

New Armed Groups in Colombia:  
The Emergence of the *Bacrim* in the 21st Century

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## **DEDICATION**

To my beloved son, Aiden; I look forward to exploring the world with you.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACCU	Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá / Peasant Self-Defense Forces of Córdoba and Urabá
ACDEGAM	Asociación Campesina de Ganaderos y Agricultores del Magdalena Medio /Association of Middle Magdalena Ranchers and Farmers
AGC	Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia ( <i>Los Urabeños</i> )
AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia / United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia
BACRIM	Bandas Criminales / Criminal Bands
BCB	Bloque Central Bolívar / Central Bolívar Bloc
BCN	Bloque Cacique Nutibara / Cacique Nutibara Bloc
BEC	Bloque Elmer Cardenas / Elmer Cardenas Bloc
CBAG	Community Based Armed Group
CERAC	Conflict Analysis Resource Center
CNP	Colombian National Police
CNRR	National Commission on Reparations and Reconciliation
DANE	Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística
DAS	Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (Dissolved in 2011)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DEA	U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
DIA	U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organization

ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional / National Liberation Army
EPL	Ejército Popular de Liberación / Popular Liberation Army
ERPAC	Ejército Revolucionario Popular Antisubversivo de Colombia / Popular Revolutionary Anti-Terrorist Army of Colombia
FARC or FARC-EP	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia—Ejército del Pueblo / Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People’s Army
FIP	La Fundación Ideas para la Paz / The Ideas for Peace Foundation
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IAG	Illegally Armed Groups
ICG	International Crisis Group
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
INDEPAZ	El Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz / The Institute of Studies for Development and Peace
IS	The Islamic State
M-19	Movimiento 19 de Abril / 19 <sup>th</sup> of April Movement
MAS	Muerte a Secuestradores / Death to Kidnappers
MOD	Ministry of Defense
NACLA	North American Congress on Latin America
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIAG	New Illegal Armed Groups
NVC	Norte Valle Cartel
OAS	Organization of American States
OFAC	Office of Foreign Assets Control – Department of the U.S. Treasury
PCC	Partido Comunista Colombiano / Colombian Communist Party
SME	Subject Matter Expert
TOC	Transnational Organized Crime

TCO	Transnational Criminal Organization
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UP	Unión Patriótica / Patriotic Union
WOLA	Washington Office on Latin America

# ABSTRACT

## NEW ARMED GROUPS IN COLOMBIA: THE EMERGENCE OF THE BACRIM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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The 2003-2006 paramilitary demobilization in Colombia created major public policy challenges for the government, including the emergence of new illegal groups (*Bacrim* or *bandas criminales*). To date, there is no agreement between the government, academicians, and non-governmental organizations about the nature of these *bacrim*. The lack of shared understanding inhibits the establishment of a comprehensive plan to combat the *bacrim* and does a disservice to prior demobilization efforts. If these groups are legitimate participants in the on-going conflict, members will reap economic and legal benefits; otherwise, they will face criminal consequences.

In this dissertation, I used an embedded case study of five major *bacrim* (*Las Águilas Negras*, ERPAC, *Los Paisas*, *Los Rastrojos*, and *Los Urabeños*) to examine their origins and leadership, members and structure, ideology and activities, and territory. I developed a comparative framework to identify key characteristics of paramilitary groups, drug

trafficking organizations, gangs, and new types of organized crime. I also developed a supporting quantitative analysis of crime statistics and public opinion surveys. The case study revealed heterogeneity across all five groups, calling into question the utility of the umbrella term *bacrim*. The quantitative research showed a substantial post-demobilization decline in homicides and other violent crimes but steady and/or increasing extortion and corruption. Identifying and ameliorating long-standing social and economic problems, in addition to developing strategies for individual groups, will do more to support peace in Colombia than focusing on short-term homogeneous approaches to the *bacrim*, such as kingpin removal.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

In the midst of paramilitary demobilization in Colombia in 2005 and 2006, accounts of new non-state actors operating throughout the country began to appear. These groups, initially named “emerging criminal bands,” now commonly known as *bacrim* or *bandas criminales* (“criminal bands”), started to fill the void left by the demobilizing paramilitaries. In January 2012, the chief of the Colombian National Police, General Óscar Naranjo, called bands like these the “principle threat” to the country.<sup>1</sup>

Colombian researcher, Katherine Aguirre Tobón, clearly outlined the terminology confusion:

“It should be noted that this designation is not an agreed upon concept, since there is no clarity about the nature of the phenomenon. The Armed Forces and the government have referred to these groups as criminal gangs (*BACRIM*) or bands that are inherent in the problem of drug trafficking (bands in the service of drug trafficking). On the other hand, social organizations and academics debate whether these groups have been established as a new phenomenon associated with organized crime or as a third generation of paramilitaries.”<sup>2</sup>

This research challenges the designations and assumptions made by the Colombian government and others about the *bacrim*. The *bacrim* could be strictly a

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<sup>1</sup> Cesar Gonzalez Calero, “Los ‘neoparamilitares’, otra amenaza para Colombia,” *La Nacion*, 29 January 2012, <<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1444247-los-neoparamilitares-otra-amenaza-para-colombia>> (11 June 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Katherine Aguirre Tobón, “El tráfico de armas en Colombia: una revisión desde los orígenes a los destinos,” *Revista Latinoamericana de Seguridad Ciudadana* 10 (2011): 40.



continuation of the AUC or a new phenomenon, as researchers have suggested. They could also be just drug traffickers, as the government proposes. By reviewing the history and assertions about the types of groups that exist in Colombia and how they operate, as well as the numbers behind their activities, including crime statistics and public opinion, this dissertation will help bring clarity to the problem. A shared understanding about the *bacrim* will allow for the establishment of meaningful policies to tackle these groups, who act as a continual threat to Colombian democracy and institutions.

## **A. A PROBLEM OF TERMINOLOGY**

*Bacrim*, illegal armed groups, neo-paramilitaries: these are only a few of the terms used to describe the new organizations in Colombia. As transnational crime researcher Louise Shelley notes, “These distinctions are not just semantic but determine how they will be treated under the peace agreements that have been negotiated in Colombia.”<sup>3</sup> If the government decides that demobilized *bacrim* qualify as combatants, they will be entitled to reintegration support and other benefits, although some jail time may still be required, while if they are declared to be criminals, prison and perhaps extradition await them.

### **A Surfeit of Labels**

From a historical perspective, the names used to refer to the *bacrim* have evolved since 2005, with the press, the Colombian government, and local NGOs, all adopting varying terminology at different times. *Semana*, a leading Colombian magazine, referred

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<sup>3</sup> Louise Shelley, *Dirty Entanglements: Corruption, Crime, and Terrorism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 232.

to them as “new paramilitary groups” in early 2007 after reporting on multiple groups, such as *Las Águilas Negras* and *Los Rastrojos*, the previous year. In an article from the middle of 2007, a writer for the magazine asked if these entities were neo-paramilitaries, common criminals, “*gatilleros de la mafia*” [mafia assassins], or perhaps all of the above.<sup>4</sup> By 2011, they were often termed by the press as “*las llamadas ‘Bacrim’*” [the so-called *bacrim*] or just “*bandas criminales (bacrim)*.” In social media, “*bandas criminales*” and the names of specific groups first appeared on Twitter in September 2007, while the usage of both “*#Bacrim*” and “*bacrim*” began in 2009.

For U.S. government agencies, however, recognition of the phenomenon came earlier. In late 2005, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) referred to them as “IAGs” or “illegally armed groups” in at least one report.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Jose Miguel Insulza, called them “new emerging armed groups” in a 2006 private meeting. The United Nation’s Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) termed them IAGs or “so-called criminal bands at the service of drug trafficking - *BACRIM*” in its 2010 Coca Survey, but later referred to them as “groups outside the law” in 2014.<sup>6</sup>

For the past several years, the Colombian government, especially the Colombian National Police (CNP) and the Attorney General, have used the term “*bacrim*” in their

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<sup>4</sup> “¿Qué son las Águilas Negras?”, *Semana*, 18 August 2007, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/que-aguilas-negras/87686-3>> (8 September 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Defense Intelligence Agency, *DIA/J2 Executive Highlights: Colombia: New Groups Forming in the Wake of Paramilitary Demobilizations*, October 2005, Declassified, ProQuest Digital National Security Archive, <<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com>> (2014).

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of State, “U/S Burns’ September 22, 2006 Meeting on Colombia with Select Countries and Organizations,” 2006 State 171309, October 2006, Declassified, Available from the ProQuest Digital National Security Archive at <http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com>; UNODC, *Colombia: Coca Cultivation Survey 2010*, 2011a, <<http://www.unodc.org>> (October 2014), 71; and, *Colombia: Coca Cultivation Survey 2013*, 2014a, <<http://www.unodc.org>> (October 2014), 67.

publications and on their websites. The Attorney General's office, in particular, formed a special *bacrim* unit to process cases and investigations.<sup>7</sup> In the Executive Office, both President Juan Manuel Santos and Vice President Germán Vargas have referred to them as “*las llamadas Bacrim*” and “*bandas criminales*.”<sup>8</sup>

NGOs and academics have adopted different language when discussing the groups. In 2011, Jorge Restrepo, Director of Bogotá-based NGO, *Conflict Analysis Resource Center* (CERAC), called them “*bandas ‘neo-paramilitares’*” [neo-paramilitary bands] in one report.<sup>9</sup> Other NGOs (e.g., Human Rights Watch (HRW)) have named them the “heirs of the paramilitary” or “NIAGs (New Illegal Armed Groups and paramilitary successors)” in addition to adopting the *bacrim* label. In 2010, Canadian academic Jasmin Hristov directly referred to them as paramilitaries in one report and later stated the term *bacrim* was an “invention” to “erase the presence of the paramilitary from the picture of the armed conflict,”<sup>10</sup> while David Spencer of the National Defense University also used the term paramilitaries, albeit “transformed paramilitaries (*BACRIM*)” in 2011.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Celina Realuyo, “The Terror Crime Nexus: Hezbollah’s Global Facilitators,” *PRISM* 5, no. 1 (2014): 124.

<sup>8</sup> “Entrevista del Presidente de la República, Juan Manuel Santos, al programa de televisión ‘Agenda Colombia’,” 27 October 2014, <[http://wp.presidencia.gov.co/Noticias/2014/Octubre/Paginas/20141027\\_05-Palabras-Entrevista-Presidente-de-la-Republica-Juan-Manuel-Santos-al-programa-de-television-Agenda-Colombia.aspx](http://wp.presidencia.gov.co/Noticias/2014/Octubre/Paginas/20141027_05-Palabras-Entrevista-Presidente-de-la-Republica-Juan-Manuel-Santos-al-programa-de-television-Agenda-Colombia.aspx)> (15 November 2014); Felipe Morales Mogollón, “No habrá diálogo con bandas criminales: Germán Vargas Lleras,” *El Espectador*, 9 January 2012, <<http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/no-habra-dialogo-bandas-criminales-german-vargas-lleras-articulo-320112>> (13 December 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Jorge A. Restrepo, Juan David Gonzalez, and Alonso Tobón, “Paramilitarismo: La Amenaza Sigue Viva,” 2011, <<http://razonpublica.com/index.php/regiones-temas-31/1861-paramilitarismo-la-amenaza-sigue-viva.html>> (October 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Jasmin Hristov, “Self-Defense Forces, Warlords, or Criminal Gangs? Towards a New Conceptualization of Paramilitarism in Colombia,” *Labour, Capital and Society* 43, no. 2 (2010): 17.

<sup>11</sup> David Spencer, et al., *Colombia’s Road to Recovery: Security and Governance 1982-2010* (Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, 2011), 17.

Nevertheless, this plethora of terms and phrases do not even begin to capture the intricacies of the self-named groups (e.g., ERPAC or *Los Rastrojos*) and it is not whether their members chose these names for themselves or adopted them from the government. For example, Los Urabeños often refer to themselves as *Los Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia* [The Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, AGC] while officials now call them Clan Úsaga or Clan del Golfo. “Gaitanist” is a reference to Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, the politician whose assassination in 1948 was one of the proximate causes of *La Violencia*. The group chose the name in homage to “a great leader assassinated for defending the most vulnerable classes in the country.”<sup>12</sup> Clan Úsaga was chosen by the CNP in response to a 2014 request from President Santos to stop stigmatizing the entire region of Urabá and instead utilizes the name of its leaders.<sup>13</sup> The police, then asked to change it again, chose the generic, “Clan del Golfo.”<sup>14</sup>

This leads to the question: what is meant by *bacrim*?

## Dissertation Structure

To address the problem of the *bacrim*, this dissertation is divided into six additional chapters. Chapter 1 covers terminology and structure, and addresses the relevance and importance of clarifying the nature of these groups. Chapter 2 reviews

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<sup>12</sup> Juan Diego Restrepo, ‘*Autodefensas gaitanistas de Colombia*’ en el Bajo Cauca antioqueño, Fundación Ideas para La Paz, October 2015, <<http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/5617efbc18756.pdf>> (7 February 2016), 12.

<sup>13</sup> “Santos pidió a la Policía cambiar nombre de la bacrim de ‘los Urabeños’,” *El País*, 25 April 2014, <<http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/judicial/noticias/juan-manuel-santos-pidio-policia-cambiar-nombre-bacrim-urabenos>> (7 February 2016).

<sup>14</sup> “Los Úsaga fueron rebautizados por autoridades y ahora se llaman Clan del Golfo,” *Publimetro*, 13 June 2016, <<http://www.publimetro.co/colombia/clan-usuga-ahora-se-llama-clan-del-golfo/lmkpfm!AMpARmTRGR69k/>> (September 2016).

pertinent literature on transnational organized crime and the Latin American state and civil society, providing a point of departure for Chapter 3, where the details of Colombia's historical conflicts and its key participants are visited. Chapter 4 presents the research design and framework used for examining the *bacrim*. Chapters 5 and 6 present case studies of the five *bacrim* groups examined in-depth and the accompanying quantitative analyses. Finally, Chapter 7 presents conclusions and implications from this research.

## **B. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS RESEARCH**

Studying organizations, both inside the state, such as civil society, and outside the state, such as organized crime, has a long history in numerous disciplines. In particular, researchers have worked for years to understand the nature of different criminal groups, from the Yakuza in Japan to the Italian Camorra, Cosa Nostra, and 'Ndrangheta.<sup>15</sup> This line of inquiry emerged from the challenges these entities present to their respective nations and, as they have grown, other countries around the world. As they control licit and illicit businesses throughout the economy and contest the state's monopoly on violence, criminal organizations have been a serious policy challenge to governments worldwide.

It continues to be important to understand the changing role in society of traditional criminal groups and the emergence of new ones (e.g., Somali pirates, Mexican

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<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of all groups, see Abadinsky (2011) and Mandel (2010). For the Yakuza, see Kaplan (1998) and Lal (2007). For the 'Ndrangheta and the region of Calabria, see Paoli (2004, 2008a) and Arlacchi (1983). On the Camorra, see Behan (2002) and Saviano (2008). For the Cosa Nostra (what is commonly considered the 'mafia'), see for example, Catanzaro (1992) and Gambetta (1993). Additional discussion of the Italian groups may be found in the literature review.

drug organizations, Balkan crime groups, and here, the *bacrim*). New groups continue to employ many of the same techniques as their predecessors, but have established different relationships with the state.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the need to pursue knowledge about criminal groups, there is also an urgency to explain the *bacrim*, specifically, and their activities because of the on-going security threat they pose to both the citizens and Colombian state. For example, in a 2015 operation against *Los Urabeños*, recovered documents suggested the group planned to be “an armed and political actor” that could “establish negotiations with the national government” by 2018.<sup>17</sup> As the peace deal between the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) and the Colombian government concludes and moves into the next phase, coordinated action on the part of *Los Urabeños* could complicate a final settlement or set in motion the requirement for additional negotiations.

### **Raising Awareness of the *Bacrim* Among an English-speaking Audience**

Since “*bacrim*,” as both a term of art and a collection of groups, has only existed for a decade, it is not surprising that there is a limited understanding of their activities and in particular, what it means to be a *bacrim*. While NGOs and academics in Colombia have engaged in multiple Spanish language studies of the *bacrim*, there is a more limited body of work addressing them in English. For example, HRW and the International Crisis Group (ICG) have each produced reports on the activities of these groups and acknowledged the issue raised by Katherine Aguirre Tobón, there is no shared

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<sup>16</sup> Shelley (2014), 102.

<sup>17</sup> “Los secretos del ‘Clan Úsuga’,” *Verdadabierta*, 24 August 2015, <<http://www.verdadabierta.com/rearme/5933-los-secretos-del-clan-usuga>> (October 2015).

understanding of what it means to be a *bacrim*. InSight Crime, sponsored by American University, has been active in reporting on *bacrim* activities but has not tackled the problem of their precise nature, other than at one point, to declare they were drug traffickers.<sup>18</sup>

A few individual scholars and analysts have considered the *bacrim* as part of larger projects. For example, in 2008, Juan Carlos Garzón at the Woodrow Wilson Center described the initial creation of the *bacrim* in 2006-2007.<sup>19</sup> Hristov looked at these groups from a human rights perspective over the period of several years; and, Adam Isacson at the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) addressed the role of the *bacrim* with regard to the end of the FARC insurgency in a 2014 report.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, much of what has been written about the *bacrim* resides in Spanish—the news media, official Colombian government reporting, and Colombian NGOs. By actively translating and analyzing these sources, it will be possible to establish a better understanding of what these groups mean to the Colombians.

### **Generating a Systematic Understanding of New Armed Groups**

As in the twentieth century, new armed groups have regularly emerged worldwide in the twenty-first century. Moreover, the Islamic State (IS) and Mexican drug trafficking organizations have latched onto emerging consumer technology and connectivity to

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<sup>18</sup> Jeremy McDermott, “The BACRIM and Their Position in Colombia’s Underworld,” *InSight Crime*, 2 May 2014a, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/investigations/bacrim-and-their-position-in-colombia-underworld>> (October 2014).

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that Garzón’s work, *Mafia & Co.: The Criminal Networks in Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia*, was originally written in Spanish and later translated by the Woodrow Wilson Center.

<sup>20</sup> For Hristov, see in particular: *Blood and Capital: The Paramilitarization of Colombia*, and for Isacson, see, “Ending 50 Years of Conflict: The Challenges Ahead and the U.S. Role in Colombia.”

innovate and define themselves and their activities globally.<sup>21</sup> How do those who oppose and study illegal groups understand these new ones in a systematic way? This includes examining their motivations, plans, leadership structure, and operations. Using the *bacrim* as one example of a new twenty-first century group might prove revelatory to armed groups in general or perhaps show there are unique characteristics of Colombian groups that do not apply to organizations in other parts of the world. For example, do they take advantage of certain technologies in order to promote their business or disseminate their message, such as IS has done with Twitter and YouTube?

These groups may also be placed in the context of their position (or lack thereof) in civil society. Thomas Carothers and William Barndt, Augustine Ikelegbe, and Phil Williams all have discussed the place that “un-civil” groups have in civil society.<sup>22</sup> While there is a powerful reason to stick to a normative definition (that requires groups to be inherently ‘civil’), there is an equally persuasive argument to include those groups which are criminal, terrorist, or motivated by hate or some other ‘distasteful’ ideology.

Groups may even fit multiple definitions as hybrid actors, although not in the sense of Tamara Makarenko and Chris Dishman, who described the potential

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<sup>21</sup> Nick Sommerlad, “ISIS rely on Twitter to pump out Islamic jihad propaganda,” *Mirror*, 6 October 2015, <<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/isis-rely-twitter-pump-out-6586458>> (30 October 2015); Deborah Hastings, “Mexican cartels use social media to post gruesome victim photos, sexy selfies,” *New York Daily News*, 16 December 2013, <<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/mexican-drug-cartel-thugs-post-atrocities-social-media-article-1.1515860>> (30 October 2015).

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Carothers and William Barndt, “Civil Society,” *Foreign Policy* 117 (Winter, 1999-2000): 18-24+26-29; Augustine Ikelegbe, “The Perverse Manifestation of Civil Society: Evidence from Nigeria,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 39, no. 1 (2001): 1-24; Phil Williams, “The Dark Side of Global Civil Society: The Role and Impact of Transnational Criminal Organizations as a Threat to International Security,” in *International Security Management and the United Nations*, eds. Muthiah Alagappa and Takashi Inoguchi (New York: United Nations University Press, 1999).



hybridization of crime and terror groups in 2004 and 2005.<sup>23</sup> For example, Christopher Bowers wrote about hybrid actors having high levels of capability, organizational maturity, and the ability to operate in many “terrains” and Xavier Raufer identified a hybrid actor that was both criminal and political.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, in conceiving the role of the *bacrim* in modern Colombia, it is important to understand their role inside civil society and the state as well as their role in opposition to it.

### **A Threat to Democracy and Civil Society in Colombia**

Compared to other Latin American nations, Colombia is known for having had a fairly continuous democracy since the nineteenth century. It has not always been a strong democracy and it has consistently been paired with a weak civil society (used here in the more traditional sense). Yet, except for a military coup in 1900 and one in 1953 (this led to the military rule of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla for four years and rule by junta for an additional year), Colombia has had continuous Presidential elections.<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately, a long history of political violence overshadows these successes. This includes but is not limited to: the assassination of presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948, the ten-year civil war that followed (during which the military coup occurred), the assassination of three presidential candidates in 1990, the 2002

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<sup>23</sup> Tamara Makarenko, “The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism,” *Global Crime* 6, no. 1 (2004): 129-145; Chris Dishman, “The Leaderless Nexus: When Crime and Terror Converge,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 28, no. 3 (2005): 237-252.

<sup>24</sup> Christopher Bowers, “Identifying Emerging Hybrid Adversaries,” *Parameters*, Spring 2012: 39-50; Xavier Raufer, “Chaos, Terrorism, and Beyond,” in *The McGraw-Hill Homeland Security Handbook*, ed. David Kamien, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006), 132. See Chapter 2 for additional discussion on hybrid actors.

<sup>25</sup> This is with the caveat that during the time of the *Frente Nacional* (following the end of *La Violencia*), presidential power alternated between parties.

kidnapping of presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt (among many others), as well as the murder and intimidation of countless other government politicians over the decades.<sup>26</sup>

As a result of pervasive political and other motivations for violence, Colombian civil society has been limited, but not absent. Local NGOs, including victims' and women's organizations, as well as peace and justice and anti-corruption groups, have consolidated despite the danger from illegal groups as well as government opposition. Several major NGOs include the *Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia* (focused on the indigenous population), the National Network of Women (focused on women), and the *Colectivo de Abogados "José Alvear Restrepo"* (a general human rights organization). Non-Colombian entities, such as the WOLA, the ICG, and Justice for Colombia work to raise awareness and educate others on the problems the country faces. Yet, it remains dangerous in some (especially rural) areas to join these groups.

This violence exists in conjunction with sixty years of insurgency, where the state has often been absent in much of the countryside, deferring to the FARC and other illegal organizations to meet citizens' needs.<sup>27</sup> The FARC and the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, AUC) have acted as replacements

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<sup>26</sup> For a look at the overall history of violence, including assassinations, see the "Colombia: Conflict Timeline" at <<http://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/colombia/conflict-profile/conflict-timeline/>>. For a discussion specifically of the assassination of Gaitan and *La Violencia*, see Palacios (2006) and LaRosa (2012). For a look at Betancourt's ordeal, see her memoir, *Even Silence Has an End: My Six Years of Captivity in the Colombian Jungle* (2006). With regard to other attacks, consider for example, in the lead up to the October 2007 local elections, twenty-seven candidates were killed, along with thirteen town-council members and numerous campaign volunteers. (Hugh Bronstein, "Dozens of Colombia Politicians Killed Ahead of Vote," *Reuters*, 28 September 2007, <[http://article.wn.com/view/2007/09/28/Dozens\\_of\\_Colombia\\_politicians\\_killed\\_ahead\\_of\\_vote/](http://article.wn.com/view/2007/09/28/Dozens_of_Colombia_politicians_killed_ahead_of_vote/)> (22 December 2014)).

<sup>27</sup> James Brittain, *Revolutionary Social Change in Colombia: The Origin and Direction of the FARC-EP* (New York: Pluto Press, 2010), 56.

for the government, imposing law and order.<sup>28</sup> So, although it is unlikely the *bacrim* will endanger the government of Colombia, they have the potential to become obstacles to the consolidation of democracy by usurping local authority and providing services.

These groups have demonstrated the ability to innovate new ways to threaten society and challenge the government, including returning Colombia back to a time when high levels of crime and corruption were commonplace.<sup>29</sup> Such a happenstance would limit the government's ability to successfully negotiate and finalize peace treaties with guerrilla groups and move forward with economic and social development in the twenty-first century.

### **A Resurgence of Crime**

Another concern is that Colombia's relative successes in reducing crime and 'demobilizing' the paramilitaries could be weakened or destroyed.<sup>30</sup> Some of the demobilized have regrouped because of threats or lack of opportunities. This not only threatens the country but may have regional or international implications. The *bacrim* have the potential to participate in and expand the existing terror, political, and economic nexuses that have existed in Colombia over the last thirty years.

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<sup>28</sup> María Clemencia Ramírez, "The Idea of the State in Colombia: An Analysis from the Periphery," in *State Theory and Andean Politics: New Approaches to the Study of Rule*, eds. Christopher Krupa and David Nugent (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 44-45.

<sup>29</sup> Max Manwaring, *Gangs, Pseudo-Militaries, and other Modern Mercenaries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 71.

<sup>30</sup> These successes could be seen as transient, as they have been achieved through negotiation and isolation, rather than dealing with structural problems within the country.

Colombia has arguably been affected by a terror-criminal nexus for decades.<sup>31</sup> The U.S. designated the FARC as a foreign terrorist organization in 1997 and both the FARC and the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army, ELN) have intermittently worked with various criminal groups in the region for at least several decades. The *bacrim* could have the potential to not only establish relationships with regional organizations, perhaps replacing the FARC as the peace talks conclude, but also to reach out to international terrorist organizations. This includes, but is not limited to, Hezbollah and al-Qaida. Ties between Hezbollah and some groups in Colombia have already been identified. A February 2016 U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) press release focused on links between the External Security Organization Business Affairs Component of Hezbollah and *La Oficina de Envigado* in Medellín.<sup>32</sup> There have also been reports of Hezbollah activity in Venezuela.<sup>33</sup>

Colombia has also demonstrated the characteristics of a political-criminal nexus. Such a nexus was originally defined by Roy Godson as “the collaborations of the political establishment with the criminal underworld.”<sup>34</sup> This may include activities such as supporting candidates for office or contributing to campaigns.<sup>35</sup> Rensselaer Lee and Francisco Thoumi elaborated on Godson’s definition, looking specifically at the political-criminal nexus in Colombia. They called out the role played by “illegal drugs and other

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<sup>31</sup> See a continued discussion of the terror-criminal nexus in the literature review.

<sup>32</sup> U.S. DEA, “DEA and European Authorities Uncover Massive Hizballah Drug and Money Laundering Scheme,” 1 February 2016, <<http://www.dea.gov/divisions/hq/2016/hq020116.shtml>> (7 February 2016).

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury, “Treasury Targets Hizballah in Venezuela,” 18 June 2008, <<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/pages/hp1036.aspx>> (7 February 2016).

<sup>34</sup> Roy Godson, “The Political-Criminal Nexus and Global Security,” in *Menace to Society: Political-Criminal Collaboration Around the World*, ed. Roy Godson (Piscataway: Transaction, 2003), 1.

<sup>35</sup> Shelley (2014), 101.

criminal organizations, guerrillas, paramilitary groups, the army and the police, the government...political parties...and [economic interests].”<sup>36</sup>

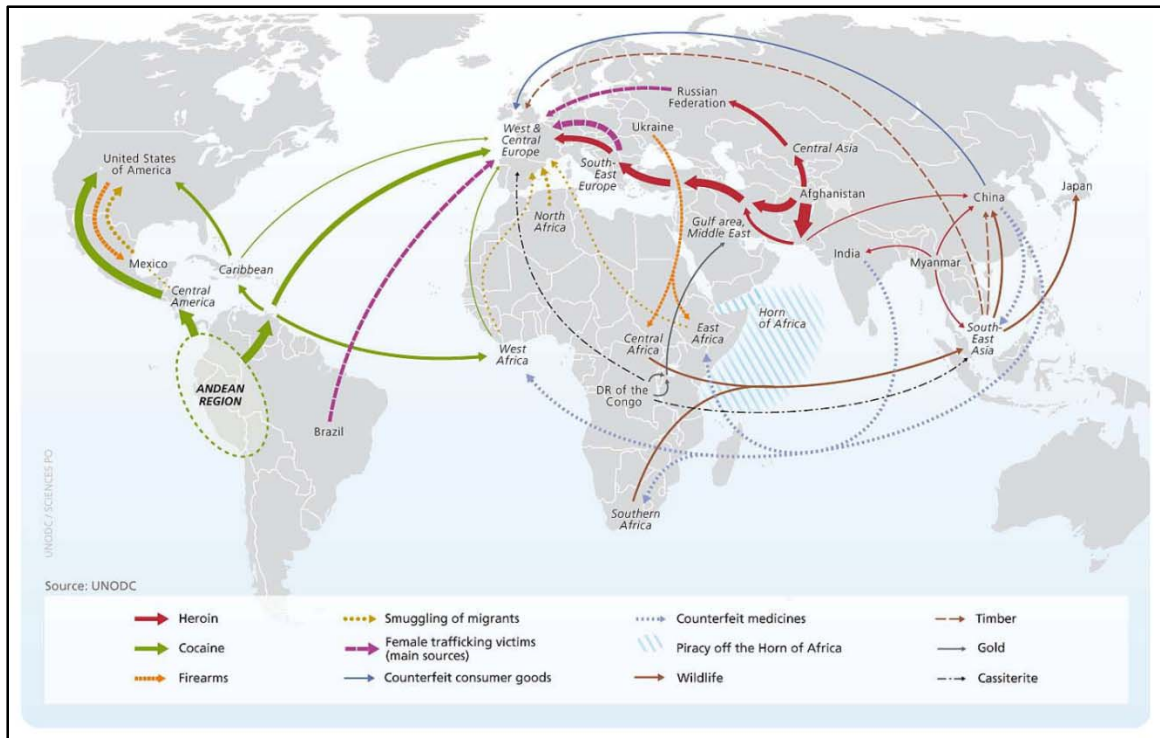
In the 1980s and 1990s, the drug cartels frequently interacted with the government at both the local and national levels. Cartel leader Pablo Escobar was elected to Congress in 1982 and former President Ernesto Samper’s administration was tainted by substantial campaign contributions from the Cali cartel in the mid-1990s.<sup>37</sup> During the second term of the Uribe administration in 2006, demobilized members of the AUC created the “parapolitics” scandal by linking many current politicians to the paramilitary group. Thus, as new groups emerge and strengthen, they could, and likely will, continue to administer *plata o plomo* (the bullet or the bribe). If they also begin to control resources (both financial and/or territorial), elected officials may again find themselves tempted or forced into cooperating with these organizations.

Another area of concern is the role of the illicit economy and the expansion of an economic-criminal nexus. The United Nations (UN) illustrates the close linkages between major aspects of the global criminal economy in its 2010 report (Figure 1). The Andean region, and Colombia in particular, play a critical role in the movement of cocaine around the world.

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<sup>36</sup> Rensselaer Lee and Francisco Thoumi, “Drugs and Democracy in Colombia,” in *Menace to Society: Political-Criminal Collaboration Around the World*, ed. Roy Godson (Piscataway: Transaction, 2003), 72.

<sup>37</sup> In particular, a named legal investigation, *Proceso 8000*, identified Samper’s campaign manager, Fernando Botero Zea, and multiple congressmen for having financial dealings with the Cali cartel. Botero eventually went to jail for his part in receiving drug money for the campaign.



**Figure 1. The UNODC's View of the Globalization of Crime (2012)<sup>38</sup>**

Researchers have provided many estimates about the size of the global illicit economy, although the UN admits difficulties in estimating the size of the illegal drug industry. In the mid-1990s, it was estimated to be \$400 or \$500 billion dollars. A 2011 UN report estimated \$322 billion in 2005, while *The Economist* reported almost the same

<sup>38</sup> UNODC, *The Globalization of Crime: A Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment*, 2010, <<http://www.unodc.org>> (14 October 2012).

number (\$320 billion) in 2013.<sup>39</sup> Regardless of the exact sum, there is no question of the lucrative nature of many of these businesses.<sup>40</sup>

Lee specifically described the case of Colombia, where the economy has long been distorted by the enormous quantity of drug-revenues. For example, in the early 1980s, the value of high-end real estate rose more than 500 percent.<sup>41</sup> He estimated that by the mid-1980s, traffickers in the region were earning about \$5-\$6 billion per year.<sup>42</sup> More recent work on the Colombian drug economy by Daniel Mejía and others updates these numbers. Mejía states that “many tens of billions” is likely spent in consumer countries.<sup>43</sup> In Colombia though, the size of the business is estimated to be much smaller.<sup>44</sup> The authors estimated it as approximately 2.3% of GDP in 2008, while numbers from the 1980s and 1990s were about twice that amount.<sup>45</sup> Dermot O’Connor calculated that the Colombians earned \$600 million-\$1.2 billion per year through 2007.<sup>46</sup> The UN used a similar number for profits in 2010 (approximately 3% of Colombian

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<sup>39</sup> UNODC, *Estimating Illicit Financial Flows Resulting from Drug Trafficking and Other Transnational Organized Crimes*, 2011b, <<http://www.unodc.org>> (7 February 2016), 31; “Illegal Markets,” *The Economist*, 29 April 2013, <<http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2013/04/daily-chart-19>> (20 July 2016).

<sup>40</sup> Francisco Thoumi, “The Numbers Game: Let’s All Guess the Size of the Illegal Drug Industry!”, *Journal of Drug Issues* 35, no. 1 (2005): 190. See also Andreas and Greenhill (2010) for a comprehensive look at the problems in estimating the size of illicit economies.

<sup>41</sup> Lee (1989), 47.

<sup>42</sup> Lee (1989), 34.

<sup>43</sup> Daniel Mejía and Carlos Esteban Posadan, “Cocaine Production and Trafficking: What Do We Know?”, *Borradores de Economía* 444, Banco de la Republica de Colombia (2007): 37.

<sup>44</sup> Daniel Mejía and Daniel M. Rico, “La microeconomía de la producción y tráfico de cocaína en Colombia,” *Documentos CEDE*, 2010-19 (2010): 22.

<sup>45</sup> Mejía and Rico, 23.

<sup>46</sup> Dermot O’Connor, “The Political Economy of Colombia’s Cocaine Industry,” *Papel Político* 14, no. 1 (2009): 95.

GDP).<sup>47</sup> Despite this decline, drug trafficking remains lucrative for Colombia and the region.

Colombia finds itself in the position where criminal groups could (and have) contest(ed) the state's ability to administer justice and control violence.<sup>48</sup> Presently, the *bacrim* and the other actors in the conflict have the ability to exercise terror and exert pressure on the political and economic structures of the state. This will certainly continue in the short term and addressing it in the long term is crucial.

### **A Risk to Colombian “Successes” against Drug Trafficking**

The Colombian government has had many international partners in its fight against drug trafficking organizations. In the early 1990s, they worked with the U.S., forcing these groups to fragment, but the amount of cocaine trafficked only decreased temporarily. In response, the two governments looked for other solutions, including Plan Colombia. Established under the Clinton Administration in the late 1990s, the U.S., Colombia, and Spain strongly championed this initiative, while the European Union (EU), several South American governments, and many NGOs (e.g., Amnesty International, the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA), and the CATO Institute) opposed it.<sup>49</sup> The Plan expanded during the Bush Administration. Some of the activities under the Plan have been less effective than others. For example, aerial

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<sup>47</sup> UNODC (2011b), 70.

<sup>48</sup> James H. Mittleman and Robert Johnston, “The Globalization of Organized Crime, the Courtesan State, and the Corruption of Civil Society,” *Global Governance* 5, no. 1 (1999): 114.

<sup>49</sup> Sabine Kurtenbach, “The European Union and the Transformation of the Colombian Conflict,” in *Colombia: Building Peace in a Time of War* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2009), 386.



spraying has not succeeded as well as interdiction.<sup>50</sup> Alternatively, the EU has worked with Colombia to promote voluntary eradication and crop-substitution programs.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, some EU countries and NGOs have focused on supporting human rights projects for victims and refugees.<sup>52</sup>

Lasting improvements from the strategy have been hard to maintain. The U.S. demand for drugs continues at a steady state, after a multi-year decline (Figure 2), and the criminal organizations in Colombia remain committed to improving coca yields and delivering the product globally.<sup>53</sup> The use of cocaine in Europe has remained at about 1% of the population, and according to recent UNODC estimates, is increasing in several unnamed countries, while declining in others.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Daniel Mejía and Pascual Restrepo, “The War on Illegal Drug Production and Trafficking: An Economic Evaluation of Plan Colombia,” *Documentos CEDE* 2008-19, (2008): 3, 43.

<sup>51</sup> Kurtenbach, 387.

<sup>52</sup> Kurtenbach, 388.

<sup>53</sup> Mejía and Restrepo, 3. The UNODC *World Drug Report 2014* notes that while the use of cocaine is generally declining or remaining steady in North America and Europe, it is readily available in Europe and could be increasing in Australia (see page 37).

<sup>54</sup> UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2014c, <<http://www.unodc.org>> (2015), 16.

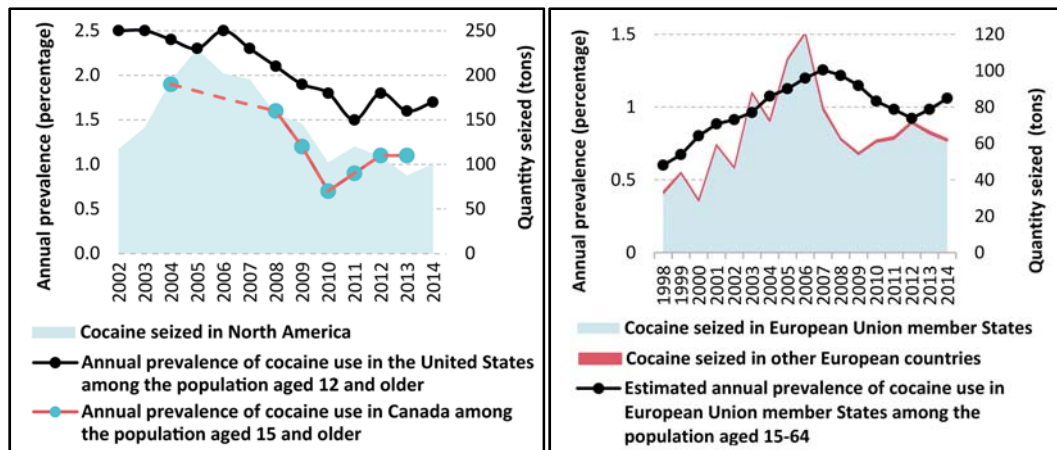


Figure 2. Prevalence of Cocaine Use in the U.S. and European Union<sup>55</sup>

If the *bacrim* expand economically and assemble more members, they may have the ability to roll back the basic security improvements that the Colombian government has achieved (e.g., lowering homicide rates<sup>56</sup>), especially as the government continues with its focus on demobilizing the FARC and other guerrillas. For the *bacrim*, improved access to weapons, innovative smuggling strategies and an international connection could impair the fight against drugs in the U.S. and around the world.

<sup>55</sup> UNODC, *World Drug Report*, 2016, <<http://www.unodc.org>> (September 2016), 37-38.

<sup>56</sup> Homicide rates have declined from almost 70 per 100,000 in the early 2000s, to approximately 30.8 per 100,000 in 2012.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines pertinent work in two major domains: transnational organized crime, including different types of criminal groups, corruption, and potential links to terrorism; and, the meanings of the state and civil society in a Latin American context. These reviews will provide the foundation for examining the on-going conflict in Colombia and then the research questions about the *bacrim*. An extended discussion of the paramilitaries is undertaken in Chapter 3, as the criminal groups discussed here are defined to be non-ideological, in contrast to paramilitaries, who have at least established a façade of ideology.

### A. TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

Transnational organized crime (TOC) is alternatively referred to as transnational crime, international crime, or even multinational crime.<sup>57</sup> The UN, in its 2000 *Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, defines organized crime as “a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences...in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.”<sup>58</sup> Offering a slightly different definition

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<sup>57</sup> See in particular Berdal and Serrano (2002); Felsen and Kalaitzidis (2005); Lupsha (1996); and United Nations (2000).

<sup>58</sup> United Nations, *Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, 2000, <[www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/index.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/index.html)> (15 September 2011), 1.

of organized crime, Howard Abadinsky says it is: “a non-ideological enterprise involving a number of persons in close social interaction, organized on a hierarchical basis....for the purpose of securing profit and power by engaging in illegal and legal activities.”<sup>59</sup>

Michael Lyman and Gary Potter attempt to clarify the numerous definitions by categorizing them as official definitions by state agencies or those generated by scholars (Table 1).

**Table 1. Comparison of Definitions of Organized Crime<sup>60</sup>**

<b>Elements of a Definition</b>	<b>State Definitions</b>	<b>Definitions from Scholarly Research</b>
<i>Structure</i>	Formal, disciplined, hierarchical structure	Networks, informal structures, social relationships
<i>Continuity</i>	Continuous and self-perpetuating	Ephemeral, continually changing, highly adaptable
<i>Goals</i>	Provides illegal goods and services for the purpose of making a profit	Provides illegal goods and services for the purpose of making a profit
<i>Means of Achieving Goals</i>	Relies on violence or the threat of violence	Integral to segments of society. Relies on heavy demand, social and political support
<i>Relationship to the State</i>	Corrupts public officials	Makes use of existing corrupt relations offered by state officials

Notably, Abadinsky highlights the non-ideological nature of the activity while the UN does not call for TOC to be hierarchical (merely structured). This contrasts with Lyman and Potter who see the hierarchical definition from official sources, rather than scholarly ones. One point on which they all agree: the motive behind this activity is profit-seeking.

<sup>59</sup> Howard Abadinsky, cited by Mark Galeotti, ed., *Organised Crime in History* (London: Routledge, 2009), 3.

<sup>60</sup> Michael Lyman and Gary Potter, *Organized Crime*, 5th ed. (New York: Prentice Hall, 2011), 6.

The UN convention goes on to define a crime as “transnational” if one or more of the following are true: “it is committed in more than one State”; “it is committed in one State but a substantial part of its preparation, planning, direction or control takes place in another State”; “it is committed in one State but involves an organized criminal group that engages in criminal activities in more than one State”; or finally, “it is committed in one State but has substantial effects in another State.”<sup>61</sup> The final definition is most important when considering whether the *bacrim* may not only be operating in Colombia, but elsewhere in South America or globally.

### **Towards an Understanding of Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs)**

There are many types of TOC groups and a distinction must be made between Organized Crime and ‘crime that is organized.’ Frank Hagan emphasizes the difference between the two, explaining that capitalized ‘Organized Crime’ refers to organizations (e.g., the Yakuza or Cosa Nostra), while ‘organized crime’ is about criminal activities that anyone can conduct but require a degree of organization to perform.<sup>62</sup> Another phrase that is sometimes employed to describe the phenomenon is “continuing criminal enterprise.”<sup>63</sup>

For the purposes herein, three types of criminal groups are of interest: drug trafficking organizations (DTOs), gangs, and Organized Crime.<sup>64</sup> Certain types of gangs

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<sup>61</sup> United Nations (2000), 2.

<sup>62</sup> Frank Hagan, “‘Organized crime and organized crime’: Indeterminate Problems of Definition,” *Trends in Organized Crime* 57, no. 4 (2006): 134, 136.

<sup>63</sup> Jennifer Hesterman, *The Terrorist-Criminal Nexus: An Alliance of International Drug Cartels, Organized Crime, and Terror Groups* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2013), 9.

<sup>64</sup> If it is eventually demonstrated that the *bacrim* are none of these (nor third generation paramilitaries), other groups may be investigated to seek an alternative definition.

and DTOs may fall into the category of Organized Crime or continuing criminal enterprises, but for the sake of distinction, they will be considered conductors of ‘crime that is organized,’ and the focus will be on this ‘ideal type’ that is based on specific illicit activities. The definitions of these ideal types for each group will be outlined in the hypotheses and the focus here is a general look at the development of TOC groups, including a brief review of Italian Organized Crime.

### *The Evolution of TCOs*

Throughout history, TCOs have manifested differently across countries. The groups rose and fell in conjunction with the fortunes and failings of the states where they were resident. In many cases, as the licit economy grew, so did they.<sup>65</sup> With a long-term perspective, traditional TCOs’ goals were profit and survivability (often through political influence on the state).<sup>66</sup> Essentially, the maintenance of the state was oddly necessary to ensure their continued successes. They sought profitability not governance.

The end of the Cold War and increased globalization in the 1990s, however, transformed this model for TCOs. Jessica Mathews highlights not only an adjustment of power between TCOs and states, but also a change in their interactions with business, civil society groups, and NGOs.<sup>67</sup> Shelley writes, “The state is no longer the preeminent determinant of international politics or individual lives.”<sup>68</sup> Susan Strange’s seminal work on the topic of the changing role of the state in this period, *The Retreat of the State*, in

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<sup>65</sup> Shelley (2014), 100.

<sup>66</sup> Shelley (2014), 100-101.

<sup>67</sup> Jessica Mathews cited in Moises Naím, *Illicit: How Smugglers, Traffickers, and Copycats are Hijacking the Global Economy* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 214.

<sup>68</sup> Louise Shelley, “Transnational Organized Crime: The New Authoritarianism,” in *The Illicit Global Economy and State Power*, eds. H. Richard Friman and Peter Andreas (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999), 25.

addition to arguing against the limited definitions of power and politics articulated by theorists, identified the deterioration of state power due to “structural forces” in the market economy.<sup>69</sup> She goes further to detail one of the consequences of this retreat (and the growth of the market economy): the growing threat of TOC.<sup>70</sup> In a similar vein, Letizia Paoli notes that during the post-Cold War period, a blurring between organized crime and the legitimate economy occurred.<sup>71</sup> In this increasingly interconnected world, where the state is taking on a different role, TCOs find new opportunities to expand and make money at the expense of law-abiding citizens.

Shelley suggests characteristics for the new transnational criminal groups emerging in the post-Cold War World and compares them with traditional ones (Table 2). New TCOs prefer a weakened state and work to accelerate that decline. They require higher levels of corruption than traditional groups and, while they may not share the same goals as terrorists, are willing to work with them in certain circumstances.

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<sup>69</sup> Susan Strange, “World Order, Non-State Actors, and the Global Casino: The Retreat of the State?” in *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order*, eds. Richard Stoffs and Geoffrey R.D. Underhill. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2000), 84-85.

<sup>70</sup> Susan Strange, *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 121.

<sup>71</sup> Letizia Paoli, “Organized Crime: New Label, New Phenomenon or Policy Expedient?”, *International Annals of Criminology* (2008c): 48.

**Table 2. Transnational Organized Crime and the State<sup>72</sup>**

	<b>Traditional Organized Crime</b>	<b>New Transnational Crime</b>
<i>Attitude to the state</i>	Often nationalistic	Interests do not coincide with the state
<i>Relationship to the nation-state</i>	Grows with the state; parasitic on nation-state Substitutes for the state Depends on state for contracts and services Rarely violently attacks state authority; uses violence symbolically	Thrives on the absence of effective governance; grows with the weakened state Substitutes for the state Routine use of violence to destabilize state
<i>Relation to corruption</i>	Tool used to influence state officials – operative tool	Depends on high levels of systemic and institutionalized corruption
<i>Relation to terrorism</i>	Usually rejects association with terrorists	May sell services to terrorists or contract terrorists/ insurgents for services

The problems of corruption and terrorism will be described in more detail below, especially the growing utilization of criminal enterprises to finance terrorist activities.

First, though some key features of one of the most well-known traditional organized crime groups, the Italian mafia, will be discussed.

#### *The Changing Role of the Italian Organized Crime*

Italian Organized Crime groups are some of the most well-known traditional groups in the world and are used here as an example of a variety of strong ‘organized’ criminal organizations existing within a single state that are transitioning post-Cold War.<sup>73</sup> Other countries in a similar situation include China and Japan. Paoli notes all three countries have uniquely “multi-functional” crime groups without a single goal, such as profit maximization.<sup>74</sup> The Japanese Yakuza families, the Yamaguchi-gumi, Sumiyoshi-

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<sup>72</sup> Shelley (2014), 106.

<sup>73</sup> Paoli (2008c) notes the poor level of organization of Organized Crime throughout the rest of Europe, 42.

<sup>74</sup> Letizia Paoli, “The Decline of the Italian Mafia,” in *Organized Crime: Culture, Markets, and Policies*, eds. Dina Siegel and Hans Nelen (New York: Springer, 2008a), 18.



kai, and Inagawa-kai, have, like Italian Organized Crime, had to evolve due to a variety of factors, notably, immigration and state interference.<sup>75</sup>

In common parlance, the ‘Mafia’ typically has meant the Sicilian Cosa Nostra, but it also includes the Camorra of Naples and the ’Ndrangheta of Calabria.<sup>76</sup> They are of particular interest here because they have different origins, different organizational structures, and different types of operations but all exist in the same country (oftentimes in close proximity).

For example, the Camorra likely date to the late eighteenth century, while the ’Ndrangheta and the Cosa Nostra are first mentioned in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>77</sup> Paoli argues that the Cosa Nostra are more horizontally structured while the ’Ndrangheta are vertically structured and that these two groups are (at least) loose confederations while the Camorra groups operate independently from each other.<sup>78</sup> All three are involved in some level of racketeering (‘providing protection’), smuggling (including cigarettes and drugs) and extortion.

The Mafia has seen a general decline due to economic issues, government crackdowns, and the “unattractiveness” of mafia ideology to younger members.<sup>79</sup> Consequently, they have taken on some of the features of Shelley’s new TOC. The Cosa

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<sup>75</sup> H. Richard Friman, “Obstructing Markets: Organized Crime Networks and Drug Control in Japan,” in *The Illicit Global Economy and State Power*, eds. H. Richard Friman and Peter Andreas (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999), 185-189. See Footnote 13 for additional sources on the Yakuza.

<sup>76</sup> *La Sacra Corona Unita* of Apulia is a fourth possible group, originally founded by a member of the Camorra in the 1980s.

<sup>77</sup> Tom Behan, *See Naples and Die: The Camorra and Organized Crime* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 17-18; Letizia Paoli, *Mafia Brotherhoods: Organized Crime, Italian Style*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008b), 33-38.

<sup>78</sup> Paoli (2008b), 230.

<sup>79</sup> Paoli (2008a), 10-11.

Nostra confronted the nation-state and engaged in a series of bombings in the early 1990s.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, the Mafia are succeeding as an attractive employer in areas where the state fails to provide services.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, though, these groups still shun associations with known terrorists.<sup>82</sup>

Recognizing the continued evolution of the Mafia and the differences that exist even between closely located groups will be important when examining the *bacrim*.

### **The Problem of Corruption**

To elaborate on corruption, it is evident that all transnational crime groups employ some level of corruption as part of their regular activities. Patrick Glynn, Stephen Kobrin, and Moises Naím see an “eruption of corruption” around the world for a number of reasons, including the end of the Cold War, the weakening of many states, and internal developments that many see as “rent-seeking” versus “vote-seeking” behavior.<sup>83</sup> Alberto Ades and Rafael Di Tella argue though, that some of this “eruption” is exaggerated, and that some of what might be seen as corruption in one country is actually business as usual in another.<sup>84</sup> Shelley also worries that those in developed countries perceive corruption to

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<sup>80</sup> Louise Shelley, et al. *Methods and Motives: Exploring Links between Transnational Organized Crime & International Terrorism*, September 2005, <<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/211207.pdf>> (13 November 2015), 54; Paoli (2008a), 24.

<sup>81</sup> Paoli (2008a), 27.

<sup>82</sup> Shelley, et al. (2005), 54.

<sup>83</sup> Patrick Glynn, Stephen Kobrin, and Moises Naím, “The Globalization of Corruption” in *Corruption and the Global Economy*, ed. Kimberly Ann Elliott, (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1997), 8-9.

<sup>84</sup> Alberto Ades and Rafael Di Tella, “The New Economics of Corruption: A Survey and Some New Results,” in *Combating Corruption in Latin America*, eds. Joseph Tulchin and Ralph Espach (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2000).

be the norm in developing countries, when in reality, the situation for the inhabitants is more complex.<sup>85</sup>

What exactly is corruption? *The United Nations Convention against Corruption* (2000) unfortunately does not provide a definition, but Transparency International, a major international organization known for its research in this area, defines corruption as: “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.”<sup>86</sup> Michael Johnston argues that oftentimes bribery is wrongly used as a synonym for corruption, when corruption also has well-being and justice components that should be addressed.<sup>87</sup> He develops four “syndromes” of corruption, based on “political and economic participation and institutions,” to bring more clarity to the dominant type of corruption in a country.<sup>88</sup>

Providing another explanation, Shelley writes in her latest work:

Corruption is a complex phenomenon operating at the local, national, and global levels. Its impact is different in each arena, but in every environment in which corruption operates, it is central to the rise and the perpetuation of crime, terrorism, and other social ills. Corruption can be considered an incubator for the growth of organized crime, violence, and terrorism. The reverse is also true. Crime incubates corruption, as does instability. All of this is self-reinforcing and complex to combat.<sup>89</sup>

Another way to look at this complexity is to examine it from the perspective of who is involved. Kimberly Ann Elliot breaks down the different types of corruption based on the combination of actors: elected officials, non-elected officials, and private

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<sup>85</sup> Shelley (2014), 65.

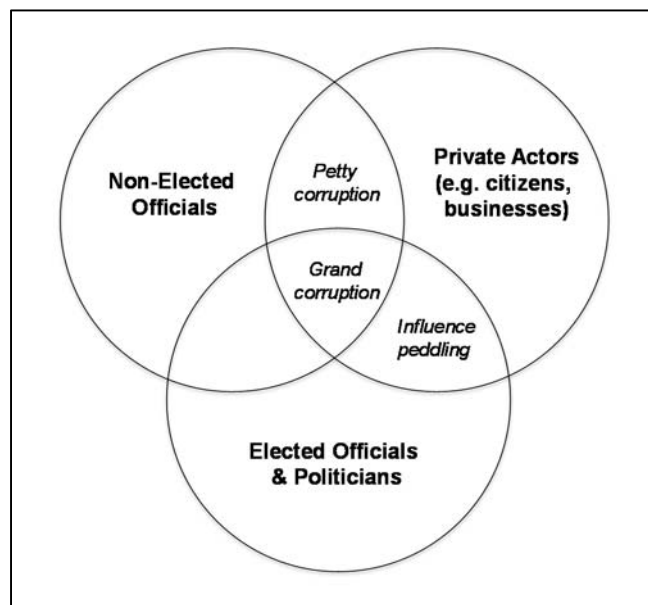
<sup>86</sup> Transparency International, “FAQs on Corruption,” [www.transparency.org/whoweare/organisation/faqs\\_on\\_corruption/2/](http://www.transparency.org/whoweare/organisation/faqs_on_corruption/2/) (19 September 2012).

<sup>87</sup> Michael Johnston, *Syndromes of Corruption: Wealth, Power, and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), x.

<sup>88</sup> Johnston, 3.

<sup>89</sup> Shelley (2014), 65.

citizens/organizations (Figure 3).<sup>90</sup> Susan Rose-Ackerman takes yet another perspective, focusing on the political, economic, and cultural aspects of corruption.<sup>91</sup> Although much of her focus is on bribery, she also tackles the problem of patronage networks and a failure of trust in the state, which leads to trust in associates and then potentially, corruption.<sup>92</sup>



**Figure 3. Types of Corruption<sup>93</sup>**

In Colombia, NGOs such as *Transparencia por Colombia*, the national chapter of Transparency International, have been working to raise awareness about the specific

<sup>90</sup> Kimberly Ann Elliott, "Corruption as an International Policy Problem," in *Corruption and the Global Economy*, ed. Kimberly Ann Elliott (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1997).

<sup>91</sup> Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences and Reform*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University, 2006).

<sup>92</sup> Rose-Ackerman, 97, 104.

<sup>93</sup> Elliott, 179.

problems of corruption within the country. The group built a complex model of state capture and corruption to illustrate several issues, including the role of both legal and illegal interests (Figure 4).

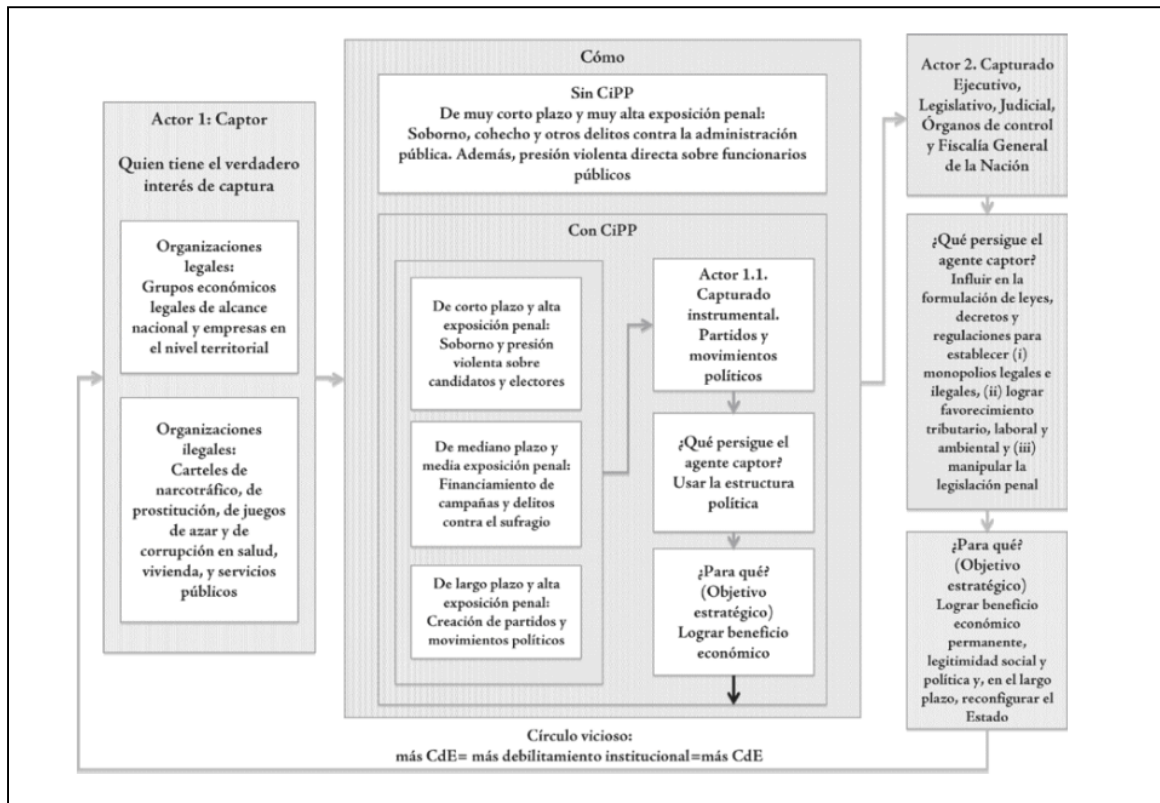


Figure 4. *Transparencia por Colombia's Model of State Capture by Legal & Illegal Interests*<sup>94</sup>

The first box indicates “Actor 1,” which includes legal organizations and businesses with economic interests, as well as illegal organizations, such as DTOs. The second box suggests two alternatives, one without capture of political parties (“Sin

<sup>94</sup> Luis Jorge Garay Salamanca, et al., *La Captura y Reconfiguración Cooptada del Estado en Colombia* (Bogotá: Transparencia por Colombia, 2008), 80.

CiPP”) and one with the capture of political parties (“Con CiPP”). Without CiPP, the bribery and other crimes are short-term and there may be direct violence against public officials. With CiPP, in the short-term there will be violence and bribery against candidates; in the medium term, there will be the financing of campaigns, and in the long term, there may even be the creation of political movements. This is all for the purpose of using the political structure to achieve economic benefits. In the final set of boxes, “Actor 2” is the captured legislative, judicial and other state organizations. This might lead to influencing the creation of laws, illegal monopolies and other manipulations. The objective in this final instance is still economic, but of a long-term nature and eventually may lead to reconfiguring the state, which creates a “vicious circle” leading back to the first set of actors.

The NGO offers several specific examples of these issues in Colombia, including Pablo Escobar’s election campaign, the role of the Cali Cartel in financing the 1994 presidential elections, and the extensive infiltration and “friendship” of the paramilitaries with Congress.<sup>95</sup> As all of the authors above noted generally and as discussed here specifically, these chronic and on-going issues make resolving the problems of the country more difficult.

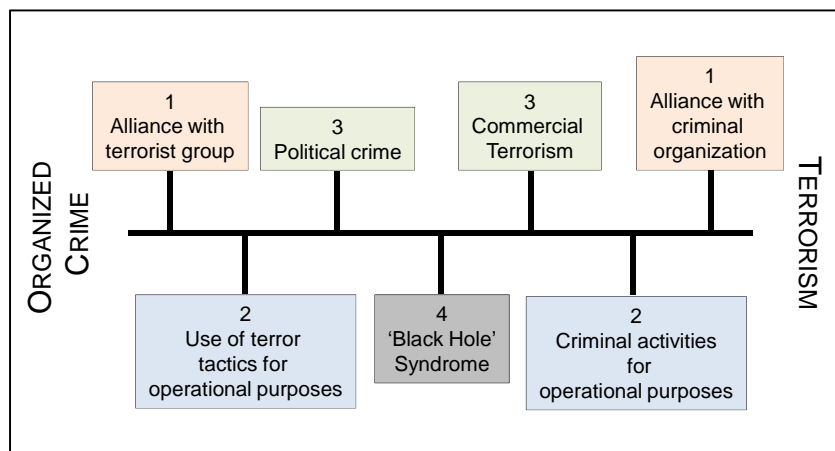
## **Terrorism and Crime**

Regarding terrorism, especially since September 11, 2001, there has been an increasing interest in the possibility of linkages between terrorism and TOC. Makarenko summarizes this issue with a continuum including both concepts (Figure 5). In the first

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<sup>95</sup> Garay Salamanca, et al., 101, 107, 113.

example, criminal and terror groups create alliances for purposes such as provisioning services. In the second example, groups create mini-operational arms of the other to fulfill specific aims (e.g., terrorists form organized criminal activities, while criminals use terror). Political crime and commercial terrorism are the points of convergence where a group displays all aspects of both types.



**Figure 5. The Crime-Terror Continuum<sup>96</sup>**

Since Makarenko, others have examined this issue, pushing back on her analysis. Rossi, for example, argues that due to the intricacies of reality, it is incorrect to suggest purely economic motives for criminal organizations and purely political ones to

<sup>96</sup> Tamara Makarenko, “The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism,” *Global Crime* 6, no.1 (2004): 131.

terrorists.<sup>97</sup> She coins the term “illicit sovereigns” to describe these various non-state actors and their activities in relationship to the state (that is the licit sovereign).

Shelley observes that traditional crime groups require the state and are less interested in allying with terrorists, while new networks are more willing to do so, as observed above.<sup>98</sup> Dishman casts the problem slightly differently, considering that low-level criminals and terrorists may have cooperated in the past for a single event, but now are seeking “strategic alliances” with each other.<sup>99</sup> Conversely, Anne Clunan cautions against the overenthusiastic linking of different groups (e.g., proliferators, criminals, and terrorists) in her look at ungoverned spaces.<sup>100</sup> Peng Wang sees it on multiple levels, as both a case of strategic as well as tactical alliances based on a dynamic of the situation (e.g., a traditional group may look to a terrorist organization if its survival were threatened by the state).<sup>101</sup>

Another consideration is the rise of the hybrid actor. Raufer first uses the term in 1995 to refer to the Kurdistan Worker’s Party in Europe, as well as ‘narco-guerrillas’ around the world, attributing both a political and terrorist aspect to them.<sup>102</sup> He continued with that theme in 2005, describing “chaotic warfare” where the adversary is a political-

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<sup>97</sup> Norma Rossi, “Breaking the Nexus: Conceptualising ‘Illicit Sovereigns’,” *Global Crime* 15: no. 3-4 (2014): 2.

<sup>98</sup> Louise Shelley, “Growing Together: Ideological and Operational Linkages between Terrorist and Criminal Networks,” *Threat Convergence: New Pathways to Proliferation Expert Series*, The Fund for Peace, 2006a, <<http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/images/pdf/shelley.pdf>> (14 October 2012).

<sup>99</sup> Dishman (2005), 249.

<sup>100</sup> Anne L. Clunan, “Ungoverned Spaces? The Need for Reevaluation,” in *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty*, eds. Anne L. Clunan and Harold A. Trinkunas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 5.

<sup>101</sup> Peng Wang, “The Crime-Terror Nexus: Transformation, Alliance, Convergence,” *Asian Social Science* 6, no. 6 (2010): 11-20.

<sup>102</sup> Xavier Raufer, “The Degenerate ‘Guerrillas’,” 1995, <<http://www.xavier-raufer.com/site/The-Degenerate-guerrillas-1995>> (10 February 2016).



criminal hybrid.<sup>103</sup> Bowers' hybrid adversary, using Lebanese Hezbollah as an example, is capable, mature, and able to operate in multiple terrains.<sup>104</sup> David Lewis also examines the existence of hybrid entities, defined by him as operating at both local and transnational levels.<sup>105</sup> Matthew Phillips and Emily Kamen distinguish between a hybrid or convergence (as a merger of two groups with separate proficiencies) and a transformation or mutation (a single group with both criminal and terrorist objectives).<sup>106</sup>

This dynamic of organized crime and terrorism will continue to evolve as states look for new ways to combat them.<sup>107</sup> The UN Security Council raised the importance of this evolution in a 2014 resolution. They underscored how trafficking of illicit materials, kidnapping, and the diversion of legitimate goods are now financing terrorist organizations, especially in Africa and the Middle East.<sup>108</sup> Recent reports on ISIS show that they have raised millions, if not billions, of dollars through the looting of resources.<sup>109</sup> Links between terrorism and crime are now one of the major issues related to TOC.

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<sup>103</sup> Raufer (2005).

<sup>104</sup> Bowers, 42-43.

<sup>105</sup> David Lewis, "Crime, Terror and the State in Central Asia," *Global Crime* 15, no. 3-4 (2014): 337.

<sup>106</sup> Matthew Phillips, Emily Kamen, "Entering the Black Hole: The Taliban, Terrorism, and Organised Crime," *Journal of Terrorism Research* 5, no. 3 (2014): 40.

<sup>107</sup> See in particular John Rollins and Liana Wyler (2010) for a look at U.S. policy to combat crime-terror links.

<sup>108</sup> United Nations, Security Council Resolution 2195, S/RES/2195 (19 December 2014).

<sup>109</sup> See for example, S.B., "Where the Islamic State Gets Its Money," *The Economist*, 4 January 2015, <<http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2015/01/economist-explains>> (13 November 2015) and Carla E. Humud, et al., *Islamic State Financing and U.S. Policy Approaches* (CRS Report No. R43980), Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2015.

## **B. THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE LATIN AMERICAN CONTEXT**

Both the idea of the state and of civil society have a long and well established body of research behind them. For this research, it is important to consider them in a regional context, because of the unique features of the Latin American state. The general paramilitary phenomenon in Colombia will be briefly examined during the discussion of civil society, as this will have implications when considering the role of the *bacrim* and its ability to influence the Colombian State or act as a part of civil society, however an in-depth look at the AUC will occur in Chapter 3.

### **The Latin American State**

Latin American countries, by and large, gained their independence from Spain in the nineteenth century but maintained the traditional power structures from the colonial period.<sup>110</sup> Local *caudillos* or leaders controlled many of the day-to-day activities throughout the region until almost the beginning of the twentieth century, when economic elites began their rise to ascendance.<sup>111</sup> The Catholic Church also played an evolving role in this period: in some countries, elites worked to limit its power, while in others, agreements were signed allowing the church to maintain its control over many important parts of daily life (e.g., births, deaths, certain taxes, and marriage).<sup>112</sup> Stephen Armet

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<sup>110</sup> Gary Prevos and Harry Vanden, *Latin America: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University, 2011), 45.

<sup>111</sup> Prevos and Vanden, 57.

<sup>112</sup> John Frederick Schwaller, *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America: From Conquest to Revolution and Beyond* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 131.

observes that in Colombia in particular, the Church has produced a very “religious culture.”<sup>113</sup>

Gary Prevos and Harry Vanden call the issue in Latin America a “democratic deficit” while Paul Lewis believes that Latin America has an undemocratic or authoritarian culture, originating from its Spanish roots.<sup>114</sup> Jorge Larrain sees it more as a problem of modernity, which was kept out during the colonial period and therefore did not successfully emerge in the region.<sup>115</sup> Thomas Skidmore and Peter Smith place various names on the countries within the region from “electoral authoritarianism” to “incomplete democracy.”<sup>116</sup> The frequent succession of military coups and other undemocratic transitions of power certainly support the assertion that something is wrong with Latin American democracy even if it is not the ‘culture.’

Consequently, these power disparities and conflicts heighten various undemocratic behaviors, from the less questionable patron-client relationship to the more harmful corruption and clientelism that lead to “filling governmental positions with one’s friends...to the exclusion of other, often better-qualified job candidates.”<sup>117</sup> Colombia’s own eruption of violence in the 1930s–1950s, partly due to the complete exclusion of one party or the other following an election, although violence is a chronic issue in

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<sup>113</sup> Stephen Armet, “Christian Mission in Colombia: Protestant Paradox and Catholic Continuities,” *Transformation* 20, no. 1 (2003): 47.

<sup>114</sup> Prevos and Vanden, 219-220; Paul Lewis, *Authoritarian Regimes in Latin America: Dictators, Despots, and Tyrants* (New York: Rowan and Littlefield, 2005), Chapter 1.

<sup>115</sup> Jorge Larrain, *Identity and Modernity in Latin America* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

<sup>116</sup> Thomas Skidmore and Peter Smith, *Modern Latin America*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University, 2001), 61.

<sup>117</sup> Prevost, 233.

Colombian history.<sup>118</sup> Douglas Porch and María José Rasmussen write, “The centrality of violence in Colombia’s political and social life has led some scholars to conclude that an intractable and endemic ‘culture of violence’ has taken root there.”<sup>119</sup> It was only after the power-sharing pact that some of the most extreme expressions of clientelism ceased. This only solved some problems, as the guerrilla conflict and other exclusionary policies continue in Colombia to this day.

Enrique Desmond Arias and Daniel Goldstein suggest a distinctive understanding of these issues. They write, “Instead of viewing violence as indicative of democratic failure, we can, from a violently plural perspective, understand violence as critical to the foundation of Latin American democracies, the maintenance of democratic states, and the political behavior of democratic citizens.”<sup>120</sup> Arias continues separately, highlighting that because of this plurality of violence (from the state and non-state actors), fundamental issues such as rule of law or citizenship have different definitions depending on the circumstances.<sup>121</sup> His example juxtaposes a neighborhood with state security against one dominated by an armed group. Consequently, different measures should be taken to address these problems rather than focusing on ‘state failure’ or incomplete ‘democracy.’

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<sup>118</sup> See Chapter 3 for additional details on violence in Colombia.

<sup>119</sup> Douglas Porch and María José Rasmussen, “Demobilization of Paramilitaries in Colombia: Transformation or Transition?”, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 6 (2008): 522.

<sup>120</sup> Enrique Desmond Arias and Daniel M. Goldstein, “Violent Pluralism: Understanding the New Democracies of Latin America,” in *Violent Democracies in Latin America*, eds. Enrique Desmond Arias and Daniel M. Goldstein, Durham: Duke University Press (2010), Kindle Location 165.

<sup>121</sup> Enrique Desmond Arias, “Understanding Violent Pluralism,” in *Violent Democracies in Latin America*, eds. Enrique Desmond Arias and Daniel M. Goldstein, Durham: Duke University Press (2010), Kindle Location 5180.

## Civil Society in Latin America

In the context of a violently plural nation-state, there also exists the problem of civil society in Latin America (beyond the question of a strict definition of ‘civil society’). In general, over the last twenty years, the concept of ‘civil society’ has re-emerged as a means for understanding democracy and development. Robert Layton contends that restrictive definitions of civil society are not helpful, and it should be defined as “social organisations occupying the space between the household and the state that enable people to co-ordinate their management of resources and activities,” without any moral judgments.<sup>122</sup>

As part of this discussion, there is the on-going question of who may legitimately be considered a member of civil society. Thomas Carothers and William Barndt argue that the mafia and the Militia of Montana are just as much a part of civil society as the Parent-Teacher Association.<sup>123</sup> Thomas Janoski mentions the Ku Klux Klan in the United States and the Freedom Party in Austria as part of civil society under certain definitions.<sup>124</sup> Simone Chambers and Jeffrey Kopstein recognize the problem of ‘bad civil society’ in their discussions.<sup>125</sup>

Even when civil society is defined normatively with the understanding that it is ‘civil,’ there is still space for debate. Shelley writes about the role of criminal groups as

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<sup>122</sup> Robert Layton, *Order and Anarchy: Civil Society, Social Disorder and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2006), 3.

<sup>123</sup> Carothers and Barndt.

<sup>124</sup> Thomas Janoski, “The Spirit of the Civil Sphere: Activating Static Conceptions of Volunteerism and Citizenship,” in *Civil Society in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Bernard Enjolras and Karl Sivesind (Bingley: Emerald, 2009).

<sup>125</sup> Simone Chambers and Jeffrey Kopstein, “Bad Civil Society,” *Political Theory* 29, no. 6 (2001): 837-865.

‘uncivil’ society in Russia following the end of the Cold War.<sup>126</sup> In particular, she notes that these groups undermine and ‘mimic’ civil society both for their own ends and to diminish resistance to their activities. Arias and Goldstein note that some groups in Latin American civil society utilize violence and restrict rights, rather than enhancing them.<sup>127</sup>

Schuberth takes on another variation of these groups by defining community-based armed groups (CBAGs), differentiating them from non-state armed groups, such as terrorists or insurgents.<sup>128</sup> These CBAGs are not precisely civil society actors, but there is a blurred line between the two. Notably, Schuberth uses the paramilitaries in Colombia as an example of a “transformed type” of vigilante CBAG, who focus on security and, over time, begin to operate their own mini-states.<sup>129</sup>

Given the argument that civil society includes all actors who are outside of the government and the CBAG concept, Colombia’s former paramilitary groups could definitely be considered part of civil society. This is especially relevant given their consistent political narrative about fighting the guerrillas. Unfortunately, in the commission of those beliefs, the paramilitaries carried out massacres and other terrible violence against the other parts of civil society.<sup>130</sup>

Returning to the issue of civil society in the Latin American context, Leonardo Avritzer defines it as, “a set of social movements and civil associations able to organize, independently from the state, a sphere for the generalization of interests and, at the same

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<sup>126</sup> Louise Shelley, “Organized Crime Groups – ‘Uncivil Society’,” in *Russian Civil Society: A Critical Assessment*, eds. Alfred Evans, et al. (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2006b).

<sup>127</sup> Arias and Goldstein, Kindle Location 470.

<sup>128</sup> Moritz Schuberth, “The Challenge of Community-Based Armed Groups: Towards a Conceptualization of Militias, Gangs, and Vigilantes,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 36, no. 2 (2015): 298.

<sup>129</sup> Schuberth, 302-303.

<sup>130</sup> Mazzei, 99-101.

time, independently from the market, the means for minimal satisfaction of vital needs.”<sup>131</sup> Phillip Oxhorn argues against a “liberal and individualist” civil society that exists in the West, concerned that it ignores many of the problems within Latin America, and instead advocates a civil society that works more closely with the government.<sup>132</sup> He fears that a weakening of civil society groups in the region, as well as unresponsive governments, will impair the development of democracy. Oxhorn also notes the role of the Catholic Church as a key player in civil society.

The Church’s role has been contradictory over the years, for although the Church has evolved into a powerful agent for peace and development in the last few decades, it has also unfortunately been a vehicle for violence. John Frederick Schwaller describes how Mexico and Colombia are the two main examples of the Church becoming involved in internal conflict.<sup>133</sup> During *La Violencia*, attacks on the Church from Liberals were met with counterattacks by pro-Catholic groups and Church leaders sometimes tacitly encouraged the conflict.<sup>134</sup> Daniel Levine and Alexander Wilde agree, noting, “The Colombian church has long been an important factor in this continuing partisan conflict, both as an actor in its own right and as the embodiment of symbols and ideas motivating impassioned defense or determined attack.”<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Leonardo Avritzer, “Introduction: The Meaning and Employment of ‘Civil Society’ in Latin America.” *Constellations* 4, no. 1 (1997): 88.

<sup>132</sup> Phillip Oxhorn, “Conceptualizing Civil Society from the Bottom Up: A Political Economy Perspective,” in *Civil Society and Democracy in Latin America*, eds. Richard Feinberg, Carlos Waisman and Leon Zamosc (New York: Palgrave, 2006): 77-78.

<sup>133</sup> Schwaller, 197.

<sup>134</sup> Schwaller, 195-196.

<sup>135</sup> Daniel H. Levine and Alexander W. Wilde, “The Catholic Church, ‘Politics,’ and Violence: The Colombian Case,” *The Review of Politics* 39, no. 2 (1977): 228.

As the extreme violence waned, Catholics and Protestants began to work together in Colombia, focusing on social and economic issues.<sup>136</sup> Levine and Scott Manwaring describe how the Church has transformed across the continent, from discouraging popular protests, to promoting change and opposing inequality.<sup>137</sup> Father Mauricio García Durán explains in Colombia, after 1986, the Church undertook a variety of projects to work for peace, including the education of civil society for this purpose.<sup>138</sup>

Other social movements in the region vary by country and circumstances. Daniel Goldstein, et al., observe that in Bolivia a thriving indigenous social movement has led to a transformation in society.<sup>139</sup> Cathy McIlwaine sees a divided and fragmented civil society in El Salvador, threatened by violence.<sup>140</sup> In between these two extremes, the United States Institute of Peace argued in 2004 that Colombia's civil society was fairly successful in their activities of promoting peace and working with guerrilla and paramilitary groups to promote a settlement, but that armed actors continued to endanger their achievements.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Schwaller, 197.

<sup>137</sup> Daniel H. Levine and Scott Mainwaring, "Religion and Popular Protest in Latin America: Contrasting Experiences" in *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*, ed. Susan Eckstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 203.

<sup>138</sup> Fr. Mauricio García Durán, *Peace Mobilization in Colombia and the Role of the Roman Catholic Church (1978-2006)*. Paper presented at Fourth Annual International Conference of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, Bogotá, Colombia. June 2007.

<sup>139</sup> Daniel Goldstein, et al., "'La Mano Dura' and the Violence of Civil Society in Bolivia," *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 51, no. 2 (2007): 44.

<sup>140</sup> Cathy McIlwaine, "Contesting Civil Society: Reflections from El Salvador," *Third World Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (1998): 657.

<sup>141</sup> USIP, "Civil Society under Siege in Colombia," Special report 114, February 2004, <<http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr114.pdf>> (20 September 2012).



Colombia's civil society has worked hard, especially in the last decade, trying to settle the on-going conflicts, but is still in danger from armed actors. It is now time to examine these armed actors and their historical roles within the Colombian state.

### 3. PERSPECTIVE ON RECENT COLOMBIAN HISTORY

In order to build a context for the *bacrim*, it will be important to understand several major themes in Colombian history: war, violence, and illegal economic activity. Gonzalo Sánchez notes an almost endless sense of war in the country, writing that Colombia has faced civil war, the war of *La Violencia*, narco-war, dirty war, and guerrilla war, to name a few.<sup>142</sup> To address these themes, four distinct, but overlapping phases of Colombian history will be examined in detail: *La Violencia*, the guerrilla conflict (1960s – Present), the era of the large cartels (1980s and 1990s) and the expansion of the paramilitary groups (late 1960s-1990s).

Even before the ‘modern’ era that is the focus here, Colombia had a long history of internal violence and war. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, conflict was common, especially political confrontations.<sup>143</sup> Historian David Bushnell once stated, “In Colombia, national party politics existed even before there was really a national economy or culture.”<sup>144</sup> These two parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, formed the basis for all political life for decades. Specifically, Jorge Osterling describes

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<sup>142</sup> Gonzalo Sánchez, “La Violencia in Colombia: New Research, New Questions,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 65, no. 4 (1985): 790 and “War and Politics in Colombian Society,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 14, no. 1 (2000): 19.

<sup>143</sup> Michael LaRosa and Germán Mejía, *Colombia: A Concise Contemporary History* (New York: Rowan and Littlefield, 2012), 79.

<sup>144</sup> David Bushnell, quoted in Sánchez (1985), 799.

“violent inter-party rivalries” and terrible land disputes from as early as the 1840s.<sup>145</sup> Sánchez writes of approximately fourteen wars in the nineteenth century, with outcomes almost always ending in elite settlements.<sup>146</sup> He explains that the wars during this century were intrinsically linked with politics, and almost always focused on said elites who wanted to control the system, but not overthrow it.<sup>147</sup> Fernando López-Alves counts differently than Sánchez and defines seventeen different conflicts in the same period, including coups, rebellions, and uprisings.<sup>148</sup>

Violence accompanied all of these early conflicts and existed on its own as well. The eighteenth century Spanish authorities, in one notable incident, beheaded and quartered rebel leaders, leaving their corpses on pikes.<sup>149</sup> During the War of the Thousand Days (1899-1902), it is estimated that 100,000 persons may have died.<sup>150</sup> In a case involving the government committing violence, an army regiment massacred striking United Fruit Company employees near the town of Ciénaga in 1928.<sup>151</sup> Colombia’s most-well known author, Gabriel García Márquez, addressed this event in his book *Cien Años de Soledad* and also frequently wrote on other violence in Colombia.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Jorge P. Osterling, *Democracy in Colombia: Clientelist Politics and Guerilla Warfare* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1989), 85.

<sup>146</sup> Sánchez (2000), 21 and 24.

<sup>147</sup> Sánchez (2000), 20.

<sup>148</sup> Fernando López-Alves, *State Formation and Democracy in Latin America, 1810-1900*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 119.

<sup>149</sup> Norman Bailey, “La Violencia in Colombia,” *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 9, no. 4 (1967): 564.

<sup>150</sup> David Bushnell, “Politics and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Colombia,” in *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, eds. Charles W. Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez (Wilmington: SR Books, 1992), 15.

<sup>151</sup> LaRosa and Mejía, 140.

<sup>152</sup> For example, in *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*, García Márquez tells the story of a murder, based on a real life event.

Turning now to the first modern period of interest, *La Violencia*, famous Colombian writer Daniel Samper Pizano reflected on it ironically: “Vino una época tan violenta, pero tan violenta, que en la larga historia de la violencia colombiana se la conoce como *La Violencia*.” [There came a violent time, so violent, that in the long history of Colombian violence, it is known as ‘*The Violence*.’]<sup>153</sup>

## A. LA VIOLENCIA

Scholars disagree on the exact dates of *La Violencia*, beginning and ending it at different times depending on their focus. Most now officially mark the end as the Declaration of Sitges in 1957, when the *Frente Nacional* was established to govern the country. Sánchez uses the twenty-year period of 1945-1965.<sup>154</sup> Norman Bailey, writing in 1967, divided it into four named stages: 1946-1953 (Political), 1953-1955 (Unstructured), 1955-1960 (Economic), and 1960 to the present [1967] (Ideological-Economic).<sup>155</sup> He notes that sometimes the origin of 1930 is given, due to conflict in that year, but argues that the violence is more similar to earlier periods. Russell Ramsey also divides *La Violencia* into four phases, but with a different emphasis: 1946-1948, 1948-1953 (First Guerrilla War), 1954-1957, 1958-1965.<sup>156</sup> He also allows for breaks in the phases,

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<sup>153</sup> *Diccionario Aristizábal de citas o frases colombianas*, <<http://www.banrepcultural.org/blaavirtual/modosycostumbres/diccio/diccio21.htm>> (15 November 2015).

<sup>154</sup> Sánchez (1985), 792

<sup>155</sup> Bailey, 566.

<sup>156</sup> Russell Ramsey, “Critical Bibliography on La Violencia in Colombia,” *Latin American Research Review* 8, no. 1 (1973): 3-4.

depending on events. Frank Safford and Marco Palacios call the years 1945-1953 the “germinal” period and 1953-1964, the second period.<sup>157</sup>

What precisely this violent period was and what caused it are also subject to disagreement. One of the most proximate causes was post-election rural violence in 1946 that escalated out of control in urban areas after the assassination of Presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in April 1948.<sup>158</sup> Sánchez describes it as “many things at once,” including a late civil war, a war between the elites and the popular classes, and also an economic conflict.<sup>159</sup> He also raises the question of the role played by *Gaitanismo* (the anti-oligarchic discourse of Gaitán), while others, such as Bailey, lay most of the blame with the Liberals and the Conservatives.<sup>160</sup> Safford and Palacios discuss elite confrontation but draw out economic issues, noting in the second period that “violence [became] a form of criminal economic enterprise.”<sup>161</sup> Murder became commonplace during Safford and Palacio’s ‘germinal period’ and was thus an ‘accepted’ action during the second period as armed bands began to appear operating that way.<sup>162</sup>

Palacios later observed that the poor were disproportionately killed during the violence, while the wealthy classes were protected, contrary to Bailey, who suggested that killing effected all levels of society.<sup>163</sup> Oquist proposed a partial collapse of the state as the cause for *La Violencia*, linking it to government institutions and rivalries between

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<sup>157</sup> Frank Safford and Marco Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 346-347.

<sup>158</sup> LaRosa and Mejía, 85-86.

<sup>159</sup> Sánchez (1985), 803.

<sup>160</sup> Sánchez (1985), 797-798 and Bailey, 566.

<sup>161</sup> Safford and Palacios, 345, 351.

<sup>162</sup> Safford and Palacios, 351.

<sup>163</sup> Marco Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875–2002*, trans. Richard Stoller (Durham: Duke University, 2006), 168 and Bailey, 570.

the two major parties, while Pecaut wrote of a “progressive dissolution of the state,” based on economic actors and a weak government.<sup>164</sup> Mary Roldán depicted it as the process of “state formation and reformation,” where partisan violence eventually led to a variety of criminal behaviors.<sup>165</sup>

Between 1948 and 1960, it is estimated that 250,000 persons (again, numbers vary by source) were killed in variety of ways depending on the time and location. Bailey underscores the brutality of the crucifixions, hangings, rapes, and torture.<sup>166</sup> In response to this extreme turn of events, the Liberals and the Conservatives formed the National Front, which would allow the two parties to alternate power every four years, beginning in 1958. Unfortunately, this “elite bipartisan agreement” excluded everyone who was not a member of said parties.<sup>167</sup> Maria Clemencia Ramirez explains how this exclusive “long-term structure” blocked out other participants and led to the continuing violence and criminality in the country.<sup>168</sup>

While the perpetrators of the violence varied by time and space, two particular groups merit special attention: *los bandoleros* [bandits] and *los pájaros* [birds]. In one of the seminal works on the *bandolero* phenomenon, Sánchez and Donny Meertens describe

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<sup>164</sup> Paul Oquist, *Violence, Conflict, and Politics in Colombia*, (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 12, and Sánchez (2000), 27.

<sup>165</sup> Mary Roldán, *Blood and Fire: La Violencia in Antioquia, Colombia, 1946-1953* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 21, 28.

<sup>166</sup> Bailey, 562-563.

<sup>167</sup> LaRosa and Mejía, 87.

<sup>168</sup> María Clemencia Ramírez, “Maintaining Democracy in Colombia through Political Exclusion, States of Exception, Counterinsurgency, and Dirty War,” in *Violent Democracies in Latin America*, eds. Enrique Desmond Arias and Daniel M. Goldstein (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), Kindle Location 1743.

the evolution from political to social banditry (in the style of Hobsbawm<sup>169</sup>), and then a branching into either revolutionaries/guerrillas or mercenaries.<sup>170</sup> These bandits were initially supporters of the Liberals, but after the establishment of the National Front, they turned on them and became independent. Sánchez and Meertens also note the existence of a unique strand of *bandolerismo* in some areas where the bandits acted as “agents of terror” on behalf of the military or elites.<sup>171</sup> The mercenary bandits of the later period were not driven by the events of *La Violencia* but rather by economic incentives.<sup>172</sup> Oquist argues that in some cases, the bandits emerged simultaneously with the guerrilla groups, who will be further discussed below.<sup>173</sup> Most of these groups were eliminated in the early 1960s (although approximately 27 remained in 1965, down from more than 57).<sup>174</sup>

The *pájaros* acted on the opposite end of the spectrum during *La Violencia* in support of the Conservatives and the government. Table 3 below captures key features of both *bandoleros* and *pájaros*. Other similar entities include the “peace guerrillas,” *contrachusmas*, and *chulavitas* described by Oquist, Roldán and Pedro Rivas Nieto.<sup>175</sup> In one of the original works on the period, Mons. German Guzman, et al., describe a *pájaro* thusly:

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<sup>169</sup> In *Bandits* (1969), Hobsbawm describes social banditry as marginal phenomenon where bandits oppose the current order to ‘defend’ against injustice.

<sup>170</sup> Gonzalo Sánchez and Donny Meertens, *Bandits, Peasants and Politics: The Case of “La Violencia” in Colombia*, trans. Alan Hynds (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 34-35.

<sup>171</sup> Sánchez and Meertens, 35.

<sup>172</sup> Sánchez and Meertens, 105.

<sup>173</sup> Oquist, 200.

<sup>174</sup> Palacios, 166.

<sup>175</sup> Oquist, 179, Roldán 44, and Pedro Rivas Nieto and Pablo Rey García, “Las autodefensas y el paramilitarismo en Colombia (1964-2006),” *Confines de relaciones internacionales y ciencia política* 4, no. 7 (2008): 44.

Born in western Caldas and perfected in the Valley [del Cauca]. An integration of a fraternity, a mafia of puzzling effective lethality. It is elusive, gaseous, vague, essentially a city dweller in the beginning. First it operates individually, with incredible speed, leaving no trace. Its group has motor vehicles and ‘fleets’ of cars involved in predation, with complicit drivers in the crime, practitioners of plunder.<sup>176</sup>

Less poetically, Sánchez and Meertens called them “criminal wage earners,” where a regular wage was paid to a *pájaro* by powerbrokers in the community for committing certain crimes, and “paramilitaries,” while Bailey identified them as “gangster-bandits.”<sup>177</sup> Osterling termed them “hitmen” and Piccoli highlights how they were used to remove or eliminate Liberals, Communists, Protestants and others.<sup>178</sup> The *pájaros* were also known for sending notes, announcing the victims, a forerunner of the pamphlets used over the years by the guerrillas, paramilitaries, and *bacrim*.<sup>179</sup> Another type of note, the *boleto*, was described by Guzman as an anonymous message to leave the area ‘or else.’ It was covered with images of guns and knives, also like the modern pamphlets that will be seen in Chapter 5.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Mons. German Guzman, et al., *La Violencia en Colombia: Estudio de un Proceso Social*, 2nd ed. (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1962) 165. My translation.

<sup>177</sup> Sánchez and Meertens, 106-107 and Bailey, 568.

<sup>178</sup> Osterling, 87 and Piccoli, 47-48.

<sup>179</sup> Gonzalo Sánchez, “The Violence: An Interpretative Synthesis,” in *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective* eds. Charles W. Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez (Wilmington: SR Books, 1992), 89.

<sup>180</sup> Guzman, et al., 201.



**Table 3. Bandoleros and Pájaros<sup>181</sup>**

	<b><i>Bandoleros/Bandits</i></b>	<b><i>Pájaros</i></b>
Political Affiliation	Liberal	Conservative
Oversight	Weak ties to sponsors	Close ties to sponsors
Sometimes known as	<i>Guerrilleros, "Muchachos del Monte"</i>	<i>Contrachusmas, Chulavitas</i>
General Evolution	Early Banditry: Political -> Social Banditry -> Late/Mercenary Banditry: Economic; In same areas, bandoleros became agents of landowners against the populace (like pájaros)	Rural -> Urban
Activities	Extortion; Land Theft; Massacres; Rape; Terror	Assassination/Murder for Hire, inc. mutilation; Conversion/Cleansing of Liberals, Communists, 'Undesirables'; Extortion; Land Theft; Terror

As the period of *La Violencia* faded, so too did the *pájaros* and *bandoleros*. Some of them took amnesty and returned to their lives, while others went on to join the guerrillas and take part in the next Colombian war.

## **B. THE GUERRILLA WAR**

Several guerrilla organizations formed in the wake of *La Violencia*. The two most well-known guerrilla groups are the FARC/FARC–EP (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejército del Pueblo*) and the ELN (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*). Also significant are the EPL (*Ejército Popular de Liberación*) and M-19 (*Movimiento 19 de Abril*).

<sup>181</sup> Oquist (1980); Osterling (1989); Piccoli (2005); Quintero (2008); Sánchez and Meertens (2001).

Multiple internal and external factors converged allowing for the establishment and growth of the guerrilla movement. Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez describes the challenge of the Communist Party by urban radicals, the establishment of the National Front, and the persistence of banditry in some areas, as all leading to the growth of the guerrillas.<sup>182</sup> Recruits were drawn from the ranks of the peasantry in the case of the FARC, while members of the middle classes went to join the ELN. Jennifer Holmes, et al., simply link the creation of the guerrillas to the resistance to the National Front.<sup>183</sup> Sánchez observes the importance of the peasant resistance in the 1950s as well as the role of *bandolerismo* as foundations for the guerrillas.<sup>184</sup> At the same time, the on-going revolution in Cuba provided the alternative that some activists were seeking. Separately, Pizarro also discusses the impact of the break-up in Chinese-Soviet relations on the attitudes of Colombian guerrillas.<sup>185</sup>

For the FARC in particular though, Garry Leech, James Brittain, Pizarro, and Osterling all argue that the group has its origins in the peasant defense forces established by the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) in the 1940s.<sup>186</sup> Pizarro called it the “people’s response to official violence and militarist aggression.”<sup>187</sup> From these groups, the FARC officially established themselves in 1966, pre-dating their founding to May 1964, when

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<sup>182</sup> Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, “Revolutionary Guerrilla Groups in Colombia,” in *Violence in Colombia: The Contemporary Crisis in Historical Perspective*, eds. Charles W. Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez (Wilmington: SR Books, 1992), 172-175.

<sup>183</sup> Jennifer Holmes, Shelia Amin Guiérrez de Piñeres, and Kevin M. Curtin, *Guns, Drugs, and Development in Colombia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 47.

<sup>184</sup> Sánchez (2000), 41

<sup>185</sup> Pizarro (1992), 171-172.

<sup>186</sup> Gary Leech, *The FARC: The Longest Insurgency* (New York: Zed Books, 2011); Brittain (2010); Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez “Las FARC-EP: ¿Repliegue Estratégico, Debilitamiento, o Punto de Inflexión?” in *Nuestra Guerra sin Nombre*, ed. Francisco Gutiérrez (Bogotá: Norma, 2006), 177; and Osterling, 292.

<sup>187</sup> Pizarro (1992), 181.

the government launched an attack on the village where former FARC leader Manuel Marulanda was hiding. Osterling writes that the FARC established clear goals with a defined Marxist-Leninist ideology.<sup>188</sup>

The ELN established themselves in 1962 after a visit to Cuba.<sup>189</sup> Unlike the peasant origins of many of the FARC, the ELN's members were youths of middle class.<sup>190</sup> Pecaute comments on their belief in guerrilla enclaves and the inspiration of the Cuban Revolution.<sup>191</sup> Holmes, et al., highlight in particular their desire to end the oligarchy (like Gaitán) and U.S. interference.<sup>192</sup> But, Pizarro notes that they have never been able to move out of a preliminary stage, likely because they believed in the peasants as the vanguard and extreme militarism, among other issues.<sup>193</sup> The EPL, forming later in the 1960s, follow a Maoist ideology (the result of the split between the Chinese and Soviets), according to Pecaute.<sup>194</sup> Holmes, et al., describe how they were almost eliminated in the early days but successfully rebuilt in the 1980s.<sup>195</sup> M-19, the latest of the four major groups, was born in 1970 after a merger between members of the FARC, the Communist Party, and the National Popular Alliance.<sup>196</sup> They are best known for taking the Palace of Justice hostage in 1985 and subsequently seeking amnesty and joining the political process. Their leader and Presidential Candidate Carlos Pizarro Leongómez was assassinated in 1990 when he was shot on an aircraft.

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<sup>188</sup> Osterling, 292-294

<sup>189</sup> Holmes, et al., 50.

<sup>190</sup> Mario Murillo, *Colombia and the United States: War, Unrest, and Destabilization* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 59.

<sup>191</sup> Pecaute, 219.

<sup>192</sup> Holmes, et al., 50.

<sup>193</sup> Pizarro (1992), 177.

<sup>194</sup> Pecaute, 219.

<sup>195</sup> Holmes, et al., 49

<sup>196</sup> Pizarro, 182.

Returning to the FARC, two schools of thought have emerged regarding their intentions over the years. In the first instance, Marco Palacios argues that the FARC have been ineffective because they have failed to create alliances with elites and urban dwellers, leaving them on the edges of national politics.<sup>197</sup> In the second case, James Petras and Brittain believe that this was never the intention of the group, instead they want to transform society from the bottom – starting at the local level and eventually moving to the national level.<sup>198</sup>

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, despite the best efforts of the Colombian government, the FARC built a solid base of support in the rural areas of the country through the provision of infrastructure, including roads and electrical grids.<sup>199</sup> In conjunction with this consolidation, the guerrillas also gained control over coca producing areas.<sup>200</sup> The FARC continued to have limited success in the cities and redoubled their efforts in the countryside (Table 4 and Figure 6). Over the next forty years, the group established a presence in every single municipality with more than one hundred fronts and anywhere between 30,000 and 45,000 members.<sup>201</sup> Pervasive poverty and the lack of any official presence from Bogotá allowed them to become the de facto government in some areas, imposing taxes and having a monopoly on the use of force.<sup>202</sup> During the 1970s and early 1980s, the drug traffickers and the FARC maintained an

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<sup>197</sup> Marco Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875–2002*, trans. Richard Stoller (Durham: Duke University, 2006).

<sup>198</sup> Petras is cited by Leech, 24 and Brittain.

<sup>199</sup> Brittain, 151

<sup>200</sup> Leech, 62-63.

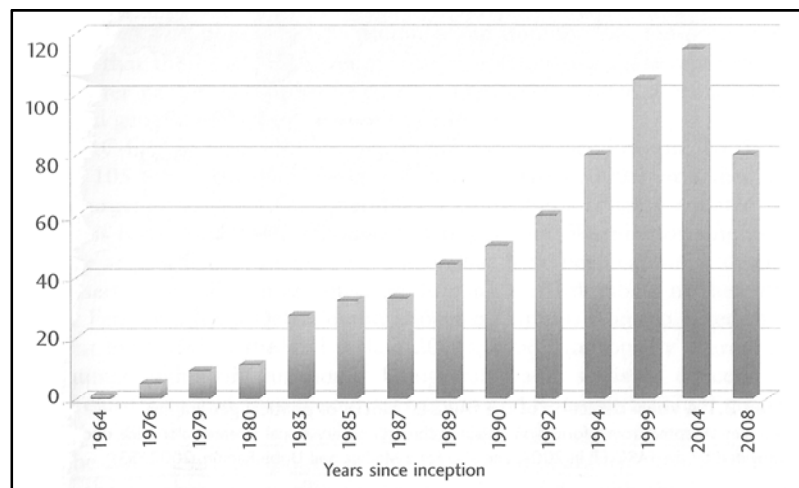
<sup>201</sup> Brittain, 19.

<sup>202</sup> Leech, 39.

uneasy alliance, in which the traffickers were allowed to produce cocaine in the countryside and the guerrillas taxed them.

**Table 4. The Growth of the FARC throughout Colombia<sup>203</sup>**

Year	Number of Municipalities	Percentage of National Municipalities
1964	4	0.4
1970	54	5
1979	100	9
1985	173	15
1991	437	2
1995	622	59
1996	800	76
1999	1000	95
2003	1050	100
2007	1050	100



**Figure 6. Number of FARC Fronts in Colombia<sup>204</sup>**

<sup>203</sup> Brittain, 16. Note, the number of municipalities has changed over time, so numbers may not be consistent.

<sup>204</sup> Brittain, 17.

By the end of the 1980s, however, the guerrillas were in active conflict with the drug traffickers who had begun to aggressively fight them (and their taxes and kidnappings). The tremendous wealth available from cocaine proved to be a great lure to the guerrilla group and, by the end of the 1990s, the FARC had become, what is termed by some, “narco-guerrillas.”<sup>205</sup> At the same time, the DIA released a report stating that the Colombian military could be defeated by the FARC within five years unless serious steps were taken.<sup>206</sup> As will be seen in more detail in Chapter 6, Colombia was suffering from extremely high levels of violence in this period (1995-2000), with kidnappings escalating from 1,158 to 3,706 (of which the FARC was responsible for approximately 1/3) in that period and homicides averaging 25,000 victims annually (a homicide rate of 65/100,000 persons).<sup>207</sup>

There were several attempts at peace talks throughout the conflict. The first major effort occurred in the early 1980s, when the Betancur government opened up discussions. This event, as well as an updated platform, led the FARC to establish a political party, the *Unión Patriótica* (UP) in 1985. Their strong successes at the polls led the political elites to believe that the FARC had become a much more serious threat.<sup>208</sup> Consequently, over the next several years, anyone who was associated with UP was “systematically eliminated” via paramilitary assassination and talks ended.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Leech, 67.

<sup>206</sup> “Multilateral invasion force for Colombia,” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 30, no. 6 (1998), 46.

<sup>207</sup> José Ferney Rodríguez Cuadrado, “La historia y el presente de las cifras delictivas y contravencionales en Colombia: Un nuevo conocimiento,” *Revista Criminalidad* 50, no. 1 (2008): 231-232, 260-262.

<sup>208</sup> Leech, 29.

<sup>209</sup> LaRosa and Mejía, 89; Leech, 30.

Throughout this entire period there was much debate on how deeply the FARC was involved with drug trafficking. Were they really narco-guerrillas or simply taking advantage of those who were already engaged in trafficking?<sup>210</sup> Again, the issue of definition obscures the ability to identify potential solutions to the problem. It also complicated the second set of peace talks between 1998 and 2002 under the Pastrana administration. Even after granting the FARC a large demilitarized zone, the government was unable to successfully negotiate any settlements with the guerrillas, who continued their military and drug operations with impunity.

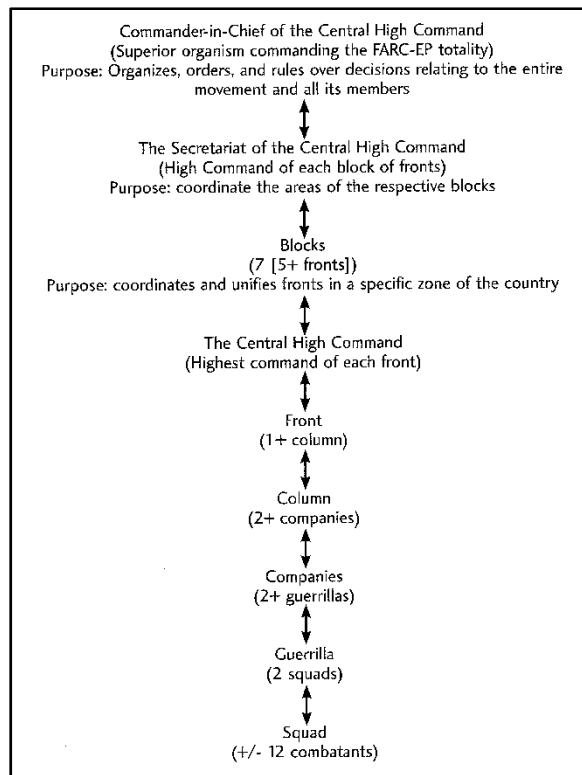
Fifty years of development has also allowed the FARC to establish a complex organization (Figure 7) with a fully operational command structure that matches a regular military organization. There were perhaps 500 people involved in 1970, but by 1982, there were approximately 3,000 members, organized and trained.<sup>211</sup> Brittain describes the complexities of the FARC's command structure via a personal anecdote from his travels in Colombia, explaining the level of command and control during an encounter with a squad at a checkpoint.<sup>212</sup> While a squad is the lowest unit in the organization, the Secretariat (made up of seven members including the Commander-in-Chief) acts as the primary decision-making body for the organization at the top.

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<sup>210</sup> Alfredo Molano, "The Evolution of the FARC: A Guerrilla Group's Long History," *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 2000, <<https://nacla.org/article/evolution-farc-guerrilla-groups-long-history>> (15 May 2016).

<sup>211</sup> Molano (2000).

<sup>212</sup> Brittain, 26.



**Figure 7. Organization of the FARC Hierarchy**<sup>213</sup>

Financially, the FARC gained a great deal of money from kidnapping for ransom, which has been going on since the 1960s.<sup>214</sup> Bilal Y. Saab and Alexandra W. Taylor note that by 2003, the FARC was estimated to have earned \$37.32 million from kidnapping, with cattle theft (\$22.19 million) being almost as lucrative for the group.<sup>215</sup> The other major source of FARC income has been taxing drug trafficking and production (known as ‘*gramaje*’) with actual trafficking still remaining an open question.

<sup>213</sup> Brittain, 27.

<sup>214</sup> See Sánchez (2000) and Mauricio Rubio, “Rebeldes y criminales,” in *Las Violencias: Inclusión Creciente*, eds. Jaime Arocha, Fernando Cubides, and Myriam Jimeno (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1998) for a discussion of early guerrilla kidnappings.

<sup>215</sup> Bilal Y. Saab and Alexandra W. Taylor, “Criminality and Armed Groups: A Comparative Study of FARC and Paramilitary Groups in Colombia,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 6 (2009): 11.



In the last decade, the FARC leadership has suffered multiple blows, including the 2008 death (by natural causes) of Manuel Marulanda, the FARC's original leader. Four other members of the Secretariat have been killed since then as well: Alfonso Cano, Raúl Reyes, Mono Jojoy, and Iván Ríos. The government killed Cano, Reyes, and Jojoy during raids, however, Ríos was betrayed by his security chief.

This turnover in leadership, in conjunction with a new generation of guerrillas who lack the ideological commitment of the older members, and a number of successes by the government have led some to ask whether the FARC was now in decline.<sup>216</sup> Nevertheless, the organization survives and has engaged in another set of peace talks with the Colombian government. This new set of talks began in 2012, with various milestones achieved throughout 2013 and 2014. Several points have been agreed upon, including land reform, political participation and drug trafficking.<sup>217</sup> The peace accord was signed on 26 September 2016. Preliminary peace talks with the ELN began in mid-2014, but no additional reports on their progress have been made.

Finally, Mario Murillo wrote, "Even if the FARC (and ELN) were to be militarily defeated on the battlefield tomorrow...other armed opposition forces most likely will emerge as long as the political and economic power arrangement continues to be monopolized by the same groups."<sup>218</sup> Piccoli is equally pessimistic: "If the drug trafficking ended by magic, and the guerrillas were defeated by a miracle, everything would continue as before. The war would use other resources to move forward, and

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<sup>216</sup> Leech, 138.

<sup>217</sup> "Peace Timeline 2014," *ColombiaPeace*, 5 November 2014, <<http://colombiapeace.org/timeline2014/>> (10 November 2014).

<sup>218</sup> Murillo, 83.

misery and despotism would produce other guerrillas.”<sup>219</sup> The same holds true in 2016. As long as certain aspects of Colombian society remain the same, there will be the constant danger of new armed groups, regardless of whether they are guerrillas, paramilitaries or simply criminals.

### C. THE ERA OF THE CARTELS

DTOs comprise another major set of actors in the on-going conflict and are one of the main sources of the third theme, illegal economic activity. Experts disagree on exactly when and how Colombia became involved in drug trafficking. Elvira María Restrepo and Gerson Ivan Arias argue that after World War II, the phenomenon emerged in Colombia as a result of various social factors and “pure chance.”<sup>220</sup> Álvaro Camacho Guizado and Andrés López Restrepo suggest instead that Colombia was already a part of the drug smuggling business in the 1930s, as a transit point.<sup>221</sup>

Regardless of the exact moment, only in the 1970s, did drug trafficking spread, as production increased and the Colombians began to take over the networks. Palacios reasons that the cocaine traffickers took their cues from illicit emerald mining and the early marijuana traffickers.<sup>222</sup> López Restrepo observes that since then, “Drug trafficking and its effects have been central to Colombian life...”<sup>223</sup> Elvira María Restrepo believes that there were two main reasons for this: a combination of the effects of the illegal

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<sup>219</sup> Piccoli, 13. My translation.

<sup>220</sup> Elvira María Restrepo and Gerson Ivan Arias, *The Changing Remnants of the Colombian Paramilitary and Their Impact in the Region*, Latin American Studies Association, presented in Toronto, 2010, 408.

<sup>221</sup> Álvaro Camacho Guizado and Andrés López Restrepo, “From Smugglers to Drug Lords to *Traquetos*” in *Peace, Democracy, and Human Rights in Colombia*, eds. Christopher Welna and Gustavo Gallón (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2007), 63.

<sup>222</sup> Palacios, 243.

<sup>223</sup> Andrés López Restrepo, “Narcotráfico, ilegalidad y conflicto en Colombia,” in *Nuestra Guerra sin Nombre*, ed. Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín (Bogotá: Norma, 2006), 407. My translation.

economy and *La Violencia* (the leaders of the cartels were all born during this time).

Thoumi suggests that some states (in this case, Colombia), have a comparative advantage with regard to drug production when there is a “weak state...an institutional presence ineffectual in generating social controls and where social capital is deficient.”<sup>224</sup> Others have emphasized Colombia’s location: positioned to control key trade routes with long, porous borders.<sup>225</sup>

Natarajan describes several stages of drug trafficking: growing, manufacturing and commercialization, transshipment and smuggling, distribution (wholesale, regional, and street-level) (Figure 8).<sup>226</sup> Palacios observes that in the early period there was a “mosaic” of organizations spread among the departments.<sup>227</sup> All of the groups participated at various stages. The most well-known Colombian drug trafficking organizations, the Medellín and Cali cartels would eventually come to dominate the scene.

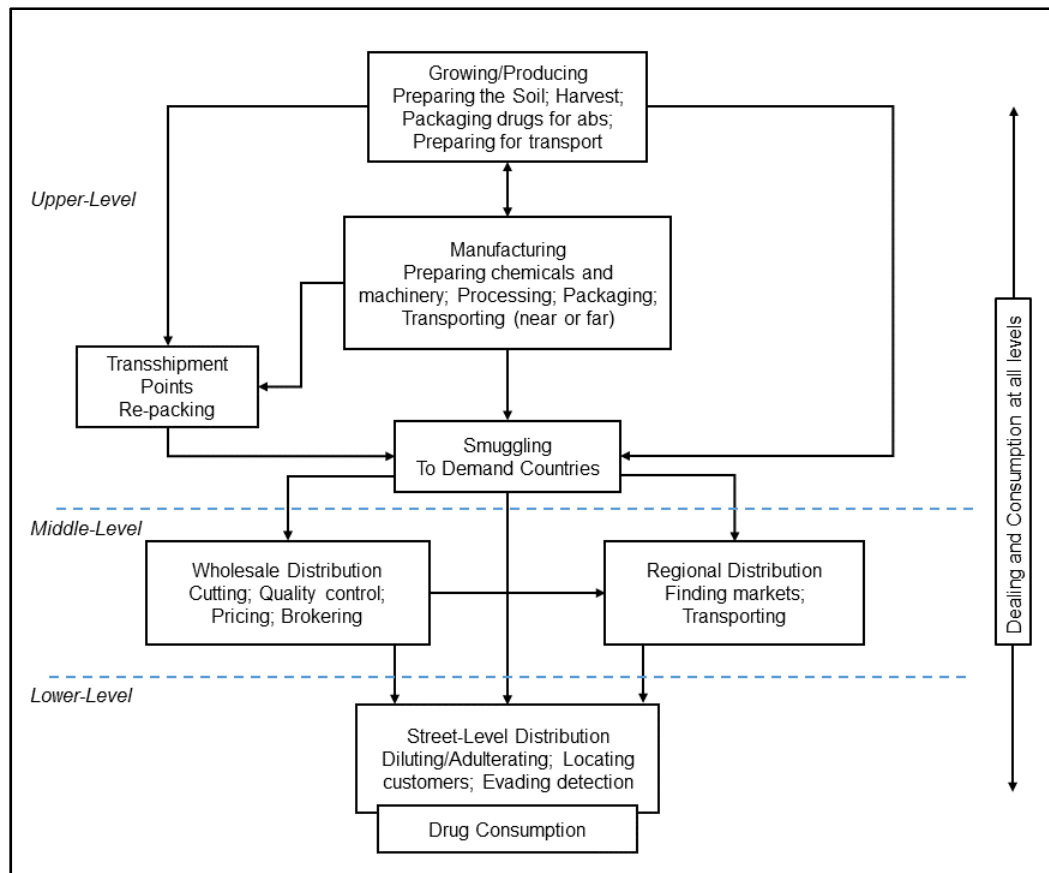
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<sup>224</sup> Francisco Thoumi, “Why a Country Produces Drugs and How This Determines Policy Effectiveness: A General Model and Some Applications to Colombia,” in *Elusive Peace: International, National, and Local Dimensions of Conflict in Colombia*, eds. Cristina Rojas and Judy Letzer (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 167.

<sup>225</sup> J. Michael Francis, ed., *Iberia and the Americas: Culture, Politics and History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 414.

<sup>226</sup> Mangai Natarajan, “Drug Trafficking,” in *International Crime and Justice*, ed. Mangai Natarajan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (2011), 111.

<sup>227</sup> Palacios, 204.



**Figure 8. Stages in International Drug Trafficking<sup>228</sup>**

Led by Pablo Escobar and the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers, respectively, these two organizations reached their high point in the 1980s and early 1990s. At the time, Lee referred to them as “cocaine mafias,” arguing that they were not precisely cartels, but rather organizations capable of “coordinated action.”<sup>229</sup> Michael Kenney also states these groups were not cartels in the economic sense and a great deal of competition existed

<sup>228</sup> Based on Natarajan, 111, and Enrique Desmond Arias, personal communication.

<sup>229</sup> Lee (1989), 99-100.

among all the different participants in the trade.<sup>230</sup> Desmond Arias notes there were probably about one or two hundred separate organizations linked to the main two entities.<sup>231</sup> Both he and Thoumi emphasize the idea of “export syndicates” rather than true “cartels.”<sup>232</sup> Conventional parlance refers to them as cartels however, so that terminology will be continued for the sake of clarity.

At the height of their power, both cartels moved tons of drugs north into the United States and freely interfered in politics. Clawson argues that the Colombian industry shaped itself as a giant pyramid (Figure 9). Abadinsky states that the top organizations were carefully compartmentalized and in particular, the Cali cartel was structured in a “patriarchal manner.”<sup>233</sup> Furthermore, unlike Escobar’s organization, those in Cali operated more like an international business rather than a criminal one.<sup>234</sup> Escobar chose to violently confront the state in the end, while those in Cali chose to co-opt the state.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Michael Kenney, “The Architecture of Drug Trafficking: Network Forms of Organisation in the Colombian Cocaine Trade,” *Global Crime* 8, no. 3 (2007): 235.

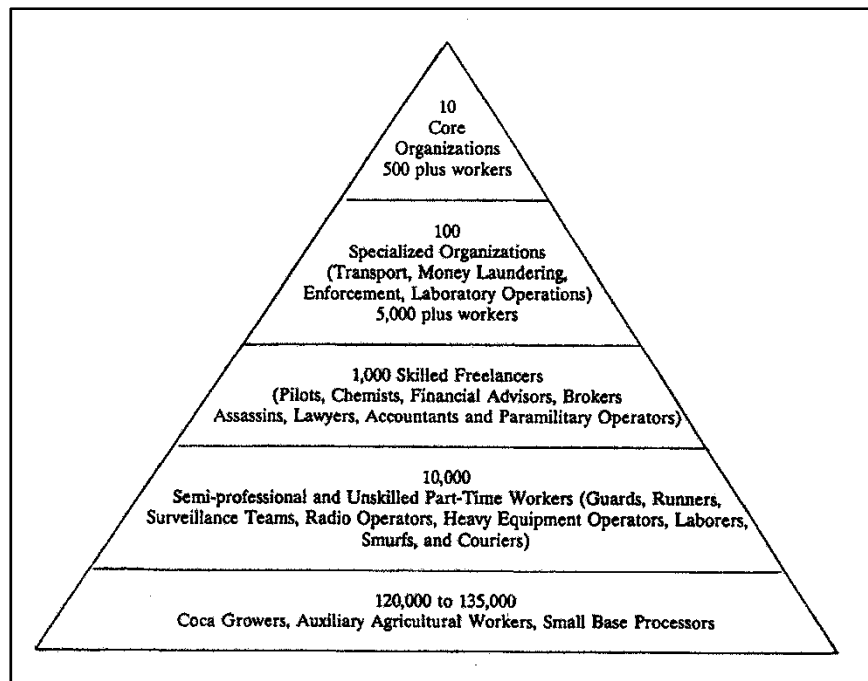
<sup>231</sup> Enrique Desmond Arias, “Drug Cartels: Neither Holy, Nor Roman, Nor an Empire,” in *International Crime and Justice*, ed. Mangai Natarajan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2011), 277.

<sup>232</sup> Arias (2011), 279.

<sup>233</sup> Abadinsky, 148-149.

<sup>234</sup> Ron Chepesiuk, *The Bullet or the Bribe: Taking Down Colombia’s Cali Drug Cartel* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 254.

<sup>235</sup> Camacho Guizado and López Restrepo, 78.



**Figure 9. Colombian Cocaine Trafficking Industry (circa mid-1990s)<sup>236</sup>**

Lee identifies some key aspects of the Colombian cartels' ideology.<sup>237</sup> First, they worked to give a façade of legitimacy to their activities, through social programs in poor areas, and advocating that the drug trade was good for the economy; and second, they were nationalists with a conservative anti-democratic mindset. Some also engaged in social cleansing.<sup>238</sup> Camacho Guizado and López Restrepo also state that the cartels worked to legitimize themselves by investing in local industry, including banking and construction, as well as land and cattle.<sup>239</sup>

<sup>236</sup> Clawson, 20.

<sup>237</sup> Lee (1989), 113-120.

<sup>238</sup> Enrique Desmond Arias, personal communication.

<sup>239</sup> Camacho Guizado and López Restrepo, 73.

As the Colombian and U.S. governments found new and innovative ways to attack the cartels (see Bowden (2001) and Chepesiuk (2003) for a discussion of the capture of Escobar and the leaders of the Cali Cartel), the industry began to fragment. Lee observes that the size of cocaine shipments declined and more criminals participated in the business.<sup>240</sup> A variety of mini-DTOs or *cartelitos* emerged, in addition to more networked entities such as the Norte Valle Cartel. The smaller organizations operated pieces of the business and cooperated with each other.<sup>241</sup> Max Manwaring suggests these groups moved to a flat structure that allowed for quick decision-making.<sup>242</sup> Nevertheless, Chepesiuk and Lee both argue that despite the government's best efforts, there was little practical difference in their efforts and that the drug traffickers in the early 2000s continued on with "business as usual."<sup>243</sup>

The Norte Valle Cartel, in particular, successfully operated for several years in the late 1990s and early 2000s, but even they eventually felt the pressure from the U.S. and Colombian governments. Those that remained continued to fracture into smaller operations. By the middle of the decade, the Colombian trafficking market was possibly more fragmented than it had ever been in the past.

#### **D. THE RISE OF THE PARAMILITARIES**

Although Colombia has maintained one of the more stable democracies in Latin America, it has been not without cost to the populace. One of these costs has been the decades-long existence of paramilitary organizations, who are the third set of actors in the

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<sup>240</sup> Rensselaer Lee, "Perverse Effects of Andean Counternarcotics Policy," *Orbis* (Summer 2002): 543.

<sup>241</sup> López Restrepo, 433-434.

<sup>242</sup> Manwaring, 58-59.

<sup>243</sup> Chepesiuk, 253; Lee (2002), 552.

on-going conflict. These groups established close ties with the military, which allowed them to act with impunity throughout the country, leading to massacres and violence against the civilian population.

The paramilitary group most synonymous with the conflict, the AUC, emerged in 1997 as a national organization from disparate sub-groups. Some of these entities first appeared in the 1980s or were transformations of associations from that era.

When Katherine Aguirre Tobón and others (e.g., *Fundación Ideas para La Paz*) refer to the third generation of paramilitaries, they consider these groups from the 1980s and then the 1990s as the first and second generations. In contrast, Hristov considers the paramilitaries from the 1960s as the “first wave.”<sup>244</sup> Gonzalo Sánchez describes an even longer history, beginning with nineteenth century private armies, landowner police in the 1900s, anti-guerrilla groups of the 1950s, and then, like Hristov, the groups authorized by the government to operate in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>245</sup>

Following Hristov’s model, the original paramilitaries formed in 1965, under Decree 3398, when the government first decreed that such groups could be established to assist in fighting the FARC and other guerrillas. This was followed up with Law 48 in 1968, which allowed the military to arm these groups. These early paramilitaries continued to operate on a limited basis throughout the 1970s under the auspices of “the state creates, the elite supports.”<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Jasmin Hristov, *Blood and Capital: The Paramilitarization of Colombia* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009a), 60.

<sup>245</sup> Gonzalo Sánchez, “Introduction: Problems of Violence, Prospects for Peace,” in *Violence in Colombia, 1990-2000: Waging War and Negotiating Peace*, eds. Charles Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources: 2001), 21.

<sup>246</sup> Hristov (2009a), 60-63.



The second generation of paramilitaries emerged in the 1980s, in conjunction with the failed attempt to bring the guerrilla groups in to the political process. They reversed the original paradigm, instead operating under the model of “the elite creates, the state supports.”<sup>247</sup> Instead of being ideological and financially tied to the military, these groups could now choose their own *modus operandi* and operate with little or no military oversight. They had financing from wealthy citizens and a new ideological purpose of targeting “subversives” and those suspected of sympathizing with the guerrillas.<sup>248</sup>

One of the earliest groups of the second generation was MAS (*Muerte a Secuestradores*; Death to Kidnappers), which included Pablo Escobar and other drug traffickers. They formed this alliance to directly fight kidnappings and threats from the guerrillas. After being targeted by the government for involvement in more than 240 murders, they reorganized as ACDEGAM (*Asociación Campesina de Ganaderos y Agricultores del Magdalena Medio*; Association of Middle Magdalena Ranchers and Farmers).<sup>249</sup> ACDEGAM operated from Puerto Boyacá, less than one hundred miles from Bogotá.

Another important second generation group was the ACCU (*Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá*; Peasant Self-Defense Forces of Córdoba and Urabá), operating in Antioquia, north of Medellín and into neighboring Córdoba. The ACCU was founded by Carlos Castaño, who eventually became the leader of the AUC (until his death in 2004), and his brothers, after the FARC killed their father.

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<sup>247</sup> Hristov (2009a), 63-70.

<sup>248</sup> Mazzei, 82.

<sup>249</sup> Hristov (2009a), 66.

Mauricio Romero argues that Castaño and his associates, at this time saw themselves as “an anticommunist advanced guard” and a “civilian defense organization.”<sup>250</sup> Even without specific military oversight, Romero highlights the continued cooperation between the armed forces and paramilitaries during this period, while Nazih Richani observes that a tight relationship between the “military, paramilitary, narcobourgeoisie, and landlords” emerged.<sup>251</sup>

By the early 1990s, the paramilitaries turned on the drug traffickers, Escobar in particular. There was some consolidation into the ACCU under Castaño and then a more complete unification, in 1997, under the umbrella of the AUC. These groups formed a “loose coalition of different private armies with common class and political interests in defending the socioeconomic order in their fight against not only the armed insurgency but also the leftist political groups.”<sup>252</sup> In addition to Castaños’ organization, others included the self-defense groups from Puerto Boyacá and the ‘Llanos Orientales’ (Eastern Plains), as well as several independent entities.<sup>253</sup> See Figure 10, below, for the major components of the AUC after the merger.

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<sup>250</sup> Mauricio Romero, “Changing Identities and Contested Settings: Regional Elites and the Paramilitaries in Colombia,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 14, no. 1 (2000): 66.

<sup>251</sup> Mauricio Romero, “Reform and Reaction: Paramilitary Groups in Contemporary Colombia,” in *Irregular Armed Forces and Their Role in Politics and State Formation*, eds. Diane E. Davis and Anthony W. Pereira (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003b); Nazih Richani, *Systems of Violence: The Political Economy of War and Peace in Colombia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 51.

<sup>252</sup> Richani, 104.

<sup>253</sup> See Mazzei (2009) for a complete description of each of these groups.

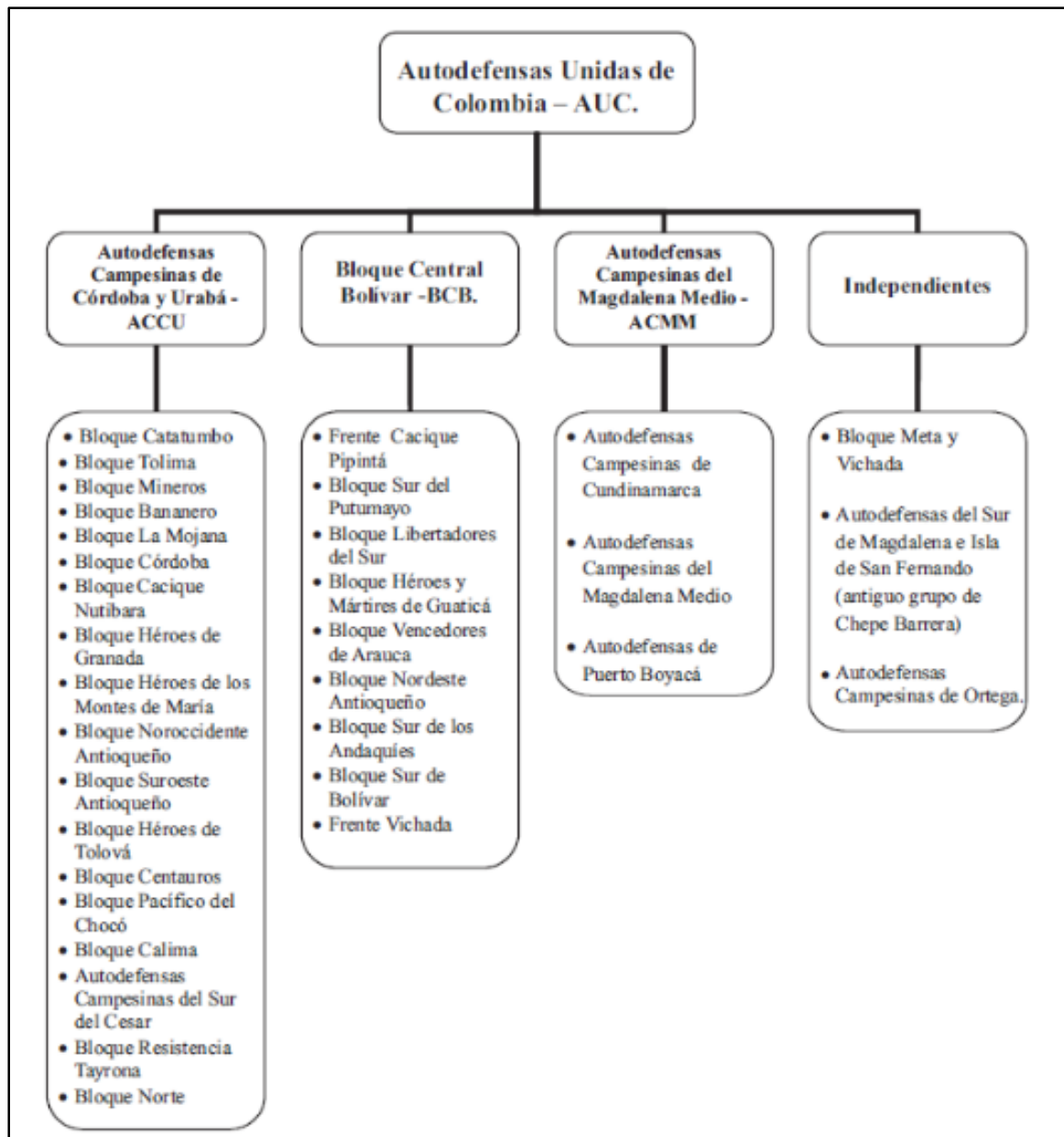


Figure 10. The Organization of the AUC<sup>254</sup>

<sup>254</sup> León Valencia Agudelo, “Municipio y Violencia Paramilitar en Colombia: 1984-2008” in *Las Otras Caras Del Poder: Territorio, Conflicto y Gestión Pública en Municipios Colombianos*, ed. Fabio E. Velásquez (Bogotá: GTZ, Foro Nacional por Colombia, 2009), 159.

While the top ranks of this new paramilitary organization belonged to the elites, Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín writes that those who joined included a mix of military, guerrillas and lower/middle class, who saw it as a kind of social mobility.<sup>255</sup> Saab and Taylor argue that it was composed of enforcers from the former cartels, mid-level independent drug traffickers and the elites, while Pedro Rivas Nieto and Pablo Rey García see the phenomenon as “*tres grandes pilares*” (three great pillars): the landowners (who opposed the guerrillas), the drug traffickers, and the military.<sup>256</sup> Holmes also emphasizes the importance of the landowners, who sought to protect their assets from guerrillas and other subversives.<sup>257</sup>

This united organization carried out a variety of illicit and licit activities (Table 5):

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<sup>255</sup> Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín, “Telling the Difference: Guerrillas and Paramilitaries in the Colombian War,” *Politics & Society* 36, no. 1 (2008): 14.

<sup>256</sup> Saab and Taylor: 455–475; Pedro Rivas Nieto and Pablo Rey García, “Las autodefensas y el paramilitarismo en Colombia (1964-2006),” *Confines de relaciones internacionales y ciencia política* 4, no. 7 (2008): 45.

<sup>257</sup> Holmes, et al., 88.

**Table 5. Activities of the Paramilitaries<sup>258</sup>**

<b>Illicit Activities</b>	
<i>Services</i>	"Protection" of landowners and ranchers from guerillas
	Strategic displacement of the population
	Intimidation of social organizations
	Supporting "para-friendly" politicians
	<i>Limpieza</i> (social cleansing)
<i>Extortion</i>	Landowners and Ranchers
	Small businesses
	Restaurants
	Politicians
<i>Operations</i>	Drug cultivation and trafficking
	Arms trafficking
	Robbery
	<i>Oficinas de cobro</i>
	Assassinations
<b>Licit Activities</b>	Purchasing land and farms
	Investing in palm oil companies
	Investing in gas stations
	Investing in other businesses

Alexandra Guáqueta describes the paramilitaries as “part criminal, part political.”<sup>259</sup> Although they had conflicts with Escobar and other drug trafficking organizations in the early 1990s, Carlos Castaño conceded that, less than ten years later, up to seventy percent of AUC financing came from the drug trade, with smaller amounts from contributions made by various elites.<sup>260</sup> Politically, they maintained their earlier

<sup>258</sup> This table is based on Hristov (2009a), 75.

<sup>259</sup> Alexandra Guáqueta, “The Way Back In: Reintegrating Illegal Armed Groups in Colombia Then and Now,” *Conflict, Security and Development* 7, no. 3 (2007): 433.

<sup>260</sup> David Spencer, *Colombia’s Paramilitaries: Criminals or Political Force?* Strategic Studies Institute, December 2001, <<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub19.pdf>> (October 2014), 10.

rhetoric of self-defense and ideology.<sup>261</sup> A former member of defunct guerrilla group M-19 described them as “a *political phenomenon* as opposed to a *political organization*.”<sup>262</sup>

Despite their relative successes, economically and politically, the paramilitaries became divided over drug trafficking and when President Uribe came to power in 2002, the group began work on a demobilization strategy.<sup>263</sup> Richani suggests three reasons for the demobilization: facilitating the passage of Plan Colombia, supporting the state’s focus on economic interests that coincided with their own, and “a growing conviction...that their movement had exhausted its historical function of helping the state contain the insurgents’ expansion.”<sup>264</sup>

At the time of demobilization in 2003, the AUC operated throughout the North, Central and Western departments of the country. Figure 11 shows the extent of their operations based on data collected by the office of the Presidential Advisor on Human Rights in Colombia. This territory would quickly be ceded to new organizations or re-occupied by paramilitaries that opted out of demobilization.

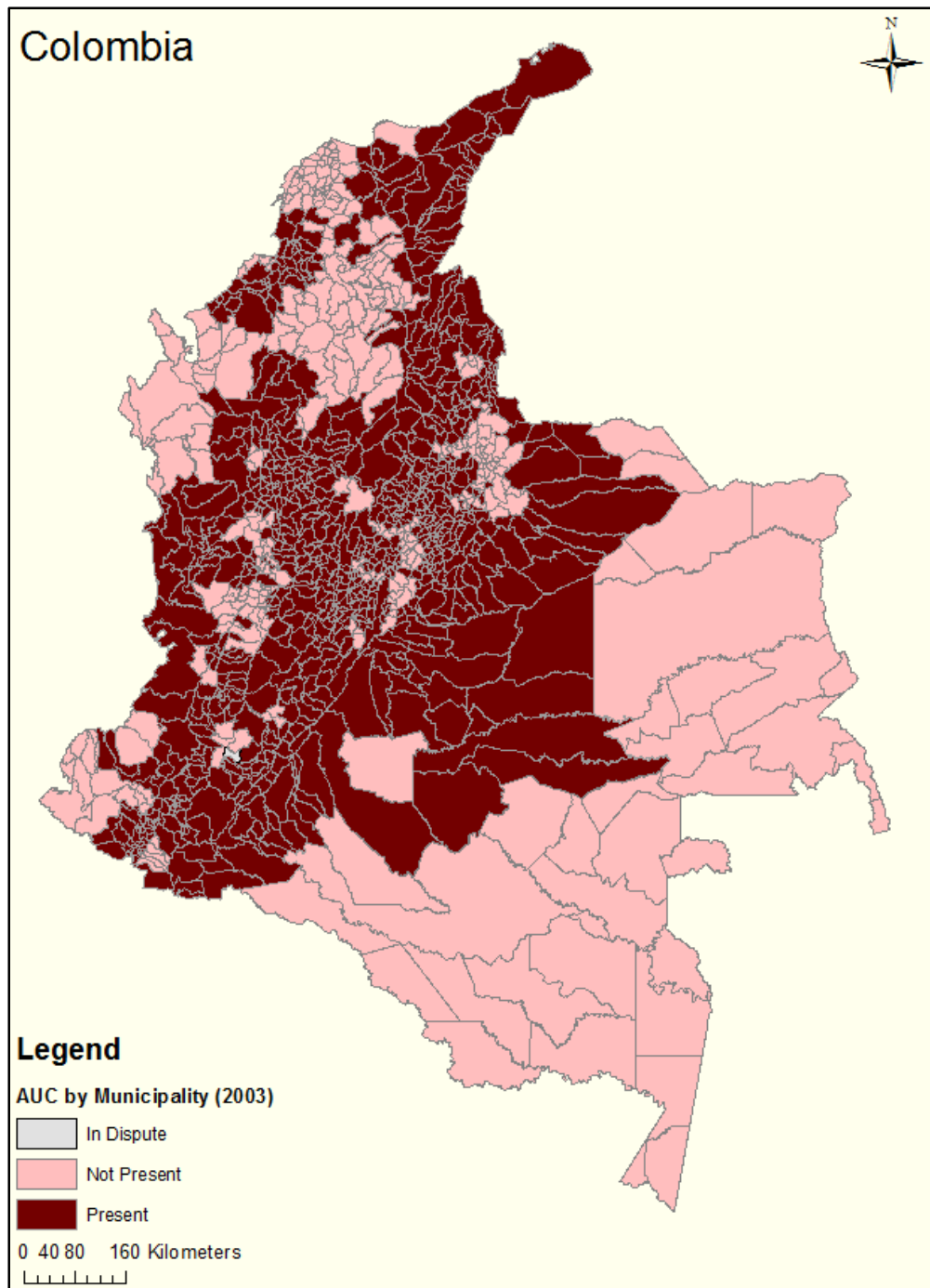
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<sup>261</sup> Guáqueta, 435.

<sup>262</sup> Carlos Alonso Lucio, quoted in Guáqueta, 436.

<sup>263</sup> Mazzei, 122.

<sup>264</sup> Richani, 224-226.



**Figure 11. AUC Presence by Municipality (2003)<sup>265</sup>**

<sup>265</sup> Based on data provided by the Colombian Consejería Presidencial para los Derechos Humanos.

There has been an extended discussion over the successes and failures of the demobilization, which took nearly three years, and the implementation of numerous new laws.<sup>266</sup> Daniel García-Peña, Director of Colombian NGO *Planeta Paz*, asked of the process: “Is the objective to end paramilitarism and dismantle a complex historic phenomenon, or is it simply to demobilize and somehow re-legitimize specific AUC leaders or combatants?”<sup>267</sup> Another local organization, *Fundación Ideas para La Paz* (FIP), expressed similar concerns: “¿se está poniendo fin al ciclo de formación de grupos de seguridad privada en Colombia?” [Is this ending the formation cycle of private security groups in Colombia?]<sup>268</sup>

Specifically, the demobilization led to almost 30,000 combatants retiring from the field (about 95%) (Table 6). One positive outcome was a steep decline in violence in areas where demobilizations occurred.<sup>269</sup> Negative outcomes have also been documented. Enzo Nussio writes about the prevailing sentiment that there really was no peace process, that many demobilized were not actually paramilitaries and did not turn in real weapons, and most notably, that the paramilitaries just changed their names but still exist.<sup>270</sup> Winifred Tate emphasizes particular concerns about the failure to fully investigate those

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<sup>266</sup> See in particular, Hristov (2009a) and Human Rights Watch, *Smoke and Mirrors: Colombia's Demobilization of Paramilitary Groups*, 2005.

<sup>267</sup> Daniel García-Peña in Cynthia Arnson, *The Peace Process in Colombia with the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia-AUC* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2005), 63.

<sup>268</sup> Fundación Ideas para La Paz, “La Tercera Generación,” no. 25, *Siguiendo El Conflicto: Hechos Y Análisis de La Semana* (August 2005): 1.

<sup>269</sup> Jorge A. Restrepo and Robert Muggah, “Colombia’s Quiet Demobilization: A Security Dividend?”, in *Security and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Dealing with Fighters in the Aftermath of War*, ed. Robert Muggah (London: Routledge, 2009), 42.

<sup>270</sup> Enzo Nussio, “Learning from Shortcomings: The Demobilization of Paramilitaries in Colombia,” *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 6, no. 2 (2011b): 88-89.



who were involved in criminal activity.<sup>271</sup> Nussio notes separately though, that DDR (disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration) was not a main topic of the AUC and government negotiations, and it was only added on near the end; and furthermore, the main conflict between the guerrillas and the government continues.<sup>272</sup> He also describes efforts by the demobilized to maintain anonymity, relocate, and remain vigilant; others have regrouped either because of threats or lack of opportunities.<sup>273</sup>

**Table 6. Demobilizations during Uribe's First Term (2002-2006)**<sup>274</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Collective Demobilizations (AUC)</b>	<b>Individual Demobilizations (FARC, ELN, AUC)</b>
2002	n/a	730
2003	1,035	2,538
2004	2,645	2,972
2005	10,417	2,564
2006	17,574	1,618*
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,671</b>	<b>10,422</b>

\*Includes demobilizations through August 2006.

Another issue, which took several years to be fully recognized, was the depth to which the paramilitaries had involved themselves in politics. Salvatore Mancuso, a key AUC leader stated, “at least 35% of the Congress of the Republic ‘democratically’

<sup>271</sup> Winifred Tate, “Accounting for Absence: The Colombian Paramilitaries in U.S. Policy Debates,” in *Sex, Drugs, and Body Counts: The Politics of Numbers in Global Crime and Conflict*, eds. Peter Andreas and Kelly M. Greenhill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 222.

<sup>272</sup> Enzo Nussio, “How ex-combatants talk about personal security. Narratives of former paramilitaries in Colombia,” *Conflict, Security & Development* 11, no. 5 (2011a): 583; and Nussio (2011b), 91.

<sup>273</sup> Nussio (2011a).

<sup>274</sup> Porch, 528.

elected in the 2006 elections, was a ‘friend’ of the paramilitary movement.”<sup>275</sup> This became known as the ‘parapolitics’ scandal, which eventually led to more than sixty people being called before the Supreme Court to testify on the relationships between members of Congress and the paramilitary groups.<sup>276</sup> A captured laptop belonging to demobilized AUC leader Jorge 40 contained lists of members of Congress, the Judiciary, and employees in the intelligence agencies who were connected to the AUC.<sup>277</sup> These links had evolved over the previous decade as politicians interacted with various leaders in the paramilitary organization. For some, this relationship was codified in the “Pacto de Ralito,” a 2001 agreement between leading politicians from Córdoba, Sucre, Bolívar and Magdalena and AUC leaders Don Berna, Mancuso, and Jorge 40.<sup>278</sup> The pact focused on topics such as “creating a new social pact” and “constructing a new Colombia.”<sup>279</sup> In practice, it allowed the AUC to advance its political goals without fielding its own candidates for election and provided financial support to the politicians who were involved.<sup>280</sup>

The fall-out from this and other scandals related to the paramilitaries continue to trouble the Colombian government as it seeks to improve the security and economic situation around the country. Although the AUC is officially demobilized, the remnants

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<sup>275</sup> Garay Salamanca, et al., 113. My translation.

<sup>276</sup> “Corte llama a declarar a 60 personas en proceso por ‘parapolítica’,” *Semana*, 1 February 2007, <<http://www.semana.com/on-line/articulo/corte-llama-declarar-60-personas-proceso-parapolitica/83244-3>> (15 November 2014).

<sup>277</sup> U.S. Office on Colombia, “Para-Politics Scandal,” undated, <[http://www.usofficeoncolombia.org/understanding\\_colombia/pdf/para\\_politics.pdf](http://www.usofficeoncolombia.org/understanding_colombia/pdf/para_politics.pdf)> (23 February 2016).

<sup>278</sup> “La historia detrás del ‘Pacto de Ralito’,” *Verdadabierta*, June 2014, <<http://www.verdadabierta.com/las-victimas/2103-la-historia-detras-del-del-pacto-de-ralito>> (23 February 2016).

<sup>279</sup> “La historia detrás del ‘Pacto de Ralito’.”

<sup>280</sup> “La historia detrás del ‘Pacto de Ralito’.”

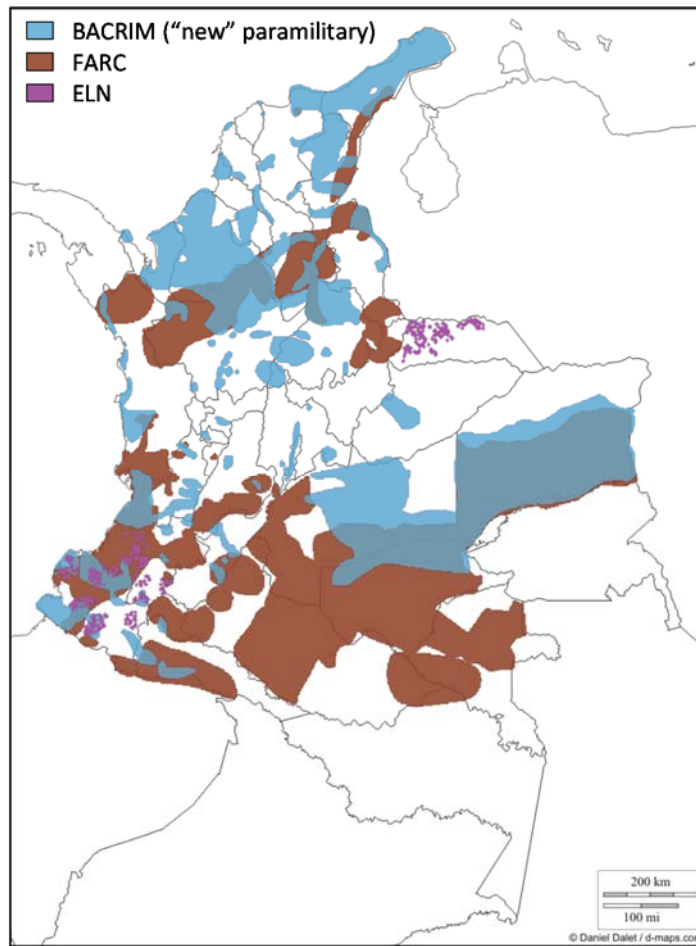
of its power continue to be seen throughout the country. As late as 2012, former members of Congress were still being sentenced and in early 2016, it was revealed that more than 100 people had been dismembered and disappeared from various prisons around the country in the late 1990s by the paramilitaries.<sup>281</sup>

## **E. SUMMARY OF THE KEY PARTICIPANTS**

The *bacrim* have joined a long line of parties operating in Colombia for their own interests. This includes the three main actors identified in this chapter: the guerrilla groups, DTOs, and paramilitaries. Of these groups, the guerrillas and the *bacrim* continue to have visible areas of operation (Figure 12). In addition, several other entities, domestic and foreign, are identified for the part they have played in the evolution of the conflict.

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<sup>281</sup> “Exgobernador Jesús M. López les construyó hospital de guerra a ‘paras’,” *El Tiempo*, 21 February 2012, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-11181604>> (23 February 2016).



**Figure 12. Approximate Presence of Armed Groups in 2012<sup>282</sup>**

### **Internal Participants and Innocent Bystanders**

The key groups in Colombia operate along a spectrum of legal and illegal activity. The major remaining guerrilla movements (FARC and ELN), the drug traffickers, and the remnants of the AUC, all discussed above, act closer to the illegal end of the spectrum by engaging in the drug trade, extortion, and other crimes. In addition to these groups, there

<sup>282</sup> Adam Isacson, “Ending 50 Years of Conflict: The Challenges Ahead and the U.S. Role in Colombia,” Washington Office on Latin America, 2014. Note: the use of the term “new paramilitary.”

are a number of smaller criminal organizations and gangs scattered throughout the country on the periphery of the conflict, who sometimes act independently and sometimes support the major participants. This includes, most notably, *La Oficina de Envigado*, a Medellín-based organization that emerged from Escobar's operations and the EPL. As of 2016, it is sometimes included in the list of *bacrim*.<sup>283</sup>

The State principally exists on the legal end of the spectrum. Within the State, the military, the politicians, the police, and the judiciary should operate with licit intent, but as has been noted several times, individual members may operate illegally as well as in the gray area between legal and illegal.

Some Colombian people also have a position on the spectrum of legal and illegal activity. However, the conflict has touched them in so many different ways that it is impossible to consider them as a homogenous group. For many, the lack of economic opportunities have led to a meager existence in the informal economy or a violent one as a participant in the on-going conflict. Others are innocent bystanders who have become victims of the endless wars.

The minority community within the country is one set of victims that has been overlooked. In the past, it has been stated that Colombia does not have ethnic conflict, but this is not strictly the case.<sup>284</sup> Amnesty International, WOLA, and other NGOs, detail violence against the indigenous population and Afro-Colombians. The 2005 Census provides detailed data on the number of these groups in the country and Table 7 (below)

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<sup>283</sup> "El paramilitarismo en Colombia, ¿realmente se desmontó?", *Verdadabierta*, 14 December 2015, <<http://www.verdadabierta.com/rearme/6121-el-paramilitarismo-en-colombia-realmente-se-desmonto>> (March 2016).

<sup>284</sup> Roldán, 11.

shows the eight departments with a population that is more than 40% indigenous and/or Afro-Colombian. The Afro-Colombians in Chocó have been particularly vulnerable over the years, with approximately 81% of the population having “unmet basic needs.”<sup>285</sup> They are certainly some of the most unwilling of the ‘internal participants’ in the conflict.

**Table 7. Census 2005 – Percent of Select Ethnic Groups by Department (>40%)<sup>286</sup>**

	Indigenous	AfroColombian	Indigenous+ AfroColombian	"Without Ethnicity"	Total 2005 Population
Department	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	
Amazonas	43	2	45	55	43,744
Cauca	22	22	44	56	1,153,285
Chocó	13	82	95	5	348,299
Guainía	65	1	66	34	17,865
La Guajira	45	15	60	40	619,135
San Andrés	0	57	57	43	59,424
Vaupés	67	2	68	32	17,385
Vichada	44	3	47	53	39,825

## External Participants

There are multiple international actors that have also participated in the conflict. This includes both states and non-state groups, with a myriad of agendas (from supporting the Colombian government to supporting the criminals).

<sup>285</sup> “La crisis humanitaria que vive Chocó,” *Semana*, 10 July 2014, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/choco-esta-en-crisis-humanitaria/395103-3>> (23 February 2016).

<sup>286</sup> DANE, <<http://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/poblacion-y-demografia/grupos-etnicos>>. Persons of Rom decent excluded from table.

The best known player by far is the U.S., although the EU, and several Latin American countries, Venezuela in particular, have also involved themselves. The U.S. began providing limited support to Colombia in the 1970s to combat drug trafficking. Since the late 1990s and the inception of *Plan Colombia* though, Colombia has become the one of the largest recipients of foreign aid (for both economic and military assistance).<sup>287</sup> The U.S.'s anti-drug laws as well as the infusion of training and military equipment to the Colombian police and military have both helped and hindered the Colombian government in its fight against the guerrillas and drug traffickers. They have helped in the sense of providing much needed training and assistance, but human rights abuses have been allowed to continue. For example, Haugaard notes that three million people were displaced by violence between 2000 and 2010.<sup>288</sup> Furthermore, many groups argue more money should have gone to economic assistance and social support, which many people in Colombia desperately need.<sup>289</sup>

Besides nation states, several non-state actors have influenced events in Colombia. Russian criminal groups were first involved in trying to sell a submarine to the drug cartels in the 1990s and then later, their engineers provided support in the

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<sup>287</sup> In FY2010, Colombia was number nine for obligations and number ten for disbursements. Other countries receiving more aid include Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, Pakistan, Egypt, Haiti, Ethiopia, Sudan and Jordan. USAID, "Foreign Assistance Fast Facts: FY2010," <[gbk.eads.usaidallnet.gov/data/fast-facts.html](http://gbk.eads.usaidallnet.gov/data/fast-facts.html)> (16 Sept 2012).

<sup>288</sup> Lisa Haugaard, Adam Isacson, and Jennifer Johnson, "A Cautionary Tale: Plan Colombia's Lessons for U.S. Policy Toward Mexico and Beyond," *Washington Office on Latin America*, November 2011 <[http://www.wola.org/sites/default/files/downloadable/Cautionary\\_Tale.pdf](http://www.wola.org/sites/default/files/downloadable/Cautionary_Tale.pdf)> (October 2014), 8.

<sup>289</sup> See Haugaard (2011), Murillo (2003), and Amnesty International (2000) for specific criticisms.

construction of submersible vehicles.<sup>290</sup> The Mexican DTOs, who picked up much of the transportation requirements when the Colombians sought to divest themselves of operational risk, continue to expand their power and activities in the region. The Sinaloa Cartel and *Los Zetas*, while escalating violence in their home country, are working more closely with different *bacrim*. Additionally, Central American gangs (e.g., MS-13 and Barrio 18), have made the world of criminals and armed groups in Latin America more complicated. While there have always been local gangs in these countries, the emergence of powerful gangs in Los Angeles who then established international linkages back to Central America, continues to be an important security concern in the region. Furthermore, some of these gangs are reported to be expanding elsewhere. For example, branches of MS-13 are now operating in Spain and Italy.<sup>291</sup>

## F. CONCLUSION

It is in the context of fifty years of history that an understanding of the illegal armed groups of the twenty-first century emerges. Manwaring believes the guerrillas, drug traffickers and paramilitaries form a kind of “unholy trinity” of their own (not to be confused with Shelley’s “unholy trinity” of transnational crime, corruption and

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<sup>290</sup> Mark Fineman, “Case Links Russian Sub, Colombia Drugs,” *Los Angeles Times*, 21 June 1998, <<http://articles.latimes.com/1998/jun/21/news/mn-62197>> (4 October 2012); James Dunnigan, “The Cocaine Boats Head For Europe,” *Strategy Page*, 29 September 2012, <<http://www.strategypage.com/dls/articles/The-Cocaine-Boats-Head-For-Europe-9-29-2012.asp>> (4 October 2012).

<sup>291</sup> Seth Robbins and James Bargent, “El Salvador Gang Members ‘Setting Up MS-13 Branch’ in Spain,” *InSight Crime*, 26 March 2014, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/el-salvador-gang-members-setting-up-ms13-branch-in-spain>> (2015); Charles Parkinson, “Italy Police Dismantle ‘MS13’ Gang,” *InSight Crime*, 10 October 2013, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/italy-police-dismantle-ms13-el-salvador-gang>> (2015).



terrorism).<sup>292</sup> From this, he sees the *bacrim* as being a federation of “splinter AUC groups, existing DTOs, faltering FARC units, and...the ELN.”<sup>293</sup> The question of the outcome of the demobilization clearly impacts the creation of the *bacrim*.

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<sup>292</sup> Manwaring, 56.

<sup>293</sup> Manwaring, 56-57.

## 4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Colombia's on-going conflict shows limited signs of ending. The success of the negotiations with the FARC is still to be determined and armed groups continue to operate in the country as they have for decades. Despite many statements from the government over the years prophesying their eminent demise, they still pose a serious threat to the country and its citizens.

The emergence of the *bacrim* after paramilitary demobilization poses yet another challenge to the security and democracy of Colombia. In order to bring clarity to this problem and provide a solid foundation from which additional research may be conducted on how to best combat them (if that is even necessary), the following research questions and hypotheses are addressed.

### A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following six questions directed the research:

1. What are the origins of the *bacrim* and how have they evolved?
2. How are the *bacrim* organized and who are their members? How does this membership differ from prior groups?
3. How are the *bacrim* influencing and acting as part of civil society?
4. How are the *bacrim* influencing the government?
5. How are the *bacrim* functioning as part of the on-going conflict in Colombia?

6. What are the key characteristics of these groups and do they ontologically differ from other illegal organizations? Is *bacrim* a valid and useful concept?

## **B. COMPETING HYPOTHESES**

- H1. The *bacrim* are the direct heirs of the AUC and a third generation paramilitary force.
- H2. The *bacrim* are the next evolution of drug trafficking organizations, following the cartels and mini-cartels.
- H3. The *bacrim* are third generation gangs.
- H4. The *bacrim* are a new type of organized crime, drawing on the legacy of both the paramilitaries and the cartels.

These four hypotheses suggested what the *bacrim* might be and guided the study.

The definitions for each of these organizations is below in section D. If none of these hypotheses are true, then it will be necessary to define precisely what type of organization the *bacrim* might be. For example, it may become apparent that they are simply older Organized Crime groups that have broken down into smaller organizations. If, however, it is clear that the *bacrim* are one of the types of groups defined above, it will be important to explain precisely why the government and academics have had such difficulties in clarifying this definition and if there is a larger explanation.

## **C. METHODS**

The overarching method is an embedded case study of the *bacrim*. Within this case study, there will be studies of five of the most well-known *bacrim* groups. This is supported by the employment of qualitative document analysis of a variety of primary

source documents, interviews of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), and quantitative analysis of survey and other statistical data.

Initial data-gathering included reports from Colombian and U.S. NGOs, the UN, as well as official U.S. and Colombian government documents. Additional data came from digital media/documents: Colombian newspaper and journal articles from 2006 until 2013, social media (i.e., YouTube, Twitter, and in-country blogs as available), and declassified documents available from the National Security Archive at George Washington University. Also included were political cartoons from popular artists and pamphlets produced by the *bacrim* themselves. For interviews, SMEs were interviewed to provide substantive experience with the *bacrim* and other illegal groups. Finally, in order to see the potential impact that these groups may be having on society, a quantitative analysis of the Latinobarómetro survey and Colombian crime data was performed. Each of these methods and the associated analysis strategy are detailed below.

### **Case Study of the *Bacrim***

The single-case study of the *bacrim* has embedded cases focusing on the five major groups identified by the Colombian government and Colombian NGO, the *Instituto de estudios para el desarrollo y la paz* (INDEPAZ): *Las Águilas Negras*, *el Ejército Revolucionario Popular Anti-Subversivo de Colombia* (ERPAC), *Los Paisas*, *Los Rastrojos*, and *Los Urabeños*.

Following from Robert Yin, the case study approach was chosen to “investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the

boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.”<sup>294</sup> In this instance, the study looks at the *bacrim* to build an understanding of their operations and activities within the context of Colombia and its on-going conflict. This will allow an in-depth look at each entity to see which type of hypothesized criminal or armed group it most closely matches. It will also allow for comparisons between the groups.

### **Qualitative Documents from Colombian Press**

The major news outlets in Colombia have been writing about the *bacrim* since 2007 and the ‘emerging bands’ since 2006. Articles published by two newspapers and a weekly magazine from 2007-2013 were translated and reviewed, with additional data gathered from 2014-2016 as necessary.<sup>295</sup> From *El Tiempo*, the daily newspaper with the highest circulation in the country, 92 articles mentioned the *bacrim*. The other major newspaper in Colombia with national circulation, *El Espectador*, had 21 relevant articles available. Finally, *Semana*, one of Colombia’s most important weekly magazines/journals, had approximately 375 articles mentioning the *bacrim*. *Semana* has played a major role in Colombia uncovering scandals, crime, and corruption since its re-founding in 1983. The magazine has won multiple journalism awards, notably a King of Spain award for tackling the para-politics scandal in 2007.<sup>296</sup> These reports were catalogued in a database containing the full text of the article along with a machine translation.

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<sup>294</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Washington, D.C.: Sage, 2009), 18.

<sup>295</sup> Additional articles from later periods were captured as needed.

<sup>296</sup> “*Semana* recibe premio Rey de España por denunciar la parapolítica,” *Semana.com*, 8 May 2008, <<http://www.semana.com/on-line/articulo/semana-recibe-premio-rey-espana-denunciar-parapolitica/92577-3>> (10 February 2016).

In addition to written source material, imagery was also gathered and analyzed as appropriate. This included political cartoons created by Colombian artists and published on blogs and in national media, pamphlets distributed by the *bacrim*, and photographs used in media reporting.

### **Social Media Postings**

A new area of important research is social media. Websites such as Twitter and YouTube allow users and the public to express their feelings, opinions and thoughts about important issues in ways that researchers previously had a difficult time accessing. Furthermore, criminals and other illicit actors, as well as those actively opposing them have the opportunity to make themselves known via these websites.

In Colombia, Twitter by far has the greatest amount of data available. Topsy.com, a now-defunct social analytics website, captured approximately 113,000 all-time tweets (with 4,000 of them hash-tagged) using the term '*bacrim*' through May 2013. A search of YouTube, returned approximately 5000 results for *bacrim* through November 2014 (with over 1000 uploaded since the beginning of the year) and about 6500 for "'*Bandas criminales*' Colombia" for the same time period. It appears that most of these are reports from news organizations.

After reviewing the social media information, it was more often the links or other sources provided within the tweets that proved to be useful, rather than the tweets themselves. Also of interest were photographs published by official Colombian government twitter feeds (e.g., the military) of *bacrim* members.

## **Declassified U.S. Government Documents**

The final source for documents was the Digital National Security Archive at George Washington University. Attempts to engage with U.S. government agencies to obtain additional declassified documents were unsuccessful (See Appendix D). The archive has approximately 2000 declassified U.S. intelligence documents on Colombia since 1970. Of these, less than thirty were relevant. These documents provided another perspective on the operations of the paramilitaries and illegally armed groups. Many of them were redacted and primarily acted as an indicator of agency-specific interest in the emerging groups and their operations.

## **Interviews with Subject Matter Experts**

Nineteen Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from NGOs, academia, and the U.S. and Colombian governments were important sources of information. Some of these individuals had interacted with members of the *bacrim* and other illegal groups as part of their work, others had experience dealing with the results of *bacrim* activities, or had extensive research experience on Colombia in general.

Interviews lasted approximately one hour and were conducted on a not-for-attribution basis because of the nature of the research and to promote detailed discussion. Questions were structured in an open-ended manner to encourage reflection and discussion (See Appendix E for the list of questions). Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish depending on the wishes of the interviewee. One research trip to Bogotá was organized in January 2014 to conduct multiple meetings. When in-person appointments were not possible, interviews were conducted on the phone or via e-mail.

The data provided from interviews acted to augment the information found in qualitative analyses. It provided individual points of view regarding these various groups and helped to demonstrate why different groups (e.g., the Colombian government and NGOs) see the *bacrim* in such different ways.

Interviewees included individuals from the following organizations:

- The U.S. government in Washington, D.C. and Colombia
  - The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
  - The Drug Enforcement Administration
  - State Department
  - Department of Defense
- The Colombian government
  - Colombian Armed Forces
  - Unidad de Información y Análisis Financiero
- Non-Governmental and Research Organizations in Colombia
  - UNODC
  - INDEPAZ
  - CERAC
  - ICG
- Non-Governmental and Research Organizations in the United States
  - The Brookings Institution
  - U.S. Institute of Peace
  - Washington Office on Latin America
- Academia in Canada, Colombia, and the United States

### **Quantitative Data, including Survey Data**

The final component of the research was a quantitative analysis of criminal data from the Colombian government, survey data from the Latinobarómetro, and the development of two data series of Colombian crime statistics at the department and municipality level.

First, the descriptive criminal data, from three sources, covered the past fifty years. The data from the *Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística* (DANE) shows three types of death by external cause: homicide, war operations, and



“indeterminate events.”<sup>297</sup> The military data describes collective homicides (massacres), kidnapping, terrorist acts, and extortion. Data from the UNODC was used on the illegal drug trade.

Second, the Latinobarómetro is a yearly public opinion survey that captures eighteen countries in Latin America and Spain, including Colombia. Questions on the survey cover topics such as democracy, attitudes, and crime. Although the Latinobarómetro had eleven years of data (2000-2013, no data was collected for 2012) available, only surveys from 2005 to 2013 were correctly tagged for location. Therefore, these eight years were used for analysis.

Third, two datasets focused on criminal activity were developed. The first focused on the period 2008-2013 at the department level. Key variables created include the following:

- Number of Homicides and Homicide Rate
- Number of Extortions and Extortion Rate
- The presence or non-presence of any one of the five *bacrim* groups in the case study.
- The presence of a guerrilla organization (FARC/ELN).

A second dataset was developed for the period 2001-2013 at the municipality level. Key variables created include the following:

- Number of Homicides and Homicide Rate

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<sup>297</sup> DANE defines three categories of interest: “512 AGRESIONES (HOMICIDIOS), INCLUSIVE SECUELAS”, and “513 INTERVENCION LEGAL Y OPERAC. DE GUERRA, INCL. SECUELAS”, “514 EVENTOS DE INTENCION NO DETERMINADA, INCL. SECUELAS.” Respectively: “512 Aggressions (homicides), including the aftermath,” “513 Legal Intervention and War Operations, including the aftermath,” and “514 Indeterminate Events, including the aftermath.”

- The presence or non-presence of any one of the five bacrim groups in the case study (from 2010-2013)
- The presence or non-presence of AUC (from 2001-2006)

This data was sourced from CERAC, DANE, INDEPAZ, the UNODC, the *Observatorio del Programa Presidencial de DH y DIH*, and the *Fundación Paz y Reconciliación*.

### **Data Analysis Strategy**

The data analysis strategy for the dissertation was based on Jennifer Greene's *Mixed Methods in Social Inquiry*, which provides a process to manage and analyze complementary qualitative and quantitative data.<sup>298</sup>

The qualitative text data was first organized in a database, and then sorted by group of interest and supporting portion of the framework (Tables 8-10, below). The interviews were transcribed and then organized by themes related to the research questions, including the activities of these groups and their role in the conflict. The descriptive quantitative, survey, and panel data were all summarized, and reviewed for ranges, invalid responses, and irrelevant information.

After these intermediate steps, all of the qualitative data was brought together for comparison, which also allowed for the identification of supporting evidence for the overall framework. Separately, the descriptive crime data and the survey data were examined for patterns and trends, in particular temporal changes based on demobilization of the AUC and the emergence of the *bacrim*. For the panel data, separate analyses

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<sup>298</sup> Jennifer Greene, *Mixed Methods in Social Inquiry* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007): 144-153.

exploring random effects, pooled OLS, and hierarchical mixed-effects were conducted on the two large datasets.

Finally, the data from the quantitative analyses was used to complement the findings from the qualitative data. It was not used directly to prove or disprove the hypotheses alone, since as Andreas and Greenhill note, “We should treat numbers with much greater skepticism and scrutiny, always aware that they are human constructs.”<sup>299</sup> The numbers provided the context and established criminal and opinion-based trends for how Colombia has changed over the last several years. From the qualitative data, a coherent narrative was created, drawing on the deep history of illegal activity in the country, and each of the hypotheses were judged against it.

## **D. DEFINITIONS & FRAMEWORK**

This section defines the four major organizations of interest: Third Generation Paramilitaries, DTOs, Gangs, and “New Organized Crime.” It then provides a framework for examining the *bacrim* groups based on these definitions and the literature on criminal and paramilitary organizations.

### **Definitions of Organizations of Interest**

#### *Third Generation Paramilitaries*

Paramilitary organizations have been operating in Colombia and around the world for decades. To address the hypotheses, it is necessary to establish an understanding of

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<sup>299</sup> Peter Andreas and Kelly M. Greenhill, eds. *Sex, Drugs, and Body Counts: The Politics of Numbers in Global Crime, and Conflict* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 265.

what it means to be both a paramilitary organization, as well as, the third generation of such an organization.

The paramilitaries frequently identify themselves as self-defense groups, which is exactly what the organizations from the 1990s named themselves: *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC). Most important, paramilitaries are “political, armed organizations that are by definition extra-military, extra-State...but which mobilize and operate with the assistance of important allies, including factions within the State.”<sup>300</sup> They are not vigilantes, private armies, or “mobsters.”<sup>301</sup> These paramilitary organizations may be made up of both civilians and members of the military and police forces (off-duty). They will use violence in order to defend the State and the ideology that they espouse.

As discussed, Colombia has had several previous generations of paramilitary groups.<sup>302</sup> Following Hristov’s model, the first formal generation existed in the 1960s and 1970s and operated mostly under the supervision of the military to combat guerrilla operations around the country. The second generation of paramilitaries began in the 1980s, reached their peak in the 1990s and ‘ended’ in 2006 with the official demobilization of the AUC. Unlike the first generation, these groups had much more operational-independence and outside funding to equip their members. They also no longer had to follow the government ideology as closely.

If the *bacrim* are third generation paramilitaries, the following characteristics would be expected. The *bacrim* would be acting to defend a stated ideology and the State.

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<sup>300</sup> Mazzei, 4.

<sup>301</sup> Mazzei, 5.

<sup>302</sup> See a more complete discussion of the generations of paramilitaries in the literature review.

They would be receiving clandestine support from both the government and other powerful 'legitimate' actors in society. The membership of the groups would be made up of a mixture of military and civilians, and while some former members of the AUC and other second generation groups would be expected to be present, the *bacrim* would largely be comprised of a new generation of actors.

### *Drug Trafficking Organizations*

Drug trafficking is defined as engaging in any one or more of the following three activities: the production, transportation or distribution of drugs. The second proposed definition of the *bacrim* is as “*bandas que son inherentes al problema del narcotráfico*” (bands/gangs inherent to the problem of drug trafficking), which have been characterized here as drug trafficking organizations (DTOs). To be defined as a DTO, a group must have a clear organizational structure, with an almost exclusive focus on drug trafficking. These groups must also be able to project violence and power to corrupt officials at all levels of government as well as intimidate the populace into accepting their activities.<sup>303</sup>

Over approximately the last thirty-five years, the various drug cartels and later members of the AUC and the FARC have profited enormously from the drug trade. While the cartels were undoubtedly DTOs, they were different for the AUC and the FARC. Drug trafficking was merely one of the tools at their disposal for generating funds. Other sources of capital included taxing traffickers and landowners, ransom money, and bank robbery.<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> See James Finckenaue, Joseph Fuentes, and George Ward, “Mexico and the United States: Neighbors Confront Drug Trafficking,” for an elaboration on each of these aspects.

<sup>304</sup> Richani, 74-76.

Therefore, if the *bacrim* are DTOs, it would be expected that they would have an organized structure and focus on drug trafficking. This does not completely exclude money-making via other activities, such as extortion, counterfeiting, etc., but suggests that the large preponderance of activities should be dedicated to the various elements of trafficking in narcotics. Furthermore, the groups must be engaging in violence and corruption against government officials and citizens in Colombia.

While it is suspected that the larger *bacrim* are fairly well-organized and undoubtedly true that they are engaging in corruption and violence, the question remains about how much they are focused on drug trafficking versus how much they are focused on other activities. Therefore, while the *bacrim* might engage in drug trafficking like the AUC and the FARC, they are not DTOs in the traditional sense of the Cali or Medellín cartels.

### *Gangs*

The third proposed definition of the *bacrim* is as a group of gangs, given their actual name as “*bandas criminales*” (criminal gangs/bands). Gangs are subject to considerable discussion in modern research, especially given the problems of gang activity throughout the United States and Central America. Some of the most well-known gangs in the world include the MS-13 and Barrio 18 (a.k.a. 18<sup>th</sup> Street gang). These gangs originated in Los Angeles and eventually became transnational organizations stretching

across the United States and south into Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras.<sup>305</sup>

While most types of gangs use violence in their activities, the overall organization and actual criminal enterprises in which they engage can vary greatly. Gangs are considered to be first generation if they are loosely organized, focused on holding turf, and not conducting any sophisticated criminal activities. In the second generation of gangs, stronger leaders emerged who were more interested in “markets” for their activities rather than a particular street or neighborhood. Finally, the third generation of gangs, which include MS-13 and Barrio 18, have a well-developed structure. They engage in more complex criminal activities and seek out multiple sources of income.<sup>306</sup>

Blackwell explains the structure of MS-13 and Barrio 18 as well some of the criminal activities that gangs undertake, including extortion, murder, local drugs (minimal/no involvement in the global drug trade), and prostitution.<sup>307</sup> Gang organization is not strictly hierarchical across the region, but within the smaller sub-groups (*clicas*) there is usually a defined chain of command and the *clicas* may act autonomously or in concert with others.<sup>308</sup> Brands explains these gangs “use violence and corruption to neutralize governments and protect their business.”<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> See Bruneau, et al. (2011) and Monteith (2010) for a complete discussion of gangs in Central America.

<sup>306</sup> Thomas Bruneau, Lucia Dammert, and Elizabeth Skinner, *Maras: Gang Violence and Security in Central America* (Austin: University of Texas, 2011).

<sup>307</sup> Adam Blackwell, *If the War on Drugs is Over ...Now What? Security Without Easy Answers* (Victoria: Friesen Press, 2015): Kindle Position 1685.

<sup>308</sup> Blackwell, Kindle Position 1657.

<sup>309</sup> Hal Brands, “Criminal Fiefdoms in Latin America: Understanding the Problem of Alternatively Governed Spaces,” Western Hemisphere Security Analysis Center, Paper 17, 2010, <<http://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/whemsac/17>> (18 September 2015).

When the Colombians referred the *bacrim* as gangs, it is likely that they were thinking of this third generation type. As a gang, a group will not have reached the level of sophistication of an Organized Crime group (below), but will be able to conduct organized crimes. If the *bacrim* are this type of third generation gang, again the characteristics of these groups would be evident. They will have a developed structure that includes a particular ‘culture’ or identity, engage in a wide variety of criminal activities (e.g., prostitution, robbery, kidnapping, and drugs), and employ violence as part of conducting business. Their culture may include dress, tattoos, and language, among other unique characteristics.<sup>310</sup>

#### *New Organized Crime*

The final hypothesis challenges the idea that the *bacrim* are a new type of “Organized Crime,” drawing on the legacy of the paramilitaries and the cartels. Again the distinction must be carefully made between engaging in crime that is organized (which it is possible for many people to do) versus being an actual Organized Crime entity.<sup>311</sup>

Recall the UN definition of organized crime:

“A group made up of three or more persons that exists during a certain period of time and acts in a coordinated fashion in order to commit one or more serious crimes, or crimes, defined according to this Convention, for the purposes of obtaining, directly or indirectly, an economic benefit or some other material benefit.”<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> Dennis Rodgers and Robert Muggah, “Gangs as Non-State Armed Groups: The Central American Case,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 30, no. 2 (2009): 302-303.

<sup>311</sup> Hagan (2006), 134.

<sup>312</sup> United Nations (2000), 5.



Characteristics of Organized Crime groups include some of those seen in DTOs and gangs, but are much more all-encompassing. The cross-cutting ones are: a clear structure or hierarchy, illegal activities, and the use of violence and corruption. Furthermore, these groups (in addition to DTOs and gangs) are non-ideological/political, in sharp contrast with paramilitary organizations. Most importantly, the Organized Crime groups have the ability to exercise a monopoly over a particular industry or territory or even both.<sup>313</sup> They have exclusive memberships, explicit rules, and seek self-perpetuation.<sup>314</sup> As mentioned before, gangs may exhibit some of these characteristics, but they do not exhibit the same level of sophistication as Organized Crime.

Therefore, while they may in fact exhibit all of these characteristics at a level high enough to be more than gangs, what makes them a “new type”? Consider the following criteria that Shelley has suggested to define “new types” of Organized Crime:

- May sell/purchase services from terrorists,
- Depends on high levels of systemic and institutionalized corruption,
- Uses violence against state, thrives on absent state
- Maintains short-term objectives,
- Uses mostly illegitimate sources of funding (instead of being diversified into legitimate business), and
- Does not invest money into the local economy or in the international financial markets, instead using it to finance immediate needs.<sup>315</sup>

Therefore, if the *bacrim* are part of this “new type” of Organized Crime group, in addition to exhibiting characteristics of the paramilitaries and the cartels, it would be expected that they would show the characteristics of the original groups, but also of these

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<sup>313</sup> Howard Abadinsky, *Organized Crime* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 2010), 4.

<sup>314</sup> See both Hagan (2006) and Abadinsky (2010).

<sup>315</sup> Louise Shelley, “The Unholy Trinity: Transnational Crime, Corruption, and Terrorism.” *Brown Journal of International Affairs* 11, no. 2 (2005): 101-111; Shelley (2014), 101-106.

new groups defined by Shelley. Are the *bacrim* engaging with terrorists of any type (whether they are the FARC (as defined by the U.S.) or other international terrorist organizations)? Are they seeking higher levels of corruption? And are their financial activities different from Organized Crime of the past?

## **Framework**

The following three Tables organize the framework with which the *bacrim* will be examined. Table 8 lays out the characteristics and potential attributes that will be considered for the groups under examination. It draws together qualities of many types of organizations, arranged by features of the organization, actions and activities, and relationships. Attributes may be contrasting (either/or) or cumulative (groups participate in one or more listed attribute for the characteristic). Note that the attributes associated with the licit and illicit enterprises focus on those typically found in Colombia.

Beneath Table 8 are two sub-tables, Table 9 and 10, which identify additional features of the groups of interest here. Table 9 highlights key distinctions between paramilitaries and criminals. This will be the first step in determining the nature of the *bacrim*. The second, Table 10, focuses on the three types of criminal organizations and identifies significant features that differentiate DTOs from Gangs from New Organized Crime. While all of the characteristics captured in Table 8 are important, it is the features in Table 9 and Table 10, which arise from there, that allow for distinctions to be made between group types.

**Table 8. Major Characteristics and Associated Attributes of Illegal Organizations**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Potential Attributes</b>
<b><i>Features of the Organization</i></b>	
Origins	Evolution or merger of older groups vs New entity
Leadership	Elites vs non-elites; Mid-level personnel who have gained power
Members	Elites vs non-elites; Current or Former Armed Forces/Police; Former Other Illegal Entity; Youth vs Experienced personnel
Structure	Network vs Hierarchy vs Franchise
Goals/Ideology	Financial gain; Political gain; Counterinsurgency
Territory	City vs Rural vs Both; Local vs Regional vs National
<b><i>Actions and Activities</i></b>	
Licit Enterprises	Ranching; Farming; Investment in local business
Illicit Enterprises	Drug Trafficking (Manufacture, Transportation, International Distribution); Extortion/Intimidation; Arms Trafficking; Money Laundering; Assassination/Massacres/Social Cleansing; Mining; Petty Theft/Criminality
<b><i>Relationships</i></b>	
Relationship with the National Government	Group corrupts/co-opts members vs Group avoids interactions with members
Relationship with the Local Government	Group corrupts/co-opts members vs Group avoids interactions with members
Relationship with Security Forces/Legal System	Group corrupts/co-opts members vs Group avoids interactions with members
Relationship with Society	Group tries to impose controls on society; Society supports or opposes them (passively or actively)

**Table 9. Key Distinctions between Paramilitary and Criminal Organizations**

<b>Paramilitary</b>	<b>Criminal</b>
Counter-insurgency ideology	No specified ideology (focus on financial gain)
Pervasive/clandestine state support	State support via corruption; individuals
Make political statements	No attempt to further a stated political cause
Claims of legitimacy; Belief in legitimacy (by portions of the population)	No claims of or belief in legitimacy
Employ a mix of civilians and current/former security forces	Predominantly composed of civilians

**Table 10. Significant Features that Differentiate between Drug Trafficking Organizations, Gangs & New Organized Crime**

	<b>Drug Trafficking Organization</b>	<b>Gang</b>	<b>New Organized Crime</b>
<b>Organization Level</b>	Moderate to High	Low to Moderate	High
<b>Illicit Enterprise</b>	Primarily focus on drug trafficking	Engage in wide range of criminal activities (e.g., extortion, prostitution, drug and arms sales)	Engage in wide range of criminal activities (e.g., extortion, arms and drug trafficking, mining)
<b>Level of Corruption</b>	Moderate	Low to Moderate	High
<b>Level of Violence</b>	Moderate (Targeted/Business Purposes)	Moderate to High (Targeted/For Hire)	Moderate to High (Targeted/Business & State)
<b>Finances</b>	Long Term, Complex Money Laundering Activities	Short term, Local	Short Term, Global
<b>Terrorism</b>	No links to terrorism	No links to terrorism	May establish links to terror groups
<b>Culture</b>	No particular culture	Establish "gang" culture featuring defining characteristics such as tattoos, symbols, hand signals. Elaborate rule set governing behavior.	No particular culture

## 5. CASE STUDY OF THE BACRIM

This Chapter lays out the formation of the *bacrim* in general, along with the generalized features that have been attributed to them. It then turns to the five groups of interest: *Las Águilas Negras*, *el Ejercito Revolucionario Popular Anti-Subversivo de Colombia* (ERPAC) and its successors (*Libertadores de Vichada* and *Bloque Meta*), *Los Paisas*, *Los Rastrojos*, and *Los Urabeños* (also referred to as *Los Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia* (AGC), Clan Úsuga, and Clan del Golfo).

### A. COUNTING AND IDENTIFYING EARLY *BACRIM* GROUPS (2006-2010)

As demobilization concluded in 2006, the landscape of illegal armed organizations shifted. The Colombian government went from facing a predominantly unified paramilitary operation to opposing a patchwork of groups varying in skill and size. According to the executive report from the High Commission for Peace, thirty-five blocks and fronts of more the 31,000 individuals comprised the final total of demobilized paramilitaries (see Appendix A for a complete timeline).<sup>316</sup>

Multiple reports estimated different numbers of groups with a variety of sizes and compositions, including demobilized paramilitaries, non-demobilized paramilitaries, as well as new members. One early report issued by the Colombian military named

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<sup>316</sup> Oficina Alto Comisionado para la Paz, *Proceso de Paz con las Autodefensas*, Presidencia de la República, 2006, 99.

approximately twenty-two new organizations with about 2,500 members.<sup>317</sup> Another identified forty-three groups.<sup>318</sup> In a third document, the Colombian National Commission on Reparations and Reconciliation (CNRR) counted 3,500-5,000 members among thirty-four groups.<sup>319</sup> Finally, a submission to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights from INDEPAZ listed seventy-nine groups (three of which were suspected to have disbanded) with almost 9,000 members, separated out by department.<sup>320</sup> Table 11, below, lists the groups identified by CNRR, while Table 12 and Table 13 list those identified by INDEPAZ.

CNRR's report also divided the groups into three categories based on their research during and after the peace process: dissidents, the re-armed, and the emergent.<sup>321</sup> The dissidents were AUC who did not demobilize (indicated in bold).<sup>322</sup> The re-armed were those who demobilized from the AUC but then rejoined old groups or became members of emerging ones. The third group (the emergent) is comprised of two different types of entities – minor groups that already existed in parallel with the AUC and expanded to fill the vacuum and entirely new groups that formed only after the demobilization.

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<sup>317</sup> Rafael Pardo Rueda, *Fin del Paramilitarismo* (Bogotá: Planeta, 2007), 156-157.

<sup>318</sup> Leech, 127. Stated by Alirio Uribe of the Jose Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective in a 2006 interview.

<sup>319</sup> Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación (CNRR), *Disidentes, Rearmados y Emergentes: ¿Bandas Criminales o Tercera Generación Paramilitar?* Informe No. 1. (2007), 46.

<sup>320</sup> Leonardo González Perafán, "Nuevo Mapa Paramilitar," 21 August 2007, <[http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session3/CO/WFTU\\_COL\\_UPR\\_S3\\_2008anx\\_NuevoMapaParamilitar,21agosto2007\\_ES.pdf](http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session3/CO/WFTU_COL_UPR_S3_2008anx_NuevoMapaParamilitar,21agosto2007_ES.pdf)> (3 April 2016).

<sup>321</sup> CNRR, 38.

<sup>322</sup> The President's Oficina Alto Comisariado para la Paz only identified two of these seven as AUC – the Autodefensas Campesinas del Casanare and the Bloque Cacique Pipintá.

**Table 11. Thirty-Four Groups Identified by CNRR<sup>323</sup>**

<i>Águilas Negras (Antioquia)</i>	Grupo en el Sur del Cesar
<i>Águilas Negras (Caquetá)</i>	Grupo en San Onofre
<i>Águilas Negras (Catatumbo y Norte de Santander)</i>	Grupo en San Vicente del Chucurí y El Carmen
<i>Águilas Negras (Magdalena)</i>	Grupo Valledupar
<i>Águilas Negras (Sur del Cesar y Sur de Bolívar)</i>	Jagua de Ibirico
<i>Alta Guajira</i>	<i>Libertadores del Llano**</i>
<i>Autodefensas Campesinas del Casanare</i>	<i>Los Paisas</i>
Autodefensas Campesinas Unidas del Norte (ACUN) or Héroes del Pacífico	<i>Los Rastrojos***</i>
Bacrim Barranquilla	Los Traquetos
Banda Criminal en el Oriente de Caldas	Mano Negra
Bloque Antisubversivo del Sur	Mosquera y Pizarro
<i>Bloque Cacique Pipintá</i>	Organización Nueva Generación (ONG)
Bloque Llaneros del Casanare*	Pueblo Bello
Bloque Pijao	<i>Rastrojos***</i>
<i>Contra insurgencia Wayuú</i>	Riohacha y Maicao
Grupo Barranco Loba	Seguridad Privada Meta y Vichada or Los Macacos
Grupo en Bajo Cauca	<i>Vencedores de San Jorge</i>

\* Originally documented as the Bloque Llaneros del Cananare (no such location)

\*\* Led by *Cuchillo*, eventual leader of ERPAC

\*\*\* Rastrojos and Los Rastrojos likely meant to be the same organization

*Groups in red are AUC who did not demobilize*

Some of these groups were more precisely identified than others (e.g., “the group in San Onofre” versus *Los Rastrojos*) based on the amount of information available at the time and the level of organization of the group (i.e., did the group publicize a particular name or did law enforcement impose one based on geography and individuals involved). It is evident from this early list that most of the *bacrim* of interest had already been established by this time. *Las Águilas Negras* existed in five different areas, and *Los Paisas* and *Los Rastrojos* also had formed. The only two not immediately evident are

<sup>323</sup> Adapted from CNRR, 73.

ERPAC and *Los Urabeños*. The *Libertadores del Llano* appear to be an early or alternate name for ERPAC, as they were both run by the same man, Pedro Oliviero Guerrero Castillo, alias “Cuchillo,” in the same time period of 2006-2007. *Los Urabeños*, operating as *Los Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia*, do not appear on the CNRR list.

From the INDEPAZ list, groups that could be associated with the five *bacrim* of interest have been highlighted. Any group that may have been associated with the *Águilas Negras* has been highlighted in red, *Los Rastrojos* in blue, and ERPAC in green. Groups in yellow were matched with groups on the CNRR list. Neither *Los Paisas* nor *Los Urabeños* appear. Groups that the list described as disbanded are in gray.

The groups listed by INDEPAZ vary greatly, from those given specific names, to those who were noted as simply demobilized from various paramilitaries groups. Others are more vaguely identified: “Paramilitary Re-composition,” and “Armed Structures.” Unlike the CNRR list however, which only provided names, locations, and estimated numbers, the INDEPAZ list also provided narratives, describing the current [2007] understanding of the groups. For example, the “Armed Structures” in Córdoba are described as operating in the municipalities of Tierralta and Montelíbano with approximately 50 men, using small arms and motorcycles.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> González Perafán, 10.



**Table 12. Seventy-Nine Groups Identified by INDEPAZ (Antioquia-La Guajira)<sup>325</sup>**

DEPT	GROUP	DEPT	GROUP
Antioquia	Desmovilizados del B.C.B.	Cauca	A.U.C. de Don Berna
Antioquia	Águilas Negras de Antioquia	Cauca	B.C.C. "Bloque Central Cauca"
Antioquia	P.A.C. "Protección al Campesino" [Disbanded]	Cesar	Frente Mártires de Valledupar
Antioquia	Autodefensas de la Universidad de Antioquia	Cesar	Desmovilizados del Bloque Norte Frente Resistencia Motilona
Arauca	Las Águilas	Cesar	Desmovilizados y no desmovilizados del Frente Resistencia Motilona del Bloque Norte
Atlántico	Desmovilizados y no desmovilizados del Atlántico	Cesar	Desmovilizados del Bloque Norte
Atlántico	Banda Criminal Emergente de "Guerrero y Salomón" (reemplazo de J.40)	Cesar	Banda criminal del Cesar – San Martín
Bolívar	Desmovilizados y no desmovilizados del Frente Defensores de San Lucas del B.C.B.	Cesar	Águilas Negras
Caldas	Bacrim en el Nororiente de Caldas	Cesar	Bacrim del Cesar y sur de Bolívar
Caldas	Cacique Pipintá	Chocó	Autodefensas Campesinas Unidas del Norte del Valle
Caquetá	Desmovilizados del Frente Sur de los Andaquíes del B.C.B.	Córdoba	"Estructuras armadas" [Armed Structures]
Caquetá	Águilas Negras	Córdoba	Los Traquetos
Caquetá	Bloque Antisubversivo del Sur 70	Córdoba	Vencedores de San Jorge
Casanare	Desmovilizados del Bloque Centauros	Cundinamarca	Bloque Central Santander (y 7 más)
Casanare	Disidentes del Bloque Vencedores de Arauca	Cundinamarca	Bloque Guaviare
Casanare	Bloque Llaneros del Casanare	Cundinamarca	Facciones del desmovilizado "Bloque Capital"
Casanare	Bacrim Autodefensas campesinas del Casanare – Martín Llanos	Guainía	Coordinadora Colombiana de Autodefensas del Guainía
Cauca	Águilas Negras del Cauca	La Guajira	Reducto no desmovilizado en la Alta Guajira
Cauca	Los Rastrojos	La Guajira	Grupo de Desmovilizados y otros
Cauca	Los Victorinos	La Guajira	Frente contrainsurgencia Wayuú

<sup>325</sup> González Perafán.

**Table 13. Table 12 Continued (Magdalena-Vichada)<sup>326</sup>**

DEPT	GROUP	DEPT	GROUP
Magdalena	Desmovilizados del Bloque Norte	Putumayo	Grupo de no desmovilizados del Frente Sur del Putumayo B.C.B.
Magdalena	Banda Criminal Emergente El Dificil	Putumayo	Macheteros y Rastrojos del Putumayo
Magdalena	Banda Criminal de Codazzi	Putumayo	Frente Antiterrorista Único
Magdalena	Águilas Negras del Magdalena	Risaralda	Grupo Cordillera
Meta	Grupo de no desmovilizados del Bloque Héroes del Guaviare	Santander	Desmovilizados del Frente Ramón Dávila del Bloque Puerto Boyacá
Meta	Por Colombia Presente [Disbanded]	Santander	Águilas Negras de Santander
Meta	Bacrim de Pedro Oliverio Guerrero "Cuchillo"	Sucre	Estructura proveniente del Atlántico
Meta	Seguridad privada de Meta y Vichada	Sucre	Frente común social por la paz de Sucre
Nariño	Desmovilizados del Bloque Libertadores del Sur	Tolima	Bloque Pijao [Disbanded]
Nariño	O.N.G. "Organización Nueva Generación"	Tolima	Los Hombres de Azul
Nariño	Rastrojos de Nariño	Tolima	Futuro Verde
Nariño	Frente Social Común por la Paz de Nariño	Valle del Cauca	Valle Machos y Rastrojos
Nariño	Mano Negra	Valle del Cauca	A.U.N.V. "Autodefensas Unidas del Norte del Valle"
Nariño	Recomposición paramilitar	Valle del Cauca	R.C.P. "Rondas Campesinas Populares" [Rastrojos]
Norte de Santander	Desmovilizados del Bloque Catatumbo	Valle del Cauca	Bloque Central
Norte de Santander	Águilas Negras	Valle del Cauca	Frente Social Común por la Paz
Norte de Santander	Águilas Doradas	Valle del Cauca	Águilas Negras
Norte de Santander	Águilas Azules	Vichada	T.C.C. Todos Contra Cuchillo
Norte de Santander	Águilas Rojas	Vichada	Reducto del "Grupo de Cuchillo" [Redoubt]
Norte de Santander	Nueva Generación		

<sup>326</sup> González Perafán.

These long, imprecise lists reveal the disorganization of the period immediately following the end of demobilization in 2006, at both a national government and operational level. Similarly, these new and changed entities would have difficulties as well. CNRR's so-called dissidents or re-armed no longer had the command and control previously available to them from a nationwide organization, while the emergent faced competition from the dissidents and re-armed, as well as the DTOs and other illegal groups operating around the country.

INDEPAZ, in their 2010 report, suggested that even in 2006 as demobilization concluded, there were groups present (numbering forty-three, perhaps from the document described by Alirio Uribe of the Jose Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective, see note 316). They identified sixty-seven in 2007 (as seen above) and then estimated a decline in the number of groups each year: fifty-three, twenty-six, and finally fifteen in 2010.<sup>327</sup> Several factors likely contributed to this decrease: law enforcement operations, consolidation/alliances, and conflict between *bacrim* and with other illegal organizations. Figure 13 (below) illustrates the decline in groups as estimated by the CNP, and also shows the estimated number of *bacrim*.

In addition to the five main *bacrim* groups that will be examined in the case study, the following others were identified by INDEPAZ in 2010: *La Oficina de Envigado* [formerly part of the Medellín Cartel], *Héroes de Castaño* [subsequently identified as another name for *Los Urabeños*], *Cordillera*, *Los Machos*, *Autodefensas Campesinas del Nariño*, *Renacer*, *Nueva Generación*, *Autodefensas del Llano* (new that year),

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<sup>327</sup> INDEPAZ, Informe sobre Presencia de Grupos Narcoparamilitares en el 2010, 2010, <<http://www.indepaz.org.co>>.

*Autodefensas Campesinas del Casanare*, and *Cacique Pipintá* (CNRR identified the last two groups as non-demobilized AUC in 2007).<sup>328</sup> This count is at variance with the estimate provided by the CNP below, which only counted seven groups in 2010.

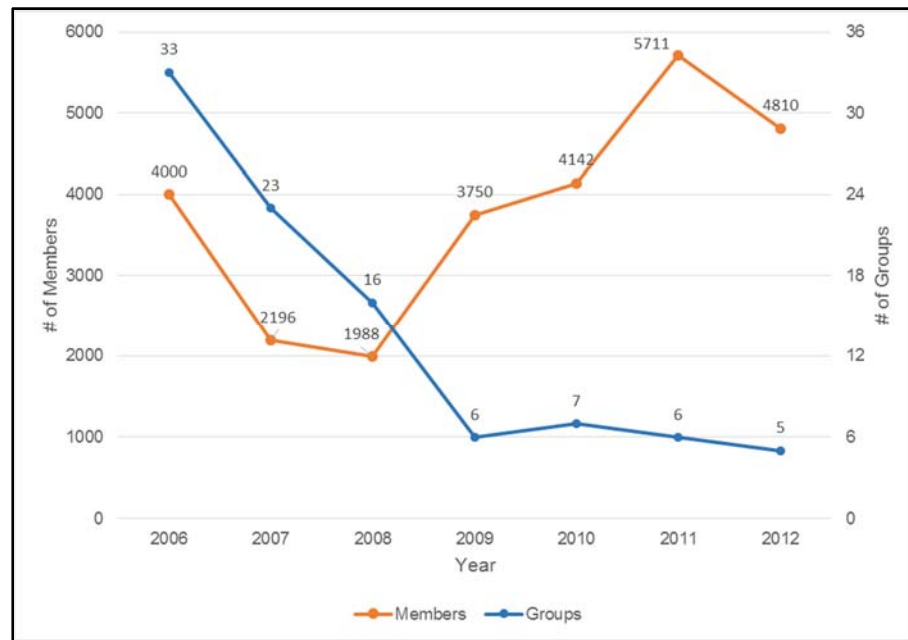


Figure 13. Number of Groups and Members Estimated by the CNP (2006-2012)<sup>329</sup>

## B. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS ATTRIBUTED TO THE *BACRIM*

This section uses literature, Colombian media reports, and interviews to identify characteristics that are generally attributed to the *bacrim* as a whole.

<sup>328</sup> INDEPAZ (2010), 17-18; CNRR, 73.

<sup>329</sup> Policía Nacional, in Carlos Andrés Prieto, “Las Bacrim y el crimen organizado en Colombia,” *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, Policy Paper 47, March 2013, <<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/la-seguridad/09714.pdf>> (June 2016).

## Paramilitary or Criminal Organization?

Even in early 2016, researchers continued to disagree about the fundamental nature of the *bacrim*. *Verdadabierta*, a joint effort by *Semana* magazine and FIP published a three-part series in December 2015 and January 2016 tackling the problem of the *bacrim*: “Paramilitarism in Colombia: Really Dismantled?”; “Neoparamilitaries or Criminals?”; and, “Criminal Bands: Simply Criminals or a 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation of ‘Paras’?”<sup>330</sup> These reports, in particular, describe both sides of this argument that will be discussed here.

The first distinction is made between being a paramilitary or criminal organization. Evidence regarding the five key features (ideology, state support, political statements, legitimacy, and membership) will be considered.

### *Ideology*

The ideology of the *bacrim*, or rather their lack of ideology, has been strongly debated. Richani believes that these post-AUC groups do not have a counterinsurgency platform and are all tied to drug trafficking.<sup>331</sup> Rafael Pardo Rueda and Celina Realuyo both note that the *bacrim* are focused on making money and not countering the guerrillas.<sup>332</sup> Jorge Restrepo, et al., specifically states that the groups do not have an explicit ideology (either left or right) while Vicente Torrijos remarks on the lack of “any platform (whether purely formal and rhetorical) and political objective (plausible or

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<sup>330</sup> Available at Verdadabierta.com as: El paramilitarismo en Colombia, ¿realmente se desmontó?; ¿Neoparamilitares o criminales?; and, Bandas criminales: ¿simples criminales o tercera generación de ‘paras’?; The contents of these reports will be further discussed below.

<sup>331</sup> Richani, 228.

<sup>332</sup> Pardo Rueda, 156-157; Realuyo, 123.

not).”<sup>333</sup> Pizarro supports the same view: “Today, in Colombia none of the criminal gangs combat the guerrilla and, to the contrary, most advance pragmatic alliances with guerrilla groups for drug trafficking.”<sup>334</sup> In 2007, the ICG acknowledged that the *bacrim* were not relying on any particular counter-insurgency ideology and had established a range of relationships with the guerrillas depending on the situation.<sup>335</sup>

The report from *Verdadabierta* quotes well-known specialist, Frédéric Massé, from the Universidad Externado de Colombia, who said that the groups were neither counterinsurgency focused nor systematically linked with the armed forces or police.<sup>336</sup>

Multiple interviewees stated that the *bacrim* were criminals with no ideology.<sup>337</sup> One did say they had an ideology, but called it “business.”<sup>338</sup> Another interviewee contrasted them with the paramilitaries, who at least had “false legitimacy.”<sup>339</sup>

There is evidence that supports the alternative view though. The CNRR has gone on record indicating that some *bacrim* have used an “*ambiguo discurso contrainsurgente*” [ambiguous counterinsurgent discourse] and engaged in targeted killings, disappearances, and displacements.<sup>340</sup> In addition to this, HRW says that it has received reports, although fewer than before AUC demobilization, that certain groups have conducted counterinsurgency operations, including threats to unionists and guerrilla

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<sup>333</sup> Jorge A. Restrepo, et al. (2011); Vicente Torrijos, “Terrorismo Desmitificado: Verdades y Mentiras Sobre La Violencia En Colombia,” *Revista 5*, no. 1 (2010): 130. My translation.

<sup>334</sup> Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, “¿Bandas criminales o neoparamilitarismo?”, *El Tiempo*, 24 January 2011, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-8795917>> (2014). My translation.

<sup>335</sup> International Crisis Group, *Colombia’s New Armed Groups*, Latin America Report, No. 20. (2007), 2.

<sup>336</sup> “¿Neoparamilitares o criminales?”, *Verdadabierta*, 21 December 2015, <<http://www.verdadabierta.com/rearme/6138-neoparamilitares-o-criminales>> (March 2016).

<sup>337</sup> Interview, 23 January 2014, Colombian Government; Interview, 23 January 2014, Colombia – NGO 2; Interview, 22 January 2014, US Government – Colombia 1.

<sup>338</sup> Interview, 22 January 2014, US Government – Colombia 3.

<sup>339</sup> Interview, 22 January 2014, US Government – Colombia 1.

<sup>340</sup> CNRR, 16.

sympathizers.<sup>341</sup> Others have noted hidden control of the populace, coercion, and social cleansing tactics.<sup>342</sup> *El Tiempo* reports that in 2010, *bacrim* conducted more attacks against civilians than both the FARC and ELN.<sup>343</sup> Furthermore, as will be discussed later, the *bacrim* continue the use of pamphlets to threaten the populace, appropriating the symbols and language of the paramilitaries.

Jeremy McDermott refutes these views, instead suggesting that *bacrim* act as “guns for hire” and thus, any activities that might be perceived as political are a consequence of them carrying out operations on behalf of their clients, who have multiple motives.<sup>344</sup> The truth is likely more nuanced than this. While the groups are paid to use these tactics, they have also used them on their own or seen them used successfully in the past. Therefore, it is highly likely the *bacrim* conduct such operations both for their own purposes, as well as for hire, but they are not articulating any overarching counter-insurgency ideology.

An opinion piece written in *Semana* in early 2009, summarized it: “Unlike the paramilitaries, *bacrim* weave any kind of alliance, their purpose is not counterinsurgency but the territorial control that allows them to operate the drug business and obtain the best

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<sup>341</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Paramilitaries’ Heirs: The New Face of Violence in Colombia* (2010), 29-30.

<sup>342</sup> Jorge A. Restrepo, et al. (2011); CNRR, 66-67; International Crisis Group (2007), 7; Amnesty International, “Colombia: Annual Report 2013,” 2014, <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/colombia/report-2013>> (October 2014).

<sup>343</sup> “Bandas, la gran amenaza,” *El Tiempo*, 26 February 2011, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-8934960>> (2014).

<sup>344</sup> McDermott (2014a).

possible returns at any expense.”<sup>345</sup> Ideology therefore should be seen as a means to an end and not a fundamental piece of *bacrim* activity.

### *State Support*

The next question of these organizations focuses on the *bacrim*’s relationship with the Colombian State. Is there any evidence of pervasive state support or only local corruption and the subversion of individuals?

General reports are much sparser on this topic compared to evaluations of their ideology. Richani and Torrijos see ties and cooperation at the local level with the authorities.<sup>346</sup> Colombian historian Jorge Orlando Melo states that these groups do not have the “protection of the military or the police or the national political establishment” but that they are tolerated at the local level by the political authorities.<sup>347</sup> Alirio Uribe of the *Jose Alvear Restrepo Lawyers’ Collective*, a victim advocacy organization, believes though that these groups continue to work with the army and police.<sup>348</sup> Massé agrees that the groups are working with the military and police, but not systematically, instead emphasizing that members of the *bacrim* try to infiltrate these government organizations to gather intelligence and any ties are financially, not strategically, motivated.<sup>349</sup> In the sections addressing each *bacrim* individually, there are multiple reports of influence and linkages.

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<sup>345</sup> “La nueva guerra de Uribe,” *Semana*, 16 March 2009, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/conflicto-armado/articulo/la-nueva-guerra-uribe/101115-3>> (2014). My translation.

<sup>346</sup> Richani, 228; Torrijos, 132.

<sup>347</sup> Jorge Orlando Melo, quoted in Gonzalez Calero (2012). My translation.

<sup>348</sup> Leech, 127. Stated by Alirio Uribe of the Jose Alvear Restrepo Lawyers’ Collective in a 2006 interview.

<sup>349</sup> Massé quoted in “¿Neoparamilitares o criminales?”



The problem of the corrupting power of these organizations was mentioned several times in the interviews and the high level of awareness and concern with corruption is also evident in the responses to the Latinobarómetro surveys (see Table 19).<sup>350</sup> One interviewee did suggest, however, that the relationship with the state at the local level was minimal and there was almost no relationship at the national level.<sup>351</sup> Nevertheless, in reflection of the varying intensity of state support illegal armed groups have received throughout the twentieth century (especially at local levels), it is highly unlikely that there *is not* any state support, but the degree remains ambiguous.

#### *Political Statements*

Interviewee opinions on the political nature of the *bacrim* were mixed. No specific statements by any groups were cited, but the following observations were made. One subject suggested that the political agenda of the *bacrim* was to make sure their economic interests were not impeded.<sup>352</sup> Another stated more generally that they were “not political but economic.”<sup>353</sup> Conversely, an interviewee believed that while most groups were “just organized crime,” that *Los Urabeños* were trying to be a political group.<sup>354</sup> Several noted that they have a local criminal agenda focused on limiting political interference.<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> Interview, 23 January 2014, Colombian Government; Email Communication, January 2014, Colombia Academic/Researcher.

<sup>351</sup> Interview, 22 January 2014, Colombia – NGO 1.

<sup>352</sup> Interview, 14 October 2013, US Government 2.

<sup>353</sup> Email Communication, January 2014, Colombia Academic/Researcher.

<sup>354</sup> Interview, 23 January 2014, Colombia – NGO 2.

<sup>355</sup> Interview, 22 January 2014, Colombia – NGO 1; Interview, 4 June 2014, Former Colombian Government.

Some political statements may be drawn from pamphlets the groups have issued. Although propaganda in the sense of seeking to influence the populace, these pamphlets do not necessarily distort facts (e.g., threats will be carried out if necessary). For example, in an *Urabeños* pamphlet, a strike was used to “reject the current misrule” by President Santos (which included the death of one of their leaders) and those who failed to obey were going to be targeted for death.

### *Legitimacy*

Legitimacy is multifaceted. First, does a group claim to be legitimate, and second, does the population support or believe these claims to legitimacy. One interviewee tied the question of legitimacy specifically to the former paramilitaries, noting that they at least had a semblance of it, especially in certain areas of the country, and that demobilization removed the ability to maintain that pretense.<sup>356</sup> Another interviewee noted that *Los Urabeños* have tried to give themselves legitimacy by making statements that they are part of the armed conflict.<sup>357</sup> Specifically, *Los Urabeños* submitted a communique to the Colombian government in mid-2013, stating that they were part of the “failed peace process” with the AUC and wanted recognition as the “third actor we have always been.”<sup>358</sup> Regarding support from the population, interviewees concluded

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<sup>356</sup> Interview, 22 January 2014, US Government – Colombia 1.

<sup>357</sup> Interview, 24 January 2014, Colombia – NGO 3.

<sup>358</sup> “Nuevas autodefensas piden ser tenidas en cuenta en proceso de paz,” *El Espectador*, 28 June 2013, <<http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/paz/nuevas-autodefensas-piden-ser-tenidas-cuenta-proceso-de-articulo-430565>> (18 January 2016). My translation.

that the so-called legitimacy of the paramilitaries did not apply to the *bacrim* and that they were believed to be just criminals.<sup>359</sup>

### *Members*

Identifying the members of a semi-clandestine organization is difficult if not impossible. In the case of *bacrim*, the leadership are fairly well-known while the true nature of the rank and file is less transparent.

Immediately after AUC demobilization, it was thought that approximately 30% of those who had demobilized joined new groups.<sup>360</sup> Others specified that group members included both guerrillas and former paramilitaries.<sup>361</sup> One interviewee cited Colombian police data that indicated 1/3 were former paramilitaries, 1/3 were former guerrillas and 1/3 were new personnel.<sup>362</sup> Regarding recruitment, several interviewees specifically named the problem of youths being lured into these organizations with promises of wealth and influence.<sup>363</sup>

In a 2007 interview with an un-named CNP member, he stated the groups were comprised of an assortment of individuals: “ex-guerrillas, former paramilitaries, people who work in the drug business, etc.”<sup>364</sup> A few days later, another article from *Semana* noted, “But perhaps what is most important is that the regional inhabitants do not

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<sup>359</sup> Interview, 24 January 2014, Colombia – NGO 3; Interview, 12 May 2014, US Government 3; Interview, 4 June 2014, Former Colombian Government.

<sup>360</sup> Richani, 228.

<sup>361</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, *Colombia: Country Report*, 2012, <<http://www.eiu.com>> (9 November 2014), 4.

<sup>362</sup> Interview, 12 May 2014, US Government 3.

<sup>363</sup> Interview, 22 January 2014, US Government – Colombia 3; Interview, 16 July 2014, US Academic/Researcher/NGO; Interview, 5 March 2014, US Academic/Researcher/NGO; Interview, 17 April 2014, US Academic/Researcher/NGO.

<sup>364</sup> “Mancuso advierte sobre 5.000 nuevos paras dirigidos por miembros del Estado Mayor Negociador,” *Semana*, 5 February 2007, <<http://www.semana.com/on-line/articulo/mancuso-advierte-sobre-5000-nuevos-paras-dirigidos-miembros-del-estado-mayor-negociador/83367-3>> (2014). My translation.

perceive a difference, they say they are the same paramilitaries but with new names.”<sup>365</sup>

A third *Semana* article, dated 2012, continued with the same theme: “Many of the members of these groups come from the war. They know their methods and their degradation. They have their weapons. And they have no qualms about using all this technical arsenal and terror in the service of criminal activities.”<sup>366</sup>

The leaders of many of the *bacrim*, except *Los Rastrojos*, were mid-level AUC commanders.<sup>367</sup> For example, *Los Urabeños* were initially led by Daniel Rendón, alias “Don Mario,” a mid-level AUC member from Bloque Elmer Arenas (BEC) and *Los Paisas* were led for a time by Cesar Augusto Torres Lujan, alias “Mono Vides,” a former member of the Bloque Mineros.<sup>368</sup> In contrast, former members of the Norte del Valle Cartel controlled *Los Rastrojos*. Massé believes that due to partial demobilization, although the groups are led by former paramilitaries, they are no longer AUC.<sup>369</sup>

Based on the data provided above, it appears that some researchers have concluded that the *bacrim* are not genuine paramilitary organizations and interviewees generally concurred with that conclusion. In sum, looking across the features of ideology, state support, political statements, legitimacy, and membership, the *bacrim* generally

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<sup>365</sup> “Los nuevos paras: ¿Son nuevos?, ¿Son paras?”, *Semana*, 13 February 2007, <<http://www.semana.com/on-line/articulo/los-nuevos-paras-son-nuevos-son-paras/83475-3>> (2014). My translation.

<sup>366</sup> “Delincuencia en Colombia: bandas desbandadas,” *Semana*, 1 December 2012, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/delincuencia-colombia-bandas-desbandadas/268712-3>> (2014). My translation.

<sup>367</sup> Richani, 230-231; Human Rights Watch (2010), 28; “Qué son las Águilas Negras?”,

<sup>368</sup> Human Rights Watch (2010), 32-33; “Cesar Augusto Torres Lujan, alias ‘Mono Vides’,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/cesar-a-torres-lujan-mono-vides>> (May 2016).

<sup>369</sup> “¿Neoparamilitares o criminales?”

present a criminal profile, with a strong legacy of paramilitarism. Turning now to those types of criminal organizations, the *bacrim* will be examined for those characteristics.

### **DTO, Gang or New Organized Crime?**

Having tentatively concluded that the *bacrim* appear as criminal organizations rather than paramilitary, the next step is to make initial assessments about the type of criminal organization they most closely resemble.

Torrijos emphasizes that the *bacrim* are “*esencialmente manifestaciones de criminalidad organizada* [essentially manifestations of organized crime].”<sup>370</sup> Massé describes them as “*grupos armados mafiosos o mafias en armas* [armed mafia groups or mafias under arms].”<sup>371</sup> Garzón emphasizes that these groups have learned the importance of keeping a low profile.<sup>372</sup> They have been described as those who “lurk in the shadows” and are “clandestine and hard to target.”<sup>373</sup>

To understand the significance of this, consider the following seven features of the framework: organization level, illicit enterprise, level of corruption, level of violence, finances, terrorism, and culture.

#### *Organization Level*

The organization of the *bacrim* appears to meet the criteria for a moderate to high level of organization. Restrepo believes their organizational level is similar to the

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<sup>370</sup> Torrijos, 131. My translation.

<sup>371</sup> Massé quoted in “¿Neoparamilitares o criminales?”

<sup>372</sup> Juan Carlos Garzón, *Mafia & Co.: The Criminal Networks in Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2008), 56.

<sup>373</sup> McDermott (2014a); María Victoria Llorente and Jeremy McDermott, “Colombia’s Lessons for Mexico,” in *One Goal, Two Struggles: Confronting Crime and Violence in Mexico and Colombia*, Cynthia Arnson, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2014), 32.

paramilitaries and that they also look to achieve local territorial control, as the paramilitaries did, to facilitate operations.<sup>374</sup>

Others have suggested a lower level of organizational control, including the ICG and the Colombian *Grupo de Memoria Histórica*, who has produced a major retrospective in 2013, looking at the on-going conflict in the country. The ICG sees the *bacrim* as having less command and control than the AUC, while the *Grupo de Memoria Histórica* suggests they are fragmented and regionally-focused.<sup>375</sup>

Some have tried to define the types of structures. Pardo Rueda suggests they are organized as networks.<sup>376</sup> Soledad Granada, et al., argue that they are a mix of hierarchies and networks.<sup>377</sup> María Victoria Llorente and McDermott see them as franchised groups operating throughout the country that are not quite hierarchies or networks.<sup>378</sup>

The interviewees also held an equally mixed view of how the *bacrim* are structured. One believed that they are vertically integrated as syndicates while others see them operating in a much more cellular or franchised fashion.<sup>379</sup> Another observed that their forms were dictated by two things: geography, both terrain and the spaces they occupy, and their current opponents.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> Jorge A. Restrepo, et al. (2011).

<sup>375</sup> International Crisis Group (2007), 2; Grupo de Memoria Histórica, *¡Basta Ya! Colombia: Memorias de Guerra y Dignidad* (Bogotá: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013), 187.

<sup>376</sup> Pardo Rueda, 156-157.

<sup>377</sup> Soledad Granada, Jorge A. Restrepo and Alonso Tobón García, “Neoparamilitarismo en Colombia: Una Herramienta Conceptual para La Interpretación de Dinámicas Recientes del Conflicto Armado Colombiano,” in *Guerra y violencias en Colombia: Herramientas e Interpretaciones*, eds. Jorge A. Restrepo and David Aponte (Bogotá: Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2009), 489.

<sup>378</sup> Llorente and McDermott, 28.

<sup>379</sup> Interview, 22 January 2014, Colombia – NGO 1; Interview, Interview, 23 January 2014, Colombian Government; Interview, 30 May 2014, US Academic/Researcher/NGO.

<sup>380</sup> Interview, 22 January 2014, US Government – Colombia 1.

The Colombian media also addressed their structures on several occasions. *El Tiempo* reported in 2011 that they are not hierarchical, but operating more like the *combos* (gangs) in Medellín.<sup>381</sup> *Semana* writers Alonso Tobón and Cesar Hernando argued the opposite. In 2011 and 2012, they write that the *bacrim* are hierarchical.<sup>382</sup> There is no agreement among researchers, and due to the heterogeneity of the groups, they are likely a combination of both hierarchies and networks.

### *Illicit Enterprise*

The type (and extent) of the illicit enterprises the *bacrim* operate is one of the key factors in determining what type of criminal organization they most closely resemble. It is also one of the variables that is easiest to document, as much criminal activity is readily and widely reported by the government, the media, and NGOs.

Llorente and McDermott summarize it as a criminal informal economy:

“In Colombia, drug traffickers with roots in the first-generation drug cartels, the second-generation baby cartels, the AUC (those who demobilized, as well as those who did not), the Marxist rebels (the FARC, the ELN, and Popular Liberation Army [EPL]), the BACRIM, and common criminals now form an intertwined and interdependent criminal network. This network is no longer exclusively dedicated to drug trafficking, but is also involved in illegal gold mining, extortion, and other criminal activities.”<sup>383</sup>

General Naranjo, arguing from the perspective that these groups are DTOs, observed the following: “Drug trafficking has a very high ability to mutate. First they

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<sup>381</sup> “Bandas, la gran amenaza.”

<sup>382</sup> Alonso Tobón, “Retos después de la muerte de un capo,” *Semana*, 13 January 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/opinion/articulo/retos-despues-muerte-capo/234021-3>> (2014); Cesar Hernando, “El Pan de Cada Día,” *Semana*, 11 November 2012, <<http://www.semana.com/opinion/expertos/articulo/el-pan-de-cada-dia-asesinatos-masacre/323863>> (2014).

<sup>383</sup> Llorente and McDermott, 28.

were large cartels, then paramilitaries, regional structures, paramilitary federations associated with drug trafficking, micro cartels, and now this new challenge that are called criminal gangs.”<sup>384</sup>

The following (Table 14) summarizes the crimes that are commonly linked to the *bacrim*. Again, as has been noted in several other parts of the framework, the crimes conducted vary by region.<sup>385</sup> For example, in the case of mining, the *bacrim* have several modes of behavior. In some areas, the groups co-opt and exploit the local artisanal miners, while in others, they operate on a larger scale, overseeing actual mining activities.<sup>386</sup> Furthermore, they have also been known to act as facilitators, private security, and intermediaries for legal mining businesses.<sup>387</sup>

**Table 14. Non-Drug Crimes Typically Associated with the Bacrim<sup>388</sup>**

Arms Trafficking	Mining
Drug Trafficking	Money Laundering
Extortion	Oil/Fuel Smuggling
Kidnapping	Counterfeit smuggling

<sup>384</sup> General Óscar Naranjo, quoted by Jineth Bedoya Lima, “‘Vamos por ‘Valenciano’ y los ‘Comba’”: General Óscar Naranjo,” *El Tiempo*, 2 January 2011, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-4328145>> (2014).

<sup>385</sup> International Crisis Group (2007), 7.

<sup>386</sup> Frédéric Massé, *Actores Armados Ilegales y Sector Extractivo en Colombia* (Observatorio Internacional – DDR, 2012), 6; Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, *Organized Crime and Illegally Mined Gold in Latin America*, April 2016, <<http://globalinitiative.net/organized-crime-and-illegally-mined-gold-in-latin-america>> (July 2016).

<sup>387</sup> Massé, 15.

<sup>388</sup> Jorge A. Restrepo, et al. (2011); Realuyo, 124; CNRR, 16; Massé, 3; Human Rights Watch (2010), 28; International Crisis Group (2007), 2, 7; Ariel Fernando Avila, *La Frontera Caliente Entre Colombia y Venezuela* (Bogotá: Random House Mondadori, 2013), Kindle Location 608.



Their behavior regarding drug trafficking is even more complex, and arguably still the largest portion of their activities. In 2010, the UNODC observed the *bacrim* making alliances with drug traffickers and controlling the various corridors where drug operations occurred.<sup>389</sup> *Bacrim* were thought to control 50% of the coca in 2010, as well as many of the trafficking routes.<sup>390</sup>

Almost all interviewees discussed drug trafficking and illegal mining. Another area of concern for many of them was money laundering and the co-option of legitimate businesses (for money laundering, extortion, and financing).<sup>391</sup>

### *Corruption*

Restrepo emphasizes the corruptive nature of the *bacrim* and their continued ability to subvert state organizations, as the paramilitaries did in the past.<sup>392</sup> This is linked to the matter of state support discussed previously, but rather it is the *bacrim* doing the corrupting rather than state entities freely providing sponsorship.

Ariel Fernando Avila cites Mauricio García Villegas, noting, “The Colombian mafia (unlike the Mexican) has learned not to fight impossible battles; therefore, their strategy consists of minimizing violence against the state, and maximizing, without any fuss, corruption and the capture of the weakest political institutions.”<sup>393</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> UNODC, *Colombia: Coca Cultivation Survey 2010*. 2011a. <<http://www.unodc.org>> (October 2014), 71.

<sup>390</sup> “Bandas, la gran amenaza.”

<sup>391</sup> Interview, 14 October 2013, US Government 2; Interview, 23 January 2014, Colombia – NGO 2; Interview, 12 May 2014, US Government 3; Email Communication, January 2014, Colombia Academic/Researcher.

<sup>392</sup> Jorge A. Restrepo, et al. (2011).

<sup>393</sup> Avila (2013), Kindle Locations 581-583. My translation.

In the interviews, when asked about Colombia's biggest challenges, corruption was a common theme. It was mentioned in conjunction with the *bacrim* as well as independently.

*El Tiempo* cites corruption as a major *bacrim* tactic in multiple articles throughout the years. In one from 2011, a reporter writes, "Corruption is another of their strategies: there already are more than a thousand civil servants, police, prosecutors and military investigated or forced to retire for links to *bandas*."<sup>394</sup> In an article from *Semana*, another reporter describes a publication from the *Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris*, which identifies the problem of *bacrim* corruption associated with drug trafficking, mining, and extortion (in particular "*la venta de protección*" [protection rackets]).<sup>395</sup>

### *Violence*

The focus on corruption does not diminish the fact that the *bacrim* are engaging in violence. Restrepo, Garzón, and Torrijos all place emphasis on the violence used by these groups.<sup>396</sup> The interviewees also discussed the problem of violence. In particular, one Colombian interviewed discussed a culture of always being armed and the violent behavior that has emerged.<sup>397</sup> This is deeply tied to the decades of violence discussed previously and that has been perpetuated by armed groups acting on all parts of the political spectrum.

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<sup>394</sup> "Bandas, la gran amenaza." My translation.

<sup>395</sup> "Una radiografía a las llamadas bacrim," *Semana*, 31 March 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/una-radiografia-llamadas-bacrim/237665-3>> (2014).

<sup>396</sup> Jorge A. Restrepo, et al. (2011); Torrijos, 130; Garzón (2008), 56.

<sup>397</sup> Interview, 4 June 2014, Former Colombian Government.

One interviewee, as well as Restrepo, noted explicitly that these groups have inherited the weapons and tactics of the paramilitaries.<sup>398</sup> In 2014, HRW documented the methods employed by several groups in the port of Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca.<sup>399</sup> This included violence, disappearances, and displacement. Most gruesome were the identification of *casas de pique* (“chop-up houses”) where groups had victims executed.<sup>400</sup> Between 2009 and 2013, displacements in the city averaged 12,000 people per year.<sup>401</sup> In Colombia overall, because of the on-going conflict, there were 6.3 million UN-registered displaced persons as of June 2015, with large refugee populations in Ecuador and Venezuela (greater than 100,000).<sup>402</sup>

Yet, levels of violent crime (e.g., homicides, massacres) are much lower than in previous years.<sup>403</sup> The nuances of *bacrim* violence then are perhaps more subtle than that of prior groups.

### *Finances*

The financing of illegal groups is always a challenging topic. One interviewee discussed the fact that the *bacrim* were aiming for “sustainable financing” to be able to continue operations.<sup>404</sup> Funding for these groups can come from diversified criminal activity including drug trafficking, extortion, and illegal mining.

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<sup>398</sup> Jorge A. Restrepo, et al. (2011); Interview, 8 October 2013, US Government 1.

<sup>399</sup> Human Rights Watch, *The Crisis in Buenaventura* (2014).

<sup>400</sup> Human Rights Watch (2014), 2.

<sup>401</sup> Human Rights Watch (2014), 5.

<sup>402</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Colombia Situation: UNHCR Presence / Key Figures of Colombian Persons of Concern, June 2015*, 30 June 2015, <<http://www.refworld.org/docid/559b7f424.html>> (14 August 2016).

<sup>403</sup> See Chapter 6 for the full analysis on crime rates.

<sup>404</sup> Interview, 23 January 2014, Colombian Government.

Financing from drug proceeds has been critical for illegal groups in Colombia for many years, and this trend continues, to a lesser extent with the *bacrim*. McDermott argues that only half of their revenue comes from trafficking, compared to the cartels.<sup>405</sup>

Extortion is another important source of money. General Naranjo claimed in 2010 that regular extortion, as well as the phenomenon of ‘micro-extortion,’ were key sources of *bacrim* funding.<sup>406</sup> Micro-extortion focuses on repeatedly extracting small sums of money from individuals rather than seeking out large lump sum payments. For example, in 2013, bicycle-taxis in Bogotá had to pay 3,000 pesos per day to operate and teachers in several municipalities in Córdoba had to pay 15,000 pesos per month to be allowed to work.<sup>407</sup> Crime statistics suggest though that most reported extortion is committed by ‘common criminals.’ Unfortunately, extortion has become a very common crime, going from a low of 830 reports in 2008 to a high of 4,805 in 2013 (See Chapter 6 for detailed statistics on extortion).<sup>408</sup>

In a *Semana* article, the writers estimated how much money the groups were earning from illegal mines, suggesting in one case (Antioquia), excavators paid between 650 and 3,450 million pesos to the illegal groups.<sup>409</sup> Massé notes that as a result of money made through drug trafficking and extortion, the groups are investing in equipment and

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<sup>405</sup> McDermott (2014a).

<sup>406</sup> “‘Quien pague una extorsión será visto como auxiliador del crimen’: MinDefensa,” *Semana*, 7 September 2010, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/quien-pague-extorsion-sera-visto-como-auxiliador-del-crimen-mindefensa/121606-3>> (2014).

<sup>407</sup> “La extorsión en Colombia empieza desde los 1.000 pesos,” *El Tiempo*, 22 September 2013, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-13075676>> (April 2016).

<sup>408</sup> Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, *Logros de la Política Integral de Seguridad y Defensa para la Prosperidad*, August 2014, <[http://www.mindefensa.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/Mindefensa/Documentos/descargas/estudios%20sectoriales/info\\_estadistica/Logros\\_Sector\\_Defensa.pdf](http://www.mindefensa.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/Mindefensa/Documentos/descargas/estudios%20sectoriales/info_estadistica/Logros_Sector_Defensa.pdf)> (October 2014).

<sup>409</sup> “Minería ilegal: entre el oro y el crimen,” *Semana*, 29 March 2013, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/oro-crimen-mineria-ilegal/338107-3>> (2014).

machines in order to operate their own mining activities (in addition to extorting existing ones).<sup>410</sup> An April 2016 article from another Colombian news source describes extortion, intimidation and the murder of those who do not cooperate with the *bacrim* in the gold mines north of Medellín (Buriticá and Segovia).<sup>411</sup>

There have been other reports of financial activities as well. A 2011 article from *Semana* detailed money laundering including casinos, car dealers, low level soccer/football teams, and arms trafficking.<sup>412</sup> In April 2016, a scandal enveloped the Congress and the *Partido Social de Unidad Nacional* (Social Party of National Unity/ Partido de ‘la U’), when it was reported that the son of the Senate’s finance and budget director was detained with more than 600 million pesos, reportedly from a *bacrim* for money laundering purposes.<sup>413</sup>

### *Terrorism*

Links to terrorism are one of the crucial features of new organized crime groups. From a purely U.S. political perspective, the *bacrim* have been linked, with varying degrees of confidence, to three groups designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations by the U.S. Department of State: the FARC, the ELN, and Hezbollah.<sup>414</sup> As discussed in the Introduction, the DEA has revealed links between Hezbollah and the *Oficina de*

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<sup>410</sup> Massé, 11.

<sup>411</sup> Pedro Vargas Núñez, “Las Bacrim les declaran la guerra a las mineras legales,” *Portafolio*, 26 April 2016, <<http://www.portafolio.co/negocios/empresas/bacrim-amenazan-mineras-legales-494785>> (17 May 2016).

<sup>412</sup> “Bacrim en Bogotá, entre la negación y las evidencias,” *Semana*, 5 April 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/bacrim-bogota-entre-negacion-evidencias/237954-3>> (2014).

<sup>413</sup> “Caleta en Carro de Congresista,” *El Tiempo*, 5 April 2016, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/caleta-en-carro-de-congresista/16555225>> (17 May 2016).

<sup>414</sup> U.S. DEA.

*Envigado*. Yet, none of the interviewees mentioned the *bacrim* in connection with terrorism in 2014.

There is little doubt that the *bacrim* have cooperated with both the FARC and ELN guerrillas as part of the on-going conflict in the country.<sup>415</sup> They have established alliances with the guerrillas for strategic, as well as practical, reasons.<sup>416</sup> This includes the conduct of multiple illicit activities, such as drug trafficking and mining. For example, in a March 2014 report, a *bacrim* worked with the FARC to mine gold in Choco Department.<sup>417</sup>

In a 2012 article in *El Tiempo*, journalist Mario López Castaño suggested that because of these alliances, the *bacrim* are working with terrorists and therefore should face the military rather than the national police.<sup>418</sup> In May 2016, the military did receive permission to bomb *Los Urabeños*, as well as two other groups: *Los Pelusos* (“the last redoubt of the EPL”) and *Los Puntilleros* (the latest incarnation of ERPAC), but as part of a change in national strategy and not necessarily for links to terrorism.<sup>419</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> Richani, 228; Garzón (2008), 58.

<sup>416</sup> Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 187.

<sup>417</sup> Marguerite Cawley, “FARC, BACRIM Dividing Gold Profits in Colombia Province: Police,” *InSight Crime*, 14 March 2014, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/farc-urabenos-dividing-gold-profits-in-colombia-pacific-police>> (14 October 2014).

<sup>418</sup> Mario López Castaño, “Narcotráfico: factor de alianza entre terrorismo y ‘bacrim’,” *El Tiempo*, 30 July 2012, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-12076641>> (2014).

<sup>419</sup> “Autorizan bombardeos aéreos contra las bacrim,” *Semana*, 6 May 2016, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/autorizan-bombardeos-aereos-contra-bandas-criminales/472499>> (17 May 2016); “Los Grupos Armados Organizados, la amenaza que cambia de nombre,” *El Espectador*, 7 May 2016, <<http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/nacional/los-grupos-armados-organizados-amenaza-cambia-de-nombre-articulo-631154>> (17 May 2016); “‘Los Pelusos’, la bacrim que se disfraza de guerrilla en el Catatumbo,” *La Opinión*, 15 May 2016, <<http://www.laopinion.com.co/judicial/los-pelusos-la-bacrim-que-se-disfraza-de-guerrilla-en-el-catatumbo-111847#ATHS>> (17 May 2016).

The purported links with Hezbollah and other foreign organizations are more troublesome. The *bacrim* have steadily expanded their operations outside of Colombia, supplying the Mexican cartels and possibly traffickers associated with Hezbollah.<sup>420</sup>

Thus, linkages to terrorism by the *bacrim* thus far could best be assessed as being generated by mutual need in the case of their relationship Hezbollah, that is, payment for drugs, which Hezbollah then smuggles to Europe, and operational/financial joint-interests in the case of the FARC and ELN.

### *Culture*

While there was not a specific discussion of “*bacrim* culture” by interviewees, two Colombians questioned discussed the general problem of a culture of illegality and violence.<sup>421</sup> This is especially problematic among the youth, who see the *bacrim* wielding local power and want to participate. Discussed in the literature review and in the section on violence, the “culture of violence” is alive in Colombia. Peter Waldmann asks directly in his research, “Is There a Culture of Violence in Colombia?”<sup>422</sup> He explains that the “socio-cultural structures and symbols” within Colombia are “connected with, produced by, and perpetuate violence.”<sup>423</sup> One particular problem is the “macho cult” where strong, ruthless individuals are admired.<sup>424</sup>

Another issue of culture is what Julián Cubillos, a Colombian political scientist, describes as the “*cultura del atajo, del avivato, y del violento* [culture of ‘short-cuts,’ of

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<sup>420</sup> Realuyo, 123.

<sup>421</sup> Interview, 23 January 2014, Colombian Government; Interview, 4 June 2014, Former Colombian Government.

<sup>422</sup> Peter Waldman, “Is There a Culture of Violence in Colombia?”, *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 4 (2007): 593-609.

<sup>423</sup> Waldman, 594.

<sup>424</sup> Waldman, 597-598.

taking advantage, and of the violent]” within the country.<sup>425</sup> In a 2011 opinion piece to *Semana*, he explains that these short-cuts, while harmless in some cases (e.g., cutting in lines), have graver consequences in others (e.g., trivializing the problem of the *bacrim*).

Other symbols of culture, especially in gangs, tend to be dress and tattoos. In a review of Twitter images, tagged with *bacrim* or the name of a specific group by the Colombian military (approximately 22,000 all time) and the Colombian police (approximately 18,000 all time) between 2011 and 2016, the only dress in common amongst the *bacrim* captured in the less than two dozen photographs is jeans and t-shirts. Conversely, pictures drawn from newspapers and research reports of *bacrim* portray uniformed men in the style of the AUC and the guerrillas. Several examples of each type are posted below (Figure 14). Tattoos are frowned upon in some groups. For example, *Las Águilas Negras* targeted youths in Norte de Santander with tattoos and piercings as a means of social control.<sup>426</sup> There is nothing among the *bacrim* that speaks particularly to a special type of gang culture separate from the culture of violence that pervades Colombia in general.

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<sup>425</sup> Julián Cubillos, “Impunity,” *Semana*, 24 June 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/opinion/articulo/impunity/241947-3>> (2014). “Avivato” is an Argentine cartoon from the 1940s, wherein the title character takes advantage of others for his own benefit.

<sup>426</sup> “Las águilas negras apunta a los jóvenes,” *Semana*, 20 November 2007, <<http://www.semana.com/online/articulo/las-aguilas-negras-apunta-jovenes/89618-3>> (17 May 2016).





Figure 14. Images of *Bacrim*<sup>427</sup>

### Social Commentary

Colombian cartoonists have made their views of the *bacrim* clear, signaling their belief in the close connection between the *bacrim* and prior organizations. Several drawings, from Colombian caricaturists Julio César González Quiceno (“Matador”), Fabro, Chócolo, and Ricky capture this sentiment over the years (Figures 15-20).

The first three drawings (Figure 15, Figure 16, Figure 17) all date from early 2011 and focus on the evolution of these groups. Matador’s drawing shows the same reaper

<sup>427</sup> *Los Urabeños*, 17 October 2013 (@COL\_EJERCITO); Unnamed *bacrim*, [www.pares.com.co](http://www.pares.com.co); *Los Rastrojos*, 12 December 2012 (@PoliciaColombia); Unnamed *bacrim*, [www.pares.com.co](http://www.pares.com.co).

first calling itself a paramilitary, then an emerging band, and finally a *bacrim*. In Fabro's illustration, it is an evolution of both the paramilitaries and the FARC, turning into emerging bands, then the "supposedly reintegrated" and finally the *bacrim*. The final drawing from Chócolo in 2011 illustrates that the *bacrim* and their associates are using the same techniques as prior groups – sending drugs underwater in semisubmersibles and killing those who oppose them.



Figure 15. “¿Notan la diferencia?” [Do you see the difference?], January 2011<sup>428</sup>

<sup>428</sup> Matador, “¿Notan la diferencia?”, 17 January 2011, <<http://matadorcartoons.blogspot.com>> (16 May 2015).



Figure 16. “Evolution of the Violence in Colombia”, February 2011<sup>429</sup>



Figure 17. “New and Old Modalities of the Bacrim and their Bad Company [associates] – Under Water and Under Ground”, February 2011<sup>430</sup>

<sup>429</sup> Fabro, “Evolución de la Violencia en Colombia,” 16 February 2011, <<http://fabrographiks.blogspot.com>> (16 May 2015).

<sup>430</sup> Chócolo, “Las Bacrim,” 24 February 2011, <<http://www.elespectador.com/opinion/caricaturista/chocolo/bacrim-imagen-253093>> (16 May 2015).

Two later drawings (Figure 18, Figure 19) from Matador show a more nuanced appreciation of how these organizations operate. In the first, *Los Urabeños* are shown to be the child of the narcotraffickers and paramilitaries. The second illustrates the connections between all the parties to the conflict: the narcotraffickers, the guerrillas, the *bacrim*, and corruption.



Figure 18. “Lazos Familiares” [Family Ties], January 2012<sup>431</sup>

<sup>431</sup> Matador, “Lazos familiares,” 6 January 2012, <<http://matadorcartoons.blogspot.com>> (16 May 2015).



Figure 19. “La Veradera ‘Alianza del Pacífico’”  
[The True ‘Pacific Alliance’], May 2013<sup>432</sup>

The final drawing, from late 2015, reflects a cynicism regarding the conclusion of the peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC. The TV viewer says, “Finally, Peace! Now only the *bacrim*, *Los Urabeños*, *La Oficina de Envigado*, *Los Rastrojos*, the ELN, delinquency, gangs, *combos*, *fleteros*, and extortionists remain...” This clearly highlights all of the illegal groups that will still operate even after FARC demobilization. *Combos* are a type of gang, frequently located in Medellín, and *fleteros* are roving groups of motorcyclists who hold up drivers on the road, typically in Bogotá.

<sup>432</sup> Matador, “La Veradera ‘Alianza del Pacífico’,” 23 May 2013, <<http://matadorcartoons.blogspot.com>> (16 May 2015).



Figure 20. “Paraíso” [Paradise], October 2015<sup>433</sup>

### *Pamphlets and Text Messages*

The topic of *panfletos* or pamphlets emerged unexpectedly during the research, since it was thought that members of the *bacrim* might have taken to modern methods of communication, such as Twitter or YouTube, to issue threats and make proclamations, as the Mexican cartels and the FARC have sometimes done. Instead it became evident that the distribution of pamphlets and the use of text messaging was a more typical *modus operandi* for these groups.

Pamphleteering, as discussed in the literature review, goes back to *La Violencia*, when illegal groups published notes to threaten both individuals and organizations. This method was adopted by the FARC, ELN and EPL, as well as the AUC, and the cartels to

<sup>433</sup> Ricky, “Paraíso,” 5 October 2015, < <http://www.ecbloguer.com/elblogdericky/?tag=pueblo> > (23 January 2016).

publicize intentions to the local populace. In remote regions where modern communications are scarce, pamphlets guarantee that recipients will receive the message.

The first three images below (Figure 21, Figure 22) provide examples of pamphlets published by the FARC and the ELN. They name targets, sometimes referred to as “*objetivos militares*” (military objectives). The first FARC pamphlet in Figure 21 from 2013 calls out several Twitter users for being “destroyers of peace,” while the second (April 2014) recognizes the sixth anniversary of the death of founder Manuel Marulanda and then calls out multinational corporations, former President Uribe’s political party, members of that party, and a local radio station. The ELN pamphlet (also from 2014) in Figure 22 declares action against political criminals, multinationals, and capitalism.

Original pamphlets for the AUC could not be found, but two similar ones were identified (Figure 23). A group calling itself the *Bloque Libertadores de Caldas y Tolima* appropriated AUC symbology in 2013 to make threats against “common criminals.” Separately, in late 2014, pamphlets alluding to a revitalized MAS, a second generation paramilitary organization, were dropped out of an airplane over the municipality of Chía, north of Bogotá. The authors indicated that anyone committing the crime of kidnapping would be executed.

Another reported way that *bacrim* target victims is through text messages. In one case, members of human rights organizations received threats via text message.<sup>434</sup> In

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<sup>434</sup> “Organizaciones de Derechos Humanos denuncian amenazas de ‘Los Urabeños’,” *El Espectador*, 25 February 2015, <<http://www.elspectador.com/noticias/nacional/organizaciones-de-derechos-humanos-denuncian-amenazas-d-articulo-546294>> (19 May 2016).



another, miners received threats to leave the village via text.<sup>435</sup> These anecdotes are common and not surprising in a country where the internet is less common, but almost everyone has a mobile phone.<sup>436</sup>

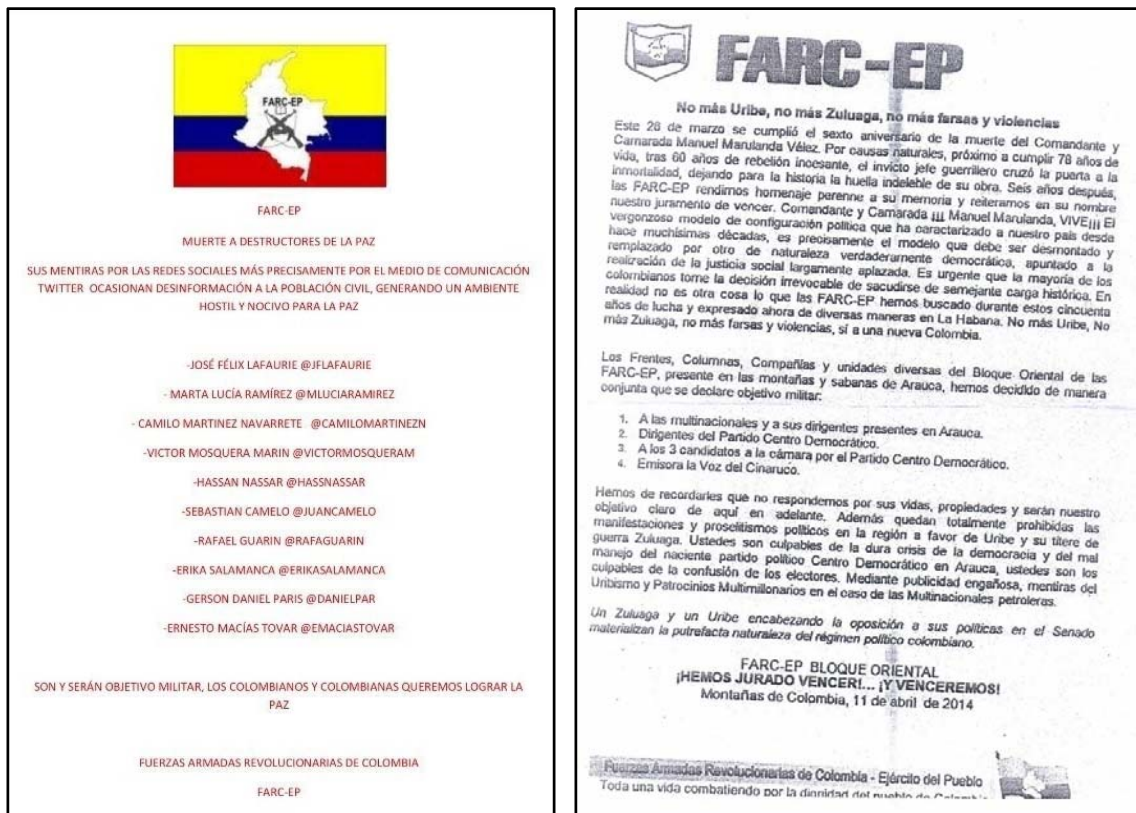


Figure 21. Pamphlets of the FARC<sup>437</sup>

<sup>435</sup> Yhoban Camilo Hernandez Cifuentes, "BACRIM tienen amenazados a mineros de Segovia," *IPC*, <<http://www.ipc.org.co/agenciadeprensa/index.php/2012/08/17/bacrim-tienen-amenazados-a-mineros-de-segovia/>> (19 May 2016).

<sup>436</sup> Colombia had approximately 56.2 million mobile accounts in late 2015, but only 6.8 million mobile Internet subscriptions. The total population of Colombia is approximately 50 million. See <[http://colombiatic.mintic.gov.co/602/articles-15178\\_archivo\\_pdf.pdf](http://colombiatic.mintic.gov.co/602/articles-15178_archivo_pdf.pdf)> for complete details on mobile and internet penetration.

<sup>437</sup> "Amenaza de las Farc en Twitter," *Correo Confidencial*, <<http://correoconfidencial.com/archivos/37356>> (2015); "Defensoría exige respeto de armados ilegales al proceso electoral," *RCCIU*, <<http://rccius.com/?p=640>> (2015).





Figure 22. Pamphlet of the ELN<sup>438</sup>



Figure 23. Pamphlets of the "AUC" and Others<sup>439</sup>

<sup>438</sup> "Paro Armado," *Prensa Libre Casanare*, <<http://prensalibrecaasanare.com/principal/print:page,1,12036-supuesto-8220paro-armado8221-del-eln-iniciarna-hoy-en-casanare-arauca-boyacb-y-santander.html>> (19 May 2016).

<sup>439</sup> "Panfletos que amenazan de muerte circulan en La Dorada (Caldas)," *La Patria*, 19 April 2013, <<http://www.lapatria.com/sucesos/panfletos-que-amenazan-de-muerte-circulan-en-la-dorada-caldas-31458>> (2015); "FAC investiga sobrevuelo de avioneta que lanzó panfletos amenazantes," *Caracol Radio*, <[http://caracol.com.co/radio/2014/10/21/nacional/1413903180\\_472068.html](http://caracol.com.co/radio/2014/10/21/nacional/1413903180_472068.html)> (2015).

## C. FIVE *BACRIM* IN FOCUS

The following section presents case studies of the five major *bacrim* identified by the Colombian government and INDEPAZ, using Tables 8-10 as the framework for understanding. Each case study will describe the origins and leadership, members and structure, territory, and goals/ideology/activities. Relationships will be discussed as appropriate within the narrative.

### **Las Águilas Negras (Black Eagles)**

#### *Origins & Leadership*

In October 2005, a since declassified DIA/J2 Executive Highlights intelligence report indicated the presence of Red and Black Eagles in Norte de Santander. These groups were reportedly comprised of both former members of the AUC's Bloque Central Bolívar (BCB) and "new recruits."<sup>440</sup> A few months later, former Ambassador William Wood wrote in a State Department cable about the existence of Black Hand/Black Eagles in Nariño, taking over territory controlled by the AUC's Bloque Libertadores del Sur, and Blue Eagles operating in Norte de Santander.<sup>441</sup>

*El Tiempo* published an early report in October 2006, saying *Las Águilas Negras* were created in 2004 in Norte de Santander after the demobilization of the Bloque Catatumbo.<sup>442</sup> *Semana*'s own expose on *Las Águilas Negras* (August 2007) dated them to

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<sup>440</sup> Defense Intelligence Agency, 14.

<sup>441</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Assessing the Paramilitary Phenomenon after Demobilizations*, 2006 Bogotá 000407, January 2006. Declassified. ProQuest Digital National Security Archive, <<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com>> (2014).

<sup>442</sup> "Las 'Águilas negras', grupo conformado por desmovilizados de las autodefensas, ya azotan 5 regiones," *El Tiempo*, 31 October 2006, <[https://web.archive.org/web/20070312173530/http://www.eltiempo.com/conflicto/noticias/ARTICULO-WEB-NOTA\\_INTERIOR-3306783.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20070312173530/http://www.eltiempo.com/conflicto/noticias/ARTICULO-WEB-NOTA_INTERIOR-3306783.html)> (2016).

2006. According to the magazine's report, the group originated in Norte de Santander and then spread west to nearby departments, including Cesar and Bolívar.<sup>443</sup> In 2011, it linked them to Bloque Catatumbo and back-dated the group to 2004, with full emergence in mid-2006.<sup>444</sup>

INDEPAZ's 2007 report identified *Águilas* or *Águilas Negras* in the following eight departments: Antioquia, Arauca, Caquetá, Cauca, Cesar, Magdalena, Norte de Santander, and Santander.<sup>445</sup> It also noted Blue, Red, and Gold Eagles in Norte de Santander. The Colombian Army indicated the colors were used to differentiate between municipalities in Norte de Santander (e.g., Black Eagles in Cúcuta and Red Eagles in El Tarra).<sup>446</sup>

In 2008, David Hernández López, the ex-secretary of former BCB Commander Carlos Mario Jiménez, alias "Macaco," explained to the Attorney General's office that Macaco had created the *Águilas Negras* in 2005 to circumvent demobilization.<sup>447</sup> A similar explanation from another source indicates that Macaco led the founding of the *Águilas Negras* with demobilized members of both the *Vencedores de Arauca* and Bloque Catatumbo.<sup>448</sup>

According to Fabio Velasquez, in several northern departments (Magdalena and Atlántico), brothers Miguel Ángel and Víctor Manuel Mejía Múnera, former leaders of

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<sup>443</sup> "¿Qué son las Águilas Negras?"

<sup>444</sup> "Águilas Negras: ¿estructura criminal o sólo un nombre para cometer delitos?", *Semana*, 17 May 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/aguilas-negras-estructura-criminal-solo-nombre-para-cometer-delitos/239953-3>> (2014).

<sup>445</sup> González Perafán, 21-23.

<sup>446</sup> González Perafán, 22.

<sup>447</sup> "La paradoja de 'Macaco'," *Semana*, 10 May 2008, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/la-paradoja-macaco/92613-3>> (May 2016).

<sup>448</sup> Avila (2013), Kindle Location 4989.

BCB sub-block Bloque Vencedores de Arauca agreed to the creation of a group of *Águilas Negras* with demobilized members of the Bloque Norte.<sup>449</sup>

In the department of Bolívar, Jacinto Nicolás Fuentes Germán, alias “Don Leo” and Jorge Luis Villadiego Mesa, alias “Pablo Angola”, both demobilized members of Bloque Vencedores Héroes de Guática, led the *Águilas Negras* for Macaco, until they were arrested in mid-2008.<sup>450</sup> Don Leo would later become one of the leaders of *Los Urabeños* (until he was arrested again in 2013, this time by a joint Colombian-Peruvian operation in Lima).<sup>451</sup> Their current leadership is unidentified.

#### *Members & Structure*

At various times, the police have tried to deny the existence of *Las Águilas Negras*, calling them a myth. Specifically, an investigator who was interviewed by *Semana* noted, “We have identified eighty different pamphlet models throughout the country, since 2007, of groups that say they are Black Eagles. This does not give us a structured band, but merely a phenomenon in name only.”<sup>452</sup> Two years later, General Rodolfo Palomino, the Director of the National Police, also in an interview with *Semana*, denied their existence, saying, “We have discovered that they do not exist but that they

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<sup>449</sup> Fabio Velásquez, *Las Otras Caras Del Poder: Territorio, Conflicto y Gestión Pública en Municipios Colombianos* (Bogotá: GTZ, Foro Nacional por Colombia, 2009), 227-228.

<sup>450</sup> Diana Carolina Duran Nunez, “‘Águilas Negras’, sin dos jefes,” *El Espectador*, 28 July 2008, <<http://www.elespectador.com/impreso/judicial/articuloimpreso-aguilas-negras-sin-dos-jefes>> (May 2016); Reviewing all of the AUC demobilized groups in “Proceso de Paz con las Autodefensas” shows no group with the name Vencedores Héroes de Guática, however, there is a group named Frente Mártires de Guática.

<sup>451</sup> “Peru holds Colombia ‘drug lord’ Jacinto Nicolas Fuentes,” *BBC*, 7 February 2013, <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-21364428>> (May 2016).

<sup>452</sup> “Águilas Negras: ¿estructura criminal o sólo un nombre para cometer delitos?”, My translation.

are used as a front to intimidate.”<sup>453</sup> In a new 2015 report from the magazine (Figure 24), it states that Macaco initially created the *Águilas Negras* to operate in Nariño and Norte de Santander, but that it broke apart in 2008 after the former AUC leader’s extradition to the U.S.<sup>454</sup> The remaining members then joined *Los Rastrojos* or *Los Urabeños*, while occasionally still using the name.

## ¿Quién está detrás de las Águilas Negras?

Un panfleto lleno de insultos y amenazas de muerte contra varios líderes de izquierda del país difundido la semana pasada conmovió a la opinión y dio pie a que SEMANA investigara quiénes son los responsables de estas intimidaciones.

**¿Cuándo surgieron?**  
En 2006 el paramilitar **Carlos Mario Jiménez**, alias **Macaco**, creó un escuadrón que bautizó Águilas Negras y comenzó operaciones de limpieza en Norte de Santander y Nariño.

**¿Por qué la Policía dice que no existen?**  
Las autoridades sostienen que no son una organización criminal estructurada a nivel nacional, pues no tienen un patrón concreto y sus panfletos consisten de imágenes descargadas de internet.

**¿Fueron parte de las Bacrim?**  
En 2008, tras la extradición de Macaco, las Águilas Negras se disolvieron y se unieron al Clan Úsuga y a los Rastrojos, quienes empezaron a usar el nombre para cometer crímenes en Venezuela y Ecuador.

**¿Qué son hoy?**  
Son una especie de marca que usa quien quiere agredir a alguien desde el anonimato. Detrás del nombre se ocultan todo tipo de intereses con el fin de desprestigiar, desinformar o intimidar.

**¿Quiénes son sus objetivos?**  
En casi diez años, los panfletos han estado dirigidos sistemáticamente contra políticos de izquierda, líderes sociales y de restitución de tierras, sindicalistas, defensores de derechos humanos y periodistas.

**Algunos datos:**  
5 panfletos han registrado las autoridades en 2015.  
591 amenazas ha contabilizado desde 2010 la organización Somos Defensores.  
Las intimidaciones aparecen en e-mail y volantes.  
7 procesos judiciales lleva hoy la Djin contra personas involucradas en amenazas.

Figure 24. March 2015 *Semana* Report on *Las Águilas Negras*<sup>455</sup>

<sup>453</sup> María Jimena Duzán, “Las evidencias muestran que los vándalos son de las Farc,” *Semana*, 7 September 2013, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/las-evidencias-muestran-que-los-vandalos-son-de-las-farc/356785-3>> (2014). My translation.

<sup>454</sup> “¿Quién está detrás de las Águilas Negras?,” *Semana*, 14 March 2015, <<http://www.semana.com/enfoque/articulo/quien-esta-detras-de-las-aguilas-negras/420962-3>> (May 2016).

<sup>455</sup> “¿Quién está detrás de las Águilas Negras?”

Consequently, assessing membership (and leadership as well) for this *bacrim* is more difficult than for the other groups. The ICG calls them one of the “less cohesive groups” without a “clear chain of command.”<sup>456</sup> It notes that they are “part of an intricate criminal network,” compared to the others.<sup>457</sup> *InSight Crime* reaches similar conclusions, reporting, “There is little evidence that the *Águilas Negras* operate as a systematic organization.”<sup>458</sup>

As mentioned before, Granada, et al., divided *bacrim* into three types: hierarchical, network and hybrid. They defined the *Águilas Negras* as a networked structure, noting “in each zone, there are differences in the methods of violence employed, their equipment is dissimilar, there appears to be no established chain of command, although each cell shares a name and it seems a common goal.”<sup>459</sup>

It is also particularly hard to estimate the size of this *bacrim* because of its loose structure. When news organizations or the government publish numbers, it is not always clear which group is being discussed. For example, the group in Norte de Santander were thought to have about 300 members in mid-2007.<sup>460</sup> In 2011, it was estimated that together the *Águilas Negras* and *Los Urabeños* totaled more than 1,300 members.<sup>461</sup> *Semana* also noted in yet another report that other criminal groups like to use the name of

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<sup>456</sup> International Crisis Group (2007), 6.

<sup>457</sup> International Crisis Group (2007), 7.

<sup>458</sup> “Águilas Negras,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/aguilas-negras>> (May 2016).

<sup>459</sup> Granada, et al., 476. My translation.

<sup>460</sup> “¿Qué son las Águilas Negras?”

<sup>461</sup> “Están engendrando tres grandes carteles de la droga,” *El Tiempo*, 27 February 2011, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-4419139>> (2014).

the *Águilas Negras* to intimidate their targets.<sup>462</sup> This means that some numbers for the group could be inflated, since incidents may not be related to the *bacrim* at all.

### *Territory*

In 2009, *El Tiempo* reported the *Águilas Negras* operating in areas beyond its departments of origin, including Bogotá, Valle de Cauca, and even Putumayo.<sup>463</sup> From 2010 and 2013, however, INDEPAZ showed them operating in fewer municipalities over time (Figure 25). In early 2016, the organization reported they were only operating in the department of Cauca, and the cities of Cali, Bogotá, Cartagena, and Saravena (Arauca).<sup>464</sup> However, the *Fundación Paz y Reconciliación* reported completely different locations, indicating their presence in approximately thirty municipalities in the northern part of the country (none in Cauca) and one in the south (Puerto Santander, Amazonas).<sup>465</sup>

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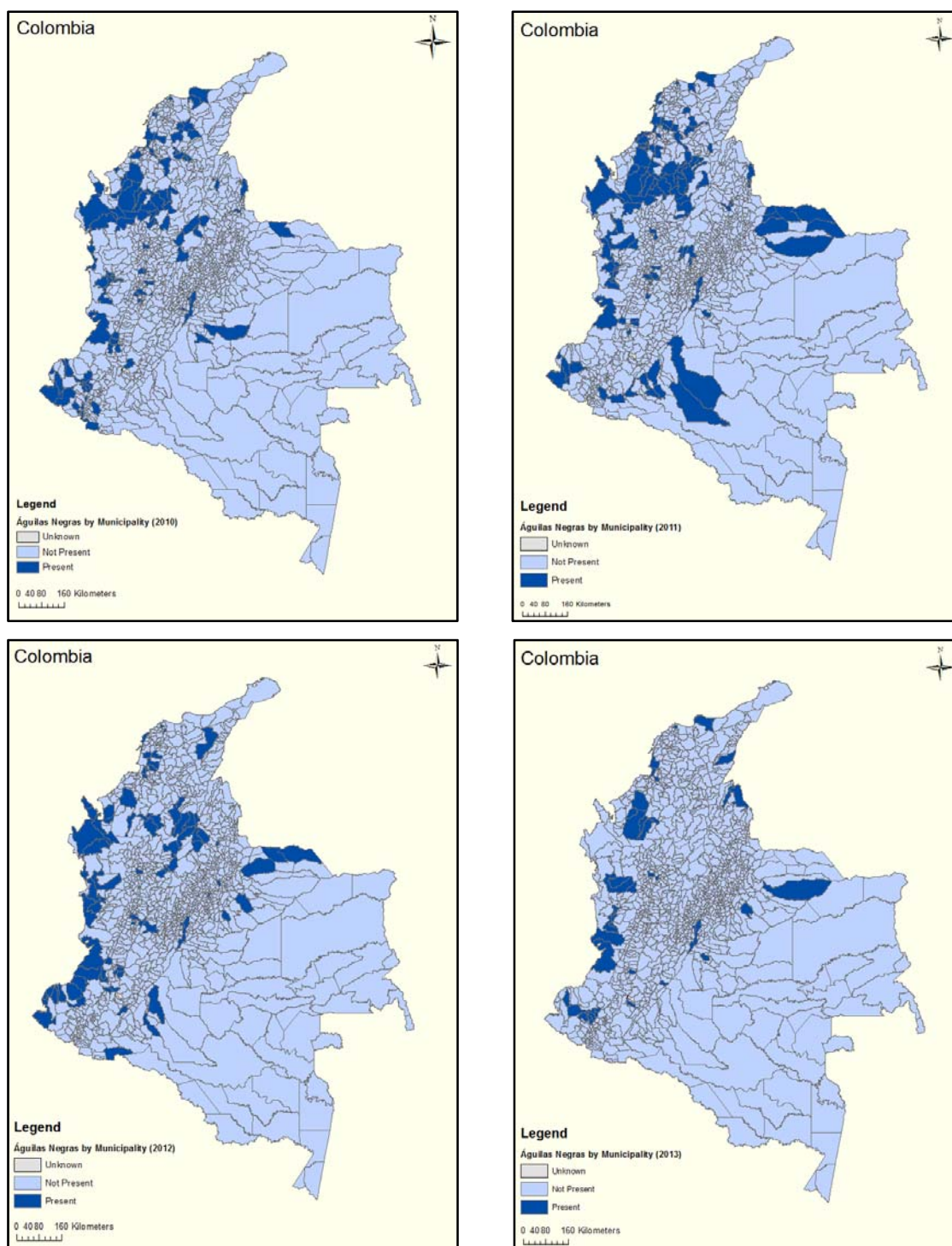
<sup>462</sup> “Águilas Negras: ¿estructura criminal o sólo un nombre para cometer delitos?”

<sup>463</sup> “Próxima generación,” *El Tiempo*, 19 August 2009,  
<<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-3575712>> (2014).

<sup>464</sup> INDEPAZ, Informe presencia de grupos narcoparamilitares en los primeros tres meses de 2016, 2016,  
<<http://www.indepaz.org.co>> (May 2016).

<sup>465</sup> “Presencia de Bandas Criminales Águilas Negras,” Fundación Paz y Reconciliación, 22 February 2016,  
<<http://www.pares.com.co/paz-y-posconflicto/presencia-bacrim-aguilas-negras-2016>> (May 2016).





**Figure 25. Presence and Non-Presence of *Las Águilas Negras* (2010-2013)<sup>466</sup>**

<sup>466</sup> Source data drawn from INDEPAZ reports.



### *Goals, Ideology, & Activities*

The goal of the *Águilas Negras* is thought to be to protect the interests of the former AUC middle managers.<sup>467</sup> Consequently, the alliances of the group vary, depending on circumstances in each department. They have attacked *Los Paisas* and worked with the FARC.<sup>468</sup> In 2012, they worked with *Los Rastrojos*.<sup>469</sup>

The focus of the group also varies by department. In Norte de Santander, the emphasis is on drugs, although the organization is not thought to control any major trafficking routes.<sup>470</sup> In Atlántico, Cesar, Magdalena and Guajira, they “[operate] as criminal urban groups.”<sup>471</sup>

The groups are particularly involved in making threats and exercising political and social control. A number of reports about the group were identified that support this:

- The mayor of a small town in Magdalena was arrested with the group’s members in late 2006.<sup>472</sup>
- In August 2011, twelve artistic organizations in Bogotá received death threats from the *Águilas Negras*.<sup>473</sup>
- In mid-2013, ‘*Bacrimpolítica*’ emerged, a follow-on to the *parapolítica* scandal of the mid-2000s (where multiple members of the government were found to be in collusion with the AUC). *Semana* reported that the

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<sup>467</sup> “Águilas Negras,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/aguilas-negras>> (May 2016).

<sup>468</sup> “Volvió el terror a Córdoba,” *Semana*, 16 October 2010; “Ya empezó la cuarta guerra,” *Semana*, 28 March 2009, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/ya-empezo-cuarta-guerra/101479-3>> (2014).

<sup>469</sup> “Capturado en Venezuela ‘Diego Rastrojo’,” *Semana*, 3 June 2012, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/capturado-venezuela-diego-rastrojo/258950-3>> (2014).

<sup>470</sup> International Crisis Group (2007), 9; “Águilas Negras,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/aguilas-negras>> (May 2016).

<sup>471</sup> International Crisis Group (2007), 16.

<sup>472</sup> International Crisis Group (2007), 7.

<sup>473</sup> “Amenazas al arte,” *Semana*, 27 August 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/enfoque/articulo/amenazas-arte/245585-3>> (2014).

Supreme Court was looking into ties between politicians and the *bacrim*.<sup>474</sup> In particular, the magazine noted that the *Águilas Negras* (among others) are thought to “have political control in the northern part of the country.”<sup>475</sup>

The *Águilas Negras* are some of the most prolific publishers of “pamphlets,” likely because there are so many different groups that utilize the name in their operations (more than eighty types of pamphlets, as noted above).<sup>476</sup> *Semana* reported that the fliers first appeared in March 2006 in the two largest cities in Norte de Santander.<sup>477</sup> Five pamphlets associated with the group were identified in 2015.<sup>478</sup> Figure 26 (below) provides examples of four different pamphlets issued by the *bacrim*. The first image (on the top left) is from March 2008, while the others, moving clockwise, date from 2014, 2009, and 2016 respectively. Some speak of military objectives and call out targets.

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<sup>474</sup> “La ‘Bacrimpolítica’, una mutación,” *Semana*, 7 June 2013,

<<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/la-bacrimpolitica-mutacion/345765-3>> (2014).

<sup>475</sup> “La ‘Bacrimpolítica’, una mutación.” My translation.

<sup>476</sup> “Águilas Negras: ¿estructura criminal o sólo un nombre para cometer delitos?”

<sup>477</sup> “Qué son las Águilas Negras?”

<sup>478</sup> “¿Quién está detrás de las Águilas Negras?”

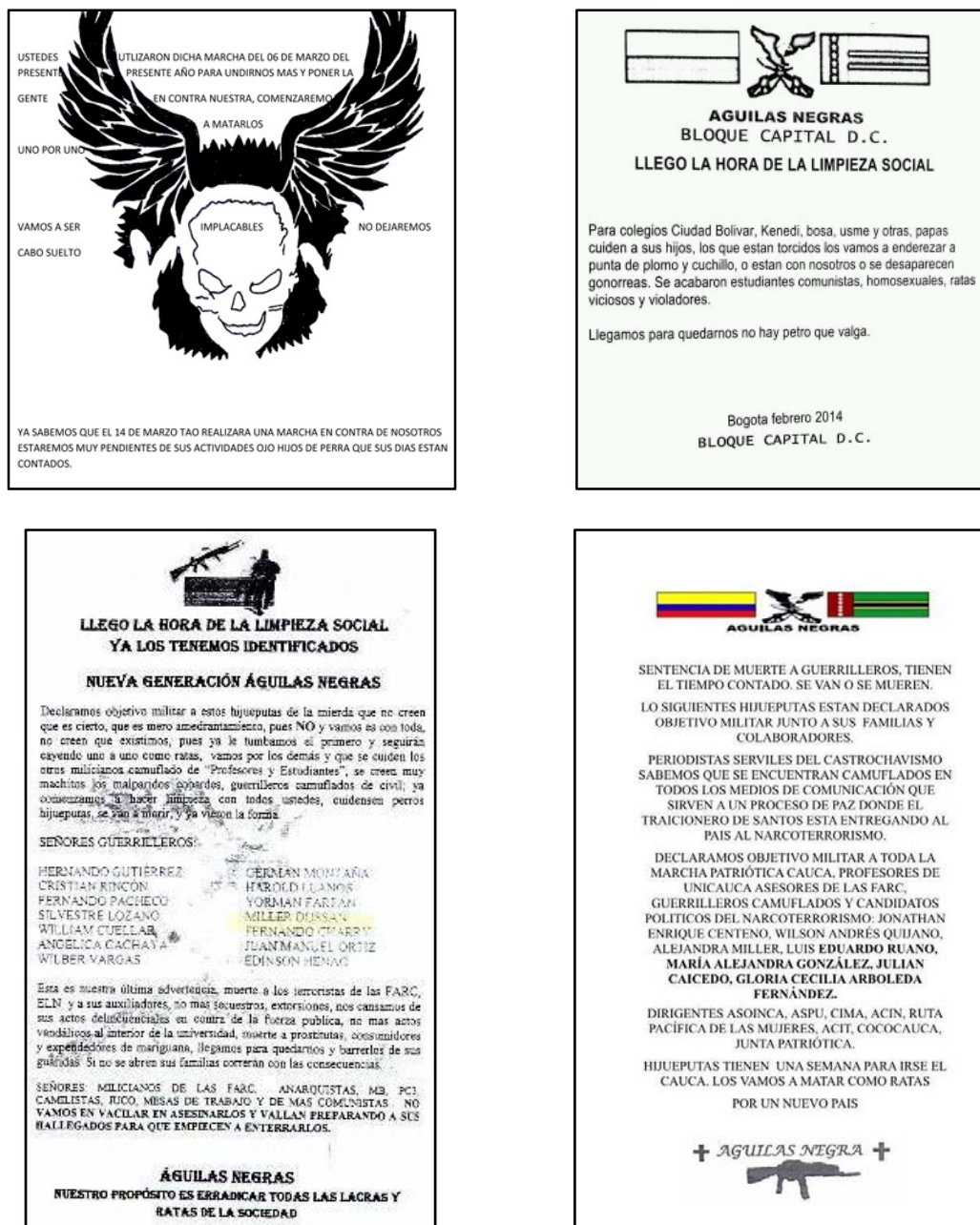


Figure 26. Examples of Pamphlets Published by *Las Águilas Negras*<sup>479</sup>

<sup>479</sup> Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 187; “Petro advierte que saldrá de la alcaldía la próxima semana,” 27 February 2014, <<http://www.radiosantafe.com/2014/02/27/petro-advierte-que-saldrá-de-la-alcaldía-la-proxima-semana/>> (2015); “Pamfleto Amenazante,” *Contagi Radio*, 29 March 2016, <[http://www.contagioradio.com/panfletos-amenazantes-aguilas-negras-articulo-21992/12939110\\_10153854141235020\\_265828809\\_n/](http://www.contagioradio.com/panfletos-amenazantes-aguilas-negras-articulo-21992/12939110_10153854141235020_265828809_n/)>; “Paramilitares “Águilas Negras” amenazan directivo de Plataforma Sur,” CDHAL, 11 November 2009, <<http://m.cdhal.org/es/blog/paramilitares-aguilas-negras-amenazan-directivo-plataforma-sur>> (2015).

## **El Ejército Revolucionario Popular Antisubversivo de Colombia (ERPAC) and Successors**

### *Origins & Leadership*

*El Ejército Revolucionario Popular Antisubversivo de Colombia* (ERPAC) was led by Pedro Oliverio Guerrero Castillo, alias “Cuchillo” (Knife), from 2006 until his death during a police operation in December 2010. Prior to founding ERPAC, Cuchillo first served the Medellín Cartel under Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha and then the AUC’s Bloque Centauros (part of the ACCU), until he famously murdered its commander, Miguel Arroyave, in 2004.<sup>480</sup> Bloque Centauros demobilized in late 2005 and Cuchillo reportedly established ERPAC shortly thereafter.<sup>481</sup> Pizarro notes that Cuchillo chose the name of his group to obscure his narcotics trafficking and extortion activities.<sup>482</sup>

After Cuchillo’s death and the detention of his second-in-command (Harold Humberto Rojas) in 2010, José Eberto López Montero, alias “Caracho,” took control of the group.<sup>483</sup> Caracho had also been a long time member of the AUC.<sup>484</sup> The new commander led ERPAC through a ‘demobilization’ with the government in December 2011, which caused the group to fracture.

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<sup>480</sup> “La nueva guerra de Uribe”; “¿Cómo fue realmente asesinado Miguel Arroyave?”, *Semana*, 24 September 2004, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/como-realmente-asesinado-miguel-arroyave/68394-3>> (May 2016).

<sup>481</sup> “‘Cuchillo,’ Pedro Oliveiro Guerrero,” *Verdadabierta*, undated, <<http://www.verdadabierta.com/victimarios/670-perfil-pedro-oliveiro-guerrero-alias-cuchillo>> (May 2016).

<sup>482</sup> Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, “¿Bandas criminales o neoparamilitarismo?”

<sup>483</sup> International Crisis Group, *Dismantling Colombia’s New Illegal Armed Groups*, Latin America Report, No. 41 (2012), 7.

<sup>484</sup> Kyle Johnson, “Armas, engaño y poder: La historia del Erpac (Primera entrega),” Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris, 26 June 2012a, <<http://www.arcoiris.com.co/2012/06/armas-engano-y-poder-la-historia-del-erpac-primera-entrega/>> (May 2016).

One splinter group, the *Libertadores de Vichada* was controlled by Martín Farfán Díaz González, alias “Pijarbey.”<sup>485</sup> A member of Bloque Centauros with Cuchillo, Pijarbey joined the Bloque Heroes de los Llanos after Miguel Arroyave’s assassination, and then later helped Cuchillo found ERPAC.<sup>486</sup> The government jailed Pijarbey in 2009, releasing him in January 2012. He took control of the *Libertadores*, which had already formed, from Albert Narvaez Mejia, alias “Careto.”<sup>487</sup> The CNP killed Pijarbey in a September 2015 raid. Within the next eight months, the police also killed his two successors: Javier Rubiano Cantor, alias ‘Móvil 7’ in April 2016 and Alvaro Enciso Arias, alias ‘Venado,’ in May 2016.<sup>488</sup>

The second faction, Bloque Meta, was led by Rubén Antonio Navarro Caicedo, alias “Flaco Freddy,” until his arrest in September 2012.<sup>489</sup> Flaco Freddy allegedly was also a former AUC member.<sup>490</sup> Bloque Meta then had a succession of leaders: alias “Jean Claude,” alias “Calamisco,” alias “Mostrico,” and most recently, alias “Jonathan,” who

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<sup>485</sup> “Violencia en Vichada por disputa entre Farc y bacrim,” *El Tiempo*, 6 July 2012, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-12007995>> (2014).

<sup>486</sup> “Martin Farfan Diaz Gonzalez, alias ‘Pijarbey’,” *InSight Crime*, 2015, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/pijarbey>> (May 2016).

<sup>487</sup> “Libertadores del Vichada,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/libertadores-del-vichada>> (May 2016).

<sup>488</sup> “Cae abatido alias Móvil 7, cabecilla del Bloque Libertadores de Vichada,” *El Pais*, 23 April 2016, <<http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/judicial/noticias/cae-abatido-alias-movil-7-cabecilla-bloque-libertadores-vichada>> (May 2016); “Muere a alias Venado cabecilla de bloque Libertadores de Vichada,” *Caracol Radio*, 13 May 2016, <[http://caracol.com.co/radio/2016/05/13/nacional/1463148390\\_044224.html](http://caracol.com.co/radio/2016/05/13/nacional/1463148390_044224.html)> (May 2016).

<sup>489</sup> “El reacomodo de las bacrim,” *El Espectador*, 9 August 2012, <<http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/el-reacomodo-de-bacrim-articulo-366411>> (2014); “Capturan en Meta a un hombre que hizo parte de tres bacrim,” *Semana*, 1 October 2012.

<sup>490</sup> Adriaan Alsema, “Meta Bloc,” *Colombia Reports*, 19 April 2014, <<http://colombiareports.com/bloque-meta/>> (May 2016).

were all captured.<sup>491</sup> Throughout early 2016, the police have captured more lieutenants of Bloque Meta, but have not identified the group's new leader.

Also in 2016, *El Tiempo* reported the government decided to bring the two factions together under a single name, "*Los Puntilleros*," after a local financier who funded both groups, in order to unify operations against them.<sup>492</sup> Newspapers will now sometimes note which group is being referenced (e.g., "*Los Puntilleros* (Bloque Meta)") or simply say *Los Puntilleros*. Reports from July 2016 describe the capture of José Manuel Capera, alias "Nube Negra," leader of *Los Puntilleros* (Libertadores de Vichada).<sup>493</sup> The increased level of activity against the *bacrim* in the departments of Meta and Vichada is part of the government's strategy to eliminate them.

### *Members & Structure*

The first reports of the size of ERPAC date from 2007, when it was reported to have 250 men.<sup>494</sup> ICG estimated the size at 750 during the same period, with about fifty percent of them paramilitaries (both dissidents and re-armed).<sup>495</sup> In 2010, ERPAC's size was estimated several times by *El Tiempo*, ranging from 442 to 637, while HRW

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<sup>491</sup> "Se entrega el cabecilla del bloque Meta, disidencia del ERPAC," *Semana*, 17 October 2012, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/se-entrega-cabecilla-del-bloque-meta-disidencia-del-erpac/266494-3>> (May 2016); "En plena bacanal capturan a alias 'Calamisco'," *Semana*, 14 January 2013, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/en-plena-bacanal-capturan-alias-calamisco/329558>> (May 2016); "Capturan a alias Mostrico, cabecilla de disidencia del Erpac," *El Pais*, 11 April 2013, <<http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/judicial/noticias/capturan-alias-mostrico-cabecilla-disidencia-erpac>> (May 2016); "Capturan al principal cabecilla de banda Bloque Meta de las Erpac," *El Tiempo*, 8 November 2015, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/captura-de-cabecilla-de-las-erpac/16424814>> (May 2016).

<sup>492</sup> "Las tres bandas criminales que serán bombardeadas en los Llanos," *El Tiempo*, 9 May 2016, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/llano-7-dias/bandas-criminales-en-el-meta/16586866>> (May 2016).

<sup>493</sup> "Cayó 'Nube Negra', jefe de la banda 'los Puntilleros'," *El Tiempo*, 14 July 2016, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/politica/justicia/capturado-jefe-de-los-puntilleros-en-meta/16645139>> (14 August 2016).

<sup>494</sup> González Perafán, 25.

<sup>495</sup> International Crisis Group (2012), 5.

numbered them at 770.<sup>496</sup> At the time of the ‘demobilization’ in late 2011, ICG stated about 1/3 of ERPAC’s members participated, and *El Tiempo* reported that 269 men actually surrendered (1/3 of 269 is 807).<sup>497</sup> The following year, ICG estimated that Bloque Meta and the Libertadores de Vichada had approximately 560 fighters.<sup>498</sup> In early 2014, it was estimated that the Libertadores had 250 men.<sup>499</sup> Bloque Meta was then thought to be about the same size.<sup>500</sup>

Under Cuchillo, the CNP believed that ERPAC had achieved better command and control than the other *bacrim* groups.<sup>501</sup> An article in *Semana* in 2011 described the group as a hierarchical organization under Cuchillo.<sup>502</sup> As part of their more regulated organization, they were reported to wear uniforms and carry assault rifles.<sup>503</sup> The Libertadores also established a hierarchical structure under Pijarbey. For example, Móvil 7, as his ‘military’ commander, had three separate groups reporting to him: one on the border of Meta and Vichada, a second in Vichada, and a third in Guaviare.<sup>504</sup>

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<sup>496</sup> “En al menos 10 regiones hay policías y militares con nexos con bandas,” *El Tiempo*, 20 January 2010, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-6989007>> (2014); Jineth Bedoya Lima, “Policía lanza ofensiva contra Bacrim en 159 municipios,” *El Tiempo*, 25 January 2010, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-3808407>> (2014); “DAS revela identidad y dónde actúan nuevas bandas criminales,” *El Tiempo*, 4 July 2010, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-7787693>> (2014); Human Rights Watch (2010), 34.

<sup>497</sup> International Crisis Group (2012), 1; “El Abecé del sometimiento de la banda Erpac,” *El Tiempo*, 27 December 2011, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-10927267>> (2014).

<sup>498</sup> International Crisis Group (2012), 12.

<sup>499</sup> “‘Pijarbey’, el nuevo capo de la droga en los Llanos,” *El Tiempo*, 24 March 2014, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-13714717>> (May 2016).

<sup>500</sup> Alsema.

<sup>501</sup> Jineth Bedoya Lima, “‘Vamos por ‘Valenciano’ y los ‘Comba’’: General Óscar Naranjo.”

<sup>502</sup> Alonso Tobón, “Retos después de la muerte de un capo,” *Semana*, 13 January 2011.

<sup>503</sup> International Crisis Group (2012), 5.

<sup>504</sup> “‘Pijarbey’, el nuevo capo de la droga en los Llanos.”

### *Territory*

The early reports about Cuchillo's operations in 2007 were in central and southern Meta.<sup>505</sup> By 2010, HRW reported that ERPAC operated in the following departments: Arauca, Casanare, Guainía, Guaviare, Meta, and Vichada.<sup>506</sup> They also were seen in Amazonas Department, near the Peruvian border.<sup>507</sup> INDEPAZ further reported operations in Antioquia, Caquetá, Cundinamarca, Bogotá, Huila, Magdalena, and Quindío.<sup>508</sup> Figure 27, below, shows four years of territorial gains and losses.

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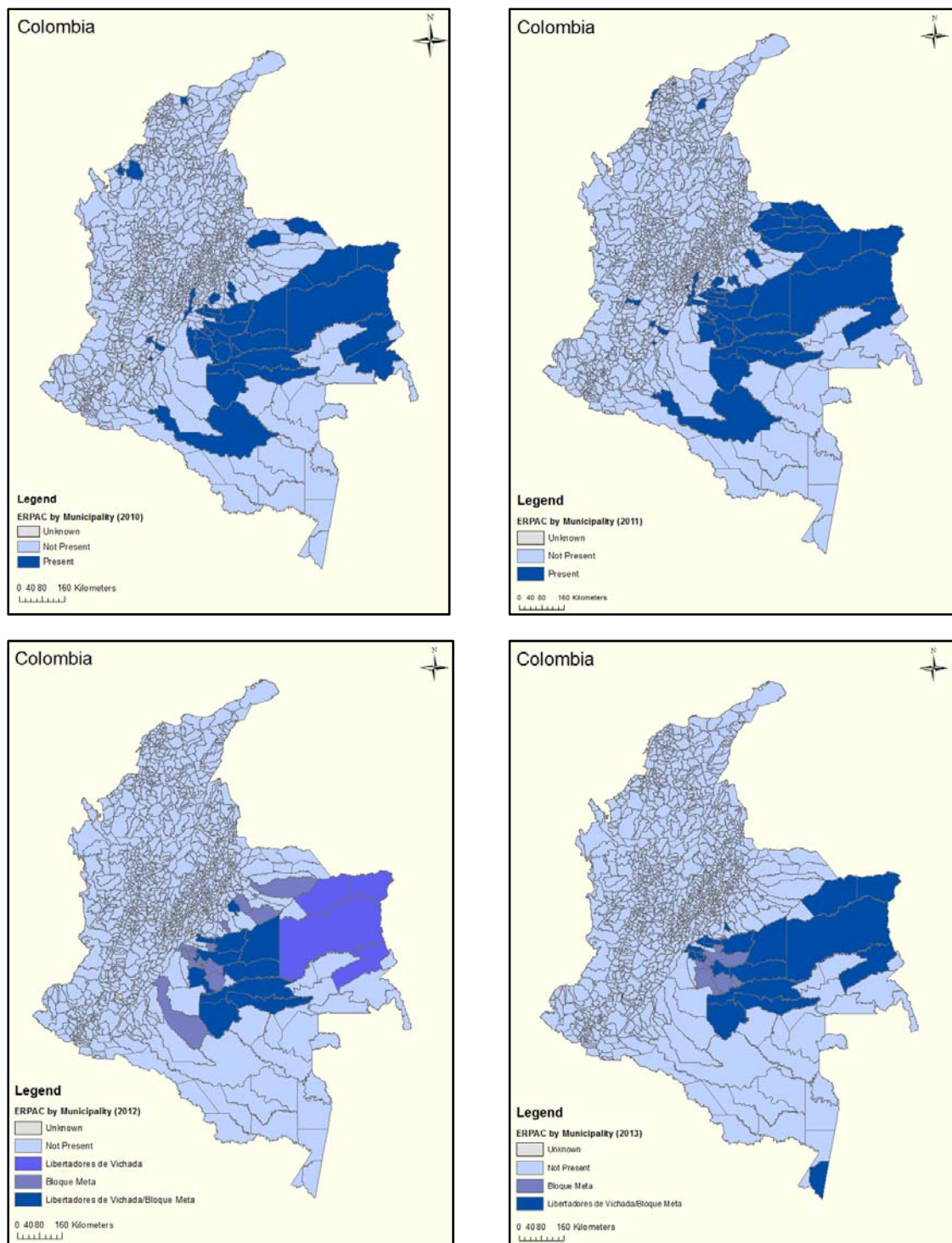
<sup>505</sup> González Perafán, 25.

<sup>506</sup> Human Rights Watch (2010), 34.

<sup>507</sup> "Bandas, la gran amenaza."

<sup>508</sup> INDEPAZ (2010), 27.





**Figure 27. Presence and Non-Presence of ERPAC and Successors (2010-2013)<sup>509</sup>**

<sup>509</sup> Source data drawn from INDEPAZ reports.

### *Goals, Ideology, & Activities*

ERPAC has been described as a “former army” with “little ideology.”<sup>510</sup> The goal of this *bacrim* and its successors has been financial with a focus on drug trafficking, as they operate almost unchallenged by other *bacrim* in the Eastern plains, where much of the coca is cultivated.

This has led to territorial competition with FARC but cooperation while engaging in drug trafficking activities.<sup>511</sup> Despite their “anti-subversive” name, the group established “non-aggression” pacts with Fronts 16 and 44, and provided them protection from the police.<sup>512</sup>

Before the demobilization, Caracho was interviewed by *Semana*. He denied involvement in operating drug laboratories but conceded ERPAC’s involvement in the taxation of the drug business.<sup>513</sup> He also denied any cooperation with the FARC – “La unica relacion con ellos es darles plomo...” [The only relationship with them is to give them ‘lead’ (i.e., kill them)].<sup>514</sup>

Nevertheless, reports about ERPAC’s drug activities have continued, although some noted the income came from providing security and owning laboratories, rather than actual trafficking.<sup>515</sup> The group has also been involved in other illegal activities such

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<sup>510</sup> “ERPAC,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/erpac>> (May 2016).

<sup>511</sup> “Ya empezó la cuarta Guerra”; International Crisis Group (2012), 6.

<sup>512</sup> Llorente and McDermott, 25; “Están engendrando tres grandes carteles de la droga.”

<sup>513</sup> “Nos vamos a someter,” *Semana*, 19 November 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/nos-vamos-someter/249587-3>> (2014).

<sup>514</sup> “Nos vamos a someter.”

<sup>515</sup> International Crisis Group (2012), 7.

as kidnapping and extortion.<sup>516</sup> There have also been reports of the illegal use of licit enterprises through land grabs for palm cultivation and mineral exploitation.

As part of their trafficking activities, the ERPAC have been tied to Daniel “El Loco” Barrera.<sup>517</sup> Until his 2012 arrest, Barrera acted as one of the main “capos” of drug trafficking in Colombia, forging ties with the FARC, the AUC, and then the *bacrim*.<sup>518</sup> ERPAC also created alliances with Mexican cartels, and groups in Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.<sup>519</sup>

ERPAC leaders have also had success in establishing relationships with members of local and regional governments. In some areas, it oversaw who was going to run for office or established ties to the security forces.<sup>520</sup> One of the worst reported cases was the link between Oscar Lopez, a former governor of Guaviare and Cuchillo.<sup>521</sup> Lopez was investigated by the Attorney General for illegal land deals and mining operations related to the *bacrim* leader.<sup>522</sup>

The group’s relationship with society has also been negative. There were reports of threats and voter corruption in Casanare.<sup>523</sup> And despite the lack of a true ideology,

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<sup>516</sup> International Crisis Group (2012), 6-7.

<sup>517</sup> “Están engendrando tres grandes carteles de la droga.”

<sup>518</sup> “Daniel ‘El Loco’ Barrera es ahora el narco más fuerte en Colombia, aseguran autoridades,” *El Tiempo*, 5 May 2008, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-4144600>> (May 2016); “Declaración del Presidente de la República, Juan Manuel Santos, sobre la captura de alias ‘El Loco Barrera’,” Presidencia de la Republica, 18 September 2012, <[http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2012/Septiembre/Paginas/20120918\\_18.aspx](http://wsp.presidencia.gov.co/Prensa/2012/Septiembre/Paginas/20120918_18.aspx)> (May 2016).

<sup>519</sup> Restrepo (2010), 4.

<sup>520</sup> International Crisis Group (2012), 6.

<sup>521</sup> Prieto (2013), 15.

<sup>522</sup> “Se entregó a la Fiscalía gobernador del Guaviare, Óscar López Cadavid,” *El Tiempo*, 26 March 2009, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-4901653>> (May 2016).

<sup>523</sup> “Grupos ilegales ponen en alto riesgo electoral a 199 municipios,” *Semana*, 1 August 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/politica/articulo/grupos-ilegales-ponen-alto-riesgo-electoral-199-municipios/244086-3>> (2014).

they have been involved in displacements, killing local NGO members (specifically members of community action boards), and using counterinsurgency rhetoric.<sup>524</sup> Some of these threats have been against community leaders involved in the land restitution process.<sup>525</sup> In one recovered pamphlet (Figure 28), the Libertadores threaten social cleansing as the “mano que limpia” [the hand that cleans]. Calling out drug addicts, thieves, and other criminals, the group warns everyone to be off the street by nine o’clock in the evening, or else suffer the “consequences.” Unlike the *Águilas Negras* (and several of the other *bacrim*, as will be seen below), neither ERPAC nor its successors appear to frequently issue threats via pamphlets (or perhaps do not make them publically available).

Conflicts between the Libertadores and Bloque Meta has caused problems and divisions throughout several departments, including:

- Territorial disputes in the capital of Meta, Villavicencio.<sup>526</sup>
- Members of Bloque Meta, “tortured, murdered and dismembered two suspected collaborators of the [Libertadores]...in Mapiripán.”<sup>527</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> International Crisis Group (2012), 8. Community Action Boards are local groups organized according to Colombian law to promote local development and community. For more details on these boards, see Ángel Emilio Muñoz Cardona, María Patricia Mayor López, “The Community Action Boards in Local Development of Municipality Itagui, Antioquia,” *Open Journal of Political Science* 6 (2016): 145-160.

<sup>525</sup> “Población desplazada de Bolívar denuncia amenazas,” *Semana*, 7 April 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/poblacion-desplazada-bolivar-denuncia-amenazas/238048-3>> (2014).

<sup>526</sup> Bernardo Pérez and Carlos Montoya, “Las bacrim después de 2013. ¿Pronóstico reservado?”, *Fundación Paz y Reconciliación*, December 2013, <<http://www.pares.com.co/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Informe-2013-Bacrim1.pdf>> (May 2016), 12.

<sup>527</sup> Pérez and Montoya, 17.

- Until his arrest, Barrera supported Bloque Meta, but the Libertadores allied themselves with *Los Urabeños*.<sup>528</sup> The support of *Los Urabeños* has helped the Libertadores significantly expand their operations.<sup>529</sup>

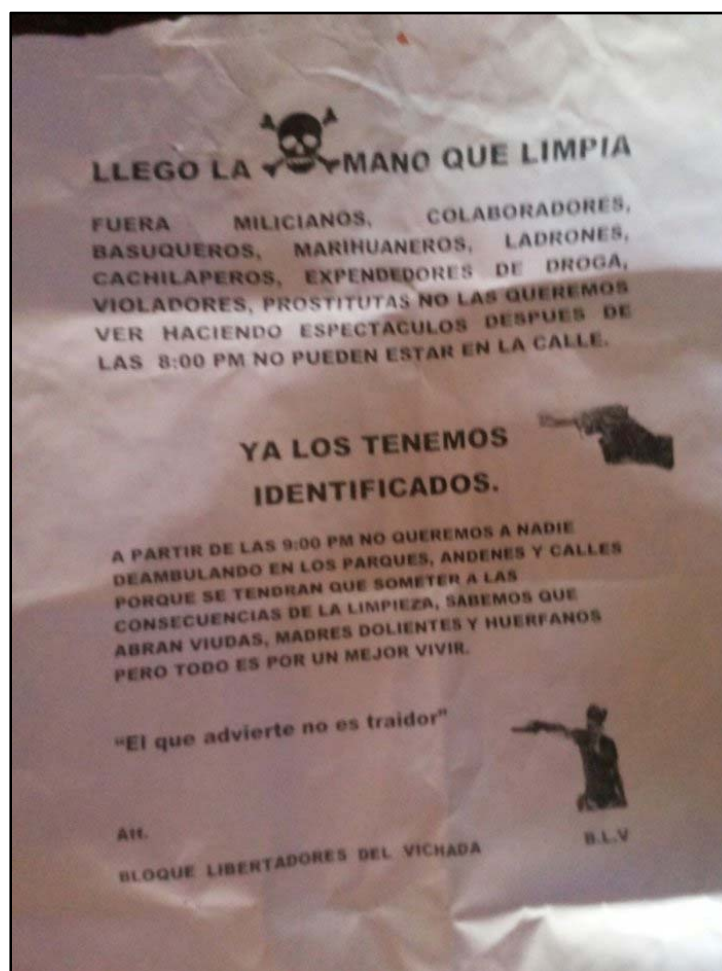


Figure 28. Pamphlet of ERPAC Successor, *Libertadores de Vichada*<sup>530</sup>

<sup>528</sup> “Libertadores del Vichada,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/libertadores-del-vichada>> (May 2016).

<sup>529</sup> “Libertadores del Vichada.”

<sup>530</sup> “Paramilitares amenazan e imponen toque de queda contra comunidad desplazada asentada en La Cristalina, Puerto Gaitán,” 2 October 2015, *Colectivo de Abogados*, <[http://www.colectivodeabogados.org/cajar\\_old/spip.php?article7292](http://www.colectivodeabogados.org/cajar_old/spip.php?article7292)> (May 2016).

## Los Paisas

### *Origins & Leadership*

The origins of *Los Paisas* are fundamentally linked to Diego Fernando Murillo Bejarano, alias “Don Berna” and the *Oficina de Envigado* in Medellín.<sup>531</sup> He started out as a member of the EPL, but joined the Medellín Cartel in the 1980s, helping to operate the *Oficina de Envigado*.<sup>532</sup> After a fall out with Pablo Escobar, Don Berna joined the effort to kill him and in the aftermath, he took control of much of Escobar’s empire.<sup>533</sup>

This empire included the gang, *La Terraza*, which eventually became the most powerful group in Medellín, and later, provided recruits for the AUC’s Bloque Cacique Nutibara (BCN).<sup>534</sup> Initially, *La Terraza* focused on managing the illicit networks and operations in the city, but the arrival of Bloque Metro and its commander alias “Doble Cero,” required the gang to establish a wider purview.<sup>535</sup>

BCN, unlike the standard paramilitary blocks, did not have an established hierarchy, but instead was, “a network linking different criminal nodes spread throughout Medellin and beyond. It brought together the experience of the self-defense groups established in the 1980s, the private army of drug kingpins, well-organized independent

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<sup>531</sup> Human Rights Watch (2010), 34.

<sup>532</sup> “Diego Fernando Murillo, alias ‘Don Berna’,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/don-berna>> (May 2016).

<sup>533</sup> Aldo Civico, “We are Illegal, but not Illegitimate, Modes of Policing in Medellín, Colombia,” *Polar* (May 2012): 85.

<sup>534</sup> Civico, 81-82.

<sup>535</sup> Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín and Ana María Jaramillo, “Crime, (counter-)insurgency and the privatization of security – the case of Medellín, Colombia,” *Environment & Urbanization* 16, no. 2 (2004): 26.

gangs...and [eventually] the remains of [Bloque Metro].”<sup>536</sup> Additionally, Don Berna took the name, “Adolfo Paz,” and joined the AUC leadership.<sup>537</sup>

BCN became the first AUC Bloque to demobilize in November 2003.<sup>538</sup> Don Berna stayed free however, running the *Oficina de Envigado* until he was arrested on a number of charges in 2005. From his prison cell, Don Berna established two rural entities associated with the *Oficina: Los Traquetos* and *Los Paisas*.<sup>539</sup> The first focused on drug trafficking while the second on territorial control.<sup>540</sup> Francisco Javier Silva Vallejo, alias “Julian,” initially operated *Los Paisas* for Don Berna.<sup>541</sup>

Don Berna’s extradition to the U.S. in 2008 caused the *Oficina* to fracture between two of his lieutenants: Maximiliano Bonilla, alias “Valenciano,” and Erick Vargas Cardenas, alias “Sebastian.” Initially, Valenciano focused on drug trafficking, while Sebastian worked with *Los Paisas* to expand their territory into parts of Antioquia and Córdoba.<sup>542</sup> This expansion eventually put the group in conflict with Daniel Rendón Herrera, alias “Don Mario,” of *Los Urabeños*.<sup>543</sup>

Other leaders during this turbulent period included Fabio León Vélez Correa, alias “Nito,” Cesar Augusto Torres Lujan, alias “Mono Vides,” and, Germán Bustos, alias “El

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<sup>536</sup> Civico, 86.

<sup>537</sup> Gutiérrez Sanín and Jaramillo, 27.

<sup>538</sup> Presidencia de la República, 14.

<sup>539</sup> “La guerra entre ‘los Paisas’ y ‘Don Mario’ por el control de La Guajira,” *Verdadabierta*, 26 February 2009, <<http://www.verdadabierta.com/rearme/941-iquien-control-la-guajira>> (May 2016); Johnson (2012a).

<sup>540</sup> Johnson (2012a).

<sup>541</sup> “‘Don Berna’: de Inspector de las Auc a jefe de banda criminal,” *Verdadabierta*, 9 September 2014, <<http://www.verdadabierta.com/justicia-y-paz/juicios/601-bloque-heroes-de-tolova/5433-don-berna-de-inspector-de-las-auc-a-jefe-de-banda-criminal>> (May 2016).

<sup>542</sup> Avila (2013), Kindle Locations 913-920.

<sup>543</sup> Avila (2013), Kindle Locations 921-922.

Puma.”<sup>544</sup> Subordinates killed Nito in 2009.<sup>545</sup> Mono Vides, a former AUC member, died in a confrontation with police in 2010.”<sup>546</sup> “El Puma,” a former member of Bloque Mineros, was captured in September 2012.<sup>547</sup>

One key temporary ‘member/leader’ of *Los Paisas* was Angel de Jesus Pacheco Chanci, alias “Sebastian” (not to be confused with Vargas Cardenas). Pacheco also found himself at odds with Don Mario and sought an alliance with *Los Paisas* to fight the early incarnation of *Los Urabeños*.<sup>548</sup> He worked for a short time with Mono Vides and other *Paisas* leadership.<sup>549</sup> Shortly thereafter, he left to become one of the leaders of *Los Rastrojos*.

In late 2012 and early 2013, news outlets reported that the *Paisas* had been absorbed and/or disbanded.<sup>550</sup> However, by later in 2013, they were reported to be operating again in Bogotá.<sup>551</sup> There is no more recent information about leadership, although reports about activities associated with the group continue to be found.

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<sup>544</sup> Human Rights Watch (2010), 34; “Cesar Augusto Torres Lujan, alias ‘Mono Vides’,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/cesar-a-torres-lujan-mono-vides>> (May 2016).

<sup>545</sup> “Maximiliano Bonilla Orozco, alias ‘Valenciano’,” *Verdad Abierta*, 2009, <<http://www.verdadabierta.com/victimarios/3366-maximiliano-bonillaorozco>> (May 2016).

<sup>546</sup> “Cesar Augusto Torres Lujan, alias ‘Mono Vides’.”

<sup>547</sup> Pérez and Montoya, 4; Kyle Johnson, “Los ‘Paisas’ sin garras: la captura de alias ‘El Puma’,” Corporación Nuevo Arco Iris, 29 September 2012b, <<http://www.arcoiris.com.co/2012/09/los-paisas-sin-garras-la-captura-de-alias-el-puma/>> (May 2016).

<sup>548</sup> “Ángel de Jesús Pacheco Chanci, alias ‘Sebastián’,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://es.insightcrime.org/noticias-sobre-crimen-organizado-en-colombia/angel-de-jesus-pacheco-chacy-sebastian>> (May 2016).

<sup>549</sup> “¿Quién era alias ‘Sebastián’?”, *Semana*, 26 July 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/quien-alias-sebastian/243697-3>> (May 2016).

<sup>550</sup> “Delincuencia en Colombia: bandas desbandadas”; “‘Bacrim’ están quedando sin cabecillas”, dijo Mindefensa,” *El Tiempo*, 12 April 2013, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-12739257>> (2014).

<sup>551</sup> “Polémica por denuncia sobre autoría de ‘bacrim’ en disturbios de Suba,” *El Tiempo*, 3 September 2013, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-13042577>> (2014).



### *Members & Structure*

The membership and structure of *Los Paisas* is also tied to its origins in Medellín. The BCN's members were mostly gang members with some members of the armed forces (military).<sup>552</sup> Furthermore, BCN operated in a “traditional mafia style” with a networked organization, rather than with a formal paramilitary structure.<sup>553</sup> With that in mind, it is not surprising that Restrepo and Arias named *Los Paisas* the rural army of Don Berna (with the *Oficina* being the urban army).<sup>554</sup> According to them, the *bacrim* was a mix of BCN and Héroes de Granada, as well as former Medellín Cartel. It was also reported that in 2006, former members of Bloque Mineros, helped to form the organization.<sup>555</sup>

After the turmoil between Sebastian and Valenciano, along with the confrontation with Don Mario, the group faced difficulties. One report suggested that one set of members joined *Los Urabeños*, while another set defected to *Los Rastrojos*.<sup>556</sup> Different numbers from 2012 also suggested they had between 350 to 415 members and were operating 128 different networks.<sup>557</sup>

### *Territory*

In 2010, HRW identified *Los Paisas* in 7 departments.<sup>558</sup> INDEPAZ estimated that they were in 9 departments (and more than sixty municipalities).<sup>559</sup> Following the

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<sup>552</sup> Gutiérrez Sanín and Jaramillo, 28.

<sup>553</sup> ICG (2007), 18.

<sup>554</sup> Restrepo and Arias (2010), 3.

<sup>555</sup> Johnson (2012b); “Ángel de Jesús Pacheco Chanci, alias ‘Sebastián’,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://es.insightcrime.org/noticias-sobre-crimen-organizado-en-colombia/angel-de-jesus-pacheco-chacy-sebastian>> (May 2016).

<sup>556</sup> Johnson (2012b).

<sup>557</sup> Human Rights Watch (2010), 34; Bedoya Lima (2014b).

<sup>558</sup> Human Rights Watch (2010), 34.

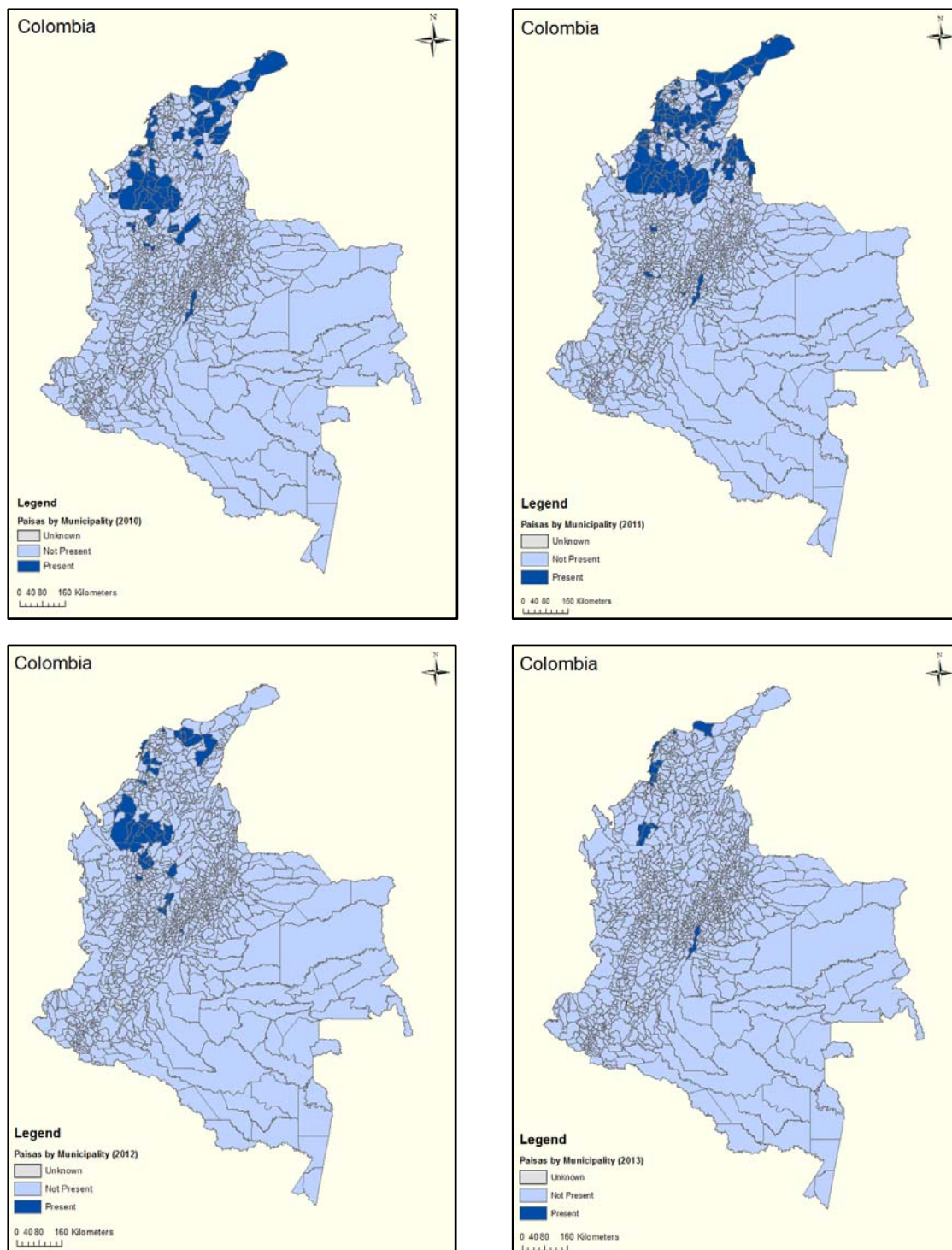
conflict with Don Mario, as well as internal issues, by 2013, the group was back to seven departments, but only 13 municipalities.<sup>560</sup> INDEPAZ's 2016 report has them only in Nariño department.<sup>561</sup> This is a departure from their traditional strongholds in the northern half of the country.

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<sup>559</sup> INDEPAZ (2010), 6, 26-27.

<sup>560</sup> INDEPAZ (2014), 14.

<sup>561</sup> INDEPAZ (2016), 3.



**Figure 29. Presence and Non-Presence of *Los Paisas* (2010-2013)<sup>562</sup>**

<sup>562</sup> Source data drawn from INDEPAZ reports.

### *Goals, Ideology, & Activities*

While the specific goals and ideology of *Los Paisas* are not clear, it is again possible to create a comparison with BCN. Civico notes that the group's intention was "the extraction of revenues from the illicit market as well as social and territorial control."<sup>563</sup>

The alliances of the organization were discussed briefly above, but it is more complicated than just their association with Pacheco. While *Los Traquetos* and *Los Paisas* initially operated independently, they merged in 2007 to face Don Mario, according to Don Berna's testimony after his arrest.<sup>564</sup>

In the department of La Guajira in 2008, Don Mario allied with the leader of Frente Contrainsurgencia Wayúu, one of the non-demobilized AUC blocs, and "started a war" with *Los Paisas* over drug trafficking in the region.<sup>565</sup> The following year, *Los Rastrojos* allied with the *Paisas* in Antioquia to combat Don Mario and help the group recapture lost territory.<sup>566</sup> *Semana* reported in 2010, that the two groups were still allied and operating in Córdoba.<sup>567</sup> The next year, *El Tiempo* put forth the idea that three major cartels were forming (which did not actually come to pass), and suggested *Los Paisas* would permanently join *Los Rastrojos*.<sup>568</sup> Separately, due to the groups' long association

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<sup>563</sup> Civico, 86.

<sup>564</sup> "'Don Berna': de Inspector de las Auc a jefe de banda criminal," *Verdadabierta*, 9 September 2014, <<http://www.verdadabierta.com/justicia-y-paz/juicios/601-bloque-heroes-de-tolova/5433-don-berna-de-inspector-de-las-auc-a-jefe-de-banda-criminal>> (May 2016).

<sup>565</sup> "La guerra entre 'los Paisas' y 'Don Mario' por el control de La Guajira," *Verdadabierta*, 26 February 2009, <<http://www.verdadabierta.com/rearme/941-iquien-controla-la-guajira>> (May 2016).

<sup>566</sup> Johnson (2012b).

<sup>567</sup> "Volvió el terror a Córdoba."

<sup>568</sup> "Están engendrando tres grandes carteles de la droga."

with drug trafficking, they had also established alliances with the Mexicans and criminal groups in Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.<sup>569</sup>

Other reports of the group's activities include the following:

- In April 2010, members of *Los Paisas* in Cartagena murdered the brother of the former Minister of Mines and Energy, Hernán Martínez Torres, because he was “collaborating with *Los Rastrojos*.”<sup>570</sup>
- In November 2012, the massacre of 10 peasants took place in Santa Rosa de Osos, Antioquia. When the perpetrators were captured, they reportedly identified themselves as *Los Paisas*.<sup>571</sup> It was later learned that alias “Jorge 18,” leader of the *Renacentistas del Norte*, a splinter group from *Los Rastrojos*, gave the order.<sup>572</sup> Jorge 18 ultimately went to jail for the crime in August 2013.<sup>573</sup>
- In one incident of corruption between the state and *Los Paisas*, the former Mayor of Tarazá in Antioquia, was alleged to have diverted millions of pesos from a local hospital to the group.<sup>574</sup>
- Pamphleteering does not appear to be a priority of the group. Figure 30 (below) captures two reported handouts. They use the same violent imagery and

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<sup>569</sup> Restrepo and Arias (2010), 4.

<sup>570</sup> “Policía esclarece asesinato de hermano de exministro,” *El Universal*, 28 October 2011, <<http://m.eluniversal.com.co/cartagena/sucesos/policia-esclarece-asesinato-de-hermano-de-exministro-50694>> (May 2016).

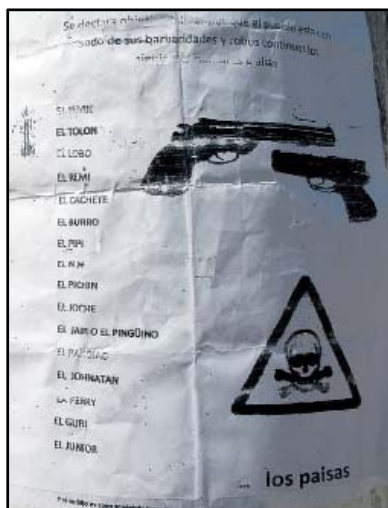
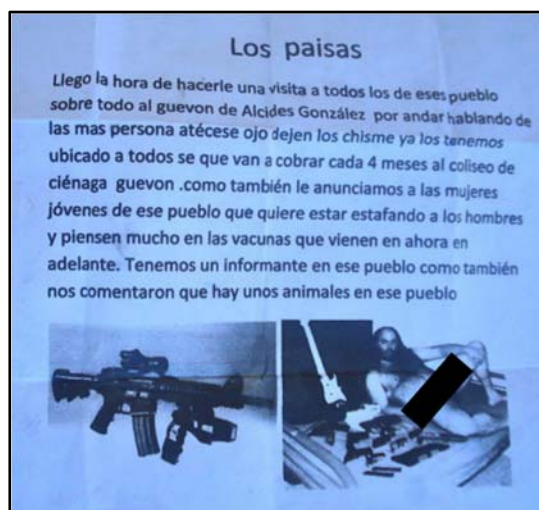
<sup>571</sup> “Capturas por matanza en Antioquia se lograron por un informante,” *Semana*, 17 November 2012.

<sup>572</sup> “Capturan autor material de masacre de Santa Rosa de Osos,” *El País*, 15 November 2012, <<http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/judicial/noticias/desde-carcel-alias-jorge-18-habria-ordenado-masacre-antioquia>> (May 2016).

<sup>573</sup> “Condenan a alias “Jorge 18” a 14 años de prisión por masacre en Santa Rosa de Osos,” *El Colombiano*, 16 August 2013, <[http://www.elcolombiano.com/condenan\\_a\\_alias\\_jorge\\_18\\_a\\_14\\_anos\\_de\\_prision\\_por\\_masacre\\_en\\_santa\\_rosa\\_de\\_osos-NCEC\\_255910](http://www.elcolombiano.com/condenan_a_alias_jorge_18_a_14_anos_de_prision_por_masacre_en_santa_rosa_de_osos-NCEC_255910)> (28 June 2015).

<sup>574</sup> “Comienza el capítulo de la ‘bacrimpolítica’?”, *Semana*, 30 March 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/comienza-capitulo-bacrimpolitica/237606-3>> (2014).

languages as those of other groups, but do not appear to conform to any established template.



**Figure 30. Reported Pamphlets of Los Paisas<sup>575</sup>**

<sup>575</sup> “El grupo paramilitar ‘Los Paisas’ anuncian inminente masacre en las próximas horas en el corregimiento Bocas de Aracataca,” 12 June 2012, *Colectivo de Abogados*, <[http://www.colectivodeabogados.org/cajar\\_old/spip.php?article3895](http://www.colectivodeabogados.org/cajar_old/spip.php?article3895)> (May 2016); “Amenaza de los panfletos es real, dice La Chinita,” *El Herald*, 22 January 2011, <<http://www.elheraldo.co/local/amenaza-de-los-panfletos-es-real-dice-la-chinita>> (May 2016).

## Los Rastrojos

### *Origins & Leadership*

*Los Rastrojos* formed as a “security service” for Wilber Varela, alias “Jabón,” a leader of the Norte Valle Cartel (NVC) in Valle del Cauca.<sup>576</sup> The group was named after Diego Pérez Henao, alias “Diego Rastrojo,” one of Jabón’s lieutenants.<sup>577</sup> While a single report suggested the group existed in the 1990s, it is most commonly stated that Rastrojo formed it in 2002 to compete with *Los Machos*, the “security service” of another NVC leader, Diego Montoya.<sup>578</sup> Eventually *Los Rastrojos* prevailed over the other group.<sup>579</sup>

Jabón originally worked for the Cali Cartel and later for Orlando Henao Montoya, another member of the NVC, until he joined its leadership.<sup>580</sup> Henao Montoya died in 1998, which allowed for the conflict between Jabón and Montoya.<sup>581</sup> Rastrojo started out as a *sicario* (assassin) for the NVC, and also established cocaine labs, until becoming *Los Rastrojos*’ leader.<sup>582</sup>

According to multiple sources, the group tried to participate in the demobilization around 2004 or 2005 under the name “*Rondas Campesinas Populares*” (Popular Peasant

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<sup>576</sup> Catalina Acosta Oidor, “Anatomía del conflicto armado en el Valle del Cauca durante la primera década del siglo XXI,” *Revista Científica Guillermo de Ockham* 10, no. 1 (2012): 87.

<sup>577</sup> “Diego Perez Henao, alias ‘Diego Rastrojo’,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/diego-perez-henao-diego-rastrojo>> (May 2016).

<sup>578</sup> Velásquez, 224-225; Acosta, 87.

<sup>579</sup> “Diego Perez Henao, alias ‘Diego Rastrojo’.”

<sup>580</sup> “¿Quién era Wilber Varela, alias ‘Jabón’?”, *Caracol Radio*, 31 January 2008, <[http://caracol.com.co/radio/2008/01/31/nacional/1201813020\\_542197.html](http://caracol.com.co/radio/2008/01/31/nacional/1201813020_542197.html)> (June 2016)

<sup>581</sup> ICG (2007), 12

<sup>582</sup> “Diego Perez Henao, alias ‘Diego Rastrojo’.”

Patrols).<sup>583</sup> This was disallowed of course, since they were not an actual paramilitary group.<sup>584</sup>

Conflict between Jabón and another of his lieutenants, Javier Antonio Calle Serna, led to the NVC leader's murder in 2008.<sup>585</sup> Rastrojo and possibly Daniel "El Loco" Barrera, supported Calle Serna's actions.<sup>586</sup> For a time after Jabón's death, Javier Antonio, along with his brother, Luis Enrique Calle Serna, together alias "Los Comba," ran the group. Javier Antonio started his career in the EPL, and after its demobilization in the early 1990s, relocated to Cali where he worked for several trafficking organizations.<sup>587</sup> Javier Antonio was captured by the government in May 2012, while Luis Enrique surrendered approximately six months later.<sup>588</sup> Rastrojo was also arrested in mid-2012 while in Venezuela.<sup>589</sup>

Before their arrests, Rastrojo and Javier Antonio were reported to have had a falling out in early 2012 over control of *Los Rastrojos*.<sup>590</sup> This led to a division in the group, with some continuing to follow Los Comba and others following Rastrojo.<sup>591</sup>

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<sup>583</sup> "Autoridades verifican si capturado en Venezuela es 'Diego Rastrojo'," *Semana*, 18 January 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/autoridades-verifican-capturado-venezuela-diego-rastrojo/234286-3>> (2014); "Rastrojos," *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/rastrojos-profile>> (May 2016).

<sup>584</sup> "Autoridades verifican si capturado en Venezuela es 'Diego Rastrojo'."

<sup>585</sup> "Javier Antonio Calle Serna, alias 'Comba'," *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/javier-antonio-calle-serna-comba>> (May 2016).

<sup>586</sup> "Javier Antonio Calle Serna, alias 'Comba'."

<sup>587</sup> "Javier Antonio Calle Serna, alias 'Comba'."

<sup>588</sup> "Director de la Policía Nacional confirmó la entrega del último hermano 'Comba'," *El Pais*, 4 October 2012, <<http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/judicial/noticias/con-entrega-luis-enrique-calle-serna-comienza-etapa-final-clan-comba>> (June 2016).

<sup>589</sup> "Diego Perez Henao, alias 'Diego Rastrojo'."

<sup>590</sup> "Capturado en Venezuela 'Diego Rastrojo'."

<sup>591</sup> "Viaje al nido de los Rastrojos," *Semana*, 28 October 2012, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/viaje-nido-rastrojos/267010-3>> (2014).



Figure 31 shows the associations of the leadership according to the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) as of early 2013.

Another leader of *Los Rastrojos* was the aforementioned Angel de Jesus Pacheco Chanci, alias "Sebastian." He was another former member of the AUC, who briefly joined *Los Paisas* and then *Los Rastrojos*. Pacheco was killed by his own men in July 2011.<sup>592</sup>

The leader of *Los Rastrojos* along the Valle de Cauca-Chocó border was a former BCB leader named Guerrero. He surrendered on the command of Los Comba in October 2012 (and was possibly killed in July 2013).<sup>593</sup>

In late 2012, Rastrojo's replacement, José Leonardo Hortúa Blandón, alias 'Mascota,' was captured and then assassinated shortly thereafter.<sup>594</sup> In mid-2013, Jorge Santodomingo, alias "Palustre," chief assassin of Los Comba was arrested in Ecuador.<sup>595</sup>

The Colombian government freed the jailed brother of Los Comba, Juan Carlos, one of the leading money launderers for *Los Rastrojos*, in early 2016. It has been suggested that he might return to the group in order to revitalize its leadership.<sup>596</sup>

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<sup>592</sup> "Quién era alias 'Sebastián'."

<sup>593</sup> "Viaje al nido de los Rastrojos."

<sup>594</sup> Pérez and Montoya, 4.

<sup>595</sup> Pérez and Montoya, 5.

<sup>596</sup> "En libertad uno de los hermanos 'Comba'," *El Espectador*, 1 February 2016, <<http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/libertad-uno-de-los-hermanos-comba-articulo-614028>> (June 2016); Arron Daugherty, "Colombia Frees Brother of Top Organized Crime Leader," *InSight Crime*, 3 February 2016, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/colombia-frees-brother-of-top-rastrojos-leader>> (June 2016).

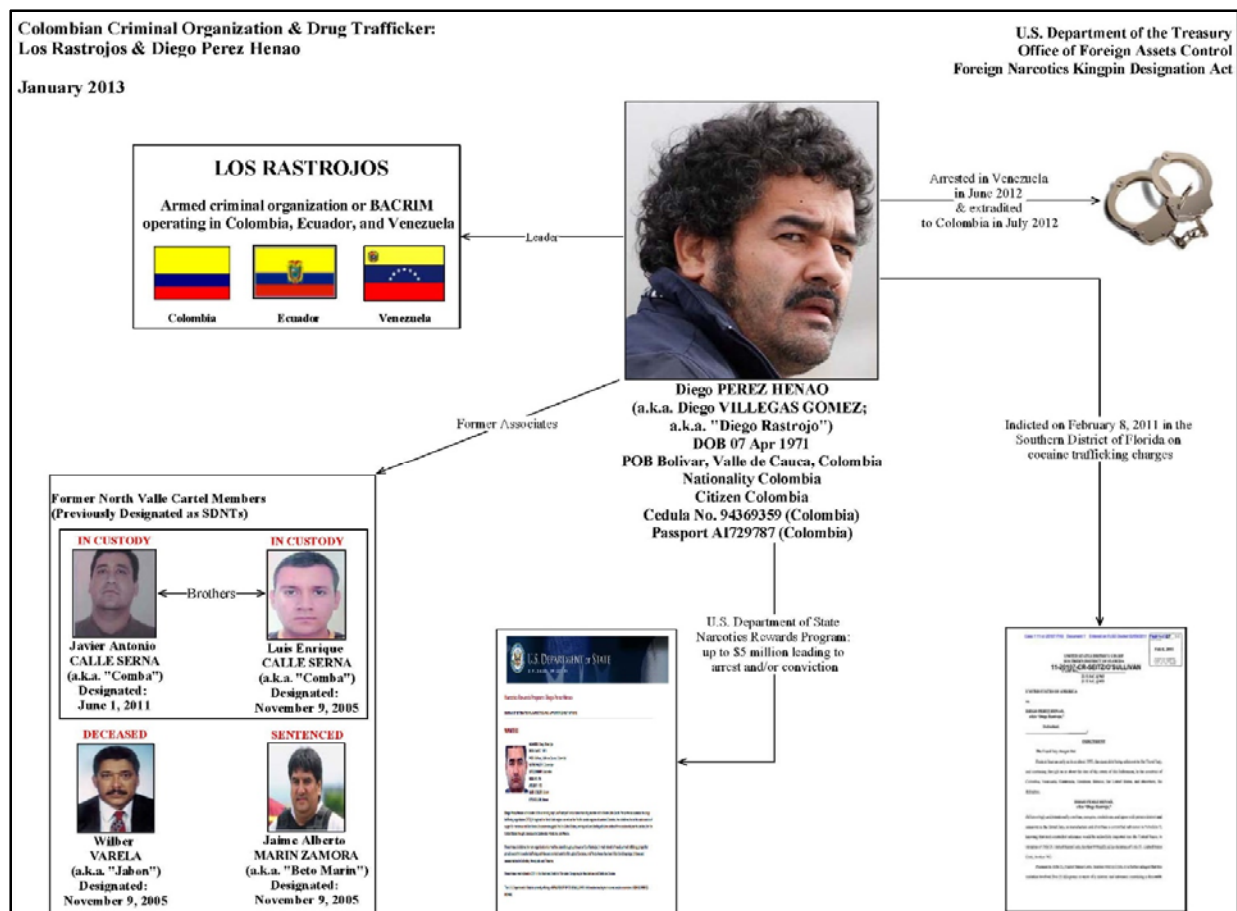


Figure 31. OFAC Representation of *Los Rastrojos* Leadership (2013)<sup>597</sup>

<sup>597</sup> "Los Rastrojos," OFAC, January 2013, <[https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/20130130\\_los\\_rastrojos.pdf](https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/20130130_los_rastrojos.pdf)> (2015).

## *Members & Structure*

Garzón referred to *Los Rastrojos* as a “private drug-trafficking army.”<sup>598</sup> Restrepo agreed that they were just a private army of the NVC.<sup>599</sup> They are described as having a hybrid structure focused on criminal activities, where their operations are different in rural areas and urban areas.<sup>600</sup> Furthermore, the members do not have uniforms or similar weapons in the different regions of operation.<sup>601</sup>

In contrast with most other reports, Hristov believes that the membership and leadership of *Rastrojos* are led by and made up of former AUC members.<sup>602</sup> Other than ties between Jabón and Macaco (the former BCB commander), which will be described below, and an observation from HRW that some members were former AUC, little additional evidence was found to support this.<sup>603</sup>

Their size was reported to be about 800 men in mid-2009, at the same time approximately 100 of them participated in a surrender to the Army.<sup>604</sup> It was later revealed that the participants were recruited specifically for the event.<sup>605</sup> They were thought to have 1400 members in 2010.<sup>606</sup> Another source reported only 653 that same year.<sup>607</sup> In mid-2012, it was reported they had approximately 1800-2000 men.<sup>608</sup> Since

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<sup>598</sup> Garzón (2008), 51.

<sup>599</sup> Restrepo (2010), 3.

<sup>600</sup> Granada, et al., 493-494.

<sup>601</sup> Granada, et al., 475-476.

<sup>602</sup> Hristov (2010), 24.

<sup>603</sup> ICG (2007), 12-13.

<sup>604</sup> “Rastrojos sin ley,” *Semana*, 30 May 2009, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/rastrojos-ley/103630-3>> (2014).

<sup>605</sup> “En al menos 10 regiones hay policías y militares con nexos con bandas.”

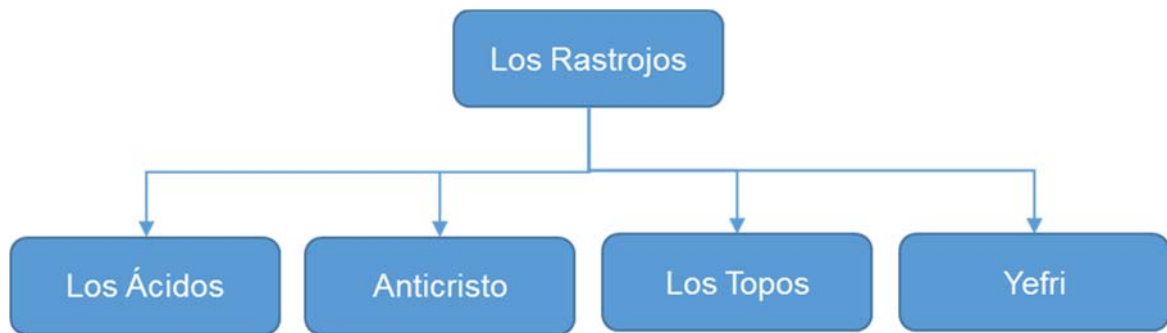
<sup>606</sup> Human Rights Watch (2010), 33-34.

<sup>607</sup> “DAS revela identidad y dónde actúan nuevas bandas criminales,” *El Tiempo*, 4 July 2010, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-7787693>> (2014).

<sup>608</sup> Prieto (2012), 184

the arrests of Los Comba and Rastrojo, however, it is likely that these numbers have declined, as the group tries to reorganize around new leadership.

As part of their networked structure, they have allowed local groups to ‘brand’ themselves as *Rastrojos*.<sup>609</sup> They have also established ties with gangs in the cities, creating mutually beneficial relationships. Figure 32 shows an example of this behavior in Cali.



**Figure 32. Gangs Associated with *Los Rastrojos* in Cali (2013)<sup>610</sup>**

### *Territory*

*Los Rastrojos* originated in the Valle del Cauca and steadily moved to other departments around the country. Jabón reportedly worked with the former leader of the BCB, Macaco, to facilitate a move south into Cauca and Nariño in 2005.<sup>611</sup> This allowed the group to gain access to coca and poppy crops growing in the region.<sup>612</sup>

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<sup>609</sup> Llorente and McDermott, 28.

<sup>610</sup> Policía Nacional in Pérez and Montoya, 11.

<sup>611</sup> ICG (2007), 12.

<sup>612</sup> ICG (2007), 13.

In a 2013 interview with *Semana*, then-Director of the Policía Nacional, General Rodolfo Palomino stated *Los Rastrojos* were, “[A] group of criminal gangs that have been specially installed in northern Valle. They are fighting to maintain hegemony over drug trafficking routes and micro-trafficking plazas.”<sup>613</sup>

In addition to the southern Pacific, the group also controlled trafficking routes in Putumayo leading into Ecuador, although in 2013, *Los Urabeños* began to challenge their power.<sup>614</sup> *Los Rastrojos* also worked with *Los Paisas* for a time in and around Antioquia, as described in the previous section.

Outside of Colombia, *Los Rastrojos* had a substantial presence in Venezuela, compared to other groups.<sup>615</sup> Most notably the group operated routes in Zulia State and its capital, Maracaibo, just across the border from La Guajira Department. From there, they also coordinated with the Mexican Cartels with whom they were allied.

The 2016 report from INDEPAZ identified *Los Rastrojos* activity in Valle del Cauca, Atlántico, Bogotá and Quindío.<sup>616</sup>

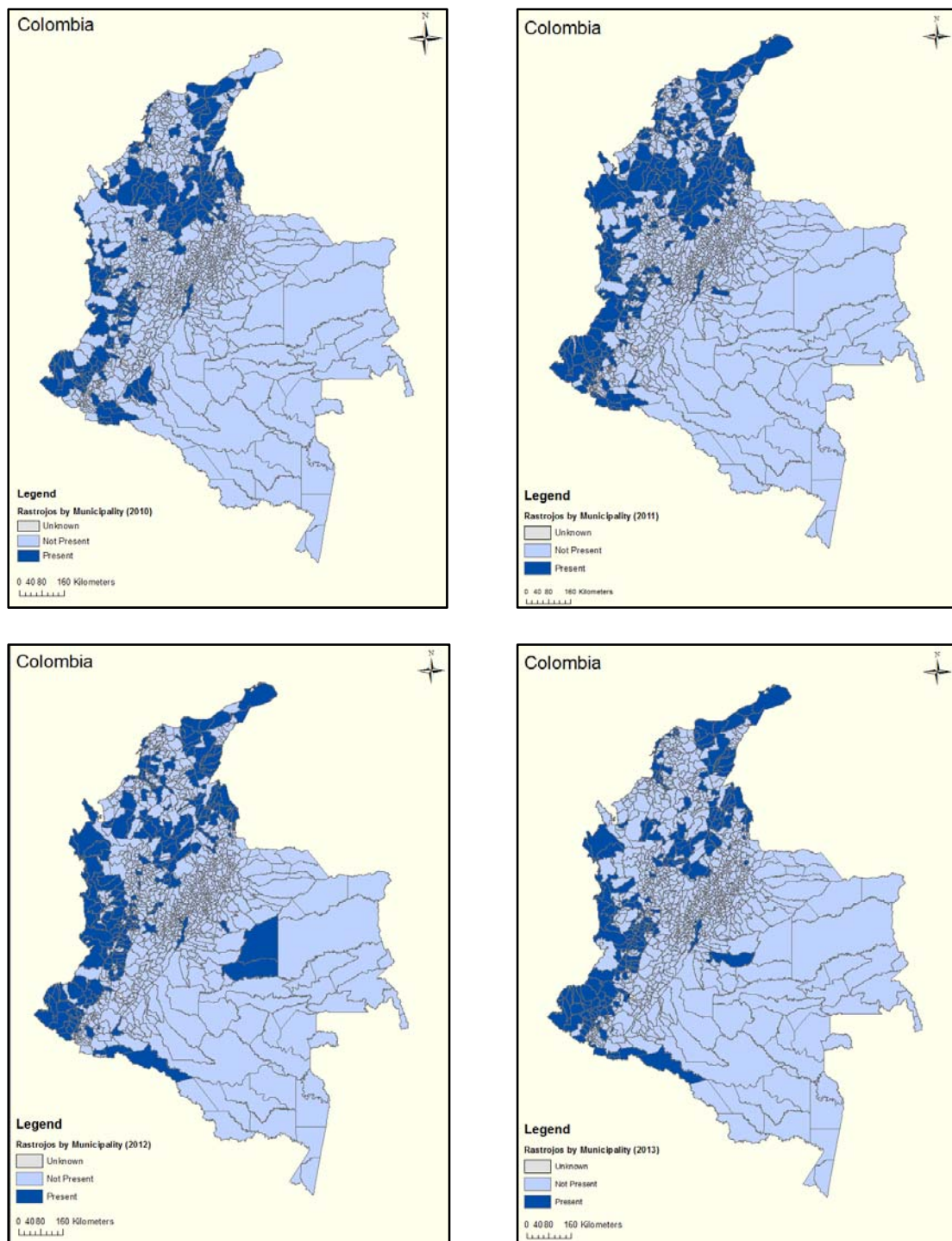
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<sup>613</sup> María Jimena Duzán, “Las evidencias muestran que los vándalos son de las Farc,” *Semana*, 7 September 2013. My translation.

<sup>614</sup> Pérez and Montoya, 19.

<sup>615</sup> Prieto (2012), 187.

<sup>616</sup> INDEPAZ (2016), 2



**Figure 33. Presence and Non-Presence of *Los Rastrojos* (2010-2013)<sup>617</sup>**

<sup>617</sup> Source data drawn from INDEPAZ reports.

### *Goals, Ideology & Activities*

The origins of *Los Rastrojos* have made it unique among the other major *bacrim*. Their ideology is financial gain. *Semana* writes, “It is clear that they have no political motivation, but now function as a franchise that uses different drug traffickers, and that their status is common criminals.”<sup>618</sup>

However, much like the demise of previous large organizations, the breakdown of *Los Rastrojos* has again opened up space for lower level operatives to move up and for local groups to try to seize control of operations. Called by the authorities the “Rastrojo Effect,” the unfortunate consequence has been an increase in violence where it has occurred.<sup>619</sup>

Despite their general focus on drug trafficking, *Los Rastrojos* have still been involved in similar activities as the other groups. The *Defensor del Pueblo* (Ombudsman), Jorge Armando Otálora, issued the following warning in August 2012 about the group (and the FARC and *Urabeños* as well): “In urban areas, [members] make threats against leaders and social organizations, perpetrate killings and attacks, establish rules of behavior, restrict the mobility of residents in the neighborhoods, control prices and impose taxes on legal trade, commit extortion, control micro-trafficking and prostitution, manage assassinations and practice torture and beheadings.”<sup>620</sup>

As part of their focus on drug trafficking they have readily established relationships with actors across the spectrum. They have formed agreements with both

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<sup>618</sup> “Rastrojos sin ley.” My translation.

<sup>619</sup> “Delincuencia en Colombia: bandas desbandadas.” My translation.

<sup>620</sup> “Delincuencia en Colombia: bandas desbandadas.” My translation.

the ELN and FARC.<sup>621</sup> Their alliance with the ELN was a non-aggression pact for the departments of Nariño and Cauca in 2008.<sup>622</sup> They also worked with them to traffic drugs along the Pacific Coast, while with the FARC, they paid for routes and delineated separate zones of operation.<sup>623</sup> In Nariño, *Los Rastrojos* also worked with the *Águilas Negras* and *Nueva Generación*.<sup>624</sup> As previously discussed, they allied with *Los Paisas*.<sup>625</sup> Outside of Colombia, they have acted as suppliers, at various times, to the Sinaloa Cartel and *Los Zetas*.<sup>626</sup>

The one group with whom they have not formed a relationship is *Los Urabeños*. It was reported that at one time, the two groups tried to divide the country (around December 2011), after engaging in conflict in a number of departments.<sup>627</sup> This pact did not last very long, as they could not entirely control either their own groups or the other *bacrim*. In-fighting escalated in particular in late 2012 – early 2013, after the arrests of most of *Los Rastrojos* leadership.<sup>628</sup>

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<sup>621</sup> Llorente and McDermott, 26, 28; “Presunta alianza entre FARC y Bacrim revela Mindefensa,” *Semana*, 23 March 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/presunta-alianza-entre-farc-bacrim-revela-mindefensa/237255-3>> (2014).

<sup>622</sup> “Preocupante aumento de bandas armadas en Colombia,” *Semana*, 28 November 2008, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/conflicto-armado/articulo/preocupante-aumento-bandas-armadas-colombia/97689-3>> (2014).

<sup>623</sup> Prieto (2012), 188.

<sup>624</sup> “La nueva guerra de Uribe”; “Capturado en Venezuela ‘Diego Rastrojo’.”

<sup>625</sup> “Volvió el terror a Córdoba.”

<sup>626</sup> Llorente and McDermott, 27; Avila (2013), Kindle Location 463.

<sup>627</sup> “Delincuencia en Colombia: bandas desbandadas.” My translation.

<sup>628</sup> “Desplazamiento chocoano por cuenta de las bacrim,” *Semana*, 8 January 2013, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/desplazamiento-chocoano-cuenta-bacrim/328912>> (2014); “Más de 680 desplazados en Chocó por guerra entre bacrim,” 10 January 2013, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/mas-680-desplazados-choco-guerra-entre-bacrim/329156>> (2014).



There have been other conflicts between the two groups. In Guaviare Department, the *bacrim* fought over rights to rare earth mineral exploitation.<sup>629</sup> In the capital of Atlántico, Barranquilla, there were multiple conflicts over territory and control of the local population.<sup>630</sup> After mid-2012, one Rastrojos splinter group from the area joined *Los Urabeños*, while another became *Los Costeños*.<sup>631</sup>

*Los Rastrojos* have been especially skilled at extortion and making threats. Kyle Johnson writes in *Semana*, “[This group] has threatened and attacked numerous social actors, including trade unionists, human rights defenders, among others....it may be true that they are not counterinsurgents – but the effects of this violence end up being totally political.”<sup>632</sup> In Nariño, notably San Andrés de Tumaco, one of the leading municipalities for coca cultivation, it is reported the group controls the port, regularly commits extortion, and threatens local leaders.<sup>633</sup> They are also said to be operating legitimate businesses in the municipality.<sup>634</sup>

*Los Rastrojos* have engaged in corruption and infiltration of the police and the military.<sup>635</sup> In May 2011, multiple government employees were arrested for ties to the group.<sup>636</sup> Several months later, it was revealed that the Rastrojos were paying civil

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<sup>629</sup> Massé, 21; Ignacio Gómez, “Colombia’s black-market coltan tied to drug traffickers, paramilitaries,” *The Center for Public Integrity*, 4 March 2012, <<https://www.publicintegrity.org/2012/03/04/8284/colombia-s-black-market-coltan-tied-drug-traffickers-paramilitaries>> (June 2016).

<sup>630</sup> Pérez and Montoya, 7.

<sup>631</sup> Pérez and Montoya, 7.

<sup>632</sup> Kyle Johnson, “Las Bacrim también son políticas,” *Semana*, 6 May 2013, <<http://www.semana.com/opinion/articulo/las-bacrim-tambien-politicas/342472-3>> (2014).

<sup>633</sup> Pérez and Montoya, 18; “Microextorsión: la caja menor,” *Semana*, 28 January 2011.

<sup>634</sup> “Están engendrando tres grandes carteles de la droga.”

<sup>635</sup> “En al menos 10 regiones hay policías y militares con nexos con bandas.”

<sup>636</sup> “Neoparamilitares?”, *Semana*, 4 June 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/neoparamilitares/240855-3>> (2014).

servants, police, and military (approximately 900 million pesos (\$500,000) to various police and DAS in a four month period).<sup>637</sup>

Other reports about their activities include:

- Participation in the displacement of 2,000 people in Choco in 2009.<sup>638</sup>
- Support for certain candidates in Nariño and Valle de Cauca and threatening others before the October 2011 elections.<sup>639</sup>
- Working with the FARC to intimidate electoral candidates, after fighting with them over territory in Nariño only a few weeks before.<sup>640</sup>
- Threats against community leaders and members of political parties in August 2013.<sup>641</sup>

*Semana* captured the sentiment in Nariño during this period: “The stories of pain of these people are like a cry in the wilderness. They do not care if *Los Rastrojos* are *bacrim*, paramilitaries, neo-paramilitaries, or drug traffickers. They just know that at any time, they will return with their weapons and will continue killing.”<sup>642</sup>

As part of this terror, *Los Rastrojos* have frequently published pamphlets threatening the populace. Examples below (Figure 34) show a standard letterhead for the group. Like the other *bacrim*, they speak of “military objectives” and call out those whom they are specifically targeting.

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<sup>637</sup> Juan Diego Restrepo E., “99,9 por ciento Gaitanista - Policía de Tarazá,” *Semana*, 2 August 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/opinion/articulo/999-ciento-gaitanista-policia-taraza/244148-3>> (2014); “A las puertas del infierno,” *Semana*, 13 August 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/especiales/articulo/puertas-del-infierno/244779-3>> (2014).

<sup>638</sup> “Autoridades verifican si capturado en Venezuela es ‘Diego Rastrojo’.”

<sup>639</sup> “Elecciones amenazadas,” *Semana*, 20 August 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/elecciones-amenazadas/245156-3>> (2014).

<sup>640</sup> “De nuevo la crueldad,” *Semana*, 1 October 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/de-nuevo-crueldad/247231-3>> (2014); “Democracia en la mira,” *Semana*, 15 October 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/democracia-mira/247914-3>> (2014).

<sup>641</sup> “Por amenazas, Polo pide protección al Gobierno,” *Semana*, 5 August 2013.

<sup>642</sup> “De nuevo la crueldad.” My translation.

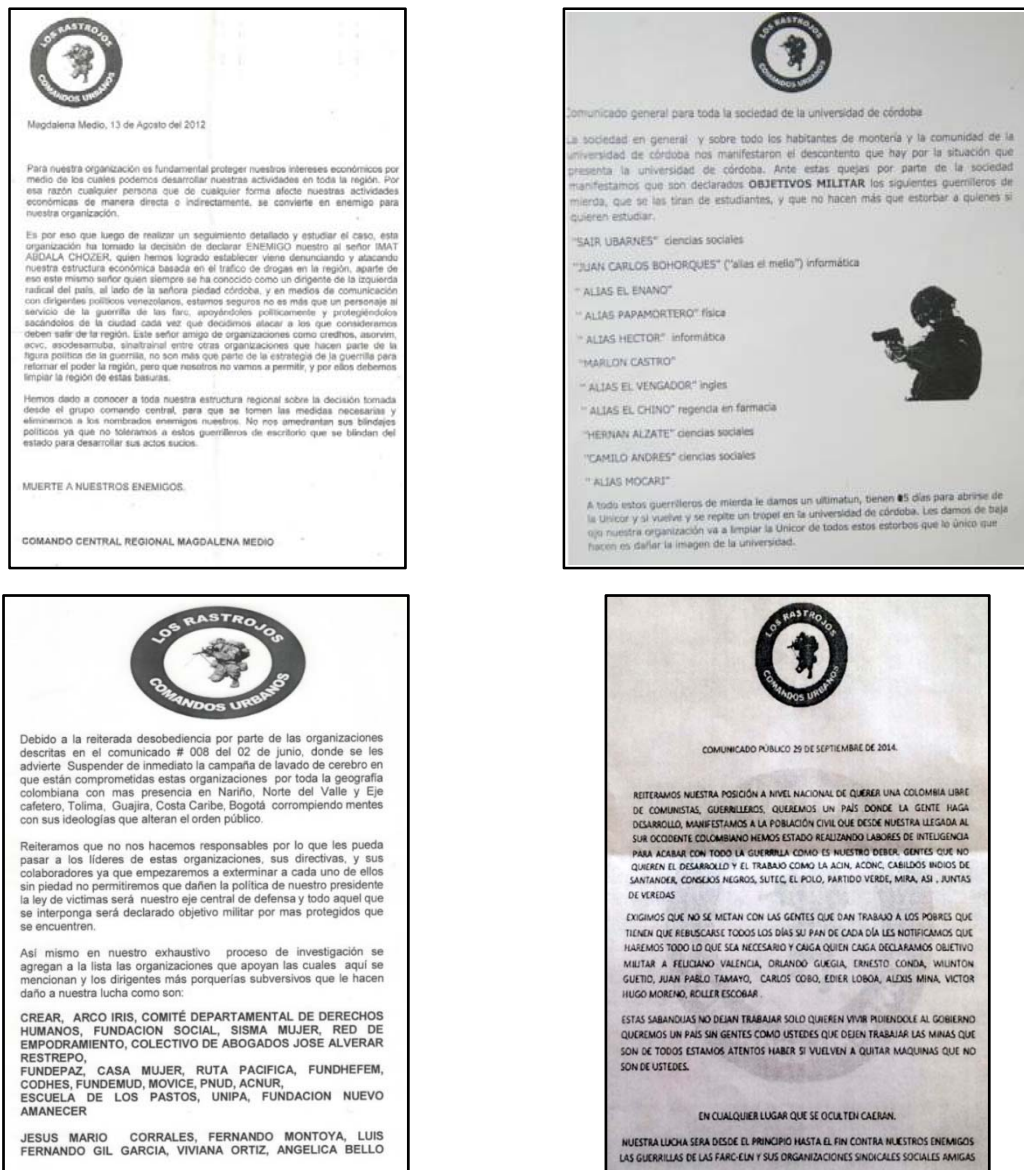


Figure 34. Pamphlets of the *Rastrojos*<sup>643</sup>

<sup>643</sup> “ACCIÓN URGENTE – Defensores de Derechos Humanos amenazados,” 29 August 2012, <<http://mjdignidad.blogspot.com/2012/08/accion-urgente-defensores-de-derechos.html>> (2015); Nida Serrano, “Estudiantes amenazados de Unicórdoba, a organismos internacionales,” *El Universal*, 21 November 2013, <<http://www.eluniversal.com.co/regional/cordoba/estudiantes-amenazados-de-unicordoba-organismos-internacionales-142600>> (May 2016); Cecilia Orozco Tascón, “Decidí luchar con más rabia,” *El Espectador*, 11 February 2012, <<http://www.elespectador.com/entrevista-de-cecilia-orozco/decidi-luchar-mas-rabia-articulo-326055>> (2015); “Defensoría advierte presencia de “bandas criminales” en 168 municipios de 27 departamentos,” 4 November 2016, <<http://www.proclamadelcauca.com/2014/11/defensoria-advierte-presencia-de-bandas-criminales-en-168-municipios-de-27-departamentos.html>> (May 2016).

## Los Urabeños

### *Origins & Leadership*

*Los Urabeños*, also referred to as the *Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia* (AGC), the Clan Úsuga, or the Clan del Golfo (as of June 2016), have become the most powerful *bacrim* in Colombia.<sup>644</sup> In 2014, HRW identified them as the largest and most organized group.<sup>645</sup>

Taking their name from the Urabá region in north-western Antioquia, *Los Urabeños* formed out of the remnants of several organizations, including the BEC and the EPL.<sup>646</sup> Daniel Rendón Herrera, alias “Don Mario,” created the group after his brother, Freddy Rendón Herrera, the former BEC commander, demobilized in 2006. Don Mario had previously served as a financial manager for the BEC, as well as the Bloque Centauros.<sup>647</sup>

During their formation in the mid-2000s, they sometimes used the name *Águilas Negras*.<sup>648</sup> Avila suggests that there was a merging of the two groups along the Colombian-Venezuelan border in particular.<sup>649</sup> After his capture, Don Mario explained that he became the commander of the *Águilas Negras* and AGC after the disappearance

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<sup>644</sup> *Los Urabeños*, Clan Úsuga, and Clan del Golfo are government names, while *Autodefensas* is the name they gave themselves. Antonio Caballero, “Otra vez la farsa,” *Semana*, 14 January 2012, <<http://www.semana.com/opinion/articulo/otra-vez-farsa/251888-3>> (2014).

<sup>645</sup> Human Rights Watch, *The Crisis in Buenaventura* (2014), 12.

<sup>646</sup> “Los Urabeños,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/urabenos-profile>> (May 2016).

<sup>647</sup> “Los Urabeños.”

<sup>648</sup> Human Rights Watch (2010), 36; “Águilas Negras: ¿estructura criminal o sólo un nombre para cometer delitos?”

<sup>649</sup> Avila (2013), Kindle Location 539.

of Vicente Castaño.<sup>650</sup> In general, he engaged in a low-profile expansion of the group in the early years, while most of the country's attention was on the other emerging *bacrim*.<sup>651</sup> In October 2008, they formally announced their presence throughout the country.<sup>652</sup>

After Don Mario was captured in 2009, the brothers Úsuga, Juan de Dios and Dario Antonio, alias "Otoniel" (Lion of God), took control.<sup>653</sup> Both brothers started out as EPL guerrillas, like many other former AUC members and drug traffickers.<sup>654</sup> Since the death of Juan de Dios at the hands of the CNP, Otoniel and Roberto Vargas Gutierrez, alias "Gavilan," have led the group. Gavilan was also formerly an EPL and AUC member (Bloque Mineros).<sup>655</sup>

Another key leader was Henry de Jesus Lopez, alias "Mi Sangre," who was captured in Argentina in October 2012. Mi Sangre worked for the Medellín *Oficina de Envigado* in the early 1990s and moved over to the AUC's Bloque Centauros by the end of the decade.<sup>656</sup> He also worked with the Bloque Capital in Bogotá, and continued to

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<sup>650</sup> "'Don Mario', Daniel Rendón Herrea," *Verdadabierta*, 29 December 2009, <<http://www.verdadabierta.com/la-historia/2101-don-mario-daniel-rendon-herrera>> (May 2016).

<sup>651</sup> "De maoístas a capos," *Semana*, 10 December 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/de-maoistas-capos/250632-3>> (2014).

<sup>652</sup> Michael Reed Hurtado, "Bandas criminales: la genética no miente," *Razonpublica*, 16 January 2012, <<http://www.razonpublica.com/index.php/conflicto-drogas-y-paz-temas-30/2662-bandas-criminales-la-genetica-no-miente.html>> (May 2016).

<sup>653</sup> Human Rights Watch (2010), 32-33; INDEPAZ, "Cartografía del Conflicto: Narcoparamilitares y Guerrilla," *Punto de Encuentro* 58 (2012a), 60; Office of Foreign Assets Control, "Los Urabeños," July 2014.

<sup>654</sup> Llorente and McDermott, 29; "De maoístas a capos."

<sup>655</sup> "La genealogía de las nuevas bandas," *El Tiempo*, 2012, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/Multimedia/especiales/bacrim/ARCHIVO/ARCHIVO-8931580-0.pdf>> (July 2015); "Gavilan," *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/gavilan>> (May 2016).

<sup>656</sup> "Así cayó 'Mi Sangre'," *Semana*, 3 November 2012, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/asi-cayo-mi-sangre/267345-3>> (2014).

operate there after his 2005 “demobilization.”<sup>657</sup> He led operations for *Los Urabeños* in Medellín after joining the group, seizing control of routes and territory from the *Oficina de Envigado* (although since his capture, the two groups have come to an agreement).<sup>658</sup> The Úsuga brothers and Mi Sangre had successfully combined knowledge of being guerrillas, AUC, and drug traffickers.<sup>659</sup>

Other important leaders include (both captured and at large):<sup>660</sup>

- Rafael Alvarez Piñeda, alias “Chepe,” former Bloque Mineros and then a member of *Los Paisas*, before joining *Los Urabeños*.<sup>661</sup> [Captured]
- Carlos Antonio Moreno Tuberquia, alias “Nicolas,” former AUC.
- Arley Usuga Torres, alias “07.” [Captured]
- Marcos de Jesus Figueroa Garcia, alias “Marquitos,” operates in La Guajira.
- Luis Orlando Padierna Peña, alias “Inglaterra.”
- Alias “JJ,” possible brother of Don Mario.
- Alias “El Señor de la M.”

Figure 35 illustrates the leadership as well as other significant members of *Los Urabeños* as determined by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

<sup>657</sup> “Mi Sangre,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/henry-de-jesus-lopez-mi-sangre>> (May 2016).

<sup>658</sup> “Mi Sangre”; Michael Lohmuller, “Argentina Approves Extradition of Colombia Capo ‘Mi Sangre’,” *InSight Crime*, 23 May 2016, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/argentina-judge-approves-extradition-of-colombian-capo-mi-sangre>> (May 2016).

<sup>659</sup> “De maoístas a capos.”


<sup>660</sup> Some members of this list are drawn from Jeremy McDermott, “The Last BACRIM Standing: The Urabeños Today,” *InSight Crime*, 2 May 2014d, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/investigations/the-last-bacrim-standing-the-urabenos-today>> (May 2016); additional information found on “Los Urabeños,” OFAC, July 2014, <[https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/20140723\\_urabenos.pdf](https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/20140723_urabenos.pdf)> (2015).

<sup>661</sup> “Rafael Alvarez Piñeda, alias ‘Chepe’,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/rafael-alvarez-pineda-chepe>> (May 2016).

**Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designations**  
July 2014

**LOS URABENOS\***  
Leaders, Lieutenants, and Companies

Office of Foreign Assets Control

 "The President identified LOS URABENOS as significant foreign narcotics traffickers on May 31, 2013"

Previously designated on March 18, 2010

**Indicted in SDPL February 2012**

**Currently at large**

**Arrested**

**Businesses**

**Henry de Jesus LOPEZ LONDONO**  
a.k.a. "El Sangre"  
DOB: 18 February 1971  
Cedula No. 71721132 (Colombia)

**Dairo Antonio USUGA DAVID**

**Juan de Dios USUGA DAVID**  
**Deceased**

**Roberto VARGAS GUTIERREZ**

**Jairo de Jesus DURANGO RESTREPO**  
a.k.a. "Guagua"  
DOB: 30 June 1972  
Cedula No. 3484876 (Colombia)

**Carlos Antonio MORENO TUBERQUIA**  
a.k.a. "Nicolas"  
DOB: 30 April 1977  
Cedula No. 11002975 (Colombia)

**Luis Orlando PADIERNA PEÑA**  
a.k.a. "Inglatera"  
DOB: 25 January 1979  
Cedula No. 14441176 (Colombia)

**Aristides Manuel MESA PAEZ**  
a.k.a. "El Indio"  
DOB: 25 April 1970  
Cedula No. 71878727 (Colombia)

**Cesar Daniel ANAYA MARTINEZ**  
a.k.a. "Tiera"  
DOB: 30 April 1981  
Cedula No. 78768807 (Colombia)

**Rafael ALVAREZ PRIEDA**  
a.k.a. "Chepe"  
DOB: 27 March 1975  
Cedula No. 98849747 (Colombia)

**Ariel USUGA TORRES**  
a.k.a. "Cero Siete"  
DOB: 14 August 1979  
Cedula No. 71255292 (Colombia)

**Orcelynn Fernando VARRON CADENA**  
a.k.a. "Martin Siete"  
DOB: 2 March 1982  
Cedula No. 16843202 (Colombia)

**Maribel VARRON CADENA**  
DOB: 27 December 1977  
Cedula No. 31480963 (Colombia)

**Ingrid Edm VARRON CADENA**  
DOB: 21 September 1976  
Cedula No. 31475317 (Colombia)

**Hector Mario URDINOLA ALVAREZ**  
a.k.a. "Chicho"  
DOB: 28 August 1982  
Cedula No. 16844641 (Colombia)

**Orlando GUTIERREZ RENDON**  
a.k.a. "Negro Orlando"  
DOB: 12 January 1966  
Cedula No. 16488960 (Colombia)

**Alexander MONTAÑA USUGA**  
a.k.a. "Paseo Usuga"  
DOB: 14 June 1979  
Cedula No. 71216560 (Colombia)

**Carlos Jose ROBAYO ESCOBAR**  
a.k.a. "Guacamayo"  
DOB: 1 January 1988  
Cedula No. 16367108 (Colombia)

**Cloriam Manuel PALENCIA GONZALEZ**  
a.k.a. "Vialje"  
DOB: 18 April 1979  
Cedula No. 10903608 (Colombia)

**Sor Teresa GOMEZ ALVAREZ**  
a.k.a. "La Negra"  
DOB: 27 June 1968  
Cedula No. 21446837 (Colombia)  
Previously designated on February 18, 2004

**H Y J COMERCIALIZADORA INTERNACIONAL LTDA**  
Rogota, Colombia  
NIT No. 830105350-0 (Colombia)

**INMOBILIARIA FOR CADENA**  
Cali, Colombia  
Matricula Mercantil No. 754952-2 (Cali)

**COMERCIALIZADORA J DURANGO**  
San Pedro de Urabá, Colombia  
Matricula Mercantil No. 00057822 (Urabá)

**LITOGRAFIA VARRON**  
Cali, Colombia  
Matricula Mercantil No. 666486-2 (Cali)

**JOYERIA MANUELLA H.M.**  
Cali, Colombia  
Matricula Mercantil No. 819179-2 (Cali)

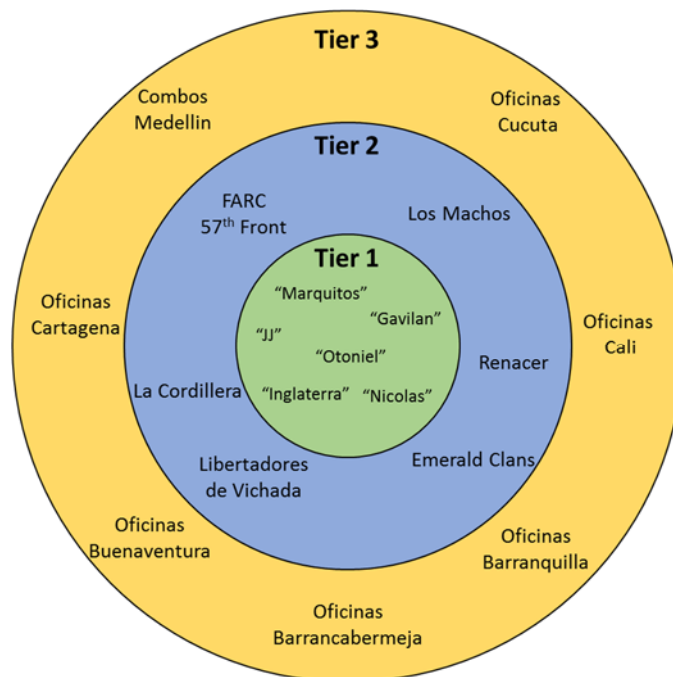
**VARRON DROS BETHNEY**  
Cali, Colombia  
Matricula Mercantil No. 606223-2 (Cali)

Figure 35. OFAC Representation of *Los Urabeños*<sup>662</sup>

<sup>662</sup> "Los Urabeños," OFAC, July 2014, <[https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/20140723\\_urabenos.pdf](https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/20140723_urabenos.pdf)> (2015).

### Members & Structure

It was also thought that by mid-2014, *Los Urabeños* was organized in eight blocks across the country with a “Board of Directors” overseeing operations.<sup>663</sup> Another explanation portrayed *Los Urabeños* is as a three tiered structure, with the leadership forming the inner circle (Tier 1/Board of Directors), and the outer two circles comprised of loosely associated networks, such as minor *bacrim* and urban gangs (Figure 36).



**Figure 36. Assessment of *Los Urabeños* Network (2014)<sup>664</sup>**

<sup>663</sup> McDermott (2014d).

<sup>664</sup> Based on original chart from McDermott (2014a).



There is little connection between the levels, and the inner circle must offer incentives for loyalty.<sup>665</sup> The leadership must, “rely on cooperation and consensus. The different nodes in the criminal network cooperate in the interests of illegal businesses.... The glue that keeps the network together is profit.”<sup>666</sup>

In addition to the groups identified in Figure 36, the groups listed in Table 15 were associated with or subsumed by *Los Urabeños*.<sup>667</sup>

**Table 15. Groups Associated with or Subsumed by *Los Urabeños* (2014)**

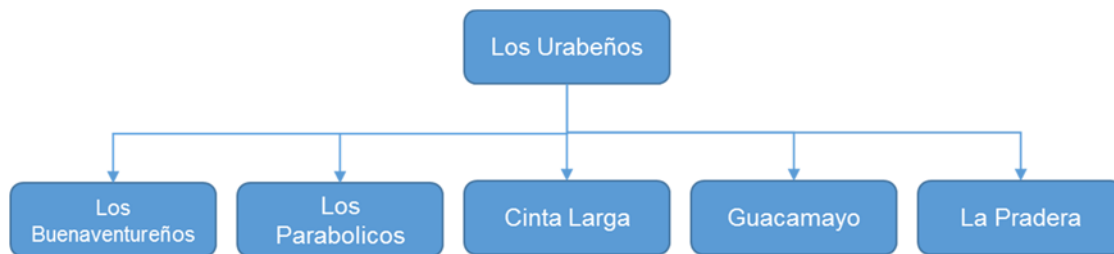
Group	Department	Note
Vencedores de San Jorge and Heroes de Castaño	Antioquia and Cordoba	The Vencedores were identified in INDEPAZ/CNRR in 2007; Heroes de Castaño has been reported to be an alternative name for Los Urabeños.
Águilas Negras	Antioquia, Cordoba, Bolívar, Cesar and Norte de Santander	Identified in INDEPAZ/CNRR; Major bacrim
Los Traquetos	Cordoba	Identified in INDEPAZ/CNRR; Minor bacrim
Los Nevados	Atlantico and La Guajira	Minor bacrim
Los Paisas	Antioquia	Formerly major bacrim (this may only be part of the organization)
Bacrim del Alta Guajira	La Guajira	Possibly identified by CNRR as "Alta Guajira"
Oficina del Caribe	Atlantico and La Guajira	Minor "oficina"
La Cordillera	Caldas, Risaralda, Quindío	Minor bacrim
Los Machos	Valle del Cauca	Former enemies of Los Rastrojos
Renacer	Choco	Minor bacrim
Oficina de Envigado	Antioquia	Major "oficina"/Sometimes identified as bacrim
Libertadores de Vichada	Vichada, Guaviare, Meta	Major bacrim

<sup>665</sup> Llorente and McDermott, 30.

<sup>666</sup> McDermott (2014d).

<sup>667</sup> List drawn from McDermott (2014a) with additional modifications.

*Los Urabeños* have a strong relationship with groups in the cities. In Medellín, there were estimated to be about 350 different groups associated with them or *La Oficina*.<sup>668</sup> In Cali, the police called out five gangs in particular for their association with the *bacrim* (Figure 37).



**Figure 37. Gangs Associated with *Los Urabeños* in Cali (2013)<sup>669</sup>**

Estimates of the size of *Los Urabeños* have steadily grown over the years. There were about 250 members at the time of Don Mario’s arrest.<sup>670</sup> In January 2010, it was estimated that there were 1,300 men.<sup>671</sup> They were thought to have 1,500 men in early 2012 and 2,000 in 2013.<sup>672</sup>

<sup>668</sup> Caroline Doyle, “Explaining Patterns of Urban Violence in Medellín, Colombia,” *Laws* 5, no. 3 (2016): 9.

<sup>669</sup> Policía Nacional in Pérez and Montoya, 11.

<sup>670</sup> “Juan de Dios Usuga, alias ‘Giovanni’,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/juan-de-dios-usuga-giovanni>> (June 2016).

<sup>671</sup> Bedoya Lima (2014b).

<sup>672</sup> Álvaro Villarraga Sarmiento, “Real significado de “Los Urabeños” y grupos similares,” *Corporación Viva la Ciudadanía*, no. 287, January 2012, <<http://viva.org.co/cajavirtual/svc0287/articulo03.html>> (May 2016); “Los Urabeños.”

## *Territory*

After the arrest of Don Mario in 2009, the brothers Úsuga expanded the territory controlled by *Los Urabeños*. In Bolívar, the group took over areas of coca cultivation and gold mining, as well as various trafficking routes.<sup>673</sup> They increased activity in Antioquia and began to operate in territory held by *Los Rastrojos* (e.g., Valle del Cauca) and ERPAC (e.g., Meta).<sup>674</sup> When *Los Urabeños* went into Cali to challenge the presence of *Los Rastrojos*, the remnants of *Los Machos* supported the operation against their old enemy.<sup>675</sup> The group also faced off against *Los Rastrojos* in Chocó and Nariño in order to further consolidate operations on the Pacific coast.<sup>676</sup>

Between 2010 and 2013, the group steadily spread across the northern and western departments. The most recent INDEPAZ report uncovered *Los Urabeños* operating in the following twelve departments: Antioquia, Bolívar, Cesar, Córdoba, Choco, La Guajira, Magdalena, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Santander, Sucre, and Valle del Cauca.<sup>677</sup>

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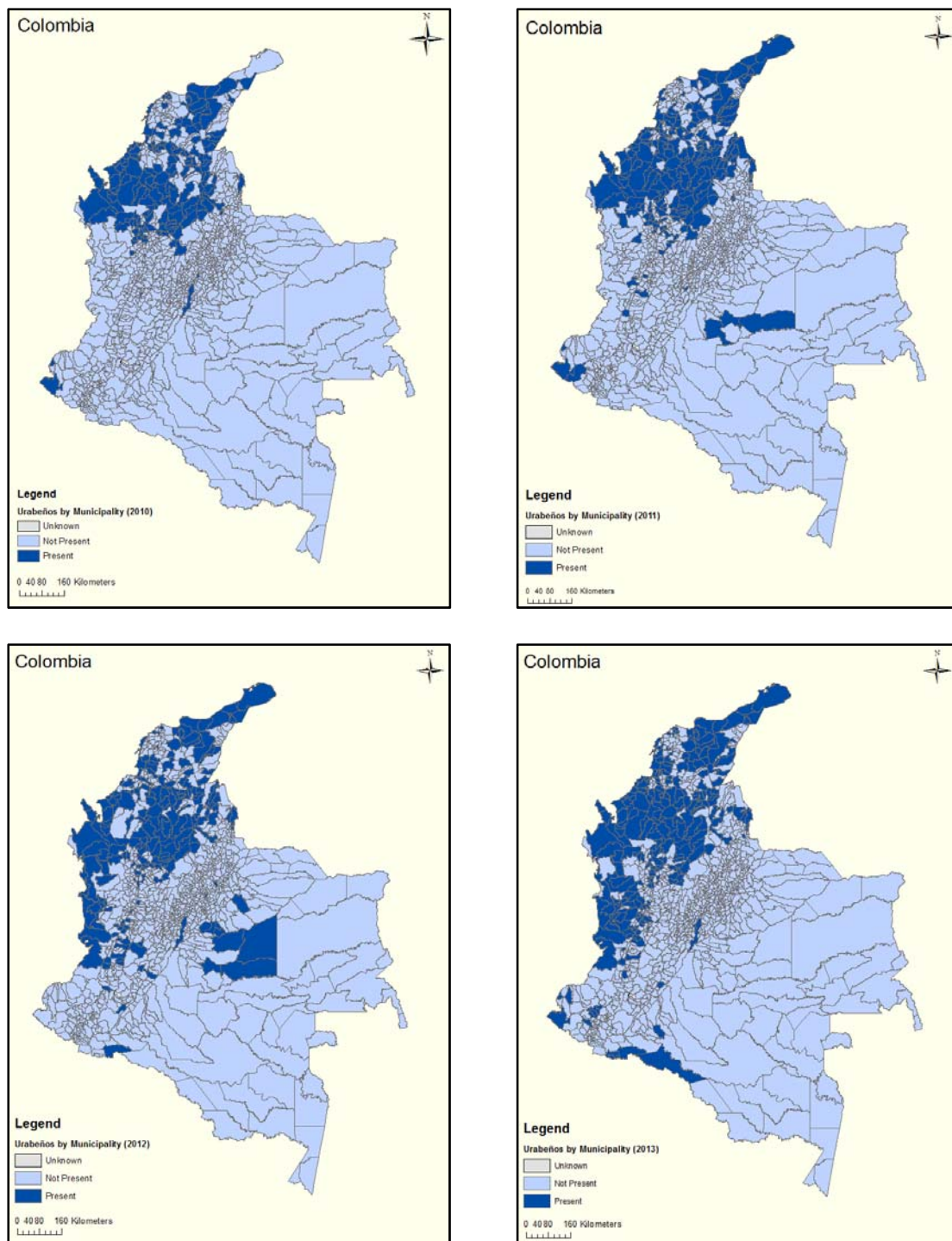
<sup>673</sup> Villarraga.

<sup>674</sup> “Dario Antonio Usuga, alias ‘Otoniel’,” *InSight Crime*, undated, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/dario-antonio-usuga-otoniell>> (May 2016).

<sup>675</sup> Pérez and Montoya, 9-10.

<sup>676</sup> Villarraga.

<sup>677</sup> INDEPAZ (2016), 2.



**Figure 38. Presence and Non-Presence of *Los Urabeños* (2010-2013)<sup>678</sup>**

<sup>678</sup> Source data drawn from INDEPAZ reports.

### *Goals, Ideology, & Activities*

Marta Ruiz, a well-known journalist for *Semana* wrote the following of the group in 2016: “*Los Urabeños* are not a simple band of extortionists, nor just a group that transmits their criminal plans from Urabá, but something scarier, with national reach.”<sup>679</sup>

Unlike the other *bacrim*, *Los Urabeños* may be seeking political recognition.<sup>680</sup> For example, before his death, Juan de Dios held public meetings that allowed locals to ask for assistance from the group.<sup>681</sup> He has also hosted festivals and other events to improve social control in areas where the group operated.<sup>682</sup> This façade expanded when the group issued a statement that it was a “third actor” in the conflict in 2013.<sup>683</sup> Most recently, in early 2015, one of the captured leaders of *Los Urabeños* was reportedly seeking to generate an agreement to demobilize the group in return for the same benefits that the FARC were going to receive.<sup>684</sup>

Underpinning this potential for national reach or political recognition are a variety of illegal activities. *Los Urabeños* are involved in drug trafficking and weapons trafficking.<sup>685</sup> They have threatened demobilized paramilitaries and extorted money from

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<sup>679</sup> Marta Ruiz, “La gran franquicia,” *Semana*, 1 June 2013, <<http://www.semana.com/opinion/articulo/la-gran-franquicia/345289-3>> (2014). My translation.

<sup>680</sup> Llorente and McDermott, 12.

<sup>681</sup> Hannah Stone, “Beyond BACRIM, Urabeños Set Sights Higher,” *InSight Crime*, 7 April 2011, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/beyond-bacrim-urabenos-set-sights-higher>> (May 2016).

<sup>682</sup> Stone.

<sup>683</sup> “Nuevas autodefensas piden ser tenidas en cuenta en proceso de paz,” *El Espectador*, 28 June 2013, <<http://www.elspectador.com/noticias/paz/nuevas-autodefensas-piden-ser-tenidas-cuenta-proceso-de-articulo-430565>> (May 2016).

<sup>684</sup> “Ideólogo del ‘Clan Úsuga’ buscaría acuerdo con la justicia,” *El País*, 19 February 2015, <<http://www.elpais.com.co/elpais/judicial/noticias/ideologo-clan-usuga-buscaria-acuerdo-con-justicia>> (June 2016).

<sup>685</sup> Avila (2013), Kindle Location 539; “A las puertas del infierno”; “En tres años han sido capturados 122 funcionarios públicos por nexos con bandas criminales,” *El Espectador*, 14 March 2014, <<http://www.elspectador.com/noticias/judicial/tres-anos-han-sido-capturados-122-funcionarios-publicos-articulo-480821>> (2014).

civilians.<sup>686</sup> They have targeted merchants and drivers on the Venezuelan border for more extortion.<sup>687</sup> In another case, one of *Los Urabeños*' support gangs in Cali forced 300 families from their homes in order to consolidate territory and expand business opportunities.<sup>688</sup> One declassified State Department cable quoted a source saying that the conflict between Don Mario and others in Urabá has led to many murders (frequently of opposing *bacrim* members).<sup>689</sup>

Like many of the other *bacrim*, *Los Urabeños* are involved in gold mining.<sup>690</sup> In Western Antioquia, the group not only charges local miners to allow them to work, but also controls local warehouses and lends money for the purchase of any necessary equipment.<sup>691</sup> In La Guajira, members now own illegal mines.<sup>692</sup> Furthermore, it is believed that the group controls sex trafficking at many mines in the region.<sup>693</sup>

Their alliances outside and inside of Colombia are numerous. This includes relations with Los Zetas and the Sinaloa Cartel in Mexico.<sup>694</sup> They have also been linked

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<sup>686</sup> “Amenaza masiva de Bacrim a ex ‘paras’ desmovilizados,” *El Tiempo*, 3 February 2011, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-4375802>> (2014); “Farc y bacrim pretenden revivir ola de extorsiones en el país,” *El Tiempo*, 24 February 2012, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-11205541>> (2014).

<sup>687</sup> “Mototaxistas denuncian amenazas de las ‘bacrim’ en la frontera,” *El Tiempo*, 27 May 2012, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-11889464>> (2014).

<sup>688</sup> Pérez and Montoya, 11.

<sup>689</sup> U.S. Department of State, *FARC and Narcotraffickers Continue to Plague Uraba*, 2008 Bogota 000645, February 2008. Declassified. ProQuest Digital National Security Archive, <<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com>> (2014).

<sup>690</sup> Massé, 17; Cawley; Yeison Gualdrón, “Las Farc y ‘Bacrim’ llenan sus bolsillos con minas de oro,” *El Tiempo*, 23 April 2012, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-5371132>> (2014); “Bacrim irían tras explotación de oro: Fundación Ideas para la Paz,” *El Tiempo*, 8 January 2013, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-12497739>> (2014).

<sup>691</sup> Pérez and Montoya, 16.

<sup>692</sup> Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 12.

<sup>693</sup> Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 34.

<sup>694</sup> Llorente and McDermott, 27; “Los Urabeños.”; Avila (2013), Kindle Location 80;

to the Italian ‘Ndrangheta.<sup>695</sup> Due to its position as the leading *bacrim* in the country, it is not surprising that the group’s international connections surpass those of the other groups, especially in regards to exporting cocaine to Europe.

Within the country, they allied with Valenciano against Sebastian in the battle over control of the *Oficina de Envigado* and Medellín.<sup>696</sup> In the Eastern Plains, they supported Pijarbey and the *Libertadores de Vichada* against Bloque Meta. They have made agreements with the FARC in multiple departments.<sup>697</sup> For example, on the Panamanian border, they work with the 57<sup>th</sup> Front and they also have strong ties to the 5<sup>th</sup> Front.<sup>698</sup>

The expanse of *Los Urabeños*’ power was revealed in early 2012, after the death of Juan de Dios at the hands of the police. They led an armed strike that affected multiple northern departments.<sup>699</sup> Pamphlets were handed out ordering a “stop work” throughout Córdoba, Magdalena and Antioquia. Also affected were municipalities in the departments of Chocó and Sucre.<sup>700</sup> The capital of Magdalena, Santa Marta, was paralyzed for an entire day.<sup>701</sup>

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<sup>695</sup> Mimi Yagoub, “Major Colombia Bust Latest Example of Italy Mafia Presence,” *InSight Crime*, 16 May 2014, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/major-colombia-bust-latest-example-of-italy-mafia-presence>> (October 2014).

<sup>696</sup> “De maoístas a capos.”

<sup>697</sup> Llorente and McDermott, 30; “Los intereses electorales de las ‘bacrim’,” *Semana*, 10 October 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/politica/articulo/los-intereses-electorales-bacrim/247698-3>> (2014).

<sup>698</sup> “FARC ‘deben revelar’ sus nexos con las ‘bacrim’: Juan Carlos Vélez,” *Semana*, 5 September 2012, <<http://www.semana.com/politica/articulo/farc-deben-revelar-nexos-bacrim-juan-carlos-velez/264237-3>> (2014); “La explosiva relación FARC-‘bacrim’,” *Semana*, 7 February 2013, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/la-explosiva-relacion-farc-bacrim/332256-3>> (2014).

<sup>699</sup> “Las bandas, gran desafío,” *Semana*, 7 January 2012, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/las-bandas-gran-desafio/251588-3>> (2014).

<sup>700</sup> Fernando, “Colombia 2012: ¿Déjà vu?”, *Semana*, 10 January 2012, <<http://www.semana.com/opinion/expertos/articulo/colombia-2012-deja-vu/324249>> (2014).

<sup>701</sup> “El desafío de las ‘bacrim’,” *El Tiempo*, 10 January 2012, <<http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-10941070>> (2014). My translation.

They've also been known to threaten elections and activists, allying with regional elites.<sup>702</sup> In May 2012, eight police officers were tried for links to the group.<sup>703</sup> *Los Urabeños* have sought to penetrate regional governments to protect their activities and generate influence.<sup>704</sup> In a well-known case from 2013, the governor of La Guajira was arrested for ties going back almost twenty years to Marquitos, *Los Urabeños*' commander in the department.<sup>705</sup>

Other pamphlets of the group (Figure 39) are displayed below. They speak of military objectives and two of them use a standard symbol and refer to themselves as the AGC or *Los Urabeños*. The first pamphlet may *not* be from *Los Urabeños* directly, but rather from a local group using their name.

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<sup>702</sup> "Grupos ilegales ponen en alto riesgo electoral a 199 municipios," *Semana*, 1 August 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/politica/articulo/grupos-ilegales-ponen-alto-riesgo-electoral-199-municipios/244086-3>> (2014); Johnson (2013).

<sup>703</sup> "Asegurados ocho policías por supuestos nexos con 'Los Urabeños'," *Semana*, 25 May 2012, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/asegurados-ocho-policias-supuestos-nexos-los-urabenos/258453-3>> (2014). Various news reports from 2011-2016 suggest that members of the police and military are occasionally convicted and sent to jail for links to the *bacrim* (not necessarily just *Los Urabeños*).

<sup>704</sup> "¿Se asoma la bacrimpolítica en las regiones?," *Semana*, 21 August 2013, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/se-asoma-bacrimpolitica-regiones/354811-3>> (2014).

<sup>705</sup> "Un gobernador de miedo en La Guajira," *Semana*, 4 May 2013, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/un-gobernador-de-miedo-en-la-guajira/342196-3>> (May 2016).



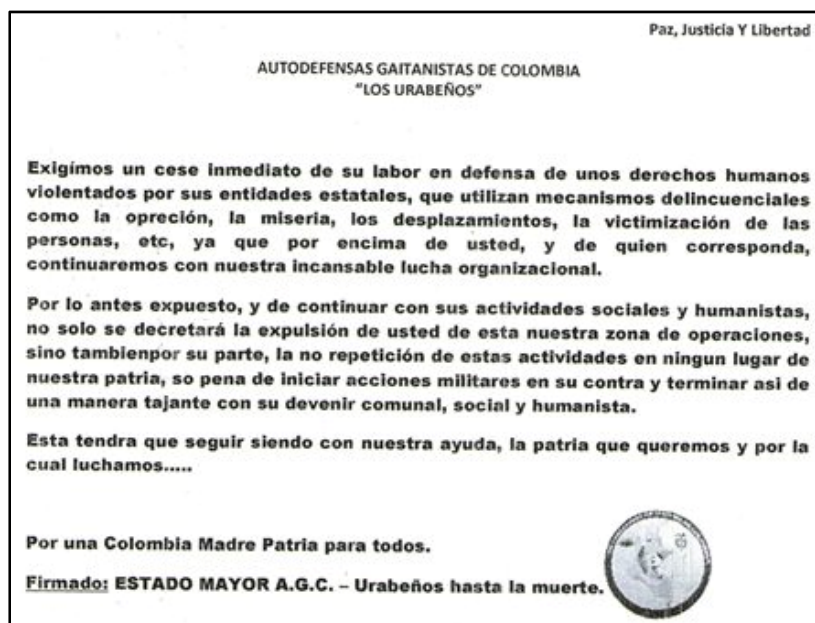


Figure 39. Pamphlets of *Los Urabeños*<sup>706</sup>

<sup>706</sup> “Con panfletos presuntamente de ‘los Urabeños’ amenazan discotecas del sur de Cali,” *Radio Macondo*, 16 June 2013, <<http://radiomacondo.fm/2013/06/16/con-panfletos-presuntamente-de-los-urabenos-amenazan-discotecas-del-sur-de-cali/>> (2015); “Clan Úsuga estaría circulando panfleto amenazante en Sincelejo por ‘desobedecer’ paro armado,” *CM&*, 4 April 2016, <<http://www.cmi.com.co/clan-usuga-estaria-circulando-panfleto-amenazante-en-sincelejo-por-desobedecer-paro-armado>> (May 2016); “Panfleto Amenazante,” *Risaralda Hoy*, August 2012, <<http://www.risaraldahoy.com/2012/08/los-urabenos-amenazan-al-presidente-de.html>> (2015).

## D. QUALITATIVE CONCLUSIONS

‘Fernando,’ writing in *Semana*, summarized the situation thusly: “History keeps repeating itself. The king is dead, long live the king. With the death of Pablo Escobar, Rodriguez Gacha, and many others; with the extradition of Rodriguez Orejuela and I do not know how many thousands more...drug trafficking has not ended, only a few cycles have ended.”<sup>707</sup>

These cycles and the overall discussion of the *bacrim* are similar to the parable of the blind men and the elephant. Each man touches part of the elephant and declares it to be a different thing. So it is with the *bacrim*. The government, the police, researchers, and NGOs, all ‘touch’ a different part of the phenomenon and declare it to be a DTO, re-cycled paramilitaries, or a new type of organized crime; and like the elephant, the *bacrim* are actually all of these things.

In retrospect, the five groups that have been examined here do not fit neatly into one category or the other. Their key characteristics, including origins and goals, vary greatly, as do their members and structure (Table 16). Their activities and relationships, although more difficult to discern in some cases, focus very much on the criminal, including the co-option and/or extortion of legal businesses and the corruption of (principally) local officials, both police and government. *Los Urabeños* are the notable exception with regard to corruption and their vocally articulated national aspirations.

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<sup>707</sup> Fernando. My translation.

**Table 16. Comparison of *Bacrim* Characteristics**

	<b>Origins</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Identified Members</b>	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Goals</b>	<b>Territory (2013)</b>
<b>Águilas Negras</b>	Paramilitary	Former Paramilitary/ Unidentified	Former Paramilitaries/ Criminals	Extremely Informal Network	Protect former AUC/ Varies by department	Limited/Dispersed
<b>ERPAC &amp; Successors</b>	Criminal/ Paramilitary	Criminal/ Former Paramilitary	Former Paramilitaries	Hierarchical	Financial/ Drug Trafficking	Eastern Plains
<b>Los Paisas</b>	Guerrilla/ Criminal/ Paramilitary	Criminal/ Former Paramilitary	Former Paramilitaries/ Criminals/ Gangs	Informal Network	Financial/ Local Territory	Limited/Dispersed
<b>Los Rastrojos</b>	Criminal	Criminal / Former Paramilitary	Former Paramilitaries/ Criminals/ Gangs	Formal Network	Financial	Western/Northern Colombia, esp. the Atlantic & Pacific Coasts
<b>Los Urabeños</b>	Paramilitary/ Guerrilla	Former Paramilitary/ Former Guerrilla	Former Paramilitaries/ Former Guerrillas/ Criminals/ Gangs	Hierarchical/ Network	Financial/ National Influence	Western/Northern Colombia, including inland

The convoluted nature of the situation in Colombia makes finding solutions difficult and helps to explain why there was a push to simplify their nature: it is ‘easy’ to fight a DTO or a gang. The government has been doing it with varying levels of success for decades. Conversely, eliminating organizations that embody aspects of many different criminal groups requires a level of coordination and resources that would be difficult for many governments to sustain.

## 6. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The previous chapter presented the case studies of the five major *bacrim* groups of interest using a combination of press and scholarly reports, interviews with subject matter experts, social media and declassified U.S. government intelligence. This chapter presents the accompanying quantitative data; it explains, via descriptive statistics, the evolution of criminal activity over the last several decades and Latinobarómetro public opinion survey results. It also presents two separate panel data analyses. The first analysis (2008-2013) looks at the effects of the presence/non-presence of the *bacrim* on homicide and extortion rates throughout the thirty-two departments and the capital. The second analysis (2001-2013) looks at the effects of the AUC, its demobilization, and the eventual presence/non-presence of the *bacrim* on homicide rates at the municipality level.

Where relevant, the data is divided into four periods:

- 2001-2002 – AUC steady-state,
- 2003-2006 – period of “AUC demobilization,”
- 2007-2009 – *bacrim* emergence and consolidation (between 2009-2010, estimates of number of groups drops from 26 to 15), and,
- 2010-2013 – *bacrim* steady-state.

These periods show large differences in criminal activity (i.e., homicide rates) related to the presence or non-presence of illegal groups. Furthermore, there is a substantial

difference in the occurrence of other crimes in these periods (both declines and increases).

### **A. ANALYSIS OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY (1963-2013)**

The following section captures the extremes in criminal activity over the past fifty years. This includes three types of death by external cause (homicide, war operations, and “indeterminate events”<sup>708</sup>), collective homicides (massacres), kidnapping, terrorist acts, extortion, and the illegal drug trade. Both long trends and the period during and after paramilitary demobilization (2001-2013) are considered.

It should be noted that there are discrepancies in data throughout this section and, therefore, all are considered approximations. For example, in 2012, the total number of homicides in Colombia were 14,670 according to the UNODC (via the CNP), 16,440 according to the Ministry of Defense (MOD), and 15,747 according to DANE.<sup>709</sup> With multiple agencies collecting and sharing the data, as well as the reporting difficulties from certain areas of the country, this problem is not unexpected. Therefore, the trends and general magnitudes will be the focus rather than the precise values.

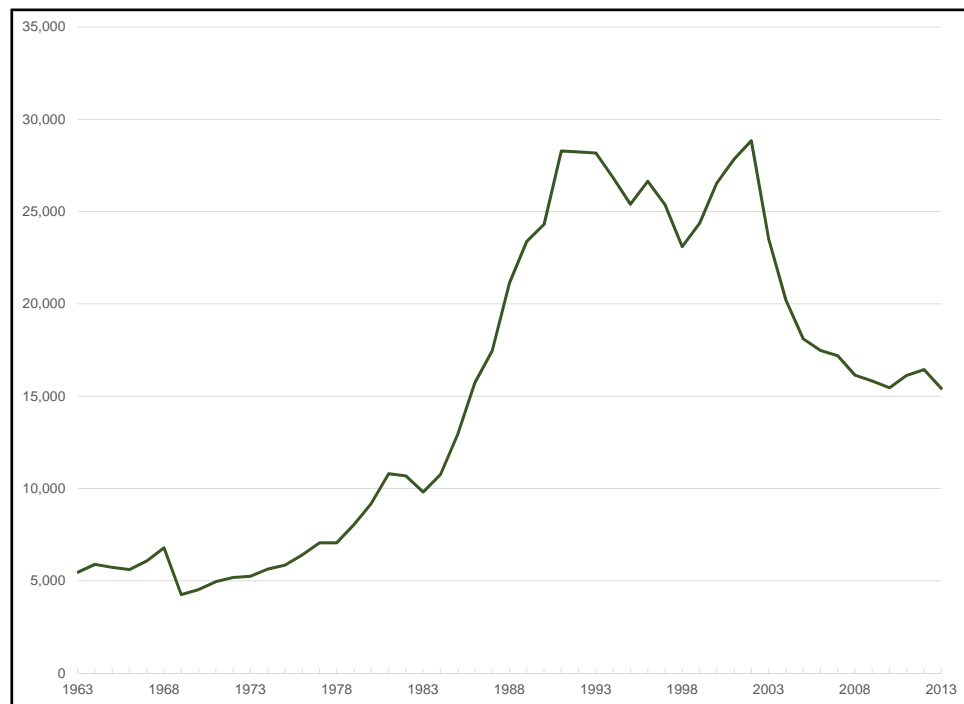
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<sup>708</sup> DANE defines three categories of interest: “512 AGRESIONES (HOMICIDIOS), INCLUSIVE SECUELAS,” and “513 INTERVENCION LEGAL Y OPERAC. DE GUERRA, INCL. SECUELAS,” “514 EVENTOS DE INTENCION NO DETERMINADA, INCL. SECUELAS.” Respectively: “512 Aggressions (homicides), including the aftermath,” “513 Legal Intervention and War Operations, including the aftermath,” and “514 Indeterminate Events, including the aftermath.”

<sup>709</sup> UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide 2013*, 2014b, <<http://www.unodc.org>> (October 2014); Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, *Logros de la Política Integral de Seguridad y Defensa para la Prosperidad*, November 2013 & August 2014, <[http://www.mindefensa.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/Mindefensa/Documentos/descargas/estudios%20sectoriales/info\\_estadistica/Logros\\_Sector\\_Defensa.pdf](http://www.mindefensa.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/Mindefensa/Documentos/descargas/estudios%20sectoriales/info_estadistica/Logros_Sector_Defensa.pdf)> (June/October 2014); DANE, *Defunciones por Grupo de Edad y Sexo, Según Departamentos de Ocurrencia y Grupos de Causas de Defunción*, <<https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/es/poblacion-y-registros-vitales/nacimientos-y-defunciones/nacimientos-y-defunciones>> (June 2014).

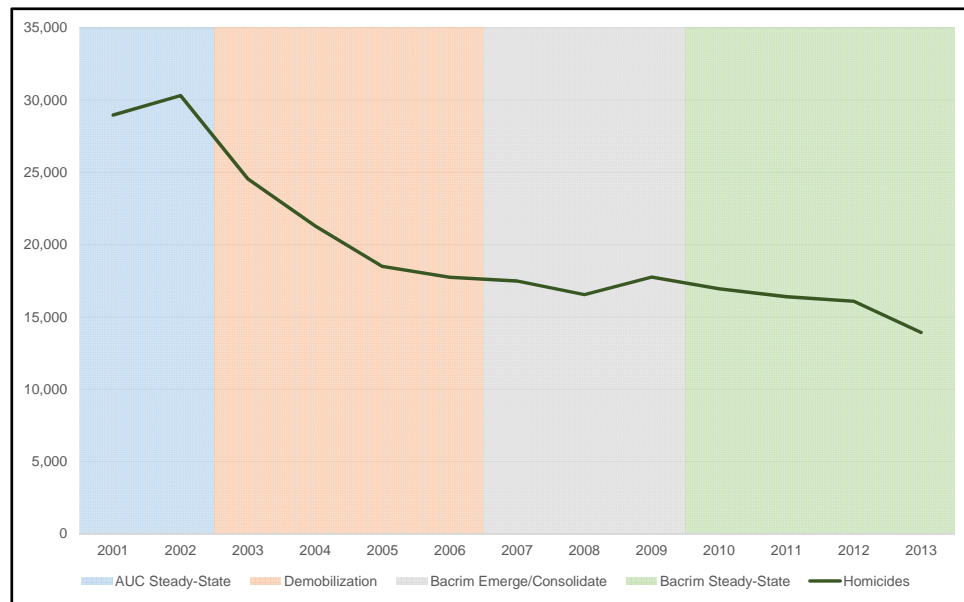
## Homicides (Countrywide)

The first two figures capture the catastrophic rise in homicides throughout the late 1970s and 1980s and the dramatic decline that occurred after the AUC's 2002 ceasefire. Figure 40 (using MOD data) covers fifty years, from the end of *La Violencia* to 2013. Figure 41 (using averaged DANE and MOD data) shows in detail the 2001 to 2013 period.



**Figure 40. Total Homicides in Colombia (1963-2013)<sup>710</sup>**

<sup>710</sup> José Ferney Rodríguez Cuadrado, “La historia y el presente de las cifras delictivas y contravencionales en Colombia: Un nuevo conocimiento,” *Revista Criminalidad* 50, no. 1 (2008): 231-232.



**Figure 41. Total Homicides in Colombia (2001-2013)<sup>711</sup>**

In 2012, this number of murders (using the UNODC statistic of approximately 14,600 murders and a population of 47.4 million) calculates out to a rate of roughly 30.8 per 100,000 persons. Based on the UNODC’s worldwide murder rates for 2012, Colombia ranks eighth among non-island nations, and sixth among Latin American nations (Table 17, South American nations in white, Central American in light gray and African in dark gray).<sup>712</sup> This is a substantial decline from 2001 and 2002, when Colombia essentially ranked number one worldwide with rates of 68.6 and 68.9

<sup>711</sup> DANE, “Defunciones por Grupo de Edad y Sexo” averaged with Rodríguez Cuadrado. (r=.96)

<sup>712</sup> There are twelve countries with rates higher than 20 per 100,000. This sample excludes four Caribbean nations with much smaller populations.

respectively.<sup>713</sup> These numbers are only slightly higher than the homicide rates in Colombia during *La Violencia* (almost 50 per 100,000) in the mid-1950s.<sup>714</sup>

**Table 17. Comparative Homicide Rates per 100,000 Persons (2012)<sup>715</sup>**

Country	2012 Rate	Country	2012 Rate
Honduras	90.4	Guyana	17
Venezuela	53.7	French Guiana	13.3 (2009 rate)
Belize	44.7	Ecuador	12.4
El Salvador	41.2	Bolivia	12.1
Guatemala	39.9	Nicaragua	11.3
Swaziland	33.8	Paraguay	9.7
South Africa	31	Peru	9.6
<b>Colombia</b>	<b>30.8</b>	Costa Rica	8.5
Democratic Republic of the Congo	28.3	Uruguay	7.9
Brazil	25.2	Suriname	6.1
Rwanda	23.1	Argentina	5.5 (2010 rate)
Mexico	21.5	Chile	3.1
Panama	17.2		

By these two different homicide measures (count and rate), Colombia has significantly improved since the AUC demobilization, despite the appearance of the *bacrim*. Overall, murders have halved from a peak of approximately 30,000 in 2002 to about 15,000 in 2013 and the resulting drop in the murder rate has pushed Colombia down the list of the most violent countries allowing it to emphasize its ‘success.’

<sup>713</sup> UNODC (2014b), 127. Data for many African countries was unavailable for this time period, so it is impossible to say with certainty that Colombia ranked first.

<sup>714</sup> Fabio Sánchez, Andrés Solimano, and Michel Formisano, “Conflict, Violence, and Crime in Colombia,” in *Understanding Civil War*, eds. Paul Collier and Nicholas Sambanis (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2005), 125.

<sup>715</sup> UNODC (2014b).

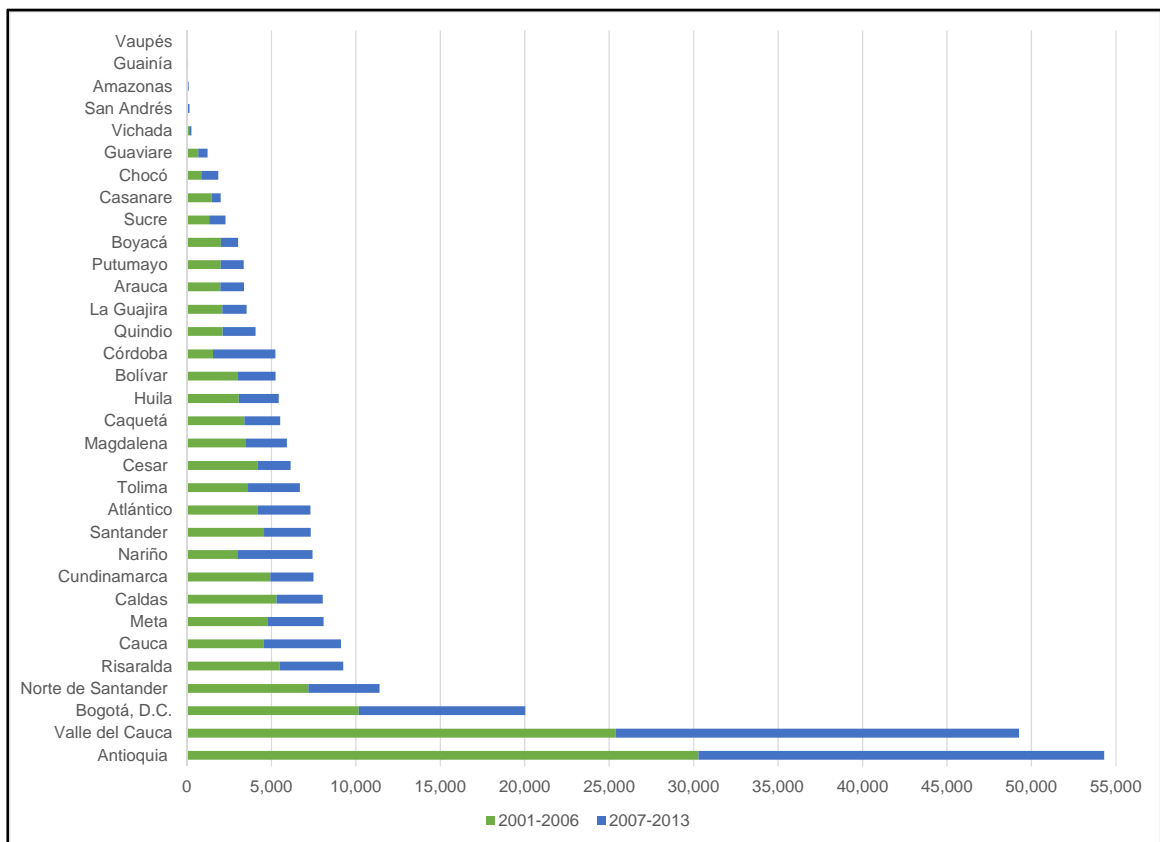


## Violent Deaths by Department

The next figures look in depth at the number of violent deaths from the perspective of each department. In addition to looking at crimes classified as ‘Homicides’ (Figures 42-44), deaths due to ‘Legal Intervention and War Operations’ (war operations) (Figure 45) and ‘Indeterminate Events’ (Figure 46) are also included. Four figures (Figures 47-50) examine the difference between two periods (using crime counts) – one, prior to the beginning of demobilization through its official end (2001-2006), and two, the formation and then steady state operations of the *bacrim* (2007-2013). There are also five additional figures, which spatially show the changes in homicide rates at the municipality level between 2003 (the beginning of AUC demobilization) and the 2010-2013 time period.

Figure 42 details the number of homicides by department. Total numbers remain fairly even, with a slight decline in the later period (approximately 147,000 in period 1 and 118,000 in period 2). Antioquia and Valle de Cauca, the two most dangerous departments by far, show a similar number of murders in both periods (30,000 and 25,000 for Antioquia/25,000 and 23,000 for Valle). Note that the two cities most traditionally tied to drug trafficking are located in these departments: Medellín is the capital of Antioquia and Cali is the capital of Valle. Two departments, Nariño and Córdoba suffered large increases in the second period (approximately an additional 1,500 and 2,000 respectively). Other departments of note are San Andrés, which more than doubled the number of homicides (from 45 to 103), and Chocó, which had almost an additional 150. San Andrés is a small island in the Caribbean 120 miles off of the

Nicaraguan coast (and approximately 400 miles from Colombia). It has become a key transit point for drug shipments moving north.<sup>716</sup>



**Figure 42. Total Homicides by Colombian Department (2001-2013)<sup>717</sup>**

Table 18 (Homicide Rates) shows a different picture of crime across the country. Departments with homicide rates of 75 or greater are indicated in red, while those with

<sup>716</sup> Marguerite Cawley, “Colombia Seizes Major Cocaine Shipment on Caribbean Island,” *InSight Crime*, 31 October 2013, <<http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/colombia-seizes-major-cocaine-shipment-on-caribbean-island>> (June 2016).

<sup>717</sup> DANE.

rates of 25 or less are indicated in green. While Valle remains highly violent, Antioquia and Bogotá have lower rates. Comparatively, small population areas with a moderate number of homicides (e.g., Arauca and Putumayo) have extremely high averages over the entire period of 2001 to 2013. Looking at averages over the final period, show a much more hopeful picture with only one department, Valle, exceeding a rate of 75).

Table 18. Homicide Rates (per 100,000) (2001-2013)<sup>718</sup>

Department	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Average (All Years)	Average (2010-2013)
Amazonas	5	9	21	9	13	10	10	18	11	18	8	18	5	12	12
Antioquia	154	142	91	65	50	48	45	51	83	75	61	52	30	73	54
Arauca	127	192	170	181	116	81	101	118	109	82	51	65	42	110	60
Atlántico	28	34	39	36	30	29	22	18	22	22	17	19	17	26	18
Bogotá, D.C.	33	29	24	24	24	20	20	19	23	22	20	17	14	22	18
Bolívar	26	29	36	23	25	24	19	16	19	17	15	16	11	21	15
Boyacá	29	34	36	30	18	15	16	13	13	11	10	10	8	19	9
Caldas	117	132	86	79	73	63	53	50	43	40	34	31	29	64	34
Caquetá	151	236	116	117	101	104	88	78	69	69	61	58	53	100	60
Casanare	102	93	99	135	52	36	41	28	19	20	14	24	20	53	19
Cauca	81	68	55	53	52	55	55	54	58	51	48	43	37	55	45
Cesar	92	115	97	72	65	33	40	35	31	27	25	24	21	52	24
Chocó	36	34	28	35	28	29	25	27	34	25	30	40	29	31	31
Córdoba	22	23	17	18	14	14	20	37	52	46	37	22	20	26	31
Cundinamarca	39	55	55	31	23	20	21	15	15	16	14	13	10	25	13
Guainía	18	30	21	17	20	11	8	11	19	3	0	5	17	14	6
Guaviare	200	110	97	127	92	85	97	111	124	93	32	55	32	97	53
Huila	54	76	64	43	38	37	41	35	35	29	25	27	27	41	27
La Guajira	56	71	54	67	49	34	22	24	26	33	28	24	19	39	26
Magdalena	66	66	63	48	31	33	36	28	33	30	26	28	24	39	27
Meta	101	130	137	101	71	92	82	67	63	50	47	50	27	78	43
Nariño	31	42	28	28	25	43	42	41	46	42	37	35	30	36	36
Norte De Santander	109	161	116	74	65	62	64	53	49	41	41	48	29	70	40
Putumayo	107	120	134	105	108	82	98	49	52	57	55	56	50	83	54
Quindío	86	77	66	61	56	52	62	54	52	52	52	44	40	58	47
Risaralda	118	116	93	101	101	88	78	84	67	57	43	41	39	79	45
San Andrés	10	6	14	11	11	11	11	8	12	33	30	20	25	16	27
Santander	62	49	38	32	27	27	29	25	25	18	13	14	15	29	15
Sucre	30	35	36	31	22	19	18	14	23	15	13	18	18	23	16
Tolima	57	58	46	33	34	38	40	37	34	28	30	28	24	38	28
Valle Del Cauca	117	117	100	111	91	85	82	73	77	80	84	80	68	90	78
Vaupés	3	19	5	5	5	3	12	15	7	2	5	2	2	7	3
Vichada	36	37	66	18	13	73	53	50	27	28	15	22	17	35	21

<sup>718</sup> DANE.

The next figures capture the differences in homicide rates between 2003 (Figure 43) and the 2010-2013 time period (Figure 44). In 2003, the maximum homicide rate for a municipality was 1378.43 (El Castillo, Meta with 97 homicides and a population of approximately 7037). There were also seven additional municipalities which registered rates above 500. Compare this with the 2010-2013 time period, where the maximum homicide rate for each year was respectively: 374.37 (La Apartada, Córdoba), 315.36 (Vegachí, Antioquia), 518.92 (Remedios, Antioquia), and 207.13 (Puerto Caicedo, Putumayo). Homicide counts in 2013 have hit their lowest point in almost twenty-five years.

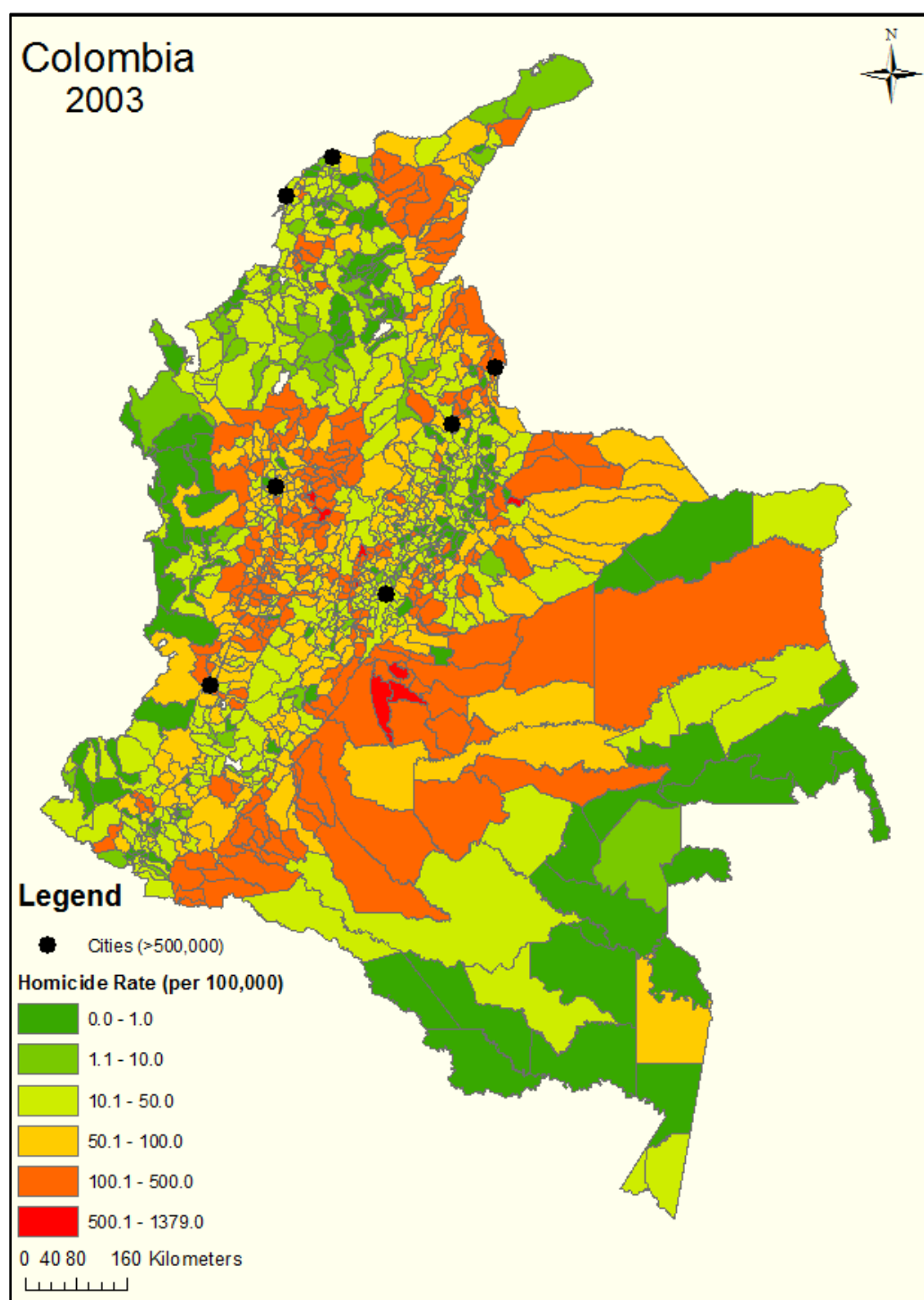


Figure 43. Homicide Rates per 100,000 Persons (2003)<sup>719</sup>

<sup>719</sup> DANE.

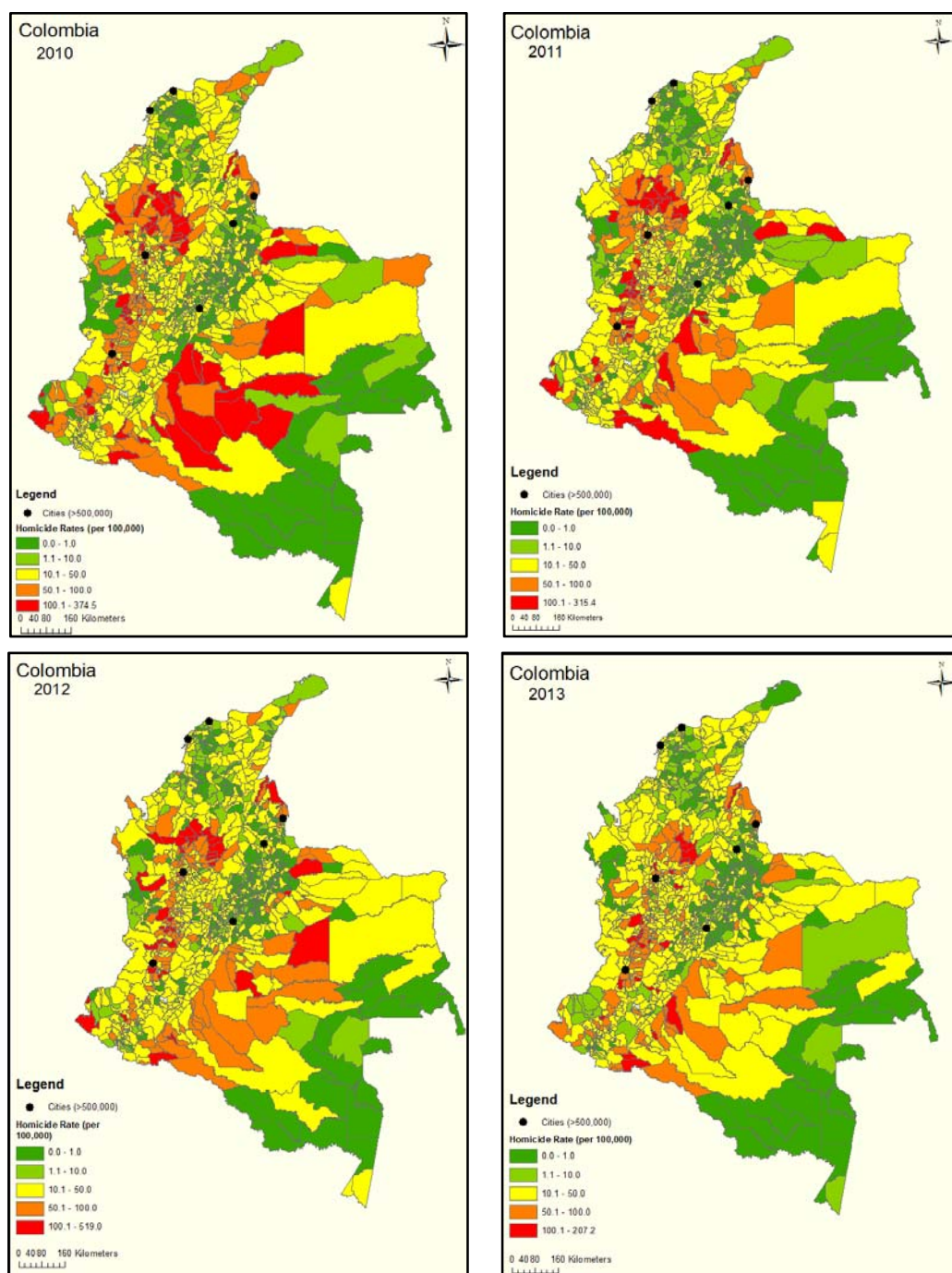
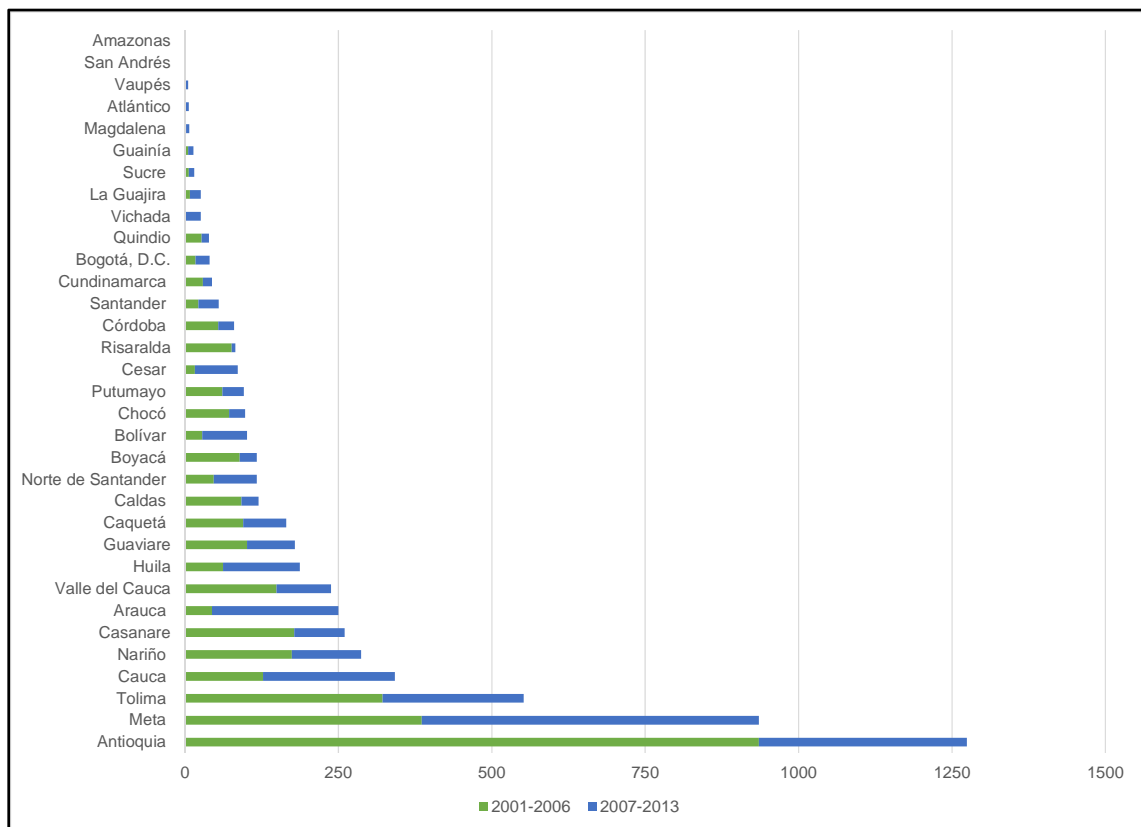


Figure 44. Homicide Rates per 100,000 Persons (2010-2013)<sup>720</sup>

<sup>720</sup> DANE.

Figure 45 presents numbers for war operations, counting the deaths of FARC, ELN, and other combatants in engagements with the Colombian Security Forces (and while not strictly ‘crime’ data, are relevant to understanding the magnitude of the civil war). The numbers are slightly smaller in the second period except in Meta, one of the FARC’s traditional strongholds. Unlike homicides and unknown deaths, war deaths peaked in the transition period of 2006 and 2007, with the low values appearing on both ends (305 in 2001 and 152 in 2013).

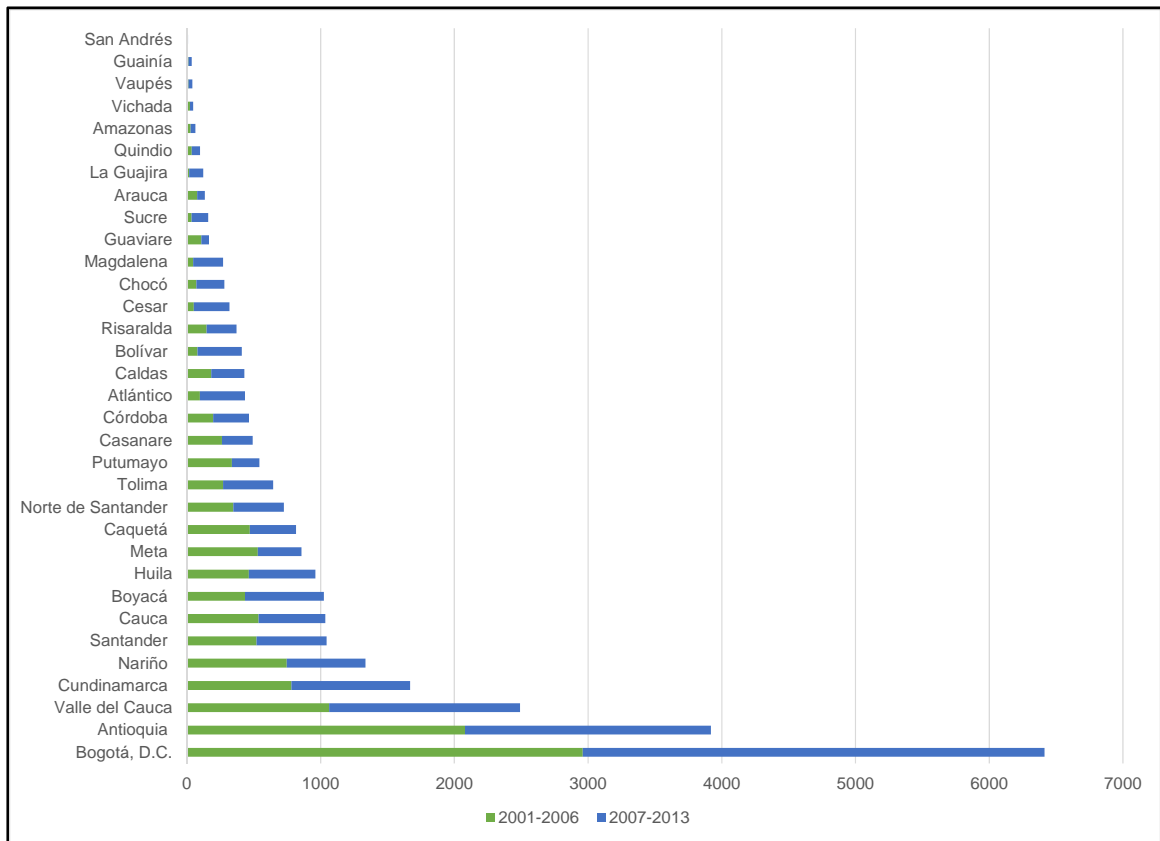


**Figure 45. Total War Operation Deaths by Colombian Department (2001-2013)<sup>721</sup>**

<sup>721</sup> DANE.



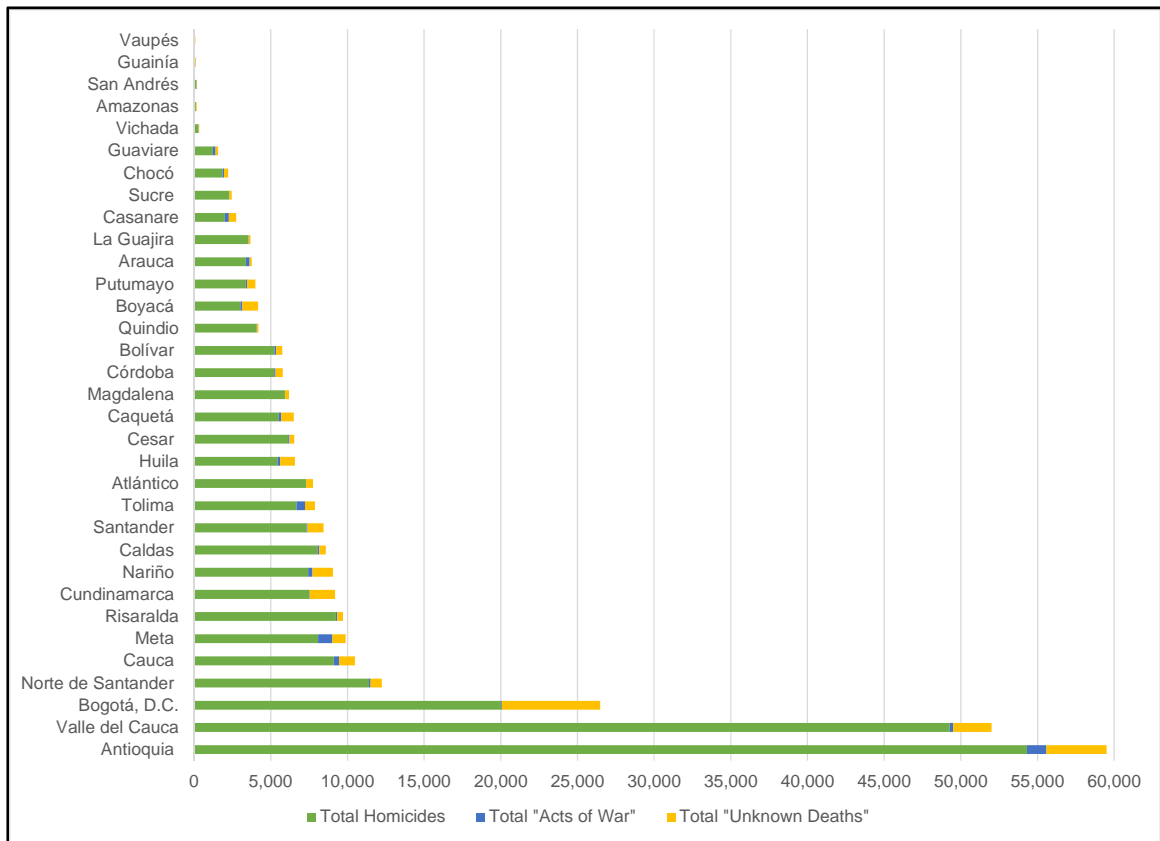
Indeterminate deaths (Figure 46) are still violent in nature, but their intention is obviously undetermined. From 2001 to 2013, there has only been a slight decline in this type of death, with a high of approximately 2,500 in 2001 to a low of 1,750 in 2013 (averaging 2,100 annually). Most deaths of this type occur in Bogotá, with Antioquia and Valle de Cauca being the other two major sources.



**Figure 46. Indeterminate Deaths by Colombian Department (2001-2013)<sup>722</sup>**

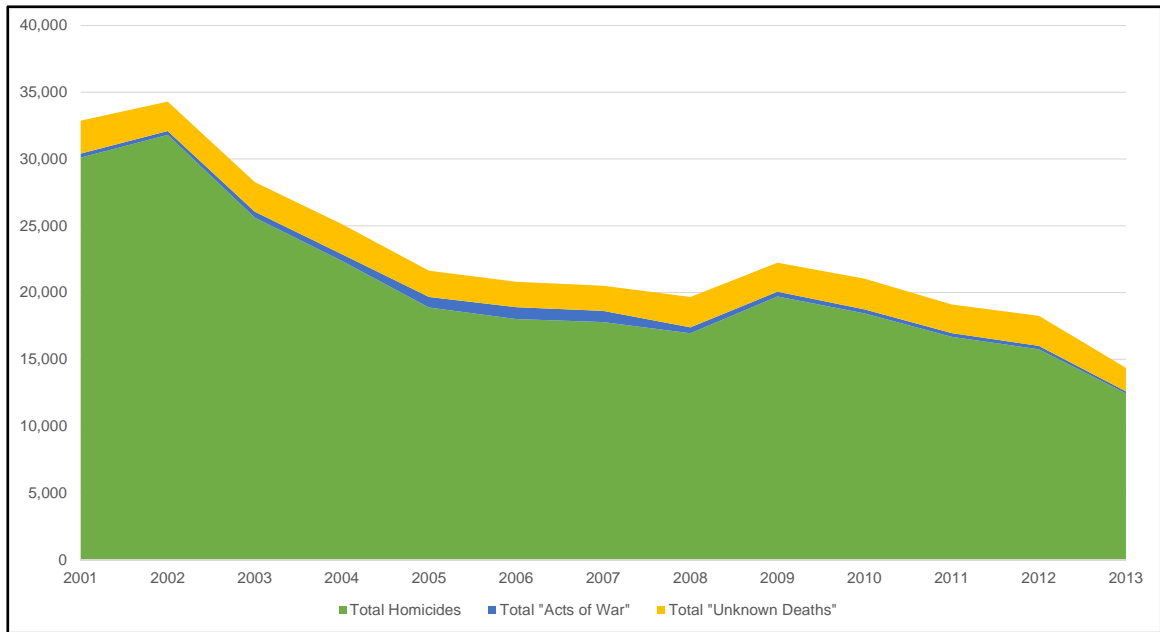
<sup>722</sup> DANE.

All three types of deaths are summarized over the entire twelve years in the final two figures, totaled by department (sorted by total) (Figure 47) and then totaled by year (Figure 48). Again, note the major decline in homicides, the steady number of unknown deaths and the slight decline in war operations deaths. The short-term trend for all violent deaths in Colombia seems to finally be stabilizing over the final five year period.



**Figure 47. Total Violent Deaths by Colombian Department (2001-2013)<sup>723</sup>**

<sup>723</sup> DANE.



**Figure 48. Total Violent Deaths per Year in Colombia (2001-2013)<sup>724</sup>**

### **Collective Homicides, Kidnapping, Terrorist Acts, and Extortion**

The next set of figures cover other trends in criminal activities in Colombia: “collective homicides” (massacres), kidnapping, terrorist acts, and extortion.

Massacres in Colombia have been an important concern for the international NGO community and other nations over the years. All major illegal groups (and several legal ones) have been involved in massacres, including the AUC, ELN, FARC, and the *bacrim*, as well as parts of the Colombian military. Most massacres, however, were conducted by the AUC. One of the most famous massacres was the 1997 attack in

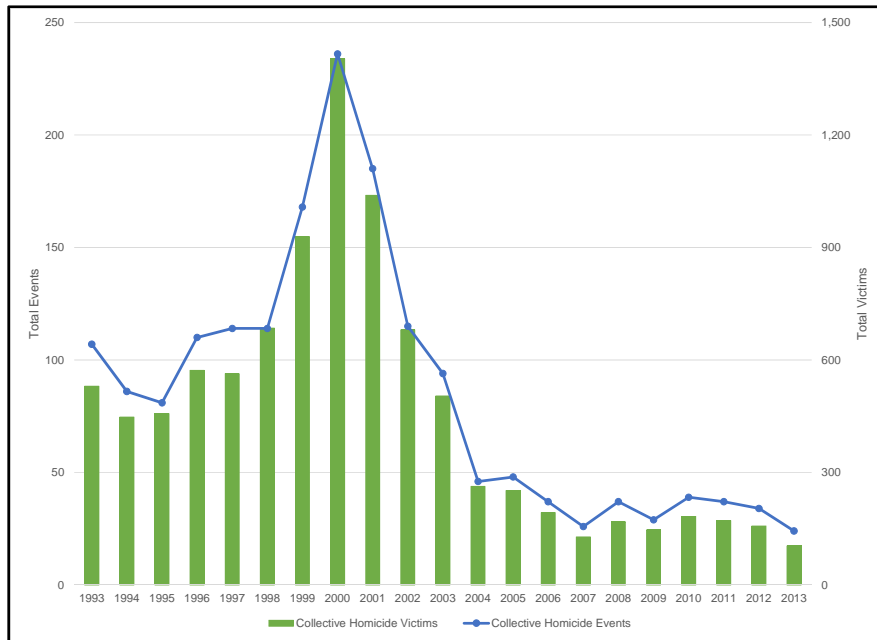
<sup>724</sup> DANE.

Mapiripán, Meta, where AUC paramilitaries hacked at least fifty civilians to death and members of the Colombian military failed to intervene.<sup>725</sup>

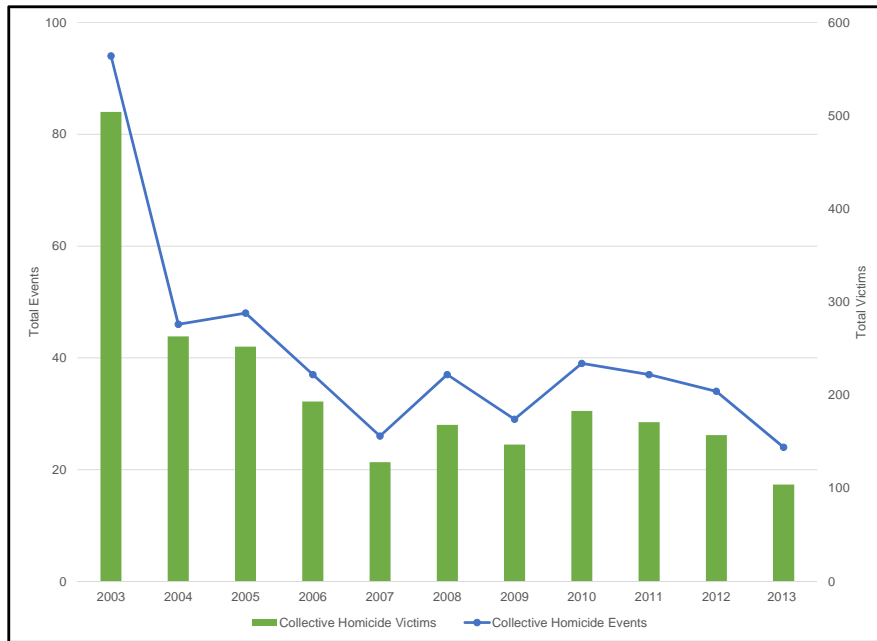
There are two figures below that show the trends related to massacres. Figure 49 captures a twenty year period beginning from before the consolidation of the AUC to 2013. Crimes of this type peaked in 2000 at what was essentially the height of the AUC's power. The second figure (Figure 50) focuses on the ten years since the AUC announced its ceasefire. Like regular homicides, the continuing decline (with leveling off) in this indicator show the enormous gains made after demobilization and that the emergence of the *bacrim* has not reversed, but perhaps slowed, this trend.

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<sup>725</sup> "Colombia Jails Death Squad General Over Massacre," *BBC*, 26 November 2009, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8380025.stm>> (9 August 2015).



**Figure 49. Collective Homicide/Massacres in Colombia (1993-2013)<sup>726</sup>**



**Figure 50. Collective Homicide/Massacres in Colombia (2003-2013)<sup>727</sup>**

<sup>726</sup> Rodríguez Cuadrado, 234.

<sup>727</sup> MOD, *Logros de la Política Integral de Seguridad y Defensa para la Prosperidad*, November 2013 & August 2014, <[http://www.mindefensa.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/Mindefensa/Documentos/descargas/estudios%20sectoriales/info\\_estadistica/Logros\\_Sector\\_Defensa.pdf](http://www.mindefensa.gov.co/irj/go/km/docs/Mindefensa/Documentos/descargas/estudios%20sectoriales/info_estadistica/Logros_Sector_Defensa.pdf)> (June/October 2014).

Values for the next three indicators (kidnapping, terrorist acts, and extortion) are available over a forty-year period, from the beginning of major drug trafficking operations in the 1970s to the present. Figure 51 shows the entire time period, while Figure 52 focuses again on the period after the AUC's ceasefire (2003-2013).

Kidnapping has peaked twice, once during the conflict between the cartels and the guerrillas, and again at the height of AUC power. It began to decline in 2003 and leveled off in 2009.

Terrorism is defined in Colombia by Law 599 of 2000 as: "the act of causing or maintaining a state of anxiety or terror in the population...through acts that put in danger life, physical integrity or the liberty of persons or buildings...taking advantage of means that cause havoc."<sup>728</sup> Overall, the number of acts of terrorism has declined from highs above 1,500 instances per year in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Unfortunately in 2012 and 2013, total events have risen, reaching almost 900 (after a low in 2007 of just under 400). One potential cause (generally unrelated to *bacrim* activities) is the peace talks between the FARC and the Colombian government, as some members of the guerilla organization have objected to the proceedings.

The most startling indicator is extortion, defined again by Law 599 of 2000 as: "the act of compelling another to do, to tolerate, or to ignore something, with the intent to obtain unlawful benefits for himself or for a third party."<sup>729</sup> Extortion peaked once at the beginning of demobilization and then rapidly declined, only to skyrocket after 2008. Although prior underreporting or a change in reporting could explain some of the

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<sup>728</sup> MOD, Slide 37, My translation.

<sup>729</sup> MOD, Slide 30, My translation.

extreme escalation, it is likely that the growth of the *bacrim* has accounted for some of this measure, although official National Police statistics list “*delincuencia común*” (common criminals) as the bulk of all extortions. In 2013, 4,084 of the 4,805 reported extortions were attributed to such criminals, while only 225 are attributed to “*bandas criminales*.”<sup>730</sup> However, Colombian officials, as well as local media, have anecdotally attributed the rise in extortion (and micro-extortion) to the *bacrim*.

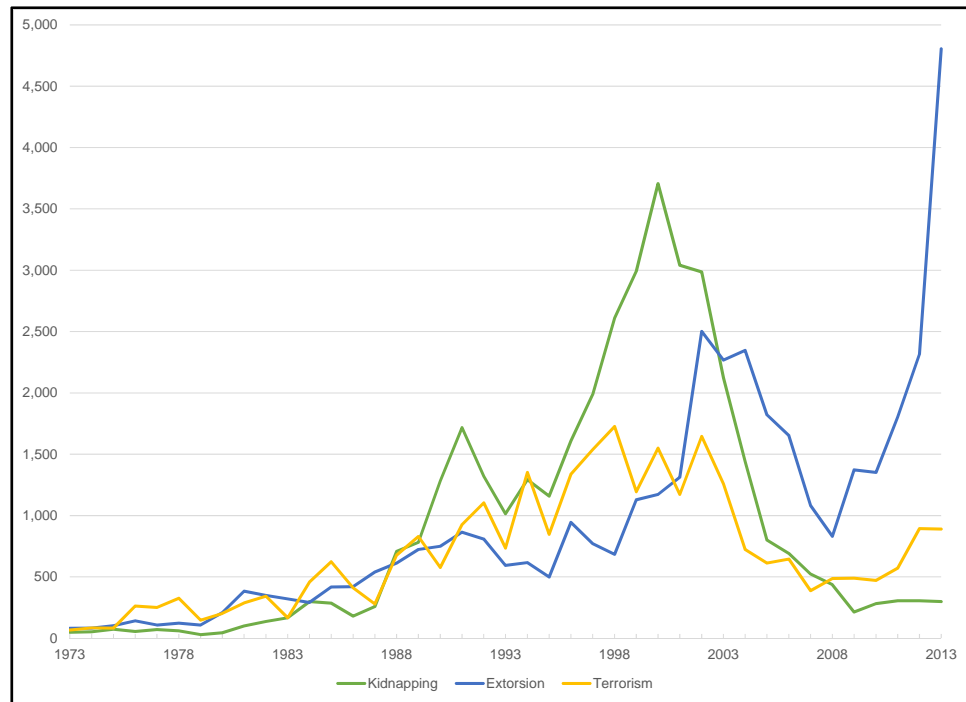
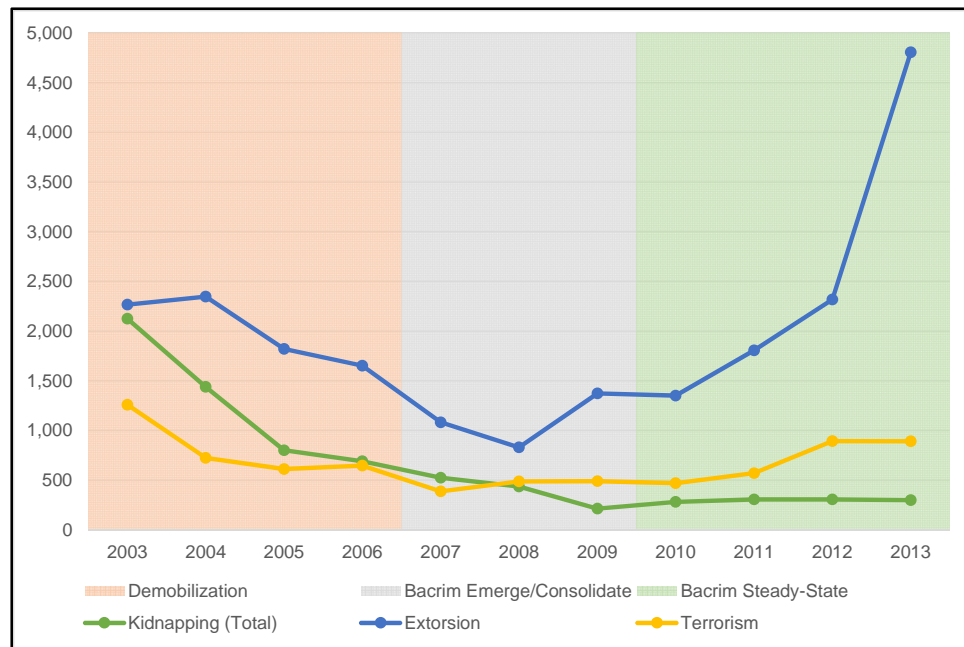


Figure 51. Major Crimes in Colombia excluding Homicide (1973-2013)<sup>731</sup>

<sup>730</sup> Policía Nacional, “Tablas estadísticas: Delitos y Contravenciones, 2013,” *Revista Criminalidad* 56, no. 2 (2014): 106.

<sup>731</sup> Rodríguez Cuadrado, 259-260, 269-272.



**Figure 52. Major Crimes in Colombia excluding Homicide (2003-2013)<sup>732</sup>**

The decline and then general steady state of kidnapping and terrorism in the country are positive developments that again, the *bacrim* have clearly not reversed. The pervasiveness of extortion, however, is a major concern, and consequently will be examined in addition to homicides in the panel data analyses.

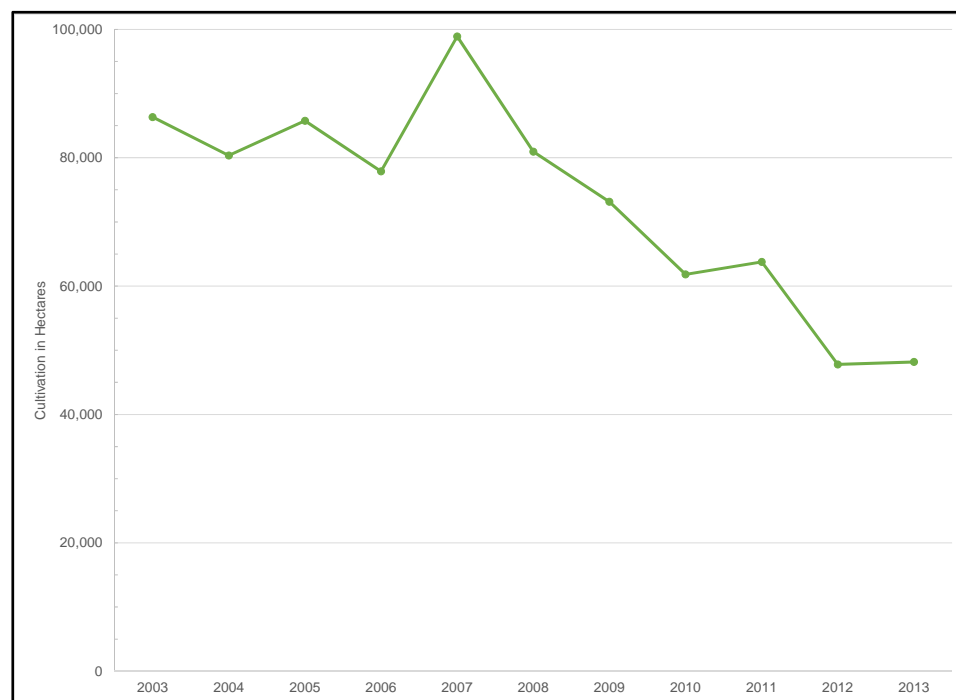
### The Illegal Drug Trade

The final set of descriptive statistics looks at the illegal drug trade, specifically coca cultivation. Ending this section are spatial depictions of the number of *bacrim* groups (the five examined in the case study) per municipality overlaid with the top 10 coca cultivating municipalities for 2010-2013.

<sup>732</sup> MOD.



Figure 53 shows UNODC estimates for the number of hectares cultivated in the country over a ten year period. Since 2007, after a single year spike, the amount has steadily declined.<sup>733</sup> The decline has come from a two-pronged approach by the Colombian government: “alternative development,” which is more than helping the rural populace grow other crops and includes other short and long-term activities such as technical assistance and formalizing land tenure; and eradication, both manual and aerial.<sup>734</sup>



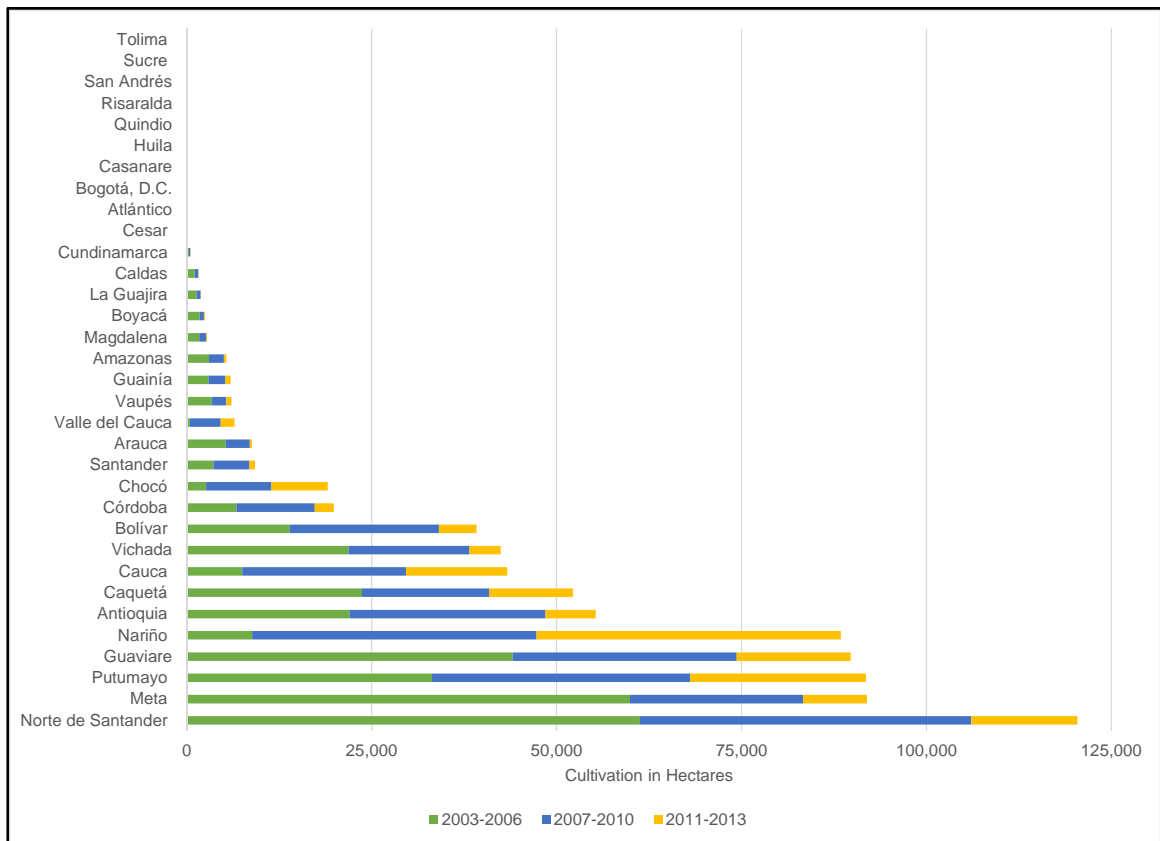
**Figure 53. Coca Cultivation in Colombia (Ha) (2003-2013)<sup>735</sup>**

<sup>733</sup> Coca cultivation reached an all-time high in 2000 and 2002, reaching over 160,000 hectares according to the UN.

<sup>734</sup> UNODC, *Colombia Cultivation Survey 2014*, 2014, <<http://www.unodc.org>> (October 2014), 80, 96-97.

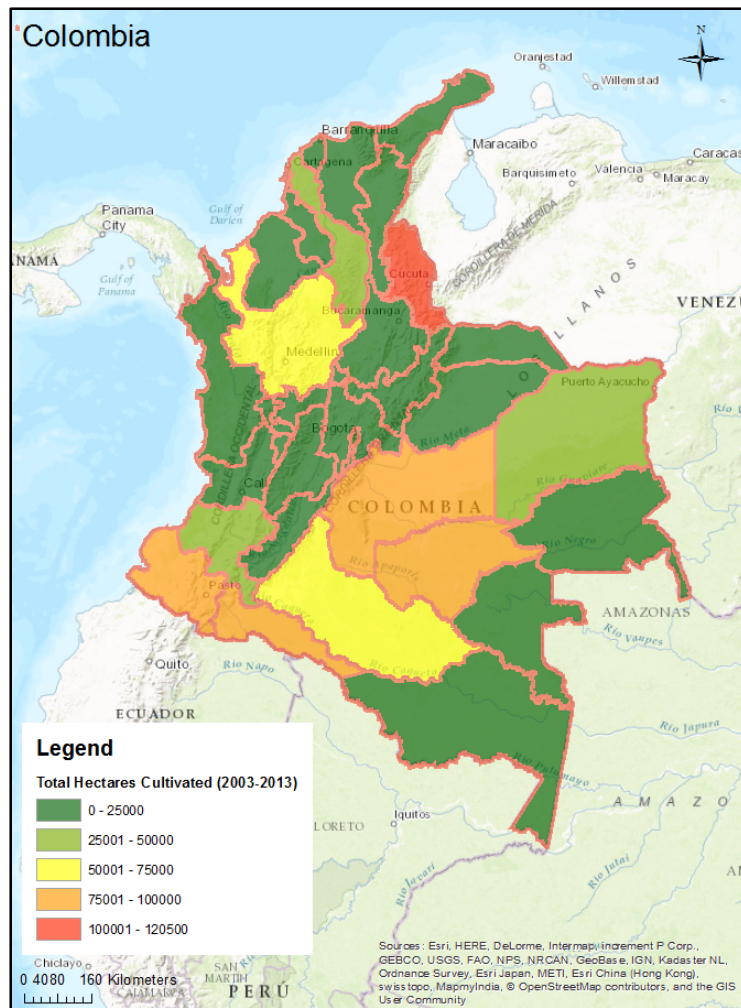
<sup>735</sup> UNODC, *Colombia Cultivation Survey 2006-2013, 2007-2014*, <<http://www.unodc.org>> (November 2014).

Figure 54 looks at cultivation by department in three time periods: 2003-2006, 2007-2009, and 2010-2013. The first period is characterized by the AUC demobilization, the second by the emergence and consolidation of the *bacrim*, and the third by a steady-state of the *bacrim*. Figure 55 shows a geographic perspective on cultivation.



**Figure 54. Cultivation by Colombian Department (Ha) (2003-2013)<sup>736</sup>**

<sup>736</sup> UNODC, *Colombia Cultivation Survey 2006-2013, 2007-2014*, <<http://www.unodc.org>> (November 2014).



**Figure 55. Total Number of Hectares Cultivated (2003-2013)<sup>737</sup>**

Coca cultivation has occurred in the region for centuries and has succeeded best at elevations between 1,500 and 6,000 feet on the eastern slopes of the Andes.<sup>738</sup> In Colombia, this includes areas of Antioquia, Caquetá, Cauca, Nariño, Norte de Santander,

<sup>737</sup> UNODC, *Colombia Cultivation Survey 2006-2013, 2007-2014*, <<http://www.unodc.org>> (November 2014).

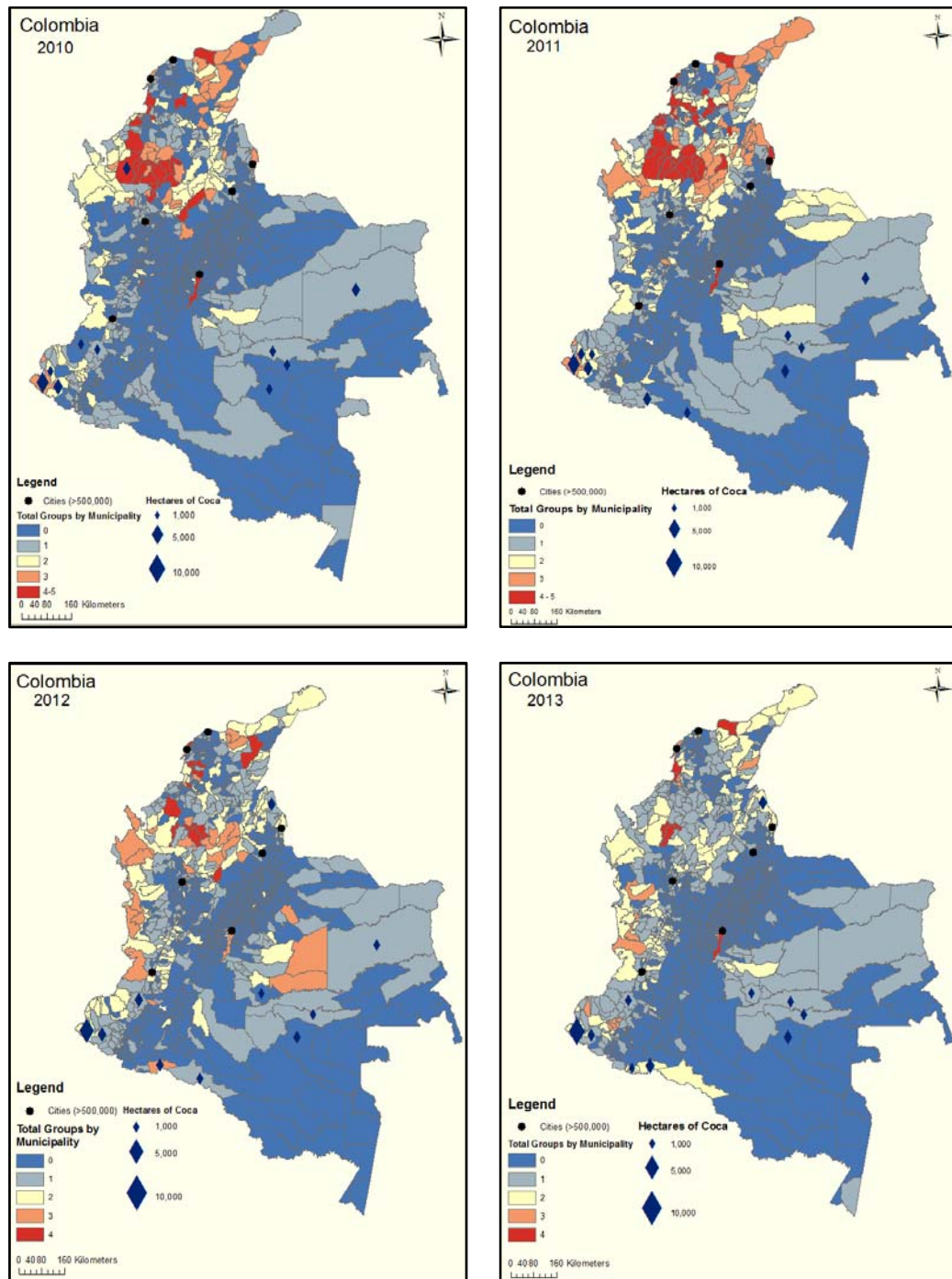
<sup>738</sup> Dominic Streatfeild, *Cocaine: An Unauthorized Biography* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002), 3.

and Putumayo. At lower elevations, parts of the Eastern Plains have also had high levels of growth, including Meta, Guaviare, and Vichada.

Eight departments, as well as Bogotá, saw no cultivation during any of these periods: Atlántico, Casanare, Huila, Quindío, Risaralda, San Andrés (island), Sucre, and Tolima. Cesar saw minimal cultivation in the second and third periods (5 and 26 hectares respectively).

The top three producers shifted during each period as targeted efforts were made against each region. Two of the largest decreases were Norte de Santander and Meta, which went from being ranked first and second, to being fourth and seventh. Conversely, Nariño, which was ninth during the first period went to second and then first. Of note, the top producing municipality between 2010 and 2013 was in Nariño: San Andrés de Tumaco (Tumaco). Other major coca production departments over the entire period were Guaviare and Putumayo.

The final figure in this section (Figure 56) overlays the top municipalities for coca cultivation with the number of groups per municipality. Tumaco in the southwest and the neighboring municipalities act as major sources throughout the entire period, as do municipalities in Putumayo, Guaviare and Meta. Most of these areas are not major *bacrim* strongholds (refer back to Figure 12 which shows FARC presence throughout.)



**Figure 56. Total Number of Bacrim by Municipality and Top 10 Municipalities for Coca Cultivation (2010-2013)<sup>739</sup>**

<sup>739</sup> INDEPAZ, UNODC.

## B. PUBLIC OPINION IN COLOMBIA

The Latinobarómetro is a yearly public opinion survey conducted by the *Corporación Latinobarómetro* that captures eighteen countries in Latin America and Spain, including Colombia. Questions on the survey cover a variety of topics, including democracy, standard of living, and crime. Although eleven years of data were available from Latinobarómetro, only surveys from 2005 to 2013 were properly tagged for location.<sup>740</sup> Therefore, these eight years were used for this portion of the analysis. Interviewee responses to questions related to security, crime, and corruption were the focus.

Table 19 (below) is sorted by the highest totals across the eight years captured and highlights the consistent concern with security related problems among interviewees. Even more notable, is that '*pandilla*' or 'band'-related violence ranks fourth overall although it was only mentioned in the final five years. It is also relevant that it is culled out from other types of activities (e.g., drug trafficking or terrorism) and not considered a subsidiary problem by respondents. Also, although not displayed here, responses from 2001-2004 placed terrorism as the number one or number two concern in all four years (along with unemployment), similar to below (other security issues have surpassed terrorism in most recent years).

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<sup>740</sup> The eleven years of data include 2000-2013; no data was collected for 2012.

Table 19. The Most Important Problem in the Country (2005-2013)<sup>741</sup>

Most Important Problem in the County	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	Total
Unemployment	455	355	271	306	351	370	281	246	2635
Terrorism/Political Violence	389	398	330	182	117	318	110	155	1999
Crime/Public Security	59	58	67	124	82	163	168	159	880
Violence, "Pandillas"	0	0	0	205	197	10	141	195	748
Corruption	31	44	199	44	39	52	153	110	672
Poverty/Social Inequality	54	147	87	43	79	69	85	37	601
Economy/Economical Problems	0	3	64	81	119	55	45	66	433
Political Crisis	42	20	47	26	33	10	8	24	210
Health Problems	6	16	6	14	19	33	42	64	200
Don't Know/No Answer	32	32	16	30	35	19	11	23	198
Education Problems	13	9	17	18	25	35	33	25	175
Inflation/Price Rise	73	32	6	23	8	2	8	2	154
Others	0	11	22	38	33	0	22	21	147
Distribution of Income	6	12	17	6	5	19	27	19	111
Drugs Consumption/Addiction	7	10	14	15	12	13	17	15	103
Drug Trafficking	8	17	11	11	19	5	13	12	96
Violation of Human Rights	9	6	9	1	4	6	3	3	41
Environment Problems	1	1	1	1	3	4	14	6	31
Lack of Opportunities	0	7	8	7	1	1	4	1	29
Low Salaries	2	5	3	14	1	1	1	1	28
Instability in Employment	5	3	5	0	1	3	1	7	25
Housing Problems	4	6	0	4	1	1	2	1	19
No Problems	4	1	0	2	6	0	2	0	15
Problems with Neighbors	0	1	0	0	7	2	0	2	12
Deficient Basic Services	0	1	0	0	0	1	4	2	8
Social Problems	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	7
Racial Discrimination	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	6
Border Conflicts	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	5
Gas, Fuel	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	5
Transportation	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	4
Global heating	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3
Total	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	

Looking specifically at Bogotá and the two departments where Cali and Medellín are located, the next (Table 20) shows the percentages of interviewees in each location that responded with a given problem for three years (beginning, middle, and end). In 2013, more than 50% of respondents in these areas were concerned with the five security

<sup>741</sup> Original Question: "En su opinión, ¿Cuál considera Ud. que es el problema más importante en el país?" Translation: "In your opinion, what do you consider to be the most important problem in the country?"

problems highlighted in the prior table. Also of note is the concern for corruption in Bogotá in 2013, with twenty percent of respondents reporting that as the most important problem.

**Table 20. The Most Important Problem in the Country (Focus on Major Cities/Departments)**

Most Important Problem in the County	Bogotá D.C.			Antioquia			Valle del Cauca		
	2005	2008	2013	2005	2008	2013	2005	2008	2013
<b>Corruption</b>	5%	4%	20%	3%	3%	7%	2%	0.7%	7%
<b>Crime/Public Security</b>	5%	14%	12%	2%	10%	10%	6%	12%	28%
<b>Drug Trafficking</b>	0%	1%	0.5%	2%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
<b>Terrorism/Political Violence</b>	36%	16%	12%	23%	15%	10%	29%	13%	10%
<b>Violence, "Pandillas"</b>	0%	16%	7%	0%	18%	27%	0%	14%	8%

Corruption, also measured in other ways by the survey, is a critical issue for the country. Transparency International, one of the principle trackers of corruption worldwide, gave Colombia a score of 37/100 in their 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index, ranking them 83 out of 168.<sup>742</sup> In 2012, they had received their worst score in 10 years, a 94.<sup>743</sup> Transparency's Global Corruption Monitor from 2010/2011 (the most recent available), reported that 56% of respondents believed that corruption had increased in the previous three years.<sup>744</sup> Returning to the Latinobarómetro survey, a 2013 question also looked at the perceived level of corruption at both the local and national levels in

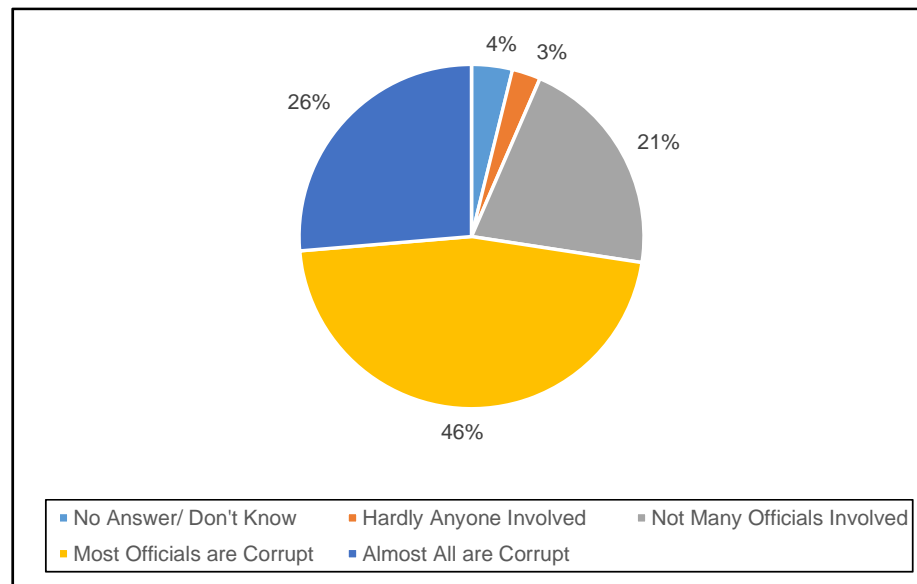
<sup>742</sup> Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2015*, 2015, <<https://www.transparency.org/country/#COL>> (2 September 2016).

<sup>743</sup> Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, Transparency International, *Colombia: Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption*, 15 March 2013, <[http://www.transparency.org/files/content/corruptionqas/373\\_Colombia\\_Overview\\_of\\_corruption\\_and\\_anti-corruption.pdf](http://www.transparency.org/files/content/corruptionqas/373_Colombia_Overview_of_corruption_and_anti-corruption.pdf)> (2 September 2013), 1.

<sup>744</sup> Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, 2.



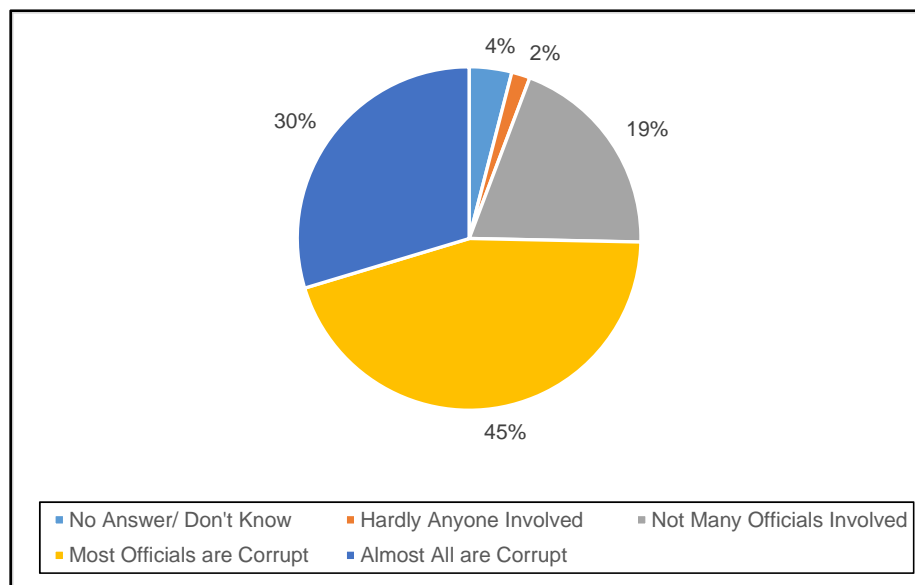
Colombia (Figure 57). The responses show that almost 75% of Colombians surveyed believe that most or almost all officials are corrupt at the local and national levels (r=.7).<sup>745</sup>



**Figure 57. Local Corruption in 2013<sup>746</sup>**

<sup>745</sup> Correlation reported for responses to the questions on local and national corruption.

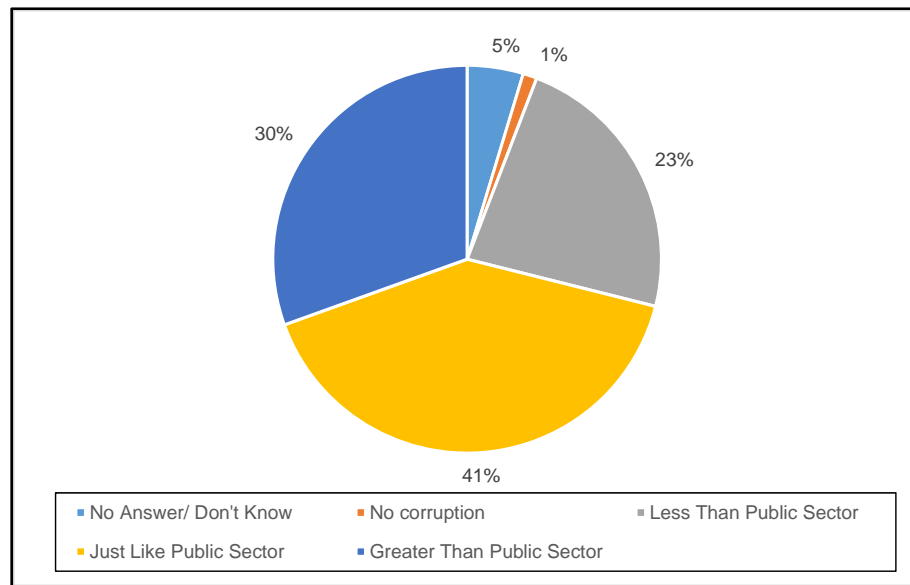
<sup>746</sup> Original Question: “¿Cuán esparcida cree Ud. que está la corrupción y el uso de coimas en el gobierno local/municipal?” Translation: “How widespread do you believe corruption and the use of bribes is in the local government?”



**Figure 58. National Corruption in 2013<sup>747</sup>**

The concern over private sector corruption in 2013 is just as high (Figure 59), with just over 70% of responders believing that the amount of corruption equaled or exceeded that of the public sector.

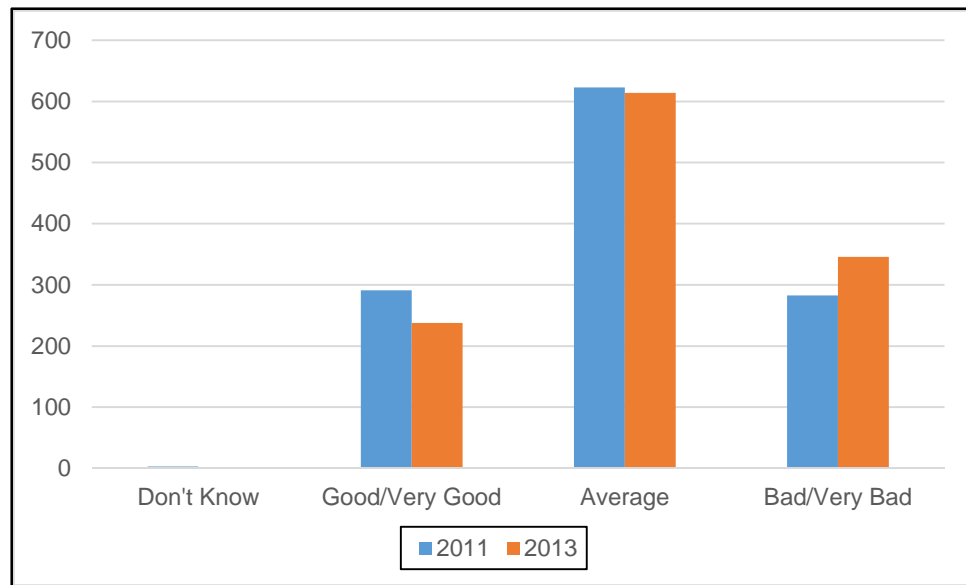
<sup>747</sup> Original Question: “¿Cuán esparcida cree Ud. que está la corrupción y el uso de coimas en el gobierno nacional?” Translation: “How widespread do you believe corruption and the use of bribes is in the national government?”



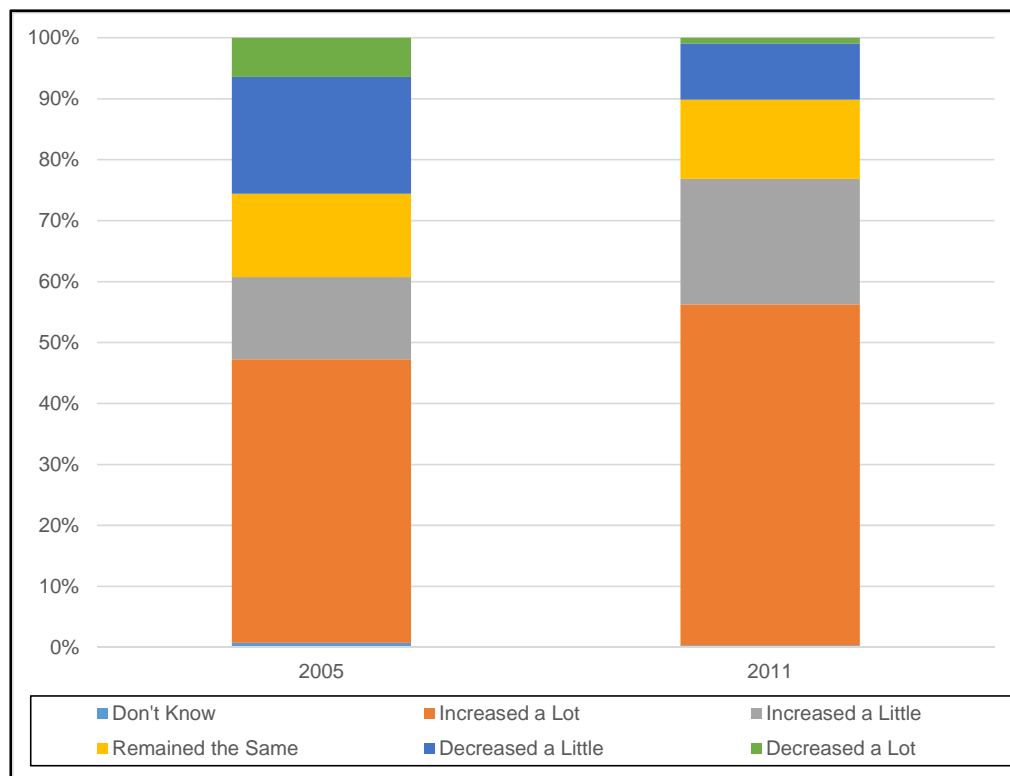
**Figure 59. Private Sector Corruption in 2013<sup>748</sup>**

Belief in public safety has also declined. The following four figures show declining confidence in security as well as an uptick in violence against citizens. Figure 60 shows the general feeling about the topic during the last two years surveyed, while Figure 61 captures belief in change in crime levels for 2005 (during AUC demobilization) and 2011 (steady state *bacrim* activity).

<sup>748</sup> Original Question: “¿Cómo cree Ud. que es el nivel de corrupción en el sector privado o cree Ud. que no hay corrupción en el sector privado?” Translation: “How do you think the level of corruption is in the private sector or do you think there is no corruption in the private sector?”



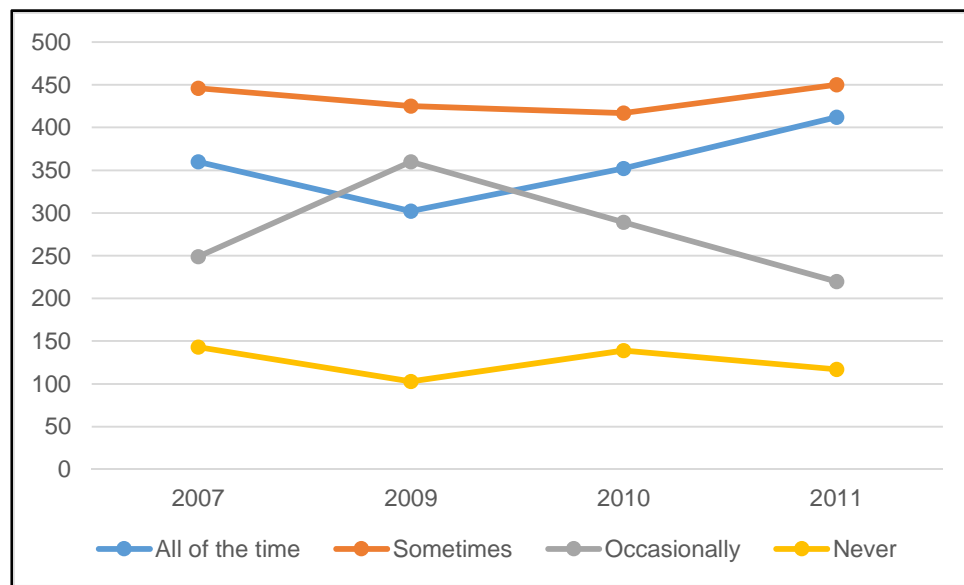
**Figure 60. Public Safety in 2011 & 2013<sup>749</sup>**



**Figure 61. Belief in Change in Crime Level in the Prior 12 Months (2005 and 2011)<sup>750</sup>**

<sup>749</sup> Original Question: “¿Cómo calificaría la seguridad ciudadana en el país?” Translation: “How would you rate citizen security in the country?”

The last two figures (Figure 62/Figure 63) show both an increase in concern about victimization as well as an increase in the number of crime victims, after several years of decline ( $r = .18$  for 2013).<sup>751</sup>

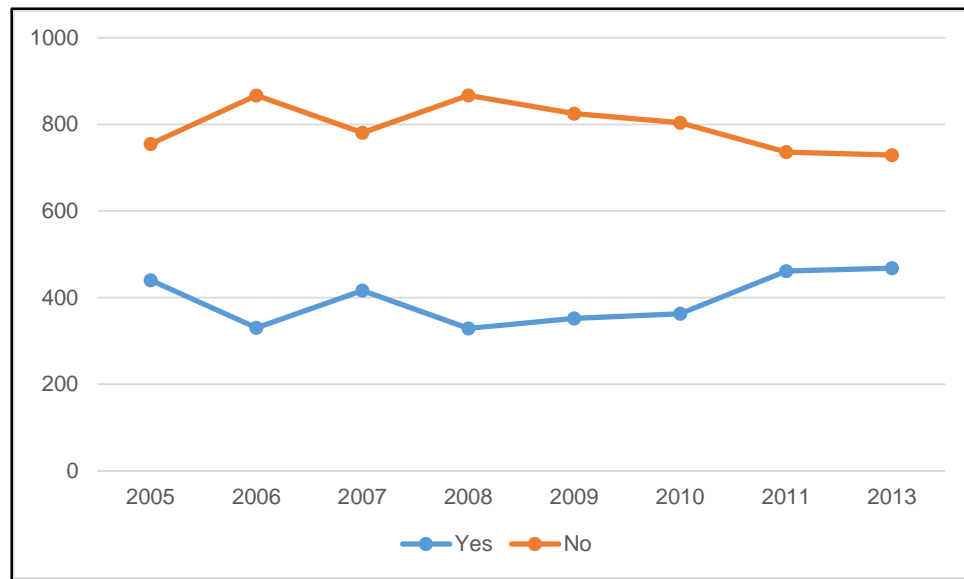


**Figure 62. “How often are you concerned that you can become a victim of violent crime?”<sup>752</sup>**

<sup>750</sup> Original Question: “¿Cree Ud. que la delincuencia ha aumentado mucho o poco, ha permanecido igual o ha disminuido mucho o poco en los últimos doce meses?” Translation: “Do you think crime has increased a lot or a little, has remained the same or declined a lot or a little in the last twelve months?”

<sup>751</sup> Correlation reported for 2013 responses to the questions: “How often are you concerned that you can become a victim of violent crime?” and “Have you or a relative (or both) been the victim of a crime in the last twelve months?”

<sup>752</sup> Original Question: “¿Cuán frecuentemente se preocupa Ud. de que pueda llegar a ser víctima de un delito con violencia?” Translation: “How often are you concerned that you can become a victim of violent crime?”



**Figure 63. “Have you or a relative (or both) been assaulted, attacked, or the victim of a crime in the last twelve months?” (2005-2013)<sup>753</sup>**

Comparing and examining the public opinion data with the criminal statistics in the country exposes several interesting contradictions and beliefs. First, despite all evidence that *violent* crimes such as murder/massacres, terrorism, and kidnapping are on the decline, interviewees are more concerned about suffering from violence. Figure 63 shows indeed that more people have been the victim of a crime, but is unclear whether all respondents suffered from violence rather than other types of crime (e.g., vandalism, theft).<sup>754</sup>

Second, despite the effort and enormous number of resources spent by the government over the years to combat drug trafficking, it is considered to be one of the

<sup>753</sup> Original Question: “¿Ha sido Ud. o algún pariente asaltado, agredido, o víctima de un delito en los últimos doce meses?” Translation: “Have you or a relative been assaulted, attacked, or the victim of a crime in the last twelve months?”

<sup>754</sup> The difference between theft and robbery is the ‘use of force, however slight’ – for theft, there is no force or violence involved.

most important problems in the country by less than 2% of respondents every year, while crime, corruption, and violence/terrorism/*pandillas* consistently rate near the top. Related to this issue is the fact that unemployment is ranked number one or number two in all years (2001-2013). From the perspective of keeping people from criminal activity, from rejoining paramilitary and/or guerilla organizations, or rehabilitating them, chronic problems with employment make any, let alone all of these policies difficult.

Thirdly, the combination of perceived corruption and reported extortion are also indications of systemic problems that make the creation of a comprehensive strategy to combat the *bacrim* and appropriately demobilize the FARC and ELN fraught with the potential for failure.

### C. PANEL DATA ANALYSIS

Two major questions emerged while gathering data and building the descriptive statistics in the prior two sections. First, is there a large difference in the homicide rate between the period of time when the AUC existed and after the emergence of the *bacrim*? Second, does the presence of *bacrim* affect criminal activity within a department or municipality? In order to address these questions, two different datasets were generated and the literature related to national and cross-national homicides was reviewed for relevant variables and methods.

There is an extensive literature looking at homicide rates and crime. Several studies will be described here because of the variables assessed. Mark Beaulieu and Steven Messner conducted a longitudinal study of multiple U.S. cities over a forty year period, using the natural log of homicide rate for their dependent variable (adding one to any cities where the rate was zero) and including explanatory variables for poverty, race, and age structure, among others.<sup>755</sup> Julio Cole and Andrés Marroquín Gramajo studied homicide rates around the world, also using the log of homicide rate as their dependent variable and explanatory variables such as age structure, urbanization levels, and income inequality.<sup>756</sup> In particular, they suggested the civil wars throughout Latin America contributed to a “culture of violence.”<sup>757</sup> Other researchers employing the log of

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<sup>755</sup> Mark Beaulieu and Steven F. Messner, “Assessing Changes in the Effect of Divorce Rates on Homicide Rates across Large U.S. Cities, 1960-2000: Revisiting the Chicago School,” *Homicide Studies* 14, no. 1 (2010): 31-32.

<sup>756</sup> Julio H. Cole and Andrés Marroquín Gramajo, “Homicide Rates in a Cross-Section of Countries: Evidence and Interpretations,” *Population and Development Review* 35, no. 4 (2009): 749-776.

<sup>757</sup> Cole and Marroquín, 767.



homicide rate as their dependent variable include David Jacobs/Amber Richardson, Marc Ouimet, and Patricia McCall/Paul Nieuwbeerta.<sup>758</sup>

For Colombia specifically, Fabio Sánchez, et al., conduct a spatial analysis at the municipality level through 2000. Their research uses several major crimes, including homicide rate, as dependent variables to understand the on-going violence and civil war.<sup>759</sup> Steven Levitt and Mauricio Rubio also look at homicide rate at the municipality level through 1998, considering the guerrillas, poverty/income inequality, culture, and the role criminal justice system as explanatory variables for the high crime rates.<sup>760</sup>

As the key interest here is the role of the AUC and the *bacrim*, indicator variables for the presence or non-presence of these groups were created. However, the literature above, as well as several others, suggests other explanations for high crime rates that should be considered and controlled. Work by Travis Pratt and Francis Cullen, as well as Cole and Marroquín, indicate a number of explanatory variables which may be linked to homicide rates based on other studies including: age structure, education, ethnographic and linguistic heterogeneity, governance, income inequality/poverty, population density, unemployment, and urbanization rates.<sup>761</sup>

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<sup>758</sup> David Jacobs and Amber M. Richardson, "Economic Inequality and Homicide in the Developed Nations from 1975 to 1995," *Homicide Studies* 12, no. 1 (2008): 28-45; Marc Ouimet, "A World of Homicides: The Effect of Economic Development, Income Inequality, and Excess Infant Mortality on the Homicide Rate for 165 Countries in 2010," *Homicide Studies* 16, no. 3 (2010): 238-258; Patricia L. McCall and Paul Nieuwbeerta, "Structural Covariates of Homicide Rates: A European City Cross-National Comparative Analysis," *Homicide Studies* 11, no. 3 (2005): 167-188.

<sup>759</sup> Sánchez, et al.

<sup>760</sup> Steven Levitt and Mauricio Rubio, "Understanding Crime in Colombia and What Can Be Done about It," in *Institutional Reforms: The Case of Colombia*, ed. Alberto Alesina (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005).

<sup>761</sup> Travis C. Pratt and Francis T. Cullen, "Assessing Macro-Level Predictors and Theories of Crime: A Meta-Analysis," *Crime and Justice* 32 (2005): 373-450; Cole and Marroquín.

Based on data available for Colombia at the department and municipality level, the following additional variables were developed for the datasets (not all were available for both analyses): the percent of males aged 15-29, GDP, infant mortality rate (IMR) (as a proxy for relative poverty),<sup>762</sup> and unemployment.

### **Panel 1 Data Summary**

The first panel covers 2008-2013 and looks at the homicide rate and extortion rate in each department. Primary independent variables were the presence or non-presence of the five major *bacrim* groups and the total number present in each department. Additional independent variables for this panel are seen below in the summary table (Table 21).

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<sup>762</sup> William Alex Pridemore, “A Methodological Addition to the Cross-national Empirical Literature on Social Structure and Homicide: A First Test of the Poverty-Homicide Thesis,” *Criminology* 46 (2008):133–154; Steven F. Messner, Lawrence E. Raffalovich, and Gretchen M. Sutton, “Poverty, Infant Mortality, and Homicide Rates in Cross-National Perspective: Assessments of Criterion and Construct Validity,” *Criminology* 48, no. 2 (2010): 509-537.

**Table 21. Model I-IV Description of Variables**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Obs</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
Homicide Rate per 100,000	198	36.35	24.17	2.34	123.82
ln (Homicide Rate per 100,000)	198	3.31	0.76	0	4.82
Extortion Rate per 100,000	198	5.59	9.78	0	115.81
ln (Extortion Rate per 100,000)	179	1.35	0.89	-1.04	4.75
Presence of Rastrojos	198	0.57	0.50	0	1
Presence of Urabeños	198	0.47	0.50	0	1
Presence of Águilas Negras	198	0.61	0.49	0	1
Presence of Los Paisas	198	0.31	0.46	0	1
Presence of ERPAC/Successors	198	0.25	0.44	0	1
Total BACRIM Groups Present	198	2.21	1.36	0	5
Presence of FARC	198	0.82	0.39	0	1
Presence of ELN	198	0.40	0.49	0	1
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 births	198	16.23	8.31	7.46	51.46
Unemployment Rate	144	0.11	0.03	0.07	0.22
ln (GDP per capita in US\$2005)	198	7.98	0.51	7.09	9.28
% of Population Male 15-29	198	0.14	0.01	0.12	0.16
% of Population Living in City (>100,000)	198	0.37	0.27	0	1

For both dependent variables, the distribution of the functions are a concern (Table 22), therefore regressions using the natural log of both variables were conducted as these follow a normal distribution. Additionally, for extortion rate, the model will be considered with and without Guaviare in 2013 (the extreme outlier, see below).

**Table 22. Frequency Distributions for Homicide and Extortion Rate (2008-2013)**

<i>Bin</i>	<i>Frequency Homicide</i>	<i>Bin</i>	<i>Frequency Extortion</i>
<10	11	0	19
10-20	47	0-10	153
20-30	44	10-20	20
30-40	25	20-30	3
40-50	20	30-40	2
50-60	23	40-50	0
60-70	10	50-60	0
70-80	6	60-70	0
80-90	5	70-80	0
90-100	1	80-90	0
100-110	2	90-100	0
110-120	2	100-110	0
120-130	2	110-120	1

### **Panel 2 Data Summary**

The second panel covers 2001-2013 and focuses on homicides and homicide rate in each municipality to answer both questions about differences in crime due to the AUC and the impact of the *bacrim* (Table 23). First, the four major time periods were coded as dummy variables based on history:

- 2001-2002 – AUC steady-state activity,
- 2003-2006 – period of “AUC demobilization,”
- 2007-2009 – *bacrim* emergence and consolidation (between 2009-2010, total of all groups drops from approximately 26 to 15),
- 2010-2013 – *bacrim* steady-state activity.

Second, independent variables were created for the *bacrim* in years 2010-2013: the presence or non-presence of the five major groups and the total number of these

groups present in each municipality. Years 2001-2006 were coded as zero and 2007-2009 as missing, as the data was not available or was unreliable.<sup>763</sup> Third, the presence of the AUC in each municipality between 2001 and 2006 was coded. Fourth, variables indicated by the literature were again identified: poverty (as IMR), age structure (as percent of males aged 15-29), and level of urbanization (a factor variable between 0 and 3 based on population). Poverty (as IMR) was capped at 100, due to extremes of very small municipalities and several deaths leading to rates exceeding 1000.

Additionally, in an effort to extend the work of Sánchez, et al., a set of lagged temporal and spatial variables were created to reproduce those of their previous study:

- One-year lagged homicides,
- Neighbor homicide, and
- Neighbor one-year lagged homicides.<sup>764</sup>

Neighbors were created by a matrix where distances between the centroids of municipalities were calculated and estimated by using  $1/\text{distance}$ .<sup>765</sup>

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<sup>763</sup> There are of course reports of illegal groups in 2005 and 2006, but the decision was made to mark those years as 0 since the AUC was still in the process of demobilizing.

<sup>764</sup> The logs of all three variables were chosen to ameliorate skewness of the data.

<sup>765</sup> In Sánchez, et al.: “A contiguity matrix for  $N$  geographic units is symmetrical ( $N \times N$ ), with values of zeros in the diagonal (because there is no vicinity of each geographical unit with itself) and in the other elements of this matrix the vicinity criteria of the other spatial units  $N_i$  and  $N_j$  are included (for  $i \neq j$ ). These values differ according to the vicinity criterion that is used. If the matrix that is used is  $1/\text{Distance}$ , elements  $i$  and  $j$  of the matrix, for  $i$  different from  $j$ , are filled with the inverse of the distance between municipalities  $i$  and  $j$ , so that geographical units that are farther away from one another have smaller values.” (p. 156).

**Table 23. Model V-XI Description of Variables**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Obs</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
Homicides	14586	18.28	103.00	0	3829
Homicide Rate per 100,000	14586	43.98	63.52	0	1378.43
ln(Homicide Rate per 100,000)	14586	3.61	0.92	-0.48	7.24
Period 2001-2002	14586	N/A	N/A	0	1
Period 2003-2006	14586	N/A	N/A	0	1
Period 2007-2009	14586	N/A	N/A	0	1
Period 2010-2013	14586	N/A	N/A	0	1
Presence of Rastrojos	11223	N/A	N/A	0	1
Presence of Urabeños	11223	N/A	N/A	0	1
Presence of Águilas Negras	11223	N/A	N/A	0	1
Presence of ERPAC/Successors	11223	N/A	N/A	0	1
Presence of Los Paisas	11223	N/A	N/A	0	1
Total BACRIM Groups Present	11223	N/A	N/A	0	5
ln(Population)	14558	9.53	1011	5.33	15.85
Presence of AUC	14558	N/A	N/A	0	1
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 births	14586	19.97	99.02	0	5000
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 births (capped at 100, because of extreme outliers)	14586	11.65	20.67	0	100
% of Population Male 15-29	14586	0.13	0.02	0.08	0.46
Lagged ln(Homicide Rate per 100,000)	13436	3.64	0.93	-0.03	7.24
ln(Spatial Homicide Influence)	14586	2.82	0.38	1.90	4.53
Lagged ln(Spatial Homicide Influence)	13464	2.84	0.37	1.98	4.53

As with the first panel, homicide rate, is skewed (skewness = 4.6, kurtosis = 48.78) (Table 24). Of the 14,558 observations, nearly 25% of them equal 0 and 71% (including the zeros) are less than or equal to 50. Therefore, again the natural log of the homicide rate will be used as the dependent variable (adding 1 to all values for calculation purposes).

**Table 24. Frequency Distributions for Homicide Rate (2001-2013)**

<b>Bin</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Bin</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
0	3292	750	3
50	7017	800	1
100	2554	850	0
150	927	900	1
200	394	950	1
250	162	1000	0
300	79	1050	0
350	38	1100	0
400	35	1150	0
450	16	1200	0
500	14	1250	0
550	12	1300	0
600	4	1350	1
650	1	1400	1
700	5		

## Type of Model

A variety of different model types are employed throughout the criminology literature to examine homicides, including OLS, fixed/random/mixed effects panels, multi-level, Poisson, and negative binomial distributions. The latter two are used with count data (e.g., numbers of homicides rather than rates) and will not be further discussed.<sup>766</sup> Paul Allison argues for the importance of fixed effects in general, but also believes that mixed effects can combine the best of both models.<sup>767</sup> Eric Neumayer

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<sup>766</sup> For insight into the use of counts for homicide data, see D. Wayne Osgood, "Poisson-Based Regression Analysis of Aggregate Crime Rates," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 16, no. 1 (2000): 21-43 and Richard Berk and John M. MacDonald, "Overdispersion and Poisson Regression," *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 24 (2008): 269-284.

<sup>767</sup> Paul D. Allison, *Fixed Effects Regression Models* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2009), 23.

concur on the importance of fixed effects, due to differences in culture and other time-invariant factors, and describes its use in cross-country homicide models.<sup>768</sup> Conversely, Tom Clark and Drew Linzer, seeking to clarify general reasons of when to use fixed or random effects, conclude that with many units and many observations (and variation within and between units), a random effects model is appropriate unless there is a high correlation between the independent variable and unit effects.<sup>769</sup> Andrew Bell and Kelvyn Jones suggest that random effects (including hierarchical and mixed effects) are almost always preferred due to the ability to assess the within and between parts of the model.<sup>770</sup>

Sánchez, et al., employ a pooled OLS model in their research. Jacobs and Richardson create a fixed-effects model in their homicide study, despite noting that random effects are most commonly used in criminology.<sup>771</sup> Liu, et al., use a linear mixed-effects/hierarchical model capturing both fixed and random effects in their longitudinal study looking at the escalation of criminal behavior among individuals.<sup>772</sup>

It was decided to follow the standard methods for criminology research. Therefore, Panel 1 strictly employs random effects models. For Panel 2, a pooled OLS regression is used to re-create the spatial analysis of Sánchez, et al., and then a hierarchical mixed-effects model is used for the entire period and then for 2010-2013 only to replicate the spatial analysis (by creating a department-municipality hierarchy)

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<sup>768</sup> Eric Neumayer, “Good Policy Can Lower Violent Crime: Evidence from a Cross-National Panel of Homicide Rates, 1980-97,” *Journal of Peace Research* 40, no. 6 (2003): 619-640.

<sup>769</sup> Tom S. Clark and Drew A. Linzer, “Should I Use Fixed or Random Effects?”, 24 March 2012, <<http://polmeth.wustl.edu/media/Paper/ClarkLinzerREFEMar2012.pdf>> (11 October 2015).

<sup>770</sup> Andrew Bell and Kelvyn Jones, “Explaining Fixed Effects: Random Effects Modeling of Time-Series Cross-Sectional and Panel Data,” *Political Science Research and Methods* 3, no 1 (2015): 134, 149.

<sup>771</sup> Jacobs and Richardson, 34.

<sup>772</sup> Jiayi Liu, Brian Francis, and Keith Soothill, “A Longitudinal Study of Escalation in Crime Seriousness,” *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 27 (2011): 175-196.



and determine if they produce comparable results. Significance levels do not need to be estimated since the entire population is known.

Four random effects models are examined for Panel 1:

- I. Homicide rate with the presence or non-presence of each group;
- II. Homicide rate with the total number of the groups present;
- III. Extortion rate with the presence or non-presence of each group; and,
- IV. Extortion rate with the total number of the groups present.

Six models are examined for Panel 2:

- V. Homicide rate with the presence or non-presence of each group (2001-2013) (OLS-Spatial);
- VI. Homicide rate with the total number of the groups present (2001-2013) (OLS-Spatial);
- VII. Homicide rate with the presence or non-presence of each group (2001-2013) (Mixed Effects);
- VIII. Homicide rate with the total number of the groups present (2001-2013) (Mixed Effects);
- IX. Homicide rate with the presence or non-presence of each group (2010-2013) (Mixed Effects);
- X. Homicide rate with the presence or non-presence of the AUC (2001-2006) (Mixed Effects);
- XI. Homicide rate with the total number of the groups present (2010-2013) (Mixed Effects);

### Panel 1 Results

For the first panel, Model I (Homicide rate with the presence or non-presence of each group) (Table 25), the presence of some groups was found to generate a small positive increase in the homicide rate while others led to a decrease. The presence of guerilla groups also strangely led to a small decrease. Not unsurprisingly, unemployment rate was the largest positive predictor of homicide rates.

**Table 25. Panel 1, Model I – Ln(Homicide Rate) (Presence or Non-Presence of Bacrim)**

Rastrojos	-0.0376
Urabeños	-0.0232
Águilas Negras	0.0219
Paisas	-0.0025
ERPAC	0.1281
FARC	-0.0199
ELN	-0.0808
IMR (Poverty)	0.0142
Unemployment Rate	2.4512
Ln GDP	-0.5527
Percent Male (15-29)	-4.976
<i>Constant</i>	8.1049

For the first panel, Model II (Homicide rate with the total number of the groups present) (Table 26), an increase in unemployment rate again increased the homicide rate, while an increase in GDP and the percent males generated a decrease. The influence of the total number of groups present in each department was very small.

**Table 26. Panel 1, Model II – Ln(Homicide Rate) (Number of Groups Present)**

Total	0.0050
FARC	0.0192
ELN	-0.0729
IMR (Poverty)	0.0127
Unemployment Rate	2.947
Ln GDP	-0.5809
Percent Male (15-29)	-9.397
<i>Constant</i>	8.843

For the first panel, Model III (Extortion rate with the presence or non-presence of each group) (Table 27), the presence of *Los Rastrojos*, *Los Urabeños*, and the percentage of male youths increased the extortion rate. The presence of *Las Águilas Negras* and *Los Paisas* both slightly decreased the extortion rate. An increase in infant mortality rate also decreased the extortion rate.<sup>773</sup> The removal of the outlier (Guaviare in 2013) from the data had no impact on the results.

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<sup>773</sup> This is likely the result of rural departments that have much higher IMRs but lower extortion rates, compared to more urban departments, with low IMR and high extortion rates.

**Table 27. Panel 1, Model III – Ln(Extortion Rate) (Presence or Non-Presence of Bacrim)**

Rastrojos	0.5453
Urabeños	0.0934
Águilas Negras	-0.3823
Paisas	-0.3998
ERPAC	-0.0326
FARC	0.0835
ELN	0.0337
IMR (Poverty)	-0.0737
Unemployment Rate	-2.0446
Ln GDP	-0.0304
Percent Male (15-29)	43.16
<i>Constant</i>	-3.1224

For the first panel, Model IV (Extortion rate with the total number of the groups present) (Table 28), the total number of groups present caused a very small increase in extortion rate. An increase in infant mortality rate again decreased the extortion rate and the percentage of male youths increased the extortion rate.<sup>774</sup> The removal of the outlier (Guaviare in 2013) from the data had no impact on the results.

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<sup>774</sup> Refer to prior footnote.

**Table 28. Panel 1, Model IV – Ln(Extortion Rate) (Number of Groups Present)**

Total	0.0086
FARC	0.0293
ELN	0.1047
IMR (Poverty)	-0.6800
Unemployment Rate	-1.8345
Ln GDP	0.0726
Percent Male (15-29)	52.7699
<i>Constant</i>	-5.3774

## **Panel 2 Results**

For the second panel, Model V (Homicide rate with the presence or non-presence of each group (2001-2013)) (Table 29), the presence of the AUC, and all of the *bacrim*, but *Los Paisas* generated increases in homicide rates. Regarding urbanization level, moving from a very small village to a slightly larger one was associated with a small decline in homicide rates (<5,000 to 5,000-20,000), but moving to a major city (e.g., Bogotá, Medellín, and Cali) were associated with increases in homicide rates (<5,000 to greater than 1 million).

The spatial variables showed the same directionality as in Sánchez, et al. The Neighbor's Homicides rates had the largest effect of any of the variables and the lagged homicide rate also caused an increase. Neighbor one-year lagged homicides led to a decrease in homicide rates (the same as the earlier period 1990-2000).

**Table 29. Panel 2, Model V – Ln(Homicide rate) (Presence or Non-Presence of Bacrim, 2001-2013)**

AUC	0.1475
Rastrojos	0.1218
Urabeños	0.0341
Águilas Negras	0.0384
ERPAC	0.1188
Paisas	-0.0306
Ln Population	-0.1107
Percent Male (15-29)	-0.5325
Modified IMR (Poverty)	0.0001
Urban	
5,000-20,000	-0.1379
20,001-100,000	-0.0637
100,001-1,000,000	0.1088
1,000,000+	0.4748
1-year Lagged Homicide Rate	0.6097
Neighbors' Homicide rates, inverse weighted	1.0148
Neighbors' Lagged Homicide rates, inverse weighted	-0.6182
Constant	1.4499

For the second panel, Model VI (Homicide rate with the total number of the groups present (2001-2013)), the total number of groups led to a small increase in homicide rates but did not substantively change the interpretations of any of the other variables.<sup>775</sup>

For the second panel, Model VII (Homicide rate with the presence or non-presence of each group (2001-2013) (Mixed Effects)) (Table 30), accounting for the spatial structure through a hierarchy, as well as allowing the slopes of the municipalities to vary based on year, provides a more robust assessment of the effects. Notable are the

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<sup>775</sup> See Appendix C for results.

increases in the coefficients for all of the groups of interest. ERPAC changed direction, leading to a decrease in homicide rate. Also of interest is the result that an increase in the percent of males aged 15-29 led to a decrease in homicide rates, which is contrary to the findings in most other homicide studies (and occurs multiple times in this dataset). Finally, it is important to note the period effects. Changes from Period 0 (AUC steady-state activity) to Period 1 (Demobilization) and Period 3 (*bacrim* steady-state) are large, with each period showing a greater decline in homicide rates.

**Table 30. Panel 2, Model VII – Ln(Homicide rate) (Presence or Non-Presence of Bacrim, 2001-2013)**

AUC	0.2333
Rastrojos	0.1680
Urabeños	0.1609
Águilas Negras	0.1443
ERPAC	-0.2366
Paisas	0.1282
Ln Population	-0.1942
Percent Male (15-29)	-2.1273
Modified IMR (Poverty)	0.0001
Year	-0.0554
Urban	
5,000-20,000	-0.2718
20,001-100,000	-0.1784
100,001-1,000,000	0.0920
1,000,000+	0.7311
Period	
AUC Demobilization(1)	-0.1369
<i>Bacrim</i> Consolidation (3)	-0.1015
Constant	117.2498
<i>Random Effects</i>	
Department	0.2909
Municipality	0.1770

For the second panel, Model VIII (Homicide rate with the total number of the groups present (2001-2013) (Mixed Effects)), the total number of groups led to a small increase in homicide rates but did not substantively change the interpretations of any of the other variables.<sup>776</sup>

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<sup>776</sup> See Appendix C for results.



For the second panel, Model IX (Homicide rate with the presence or non-presence of each group (2010-2013) (Mixed Effects)) (Table 31), the impact of the groups alone was measured. All of the variables of interest remain small and positive, except for ERPAC. The magnitude of these coefficients is comparable with the magnitude of the effect of the AUC during the first two periods (Table 32), although the effects of the AUC, with *Los Paisas*, *Los Rastrojos*, *Los Urabeños*, and *Las Águilas Negras*, following sequentially.

**Table 31. Panel 2, Model IX – Ln(Homicide rate) (Presence or Non-Presence of Bacrim, 2010-2013)**

Rastrojos	0.1670
Urabeños	0.1528
Águilas Negras	0.0875
ERPAC	-0.007
Paisas	0.1332
Ln Population	-0.2493
Percent Male (15-29)	0.0297
Modified IMR (Poverty)	0.0003
Year	-0.0348
Urban	
5,000-20,000	-0.387
20,001-100,000	-0.2499
100,001-1,000,000	0.2108
1,000,000+	0.8555
Constant	75.8797
<i>Random Effects</i>	
Department	0.2494
Municipality	0.1774

**Table 32. Panel 2, Model X – Ln(Homicide rate) (Presence or Non-Presence of AUC, 2001-2006)**

AUC	0.1263
Ln Population	-0.2004
Percent Male (15-29)	-1.8750
Modified IMR (Poverty)	-0.0001
Year	-0.0964
Urban	
5,000-20,000	-0.2100
20,001-100,000	-0.0598
100,001-1,000,000	0.2402
1,000,000+	0.9091
Constant	199.2908
<i>Random Effects</i>	
Department	0.3571
Municipality	0.2574

For the second panel, Model X (Homicide rate with the total number of the groups present (2010-2013) (Mixed Effects)), the total number of groups led to a small increase in homicide rates but did not substantively change the interpretations of any of the other variables.<sup>777</sup>

## D. QUANTITATIVE CONCLUSIONS

More than half a century of conflict has left entire generations wounded by the extreme violence. The role that the guerrillas, drug traffickers, and paramilitaries have played in generating and exacerbating that violence is immense. Since paramilitary demobilization was announced in 2003, though, many of the indicators of crime and violence have dropped, most importantly, homicides rates. Coca cultivation has dropped,

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<sup>777</sup> See Appendix C for results.

kidnappings are down, and acts of terrorism have remained level. The drops in several indictors have leveled off, although some still continue a downward trend. For example, DANE's preliminary data estimates 12,452 homicides for 2014 and 9,977 homicides for 2015 (the lowest levels since the late 1970s and early 1980s).<sup>778</sup> Yet, extortion has skyrocketed and people remain anxious about security issues (terrorism, violence, corruption).

At the beginning of the panel analysis two questions were asked: is there a large difference in the homicide rate between the period of time when the AUC existed and after the emergence of the *bacrim*, and does the presence of *bacrim* affect criminal activity within a department or municipality?

In the case of the first question, homicide rates are much lower during all periods after AUC demobilization than during AUC operations. Furthermore, across the entire period (2001-2013), the AUC had a stronger effect than any of the five groups of interest. Dividing the set into two (2001-2006 and 2010-2013) moderated the coefficient for the presence of the AUC, bringing it into line with the *bacrim*. Clearly there are other factors driving the homicide rates that need to be identified in future research to more completely model the changes.

For the second question, some *bacrim* had an effect on extortion rates at the department level, although in opposite directions, but the effects on homicide rates were negligible. At the municipality level, using both the entire period (2001-2013) and only the later period (2010-2013), all of the groups, except ERPAC, showed a positive impact

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<sup>778</sup> DANE.

on homicide rates. ERPAC's negative effect when examined over the entire period is likely due to the limited number of municipalities where the group and its successors operate.

Where do these conclusions situate Colombia and the *bacrim* regionally and internationally, regarding homicide and the related factors of conflict, instability, and violence?

At the regional level, several researchers have argued that there is something unique about Latin America (i.e., a cultural proclivity), which leads it to have higher levels of homicides and violence. Referring back to Table 17, in 2012, Latin American countries occupied seven of the top ten spots (excluding island nations). These other countries, including Honduras, Venezuela, and Guatemala, have faced civil war, repressive governments, and powerful criminal organizations.

At the international level, the remaining top three are South Africa, its internal neighbor, Swaziland, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The first two have experienced years of widespread inequality and low government legitimacy, while the third has suffered numerous wars and insurgencies over the same fifty year period as Colombia.

All of these countries could be seen as societies under stress, be it social, political, or economic. In the case of Colombia, the *bacrim*, like the AUC before them, exacerbate all of these issues with their presence and in particular, their criminal activities.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

### A. SYNTHESIS OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

This analysis has shown that the *bacrim* are not in any way monolithic nor are they created equal. The origins of the *bacrim* have been identified as varied, as have their expansions and contractions. The membership and organization for each group has been assessed to the extent that such information was available. Their level of influence in society, through their pamphleteering and the concern identified in public opinion surveys, was seen to be high in some areas, while interviewees suggested that those far from their influence were less troubled. Their influence on local governments and officials is regularly seen in newspaper reporting about arrests and investigations. Their role in the on-going conflict remains complicated, and varies by group, especially as the peace agreement is at a standstill, but some are clearly functioning as associates of the FARC and ELN.

Finally, the key characteristics of these groups were specified and it is clear that the idea of *bacrim* or *bandas criminales* is not a useful concept to distinguish these groups from any others (or themselves). Every entity examined here is different. *Los Rastrojos* originate from the *Norte del Valle* cartel, *Los Paisas* are the creation of a former Medellín crime boss, *Los Urabeños* are a well-structured representative of the

former paramilitaries led by former guerrillas-turned traffickers-turned AUC, while *Los Águilas Negras* are essentially ephemeral and leaderless. ERPAC and its successors draw strongly on the AUC model but their drug ventures in the Eastern Plains have placed them in close contact with the guerrillas.

Four competing hypotheses about the *bacrim* were proposed at the beginning of this research. They were examined using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in order to create a complimentary picture and generate unique insights into the problem that would be otherwise unavailable and are restated here:

- H1. The *bacrim* are the direct heirs of the AUC and a third generation paramilitary force.
- H2. The *bacrim* are the next evolution of drug trafficking organizations, following the cartels and mini-cartels.
- H3. The *bacrim* are third generation gangs.
- H4. The *bacrim* are a new type of organized crime, drawing on the legacy of both the paramilitaries and the cartels.

Based on the research, the following conclusions are made regarding the *bacrim*:

H1: The *bacrim* are not the direct heirs of the AUC and a third generation paramilitary force. Some *bacrim* are led by former members of the AUC, many members are former AUC, and paramilitary tactics are employed; however, they do not maintain a genuine counter-insurgent narrative, did not all originate from paramilitary blocks, and oftentimes work with guerilla groups. There are other organizations within Colombia, not examined here, that might more properly be termed paramilitary and in the future, new *bacrim* groups could emerge with a paramilitary mission. At this time, however, it is concluded that the *bacrim* are not a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation paramilitary.

H2: Nor are the *bacrim* the next evolution of drug trafficking organizations. Some *bacrim* are heavily involved in drug trafficking but most are involved in far too many other operations to be thought of as primarily DTOs. Furthermore, as an aside, almost no one in Colombia directly acknowledges that drug trafficking is a problem (.01% in the Latinobarómetro survey from 2005-2013), while they are definitely concerned with crime and violence.

H3: The *bacrim* are not third generation gangs either. Some *bacrim* definitely employ gangs in the cities, but overall are far too complex in operations. Some occupy territory, but they do not hold it the way that gangs (or the paramilitaries used to) in order to avoid the attention of the security forces. Nor was there any evidence of a unique culture for these groups.

H4: The *bacrim* are not a new type of organized crime, as defined in Table 10. Criteria for new organized crime included relationships with terrorists, high levels of institutionalized corruption, interests unaligned with the state, and high levels of violence that include efforts to destabilize the government, and using primarily illegal sources of funding. The *bacrim* examined here are not actively seeking out relationships with terrorists, aside from ties to the FARC. They are not making efforts to destabilize the government or create new higher levels of corruption, rather they continue with traditional corruption – to facilitate their businesses and local control. Homicides continue to decline, as do massacres. Furthermore, several *bacrim* continue to operate numerous licit businesses (e.g., *Los Urabeños* businesses include a grocery store, a jewelry store, and a construction company).

Instead, the *bacrim* fall closer to traditional organized crime in many ways, but with a unique Colombian character understood as a function of the fragmented sovereignty of the state. They could almost be called “organized para-guerilla drug-trafficking criminals,” tracing from *La Violencia*, the conflict with the FARC, and the rise of the paramilitaries. They are the heirs of the paramilitaries and the cartels, but they are also the heirs of the guerrillas, the *pájaros*, and the *bandoleros*. They are tied to the illegal economy, local elites, and state agents. They are well-armed, skilled in combat and assassinations, but focused on making money and “controlling” territory at various levels in order to facilitate their businesses and lifestyle. Some of what is old still works well: killings, pamphleteering, land displacements, and extortion. But there are new tactics too: keep the violence below a certain level and spread out the attacks, don’t stay in one place for too long, and franchise out the name for prestige and support.

Overall, because of the decline in homicides and coca cultivation, Colombia may read as a success story. Nevertheless, underlying issues that lead to the existence and spread of groups such as the *bacrim* have not been addressed, including displacements, reintegration, land reform, inequality (including racial), limited state presence in remote regions, and a culture that even Colombians acknowledge is violent.

## **B. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The research presented here has policy implications within Colombia, Latin America, and at the international level. It is key to realize that the challenge of the *bacrim* is not one of the last ten or twenty years, but the last fifty or sixty years. Deeply ingrained modes of operation within certain parts of the country do not lend themselves to easy



solutions. Therefore, when considering a long-term approach to combating the *bacrim* and other Colombian criminal organizations, the following observations should be considered.

**Renaming a problem does not change the fundamental issues associated with that problem**

The Colombian government's insistence on the name *bacrim* and the relabeling of certain groups (*Los Urabeños* to Clan Úsaga to Clan del Golfo) undermines their credibility. The NGO/researcher community, on the other hand, constantly criticizes the government without recognizing some of the operational restrictions it faces. The two groups are so far apart on the issue of the name *bacrim* that their differences have limited constructive conversation on the problem. To admit that the other side is partially right undermines the absolutist positions some profess on the matter (pure criminal organizations vs recycled paramilitaries). Instead, the focus should be on what should be done to reduce criminality and corruption without highlighting or crediting the perpetrators.

**Colombia's paramilitary problem has a much longer history than is sometimes acknowledged**

While the AUC are the most recent and famous antecedents of many members of the *bacrim* and their leadership, these groups have existed in various incarnations with the support of the elite class for decades. The *pájaros* and *bandoleros* of mid-century were themselves born out of previous decades of inequality and violence. Paramilitarism

and its legacies shroud and shape the behavior of these groups, even if they do not directly subscribe to paramilitary ideals and counter-insurgency ideologies.

**Counter-narcotics support, including Kingpin strategies, need to be complimented by other legal initiatives**

The constant parade of *bacrim* leaders, new groups, splinter groups, re-joined groups, alliances and the like, challenges the idea that a kingpin strategy will destroy a group. It may degrade operations and, in the case of certain cult-like operations, destroy a group's core, but as long as there is money to be made in drug trafficking (as well as in emerald mining and other areas), there will be individuals and groups formed to carry out those tasks.

Therefore, while it is important to continue these operations, judicial and penal reform needs to occur as well. This includes swiftly prosecuting cases related to *bacrim* and imprisoning those found guilty such that they cannot continue their illegal business on the inside.

**The U.S. and the EU need to continue to promote economic development and counter-corruption efforts at all levels throughout the country (local, regional, national)**

Every country suffers from some level of criminal activity, but not every country's criminals are as well-organized, trained, and equipped as those in Colombia. Consequently, their reach is far and deep. The U.S., the EU, and their allies, have the opportunity to take the Colombian success story of declining homicide rates and coca cultivation and turn it into a long-term achievement by now focusing on corruption and the economic issues that plague the country (including unemployment, land reform,

poverty, and education). Although focusing on the national level is frequently easiest, it neglects the very stark regional and local inequalities that exist and which the national government has always had difficulties ameliorating.

Between 2005 and 2013, more than 27% of respondents to the Latinobarómetro identified unemployment as the worst problem, compared to 21% who identified “terrorism and political violence.” The government estimated the national unemployment rate at 9.8% in July 2016 (in line with other major South American countries, excluding Venezuela, which the IMF estimates at more than 17%).<sup>779</sup> Locally, however, some estimates are much higher, for example 13.2% in San José del Guaviare (Guaviare Department) or 12.1% in Arauca (Arauca Department) in 2015.<sup>780</sup> Some of the unemployed will eventually find themselves drawn into informal or illegal activities in order to survive. Comprehensive economic initiatives will break that cycle and will start to promote a culture of responsibility and legality.

### **The importance of regional cooperation should not be underestimated**

Members of the *bacrim* have been captured in Venezuela and Argentina, while Colombia has captured major Peruvian and Ecuadoran criminals. These criminal organizations take advantage of porous borders and weak laws to move themselves and their products throughout the region. Therefore, it is paramount that regional cooperation be improved to limit the transnational nature of these groups and their operations.

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<sup>779</sup> International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, September 2016, <<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2016/01/weodata/index.aspx>> (September 2016).

<sup>780</sup> DANE, *Principales Indicadores del Mercado Laboral - Nuevos Departamentos, 2015*, 23 March 2016, <[http://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/boletines/ech/ml\\_nvos\\_dptos/bol\\_nvos\\_dptos15.pdf](http://www.dane.gov.co/files/investigaciones/boletines/ech/ml_nvos_dptos/bol_nvos_dptos15.pdf)> (September 2016).

Options might include robust extradition treaties, expanded law enforcement cooperation, and enhanced intelligence sharing.

### C. CLOSING THOUGHTS

On 26 September 2016, the Colombian government and the FARC signed a historic peace agreement after more than four years of talks in Cuba. Key features of the deal included: demobilization and disarmament (including municipalities throughout the country where the FARC will gather for these purposes, especially in the southern/eastern departments of Vichada, Meta, Guaviare and Caquetá), political amnesty, punishment for war crimes, restorative justice, a UN monitoring mission, and a place in the political system (including guaranteed seats for the FARC in Congress for a set term).<sup>781</sup>

On 2 October, the people of Colombia voted to reject the accord. New negotiations took several weeks, with the FARC and the government signing an agreement on 24 November. This deal will be voted on by Congress, rather than the public. Many of the changes focus on new requirements for the FARC. The concerns for when the peace deal is implemented remain. This includes the growth of what has been called the “*facrim*,” an amalgam of non-demobilized or re-mobilized FARC members who are unable or unwilling to re-acclimate to civilian life. These guerrillas will find themselves absorbed into a variety of organizations, including the *bacrim*, ELN, *combos*,

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<sup>781</sup> Washington Office on Latin America, “Summary of the FARC-Government Ceasefire and Disarmament Accord,” 23 June 2016, <<http://colombiapeace.org/2016/06/23/summary-of-the-farc-government-ceasefire-and-disarmament-accord/>> (September 2016); Washington Office on Latin America, “Summary of the FARC-Government Ceasefire and Disarmament Accord,” 23 June 2016, <<http://colombiapeace.org/2016/06/23/summary-of-the-farc-government-ceasefire-and-disarmament-accord/>> (September 2016); Nick Miroff, “The paradox of Colombia’s peace deal for FARC,” *The Washington Post*, 25 August 2016, <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/08/25/the-paradox-of-colombias-peace-deal-for-farc/>> (September 2016).

or *pandillas*. Some may establish their own organizations to compete with existing *bacrim*. Other demobilized members may find themselves or their families targeted and be forced to turn to criminal activity for protection.

As the civil war hopefully comes to a close, Colombia still faces another war. Whether it is called a war on drugs or a war on corruption, the conflict between the government and the criminal organizations (and their clandestine supporters) continues. The people of Bogotá had it right: it matters not what the government calls the *bacrim* (despite influencing the government's ability to target them), they are truly the byproduct of decades of guerilla operations, illegal mining, cocaine production, paramilitaries, *sicarios* (assassins), and corruption.<sup>782</sup> There are entire generations who have known nothing but this struggle. It is vital for the future of the Colombian people to be able to experience peace and to begin to tackle the other issues, including unemployment, economic growth, and the legacy of insecurity, which has had a destructive impact on the country's democracy and institutions.

As an acknowledgement to the limitations of this project, it was not possible to conduct in-depth field studies of the *bacrim* in Colombia or conduct interviews with current and former members of these organizations. Therefore, several follow-ons to this research exist. First, additional on the ground evidence gathering would provide a richer understanding of the operations of these groups. Second, documenting the outcomes from any future demobilization will be key. This includes the stories of the FARC and its

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<sup>782</sup> “Según el Gobierno, en Bogotá no hay ‘bacrim.’ ¿Qué opina?”, *Semana*, 4 May 2011, <<http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/segun-gobierno-bogota-no-bacrim-que-opina/237950-3>> (2014). [“According to the government, in Bogotá, there are no ‘bacrim.’ What’s your opinion?”]

victims, changes in crime rates, and the outcomes of future elections. This will enable proper contextualization of future *bacrim* activities (especially if the peace deal is only partially successful) that will help generate meaningful policies in Colombia (and elsewhere, especially the United States and the European Union) to combat these resilient, powerful organizations.

## APPENDIX A: TIMELINE

1946: Post-election rural violence

April 1948: Assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán; beginning of *La Violencia*

1953-1958: Gustavo Rojas Pinilla/Military Junta

1957-58: Official End of *La Violencia*

1965: Decree 3398 – Establishes self-defense units that support the regular military

1965: Establishment of the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN)

1966: “Official” establishment of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia—  
Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC); pre-dated to 1964

1968: Law 48 – Authorizes the continued the existence of these self-defense groups

Mid-1970s: Origins of the Medellín and Cali Cartels

1980s: Beginning of *Asociación Campesina de Ganaderos y Agricultores del Magdalena  
Media* (ACDEGAM) and *Muerte a Secuestradores* (MAS)

Summer 1982: Election of Belisario Betancur Cuartas

1985: Creation of the FARC *Unión Patriótica* (UP) party

Summer 1986: Election of Virgilio Barco Vargas

1990s: Consolidation of *Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá* (ACCU)

Summer 1990: Election of César Gaviria Trujillo

December 1993: Death of Pablo Escobar/End of Medellín Cartel

Summer 1994: Election of Ernesto Samper Pizano

June 1995: Arrest of Gilberto Rodríguez-Orejuela (Cali Cartel)

August 1995: Arrest of Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Orejuela (Cali Cartel)

March 1996: Death of José Santacruz Londoño (Cali Cartel)

1997: Additional consolidation of *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) – includes self-defense groups from Puerto Boyacá and ‘los Llanos Orientales’ and a group controlled by Ramón Isaza

Late 1990s: Emergence of the Norte del Valle Cartel

Summer 1998: Election of Andrés Pastrana Arango

Summer 2002: Election of Álvaro Uribe Vélez

December 2002: AUC declares a ceasefire

November 2003: Demobilization of Bloque Cacique Nutibara (Antioquia)

December 2003: Demobilization of Autodefensas Campesinas de Ortega (Cauca)

Mid-2004: Death of Carlos Castaño

November 2004: Demobilization of Bloque Bananero (Antioquia)

December 2004: Demobilization of Autodefensas del Sur del Magdalena e Isla de San Fernando (Magdalena); Bloque Cundinamarca (Cundinamarca); Bloque Catatumbo (Norte de Santander), Bloque Calima (Valle del Cauca/Cauca)

July 2005: Ley de Justicia y Paz

January 2005: Demobilization of Bloque Córdoba (Córdoba); Bloque Sur Oeste Antioqueño (Antioquia)

February 2005: Demobilization of Bloque Mojana (Sucre/Bolívar)

June 2005: Demobilization of Bloque Héroes de Tolová (Córdoba)

July 2005: Demobilization of Bloque Montes de María (Bolívar); Bloque Libertadores del Sur (Nariño)

August 2005: Demobilization of Bloque Héroes de Granada (Antioquia); Autodefensas Campesinas de Meta y Vichada (Meta and Vichada); Bloque Pacífico (Valle de Cauca/Cauca)

September 2005: Demobilization of Bloque Centauros (Cundinamarca, Tolima, Casanare); Bloque Noroccidente Antioqueño (Antioquia); Frente Vichada del Bloque Central Bolívar (Vichada)

October 2005: Demobilization of Bloque Tolima (Tolima)



December 2005: Demobilization of Frentes Nordeste Antioqueño, Bajo Cauca y Magdalena Medio (Antioquia/Bolivar); Frente Mártires de Guática del Bloque Central Bolívar (Caldas, Risaralda); Bloque Vencedores de Arauca (Arauca)

January 2006: Demobilization of Bloque Mineros (Antioquia); Autodefensas Campesinas de Puerto Boyacá (Santander/Boyaca); Bloque Central Bolívar - Santa Rosa del Sur (Bolivar)

February 2006: Demobilization of Frente Resistencia Tayrona (Magdalena/La Guajira); Autodefensas Campesinas del Magdalena Medio (Antioquia/Santander/Caldas/Tolima); Frentes Próceres del Caguán, Héroes de los Andaquíes y Héroes de Florencia del Bloque Central Bolívar (Antioquia/Caldas/Tolima)

March 2006: Demobilization of Frente Sur del Putumayo del Bloque Central Bolívar (Putumayo); Frente Julio Peinado Becerra (Cesar/Norte de Santander); Bloque Norte (El Copey - Chimila) (Bolivar/Magdalena/La Guajira/Cesar/Sucre); Bloque Norte (La Mesa - Valledupar) (Bolivar/Magdalena/La Guajira/Cesar/Sucre)

April 2006: Demobilization of Frentes Héroes del Llano y Héroes del Guaviare (Meta/Guaviare); Bloque Élder Cárdenas - Frente Costanero de las Autodefensas Campesinas (Córdoba/Antioquia); Bloque Élder Cárdenas - Frentes Pavarandó y Dabeiba (Córdoba/Antioquia)

Summer 2006: Second election of Álvaro Uribe Vélez

August 2006: Demobilization of Frente Norte Medio Salaquí del Bloque Élder Cárdenas de las Autodefensas Campesinas (Chocó)

January 2007: Capture of Juan Hipólito Mejía Rodríguez (AUC/Aguilas Negras)

February 2007: Semana publishes reports on the “nuevas generaciones de autodefensa” and “las Águilas Negras, Doradas, Azules y Rojas; o de Los Machos, Los Rastrojos y Los Macheteros.” It asks if they should be called “bandas criminales,” “nuevos ‘paras’,” or “reinsertados desordenados.” The National Police call them “Bandas Criminales Emergentes” or “BACRIM”

March 2007: Vicente Castaño reported to have committed suicide (reported by Daniel Rendón Herrera, alias ‘Don Mario’ in Dec 2009); facts in dispute

August 2007: First tweet about the ‘Águilas Negras’

October 2007: Capture of José Gregorio Rojas Mendoza, alias ‘Goyo’/‘Yoyo’ (Los Paisas)

January 2008: Death of Wilber Varela, alias ‘Jabón’ (Norte del Valle)

March 2008: Deaths of FARC leaders Raúl Reyes, Iván Ríos and Manuel Marulanda

May 2008: 14 AUC leaders extradited to the United States (including Salvatore Mancuso and Diego Fernando Murillo, alias ‘Don Berna’ (also Oficina de Envigado))

April 2009: Capture of Daniel Rendón Herrera, alias ‘don Mario’ (AUC/Águilas Negras/Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia/Urabeños)

July 2009: First ‘#BACRIM’ tweet

Summer 2010: Election of Juan Manuel Santos

July 2008: Capture of Jacinto Nicolás Fuentes, alias ‘Don Leo’ (Aguilas Negras of Southern Bolivar)

February 2010: Capture of Ubadel Burgos, alias ‘Marcos’ or ‘Ángelo’ (Aguilas Negras of Uraba y Taraza)

March 2010: Death of Virgilio Peralta, alias “Víctor Caparrapo” (Paisas)

September 2010: Death of FARC leader Jorge Briceño Suárez aka Mono Jojoy

October 2010: Death of Cesar Augusto Torres Lujan, alias ‘Mono Vides’ (AUC/Paisas)

December 2010: Death of Pedro Oliveiro Guerrero, alias ‘Cuchillo’ (Medellin Cartel/AUC/ERPAC)

June 2011: Victims and Land Restitution Law

July 2011: Death of Angel de Jesus Pacheco Chanci, alias ‘Sebastian’ (AUC/allied with Paisas/Rastrojos)

November 2011: Death of Alfonso Cano

November 2011: Capture of Maximiliano Bonilla Orozco, alias ‘Valenciano’ (Oficina de Envigado)

December 2011: Surrender of Jose Eberto Lopez Montero, alias ‘Caracho’  
(AUC/ERPAC)

January 2012: General Naranjo calls ‘neo-paramilitary groups’ the “principle threat” to the country

January 2012: Death of Juan de Dios Usuga, alias ‘Giovanni’ (EPL/AUC/Urabeños)

January 2012: Los Urabeños announce a 24 hour strike on 5 January following the death of Giovanni

May 2012: Capture of Javier Antonio Calle Serna, alias ‘Comba’ (EPL/Rastrojos)

June 2012: Capture of Diego Perez Henao, alias ‘Diego Rastrojo’ (Norte del Valle Cartel – created Rastrojos in 2002)

August 2012: Capture of Erickson Vargas Cardona, alias ‘Sebastian’ (Oficina de Envigado)

September 2012: Launch of talks with FARC

September 2012: Capture of Daniel Barrera Barrera, alias ‘El Loco’ (allied with Rastrojos/ERPAC)

September 2012: Capture of Rubén Antonio Navarro Caicedo, alias El Flaco Freddy or ‘El Coyote’ (ERPAC-Bloque Meta)

October 2012: Capture of Luis Enrique Calle Serna (Rastrojos)

October 2012: Capture of Henry de Jesus López Londoño, alias ‘Mi Sangre’ (Oficina de Envigado/AUC/Urabeños)

October 2012: Capture of José Antonio López, alias ‘Jean Claude’ (AUC/ERPAC-Bloque Meta)

October 2012: Surrender of Carlos Enrique Salazar, alias ‘Guerrero’ (Rastrojos)

January 2013: Capture of Hélder Alejandro Ávila Misa, alias ‘El Ratón’ (Aguilas Negras in Choco)

January 2013: Capture of alias ‘Calamisco’ (ERPAC-Bloque Meta)

April 2013: Capture of Rafael Escobar Patiño, alias ‘Mostrico’ (ERPAC-Bloque Meta)

April 2013: Death of Francisco José Morelo Peñata, alias ‘el Negro Sarley’ (Urabeños)

May 2013: Capture of alias ‘Guacharaco’ (Renacer/Aguilas Negras)

July 2013: Death of Carlos Enrique Salazar, alias ‘Guerrero’ (Rastrojos)

August 2013: Capture of Rafael Alvarez Piñeda, alias ‘Chepe’ (AUC/Paisas/Urabeños)

August 2013: Capture of alias ‘Wilson’ (Nuevo Renacer de Casanare Águilas Negras Presente ANC)

August 2013: Capture of alias ‘el Viejo’ (Paisas)

February 2014: FARC and government begin negotiations about Item 3 on the Agenda “Solution to the Problem of Illicit Drugs.”

February 2014: Capture of Humberto Barrios Orjuela, alias ‘Barrios’, 2IC of ‘Pijarbey’ (ERPAC-Libertadores del Vichada)

April 2014: Los Urabeños re-named “el clan de los Úsuga David”/Clan Úsuga

September 2015: Death of Martín Farfán Díaz González, alias ‘Pijarbey’ (ERPAC-Libertadores del Vichada)

October 2015: Death of Víctor Ramón Navarro, alias ‘Megateo’ (EPL)

November 2015: Capture of Darío Andrés León Humanez, alias ‘Jonathan’ (ERPAC-Bloque Meta)

April 2016: Death of Javier Rubiano Cantor, alias ‘Móvil 7’ (ERPAC-Libertadores del Vichada)

May 2016: Death of Alvaro Enciso Arias, alias ‘Venado’ (ERPAC-Libertadores del Vichada)

June 2016: “el clan de los Úsuga David”/Clan Úsuga re-named “el clan del Golfo”

July 2016: Capture of José Manuel Capera, alias Nube Negra (Los Puntilleros - Libertadores del Vichada)

September 2016: FARC and Colombian Government sign peace agreement

October 2016: Colombian public rejects peace agreement.

## APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL DATA SOURCE INFORMATION

**Table 33. Latinobarómetro Technical Record for Colombia 2005-2013**

Year	Company	Methodology	Sample	Sampling Error (95% Confidence Interval)	Representation (% of country's total adult population)
2005	Centro Nacional de Consultoría	Three stage random sample by 2 stages and quotas in the final stage	1200	+/- 2.4%	100%
2006	Centro Nacional de Consultoría	Four-stage probabilistic sample, with quotas in the final stage	1200	+/- 3.5%	100%
2007	Centro Nacional de Consultoría	Four-stage modified probabilistic sample in urban areas and three stages in rural areas	1200	+/- 3.5%	100%
2008	Invamer S.A.	Four-stage probabilistic sample	1200	+/- 3.0%	100%
2009	Ipsos-Napoléon Franco	Modified probabilistic sample: conglomerates, stratified and multi-stage	1200	+/- 3.2%	100%
2010	Centro Nacional de Consultoría	Modified probabilistic sample: conglomerates, stratified and multi-stage	1200	+/- 3.5%	100%
2011	Centro Nacional de Consultoría	Modified probabilistic sample: conglomerates, stratified and multi-stage	1200	+/- 3.5%	100%
2013	Centro Nacional de Consultoría	Modified probabilistic sample: conglomerates, stratified and multi-stage, with quotas in final stage	1200	+/- 3.5%	100%

**Table 34. Latinobarómetro Interviewees by Department (2005-2013)**

Department	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	Total
Amazonas	35	35	40	0	0	40	40	40	230
Antioquia	125	125	74	136	245	100	100	100	1005
Arauca	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Atlántico	90	90	75	64	130	100	100	100	749
Bogotá D.C.	190	190	198	184	212	205	205	205	1589
Bolívar	80	80	31	56	0	20	20	20	307
Boyacá	35	35	65	56	18	28	28	28	293
Caldas	35	35	0	8	0	63	63	63	267
Caquetá	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	8
Cauca	10	10	27	32	47	81	81	81	369
César	0	0	0	40	0	30	30	30	130
Chocó	0	0	0	32	16	0	0	0	48
Córdoba	35	35	28	64	46	45	45	45	343
Cundinamarca	70	70	82	24	65	38	38	38	425
Guainia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guaviare	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Huila	10	10	41	24	35	65	65	65	315
La Guajira	10	10	0	32	0	0	0	0	52
Magdalena	60	60	0	32	0	45	45	45	287
Meta	25	25	19	24	0	62	62	62	279
Nariño	35	35	24	48	17	43	43	43	288
Norte de Santander	0	0	0	16	116	30	30	30	222
Putumayo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Quindío	35	35	53	24	26	0	0	0	173
Risaralda	55	55	82	32	0	36	36	36	332
San Andres	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Santander	85	85	43	64	24	46	46	46	439
Sucre	50	50	119	32	45	0	0	0	296
Tolima	25	25	44	32	26	40	40	40	272
Valle del Cauca	105	105	155	136	132	83	83	83	882
Vaupés	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vichada	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>9,600</b>

## APPENDIX C: FULL QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

### A. PANEL 1 RESULTS

Table 35. Panel 1, Model I – Ln(Homicide Rate) (Presence or Non-Presence of Bacrim)

homiln	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Rastrojos	-.0376032	.0473404	-0.79	0.427	-.1303885	.0551822
Urabeños	-.0231967	.0444163	-0.52	0.601	-.1102511	.0638577
AguilaNegras	.0219447	.0419045	0.52	0.600	-.0601867	.104076
LosPaisas	-.0025204	.0501882	-0.05	0.960	-.1008875	.0958467
ERPAC	.12818	.0469977	2.73	0.006	.0360661	.2202938
FARC	-.0198765	.0583569	-0.34	0.733	-.1342539	.094501
ELN	-.0807637	.0409625	-1.97	0.049	-.1610487	-.0004788
IMR	.0142028	.0083664	1.70	0.090	-.002195	.0306007
UNEMPRATE	2.451213	1.023249	2.40	0.017	.4456814	4.456744
LnGDP	-.5527143	.1790618	-3.09	0.002	-.9036691	-.2017595
PERCMALE1529	-4.975965	9.391816	-0.53	0.596	-23.38359	13.43166
_cons	8.104864	2.146317	3.78	0.000	3.898159	12.31157
sigma_u	.43865911					
sigma_e	.16921964					
rho	.87046203	(fraction of variance due to u_i)				

**Table 36. Panel 1, Model II – Ln(Homicide Rate) (Number of Groups Present)**

homiln	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Total	.0050391	.0169695	0.30	0.767	-.0282204	.0382986
FARC	.0192226	.0589258	0.33	0.744	-.0962699	.1347151
ELN	-.0729033	.042505	-1.72	0.086	-.1562116	.010405
IMR	.0127649	.0084482	1.51	0.131	-.0037933	.0293232
UNEMPRATE	2.947025	1.022718	2.88	0.004	.9425341	4.951517
LnGDP	-.5808869	.1719524	-3.38	0.001	-.9179075	-.2438664
PERCMALE1529	-9.396644	9.266546	-1.01	0.311	-27.55874	8.765451
_cons	8.843617	2.097981	4.22	0.000	4.731651	12.95558
sigma_u	.39141239					
sigma_e	.17105582					
rho	.83963887	(fraction of variance due to u_i)				



**Table 37. Panel 1, Model III – Ln(Extortion Rate) (Presence or Non-Presence of Bacrim)**

extrateln	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Rastrojos	.5453284	.147875	3.69	0.000	.2554988	.835158
Urabeños	.0934266	.1455107	0.64	0.521	-.1917691	.3786224
AguilaNegras	-.3823205	.1364416	-2.80	0.005	-.6497412	-.1148998
LosPaisas	-.3997715	.139264	-2.87	0.004	-.672724	-.1268191
ERPAC	-.032642	.1513475	-0.22	0.829	-.3292778	.2639937
FARC	.0835058	.1640228	0.51	0.611	-.237973	.4049846
ELN	.0336576	.1206843	0.28	0.780	-.2028792	.2701944
IMR	-.0736888	.0167089	-4.41	0.000	-.1064377	-.0409399
UNEMPRATE	-2.044634	2.704897	-0.76	0.450	-7.346135	3.256867
LnGDP	-.0303662	.2010706	-0.15	0.880	-.4244574	.363725
PERCMALE1529	43.16662	14.75802	2.92	0.003	14.24143	72.0918
_cons	-3.12244	3.018843	-1.03	0.301	-9.039264	2.794384
sigma_u	.19707058					
sigma_e	.56116072					
rho	.10978972	(fraction of variance due to u_i)				

**Table 38. Panel 1, Model IV – Ln(Extortion Rate) (Number of Groups Present)**

extrateln	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Total	.0085963	.0554627	0.15	0.877	-.1001086	.1173011
FARC	.029325	.179396	0.16	0.870	-.3222846	.3809346
ELN	.1046937	.1325796	0.79	0.430	-.1551575	.3645449
IMR	-.0679935	.0187973	-3.62	0.000	-.1048355	-.0311515
UNEMPRATE	-1.834527	2.871795	-0.64	0.523	-7.463142	3.794089
LnGDP	.0726492	.2242627	0.32	0.746	-.3668975	.512196
PERCMALE1529	52.76986	16.39849	3.22	0.001	20.62942	84.9103
_cons	-5.377383	3.317722	-1.62	0.105	-11.88	1.125233
sigma_u	.23831489					
sigma_e	.6025868					
rho	.13525442	(fraction of variance due to u_i)				

## B. PANEL 2 RESULTS

**Table 39. Panel 2, Model V – Ln(Homicide rate) (Presence or Non-Presence of Bacrim, 2001-2013)**

lnhomirate	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
auc	.1474738	.0156587	9.42	0.000	.1167797	.1781679
rast	.1218673	.0265225	4.59	0.000	.0698778	.1738568
urabe	.0341462	.0270298	1.26	0.207	-.0188376	.08713
aguila	.0384209	.0385392	1.00	0.319	-.0371236	.1139653
erpac	.1187732	.0531313	2.24	0.025	.0146252	.2229212
paisas	-.0305906	.0478758	-0.64	0.523	-.1244368	.0632557
lp	-.1107107	.0153482	-7.21	0.000	-.1407962	-.0806251
pmale	-.5324926	.3820379	-1.39	0.163	-1.281363	.216378
modimr	.0001271	.0003021	0.42	0.674	-.000465	.0007193
urban						
1	-.1379485	.025786	-5.35	0.000	-.1884942	-.0874028
2	-.0636876	.0413334	-1.54	0.123	-.1447093	.0173342
3	.1087822	.0710272	1.53	0.126	-.0304452	.2480096
4	.47482	.1454316	3.26	0.001	.189745	.7598949
hl2	.6097242	.0076136	80.08	0.000	.5948	.6246484
lnshi	1.014844	.0764443	13.28	0.000	.8649981	1.16469
lnlhi	-.6182132	.0781328	-7.91	0.000	-.7713691	-.4650572
_cons	1.4499	.1377553	10.53	0.000	1.179873	1.719928

**Table 40. Panel 2, Model VI (Homicide rate with the total number of the groups present (2001-2013))**

lnhomirate	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
auc	.1446365	.0156289	9.25	0.000	.1140007	.1752722
total	.0571268	.0103076	5.54	0.000	.0369218	.0773317
lp	-.1094114	.0153427	-7.13	0.000	-.1394861	-.0793367
pmale	-.50133	.3814871	-1.31	0.189	-1.249121	.2464609
modimr	.0001392	.0003021	0.46	0.645	-.0004529	.0007313
urban						
1	-.1373473	.0257834	-5.33	0.000	-.1878879	-.0868067
2	-.0645643	.041329	-1.56	0.118	-.1455774	.0164489
3	.1078358	.0710176	1.52	0.129	-.0313729	.2470446
4	.4571506	.1452132	3.15	0.002	.1725037	.7417974
hl2	.6112655	.0075961	80.47	0.000	.5963756	.6261554
lnshi	1.030147	.076282	13.50	0.000	.8806195	1.179675
lnlhi	-.6343	.0779779	-8.13	0.000	-.7871522	-.4814478
_cons	1.434294	.1377003	10.42	0.000	1.164374	1.704214

**Table 41. Panel 2, Model VII – Ln(Homicide rate) (Presence or Non-Presence of Bacrim, 2001-2013)**

lnhmirate	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
auc	.2332938	.0163202	14.29	0.000	.2013067	.2652809
rast	.1679371	.0282403	5.95	0.000	.1125871	.2232871
urabe	.1608582	.0288077	5.58	0.000	.1043962	.2173202
aguila	.1442585	.0390178	3.70	0.000	.067785	.220732
erpac	-.2365819	.0594886	-3.98	0.000	-.3531774	-.1199865
paisas	.1281681	.0491482	2.61	0.009	.0318394	.2244967
lp	-.1941579	.0265876	-7.30	0.000	-.2462686	-.1420472
pmale	-2.12731	.7448215	-2.86	0.004	-3.587133	-.6674863
modimr	.0000648	.0003072	0.21	0.833	-.0005373	.0006669
year	-.0554333	.0055956	-9.91	0.000	-.0664005	-.044466
urban						
1	-.271824	.045197	-6.01	0.000	-.3604084	-.1832395
2	-.1783683	.0671964	-2.65	0.008	-.3100708	-.0466658
3	.0919077	.1134778	0.81	0.418	-.1305047	.3143201
4	.7310703	.3009343	2.43	0.015	.1412498	1.320891
period						
1	-.1368872	.0227401	-6.02	0.000	-.181457	-.0923174
3	-.1014812	.0569417	-1.78	0.075	-.2130849	.0101226
_cons	117.2498	11.19704	10.47	0.000	95.30399	139.1956

Random-effects Parameters	Estimate	Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
dptom: Identity				
var(_cons)	.290858	.0771645	.1729249	.4892203
mpio: Independent				
var(year)	1.78e-16	2.44e-16	1.21e-17	2.62e-15
var(_cons)	.1770224	.0091974	.1598834	.1959987
var(Residual)	.3444385	.0048615	.3350406	.3541

LR test vs. linear model:  $\chi^2(3) = 6322.44$  Prob >  $\chi^2 = 0.0000$

**Table 42. Panel 2, Model VIII – Ln(Homicide rate) (Number of Groups Present, 2001-2013)**

lnhomicrate	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
auc	.2353922	.0163463	14.40	0.000	.203354	.2674305
total	.1431984	.0112693	12.71	0.000	.1211111	.1652857
lp	-.196607	.0266016	-7.39	0.000	-.2487451	-.1444689
pmale	-2.070334	.7443936	-2.78	0.005	-3.529319	-.6113494
modimr	.0000284	.0003077	0.09	0.926	-.0005747	.0006315
year	-.0541526	.0055609	-9.74	0.000	-.0650517	-.0432534
urban						
1	-.2743371	.0452313	-6.07	0.000	-.3629888	-.1856854
2	-.1804314	.0672568	-2.68	0.007	-.3122522	-.0486106
3	.0929763	.1136054	0.82	0.413	-.1296861	.3156387
4	.7412392	.3006841	2.47	0.014	.1519091	1.330569
period						
1	-.1409243	.0226818	-6.21	0.000	-.1853798	-.0964689
3	-.1181654	.0567761	-2.08	0.037	-.2294444	-.0068863
_cons	114.6944	11.12721	10.31	0.000	92.88552	136.5034

Random-effects Parameters		Estimate	Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
dpmom: Identity					
	var(_cons)	.2802564	.0744302	.1665308	.4716465
mpio: Independent					
	var(year)	6.63e-15	8.51e-15	5.36e-16	8.20e-14
	var(_cons)	.1768345	.0091903	.1597088	.1957965
	var(Residual)	.3458314	.00488	.3363978	.3555296

LR test vs. linear model: chi2(3) = 6354.78

Prob > chi2 = 0.0000

**Table 43. Panel 2, Model IX – Ln(Homicide rate) (Presence or Non-Presence of Bacrim, 2010-2013)**

lnhomicrate	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
rast	.1670417	.0286746	5.83	0.000	.1108405	.2232429
urabe	.1527813	.0294166	5.19	0.000	.0951258	.2104368
aguila	.0875111	.0349532	2.50	0.012	.0190041	.1560181
erpac	-.0070257	.0705865	-0.10	0.921	-.1453726	.1313213
paisas	.1332426	.0450332	2.96	0.003	.0449792	.221506
lp	-.2493322	.034908	-7.14	0.000	-.3177507	-.1809137
pmale	.0297319	1.004553	0.03	0.976	-1.939157	1.99862
modimr	.0003005	.0004135	0.73	0.467	-.00051	.0011109
year	-.0347739	.0064933	-5.36	0.000	-.0475005	-.0220472
urban						
1	-.386971	.059219	-6.53	0.000	-.5030381	-.270904
2	-.2499356	.0918349	-2.72	0.006	-.4299286	-.0699426
3	.2107955	.1593358	1.32	0.186	-.1014969	.5230879
4	.8554945	.3462191	2.47	0.013	.1769176	1.534071
_cons	75.87974	13.04956	5.81	0.000	50.30308	101.4564

Random-effects Parameters	Estimate	Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
dpnom: Identity				
var(_cons)	.2491277	.0662866	.14789	.4196673
mpio: Independent				
var(year)	3.66e-13	4.99e-13	2.54e-14	5.29e-12
var(_cons)	.1774044	.0104376	.1580826	.1990879
var(Residual)	.2213572	.0054525	.2109244	.2323061

LR test vs. linear model: chi2(3) = 2749.57

Prob > chi2 = 0.0000

**Table 44. Panel 2, Model X – Ln(Homicide rate) (Presence or Non-Presence of AUC, 2001-2006)**

lnhmirate	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
auc	.1262845	.0167174	7.55	0.000	.093519	.1590501
lp	-.2004308	.0355899	-5.63	0.000	-.2701856	-.1306759
pmale	-1.874691	.9891473	-1.90	0.058	-3.813384	.0640025
modimr	-.0001469	.0004081	-0.36	0.719	-.0009468	.000653
year	-.0964237	.0040919	-23.56	0.000	-.1044436	-.0884037
urban						
1	-.2099932	.0613483	-3.42	0.001	-.3302336	-.0897529
2	-.0598382	.0932637	-0.64	0.521	-.2426316	.1229552
3	.2402375	.1558575	1.54	0.123	-.0652376	.5457125
4	.9091071	.3770475	2.41	0.016	.1701077	1.648107
_cons	199.2908	8.196571	24.31	0.000	183.2258	215.3557

Random-effects Parameters		Estimate	Std. Err.	[95% Conf. Interval]	
dpnom: Identity					
	var(_cons)	.3571016	.096185	.2106306	.6054276
mpio: Independent					
	var(year)	5.66e-15	8.34e-15	3.16e-16	1.01e-13
	var(_cons)	.2574402	.0134714	.2323456	.2852451
	var(Residual)	.3192045	.0060459	.307572	.3312768

LR test vs. linear model: chi2(3) = 4279.52

Prob > chi2 = 0.0000

## APPENDIX D: FOIA LETTER

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

20 November 2013

Ms. Tara McGovern  
[REDACTED]

Reference: F-2013-02690

Dear Ms. McGovern:

This is a final response to your 18 September 2013 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, received in the office of the Information and Privacy Coordinator on 20 September 2013, for "records on the bacrim (criminal gangs) in Colombia from 2006-2012, specifically their membership, activities, and structure." Specifically, I would like any records on the Erpac, Los Rastrojos, the Aguilas Negras, Las Paisas, and Los Urabenos. We have assigned your request the reference number above. Please use this number when corresponding so that we can identify it easily.

In accordance with section 3.6(a) of Executive Order 13526, the CIA can neither confirm nor deny the existence or nonexistence of records responsive to your request. The fact of the existence or nonexistence of requested records is currently and properly classified and is intelligence sources and methods information that is protected from disclosure by section 6 of the CIA Act of 1949, as amended, and section 102A(i)(1) of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended. Therefore, your request is denied pursuant to FOIA exemptions (b)(1) and (b)(3). As the CIA Information and Privacy Coordinator, I am the CIA official responsible for this determination. You have the right to appeal this response to the Agency Release Panel, in my care, within 45 days from the date of this letter. Please include the basis of your appeal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michele Meeks".

Michele Meeks  
Information and Privacy Coordinator



## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What organization/government agency do you work for? (If relevant)
  - What is your position there?
  - How long have you worked there?
- (Otherwise) How long have you been studying Colombia?
  
- How do you think the following groups, historically and currently, have impacted the functioning of the government and civil society in Colombia?
  - Drug traffickers
  - Paramilitaries
  - Guerilla groups
  - New armed groups
  
- Do you think paramilitary demobilization was a failure or success (why or why not)?
  
- How are the BACRIM acting as part of (civil/uncivil) society?
- How do you see these new armed groups in Colombia?
  - Who are members?
  - How does this membership differ or not differ from prior groups?
  - What are their structures (e.g., cells, networks, loosely affiliated individuals)?
  - What are their activities (e.g., drug trafficking, arms trafficking, kidnapping, mining, trafficking in persons, protection rackets)?
  - Are they engaging in behaviors similar to those of prior groups?
    - Do you see them linked to the activities of prior groups?
  - Which groups do you believe are causing the most problems?
- How are the BACRIM functioning as part of the on-going conflict in Colombia?
  
- How do you think the government views these groups?
- How do you think that NGOs view these groups?
- How does Colombian society (urban/rural; upper class/lower class) view these groups?
- How do you think they view themselves?

- Why do you think the government sees this as a criminal problem rather than as something else (i.e., a new paramilitary problem)?
- What do you think are the biggest challenges that Colombia faces now and in the future?
  - Are the BACRIM really the biggest problem as suggested by some?
    - If yes, what are some concrete steps that could be taken to stop them?
    - If no, what are the bigger problems in Colombia?
  - How are the on-going talks about FARC and ELN demobilization influencing the activities of these groups (if at all)?

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