analogy. Analyst in the strategy and operations of guerrillas and paramilitaries, have suggested that the Colombian conflict analysis should show the differences between clusters paramilitary. Not only because after the 80s, drug trafficking has played a decisive role, but because the geography of territories and control combinations have not been studied sufficiently. Geography of armed conflict should also provide tools to understand the impact of war on natural resources, for example.

Finally, we sustain that while the drug economy has filtered the structure of semi-groups, promoting market competition and private security protection, drug trafficking does not explain absolutely all sources of violence in Colombia. The strategy of armed conflict has its main actors incentives are deeply rooted in unequal economic relations. There differences between regions in the center and the periphery of the Colombia and asymmetrical

forms of development, poverty, unemployment and corruption. These are variables in which the drug is not directly involved but are part of historical attitudes that require our analysis.

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