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# De-securitization of coca plantation in Colombia in a ‘war on drugs’ context

A possibility opened by peace negotiations with a former  
enemy

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# Abstract

This thesis intends to explain the change of strategies to address coca plantation in Colombia before and after the 2016 Peace agreement. To do so, I build a theoretical model that draws on securitization/de-securitization theory and ripeness/readiness theories. The former theory is used to explain what kind of change was there between the different strategies. In this sense, I claim that policies to address coca plantation before 2016 Peace agreement, securitized coca and framed it as a vital threat, something that ought to be eliminated. On the other hand, the Substitution program of the Peace agreement is, I claim, an attempt to de-securitize -move back to the realm of politics- the issue of coca plantation. The latter theory is used to explain this change and address the characteristics of the ready/ripe moment that made possible the peace negotiations and the change of strategies regarding coca plantation. More specifically, the analysis centres on the changing of disputants' aspirations to end the conflict and the changing perceptions of each other. I claim that this change of perception of 'the Other' is fundamental to de-securitize an issue in a conflict. As a result, the attempt to de-securitize coca in a context of conflict like the Colombian is done through reconsidering the perception of 'the Other', the former enemy.

*Keywords:* Colombia, Illicit use crops, Securitization and de-securitization processes, Readiness and ripeness theory, Negotiated end to the conflict

*Words:* 19999

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# Preface

I am immensely thankful with my family, who has always been supportive and who has always had more faith in what I can do, than I could ever have. Thank you for your love and for helping me getting out of my comfort zone to take the steps I wanted to take, despite risks and uncertainties. Muchas gracias a mis papás por su entrega, por el apoyo constante y el amor creciente; por respetar mis decisiones y ayudarme a llevarlas a cabo; por querer sin condiciones y a pesar de los cambios; por ser la muestra más pura del amor incondicional.

I also want to thank my friends, those who have been there from the beginning and those I have met during this journey, those friends who checked in on me, found the time to discuss ideas and shared their souls. The writing process ends being cathartic, which is good, but is made out of a lot of internal screaming, constant doubting and pushing of your own boundaries; so I want to thank anyone who was around during the process. I especially want to thank John Edison. Grenouille verte, merci beaucoup, pour votre temps, tes commentaires et tes conseils!

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# 1. Introduction

The aggressive campaign against coca production in the Andean countries started in the 1980s. However, it was only until the mid-1990s that this campaign started to focus on illicit crops in Colombia. This renewed focus was due to the increasing number of hectares of coca that started to be grown in the country. This was the result of the ‘success’ of US led strategies like the ‘kingpin strategy’ (Crandall, 2002, p.160) and the ‘shoot-down programs’ (Angrist and Kugler, 2008, p.193); that shifted the distribution of coca plantation in the region from Peru and Bolivia, to Colombia. This unexpected result of the strategies, ‘...swelled the war chests of both leftist guerrillas and right-wing paramilitary groups’ in Colombia (Crandall, 2002, 160). This change of the drug trafficking dynamic transformed the internal armed conflict in Colombia, which at the end of the century had a peak in violence that had not been seen since the first half of the century (Chernick, 2005, p.178).

Consequently, during the 1990s Colombia experienced the expansion of drug trafficking, insurgent groups, and paramilitaries while having a weak state power and institutions to face them. In this sense, Colombia’s state was considered about to be a failed state, a narco state and as such, dealing with a security crisis. In this context, Plan Colombia was signed in 2000 between the Colombian and the US governments. It was mainly a set of counter-narcotic measures that found the ideal justification in 1990s Colombia’s state crisis; to ‘exten[d] the war on drugs’ (Crandall, 2002, p.163).

Plan Colombia put a focus on eradication and militarized strategies to fight cocaine production and coca plantation. Accordingly, Colombia’s main strategies to address coca plantation have been largely focused on forceful eradication. The 2010-2014 National Policy against Drugs defines three main strategies to reduce drug supply, which are focused on eradication of coca crops. The first of these strategies is the eradication of illicit crops through aerial spraying with the herbicide glyphosate. It started in 1994 and had a steady increasing implementation, since 2001, with the execution of Plan Colombia. Consider that until 2000 an average of 50.000 hectares of coca crops was sprayed (OCD, 20-) and between 2001 and 2012 this number increased to 126.000 hectares, having the highest peak in 2007, with 172.026 hectares of coca crops sprayed (UNODC, 2016, p.v).

The second strategy is forceful manual eradication and is conducted by mobile groups of eradication together with the National Army, the National Police or the National Navy. The third eradication strategy is voluntary and is followed by alternative development projects that support and promote legal opportunities for former coca growers. However, these alternative development projects have been considered, since 1994, a ‘...palliative of the social and economic impacts of eradication activities’ as its importance has been subjected to its contribution to eradication (Zorro, 2005, p.110).

This continuous emphasis on forceful eradication strategies goes in line with the already mentioned 1990 militarization of the drug war in the region. In this sense, the national policies against drugs have remained largely unchanged. Recent changes regarding eradication policies have pointed out in the direction of consolidating and coordinating the different strategies, but the main focus remains to be eradication. This emphasis has persisted, despite numerous attempts to open up the debate about the need to change the approach of the ‘war on drugs’.

In fact, regional attempts to produce a fragmentation of the paradigm of the ‘war on drugs’ include, for instance, Bolivia’s recognition of coca leaf as a ‘...cultural patrimony, a natural and renewable resource of Bolivia’s biodiversity and a factor of social cohesion; which in its natural state is not considered a narcotic’ (My translation, Plurinational State of Bolivia, 2009) and Uruguay’s legalization of marijuana in 2016, being ‘...the first country in the world to pass a law legalizing the recreational use, sale and cultivation of marijuana’ (The Guardian, 2016). In the same direction, Colombia’s President Juan Manuel Santos ‘...has led the critiques against the traditional policies and [...] has even suggested the need to open the legalization debate’ (My translation, Soberón, 2013, p.37).

These efforts of Colombia’s government to open up the debate at an international level contrasts with the largely unchanged focus of the national policies to address coca plantation. In fact, Eventon claims that ‘...the Santos administration has played a double game, using repressive and draconian methods at home while in the international arena preaching the need for reform and human-rights based approaches’ (2016, p.3).

Colombia’s apparent inability to open up the debate on drugs at an international level or make substantial changes to this militarized eradication-centered approach seems to change in 2016, with the Peace agreement<sup>1</sup> signed in Colombia. This Peace agreement is the result of about six<sup>2</sup> years of negotiations between president Santos and the top leader of Colombia’s biggest guerrilla, Rodrigo Londoño, alias ‘Timochoenko’. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia- People’s Army- FARC were<sup>3</sup> the oldest communist guerrilla of the continent. It was founded in 1964-66, when violent, exclusive and limited political scenario was the rule

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<sup>1</sup> Final agreement for the termination of the conflict and the construction of a stable and longstanding peace

<sup>2</sup> Including the exploratory talks that started in October 2011 (WOLA, 201-)

<sup>3</sup> I refer to them in past, anytime the signature of the Peace agreement entailed the end of FARC as a guerrilla and their transit to a political party.

in Colombia (Uribe Calderón, 2007, p. 84) and when a revolution appeared as ‘a viable model for changing society’ (Farah, 1994).

The 2016 Peace agreement put an end to Colombia’s internal armed conflict, which had been active since 1964 and resulted in over 222.000 deaths, most of them (85%) civilians (GMH, 2016, p.32) and the forceful displacement of 15% of Colombia’s population (5.700.000 people) (GMH, 2016, p.34). One of the six issues agreed on this document was the Solution to the problem of illicit drugs, which includes a Program of Substitution of illicit use crops.

Given the prevalence of the militarized approach in Colombia’s strategies to fight coca plantation, despite regional sprouts of demands for a change of paradigm and the discursive attempts of Santos that have had no real changes at an international or national level so far; the research question this thesis aims to answer is: Why is there a change regarding actions against coca plantation, between the ‘2010-2014 National Policy against Drugs’<sup>4</sup> and the public policy envisioned in Colombia’s Peace agreement approved in 2016<sup>5</sup>?

To answer this question, I will use a theoretical model that draws on securitization/de-securitization theory and ripeness/readiness theory. The former theory is used to explain what kind of change was there between the different strategies. The latter is used to explain this change and address the characteristics of the ripe/ready moment that made possible the peace negotiations and the change of strategies.

In this sense, Chapter 2 develops in detail securitization/de-securitization theory (in subsection 2.1), ripeness/readiness theoretical framework (in subsection 2.2) and the proposed theoretical model that merges both theories to explain the attempt to de-securitize coca plantation in a context of conflict (in subsection 2.3). Chapter 3 is structured to follow the order presented in the theoretical model. Accordingly, subsection 3.1 identifies the components of securitization in the strategies used to fight coca plantation before the Peace agreement. Subsection 3.2 explore the concepts of crisis of tactics and crisis of strategy in the process to the 1999 and 2012 peace dialogues and the perceptions of the conflict of Colombian government and FARC. Subsection 3.3 focus on the analysis of the two mechanisms that Motivation has to influence Optimism that are most relevant to the investigation: the scaling down of aspirations (developed in subsection 3.3.1) and the change of perception of the enemy (developed in subsection 3.3.2). Lastly, subsection 3.4 identifies the components of de-securitization of the strategies used to fight coca plantation in the program proposed in the Peace agreement and mentions the difficulties such an attempt can have.

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<sup>4</sup> The 2010-2014 National Policy against Drugs was the latest and broadest official tool to address drug trafficking before the Peace agreement. However, it is not the only official document that is going to be considered. In this sense, the analysis of this policy includes other plans, programs, official documents and campaigns to implement the strategies against coca plantation.

<sup>5</sup> I refer here to the last document of the Peace agreement, which was approved by Colombia’s Congress on November 2016, after the earlier version (that of the 24 August 2016) was rejected in a referendum conducted in October 2 2016 (Casey, 2016).



Finally, this thesis is framed in the literature about securitization/de-securitization and conflict resolution. In relation to the literature of securitization associated with the Copenhagen School, this thesis expects to contribute to the group of attempts to apply securitization to empirical cases and the very small group that try to do so in non-European cases (Çoskun, 2011, p. 7).

More importantly, this investigation seeks to create a dialogue between securitization theory and theories about conflict resolution. Some studies (Çoskun, 2011; Oelsner, 2005) use both securitization/de-securitization and peacebuilding theories to analyze conflicting relations between states. Differently, this analysis focus on the previous process of peacebuilding: the start of peace negotiations; the formal result: the Peace agreement and two disputants *within* a state. The emphasis on both securitization and de-securitization allows an analysis that can theoretically build more on the underdeveloped concept of de-securitization.

In this context, this thesis seeks to extend the explanatory power of the theories used to a case that has been not analyzed with this scope before. Analysis about the securitization of drugs at an international, regional (Latin America) and national (Colombia) level have been done (Crick, 2012; Oelsner, 2005; Hesselroth, 2005). However, none of these analyses have looked specifically at the securitization of coca plantation and its possible de-securitization in a context of conflict resolution.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter describes two complementing explanations for the change in the strategies against coca plantation in Colombia in the Peace agreement: securitization and ripeness theory. The former addresses how an issue is construed as a matter of security while the latter reflects on the conditions that make possible the negotiation of a peace agreement between the conflicting parties, by bringing in new issues to the table.

### 2.1 Securitization theory.

Securitization theory was first developed in the late 1980s by the Copenhagen School<sup>6</sup> (Çoskun, 2011, p.7).<sup>7</sup> The main claim of the Copenhagen School is that the word ‘security’ and the language used to present an issue in security terms (‘threat’, ‘war’, ‘defense’, etc.) is not merely descriptive. Rather than describing an objective threat, this language is used to frame an issue as threatening (Wæver, 1997 quoted by Çoskun, 2011, p.8). Thus, security issues do not rely necessarily on external objective threats; language *does* something, in this case, it is used by leaders to shape the world in a certain way and build a ‘threatening other’. This capacity of the language to do and not just describe is one of the main assumptions of the Copenhagen School. In this framework, a speech act is an utterance that performs an action.

Therefore, securitization theory analyses the process through which an issue is framed in security terms, which is called securitization. According to Balzacq (2011, p.3), securitization is:

...an articulated assemblage of practices whereby heuristic artefacts (metaphors, policy tools, image repertoires, analogies, stereotypes, emotions, etc.) are contextually mobilised by a securitizing actor, who works to prompt an audience to build a coherent network of implications (feelings, sensations, thoughts, and intuitions) about the critical vulnerability of a referent object, that concurs with the securitizing actor’s reasons for choices and actions, by investing the referent subject with such an aura

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<sup>6</sup> Usually, securitization theory has been described as developed by different schools like Copenhagen School, Paris School and Aberyswyth School.

<sup>7</sup> However, as Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka (2016, p.496) claim, the studies of ‘how social issues are designed’, which are closely linked to the security theory approach; were conducted since the 1970s by different scholars.

of unprecedented threatening complexion that a customised policy must be immediately undertaken to block it

In other words, a securitization process is brought into being by a Securitizing actor. The Securitizing actor claims that the entity at risk (Referent Object) is threatened. This threat comes from what is represented as a 'vital threat', which is the Referent Subject. All this discursive construction is presented to audiences through different types of speech acts, in a specific context. The context's main role is to facilitate or hinder the securitization process.

According to Fierke, this securitization process is about the consolidation of 'the Self', the Referent Object, in contrast to the definition of 'the Other', the enemy (Referent Subject) as an existential threat (2007, p.112). This framing of an existential threat made by the Securitizing actor, which is called 'securitizing move' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, 1998, p.25) might make reference to the audiences' experience so that they feel identified (Balzacq, 2011, p.9) and '...some sort of cognitive and behavioral change occurs' (Çoskun, 2011, p.15) in relation to how 'the Other' is perceived.

The success of the 'securitizing move' relies on its acceptance by the Enabling audience. The Enabling audience is the audience that '...has the ability to empower the securitizing actor [or the appropriate authority] to adopt measures in order to tackle the threat.' (Balzacq, 2011, p.34). The Securitizing actor can address a variety of audiences, who might provide the Securitizing actor with different forms of support. Balzacq (2011, p.9) identifies two ways in which the audience can support the Securitizing actor: moral and formal support. The moral support, usually found in civil society, is generally necessary, as it legitimizes the move, but not enough for the securitizing move to be successful. The formal support is usually a decision of an institution that allows the Securitizing actor to take the measures required, and as such is necessary and sufficient. The formal support is the support of the Enabling audience, as it is the one that makes the 'securitizing move' successful. The Enabling audience is the audience that can give formal support and empower the Securitizing actor to adopt exceptional measures, distinctive policies or the actions that the Securitizing actor deems necessary, whatever they are.

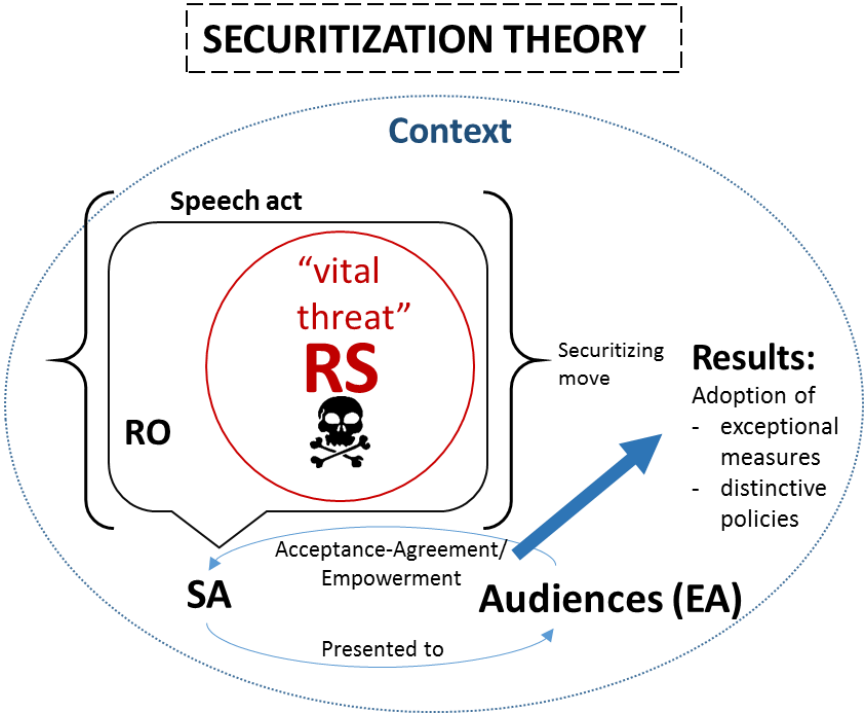
Regarding the Securitizing actor is important to mention at least two issues. First, the Securitizing actor has the capabilities and social power to speak on behalf of others' security and be heard, as it makes part of the elites. Anyone can discursively create a threat, but not all the actors are in the same power position: '[s]ecurity is articulated only from a specific place, in an institutional voice, by elites' (Wæver, O., 1995, p.57). Second, the successful securitization of an issue gives special grants for the elites to get above normal politics. This, in turn, increases their power, which is why Çoskun (2011, p.15), Huysmans (2006, pp.6-9) and Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka (2016, pp.517-518, 521) claim that securitization is a technique of governance. Finally, as the Enabling audience might be the inner circle of the Securitizing actor, securitization might reinforce the power of the elites.

As the 'securitizing move' frames the issue as a threat to the survival of the Referent Object, it must have absolute priority and cannot be dealt with normal politics. This means that the result of a successful 'securitizing move' is the possibility of the Securitizing actor to go

beyond the regular rules that it was formerly bound to, as it puts ‘...the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics’ (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, 1998, p.23). This is why the construction of the existential threat ‘...can thus be used to legitimate political action which might not otherwise appear as legitimate’ (Çoskun, 2011, p.9), like less democratic and more authoritarian strategies.

To sum up, the securitization of an issue is a process in which the Securitizing actor describes ‘the Other’ as a vital threat (Referent Subject) to ‘the Self’ (Referent Object), through a speech act. This speech act is presented by the Securitizing actor to the audiences seeking for support. Once the Enabling audience does accept and support this ‘securitizing move’, it empowers the Securitizing actor to adopt exceptional measures or distinctive policies to address the ‘vital threat’. These are the result of a successful securitizing move. The speech act is built making reference to the features of the context, the external reality, to make the securitizing move more compelling to the audiences. Figure 1 visually presents the relation between these concepts, where SA is the Securitizing actor, RO is the Referent Object, RS is the Referent Subject and EA is the Enabling audience.

Figure 1. Securitization theory



Thus the Copenhagen School is critical to both the traditional security studies and the ‘widener’ approach. Traditional security studies assume that threats are previous to language and claim that more security is always better. The latter argues that security should include more issues (Wæver, 1995, p.46). In contrast, the Copenhagen School is critical about the definition of security itself and focuses on the process of framing an issue as a matter of security through speech acts. This is not to say that the Copenhagen School claims that there is no *objective* reality, instead, it means that the ‘security-ness’ of issues is not dependent on

*objective* realities, but on the intersubjective process of securitization<sup>8</sup>. The features of reality are part of the securitization process' context (which are considered facilitator conditions); and not external, independent and objective threats. Besides this, the Copenhagen School claims that a securitization of larger aspects of life is not desirable, thus more security is not better. This is going to be further developed when talking about de-securitization.

According to Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde (1998, pp.32-33) the facilitating conditions can be divided in two, internal and external. The internal conditions refer to the usage of the grammar of security in the speech act. This grammar of security in the speech act of the 'securitization move' entails the construction of a plot that includes an existential threat (RO, RS), a point of no return and a possible way out. The external conditions refer to social and contextual conditions. The first one refers to the 'social capital' of the Securitizing actor, its position of authority regarding the audience(s) and hence '...the likelihood of the audience accepting the claims made in a securitizing attempt' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, 1998, p.33). The contextual conditions denote '...the features of the alleged threats that either facilitate or impede the securitization' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, 1998, p.33). The central components and the facilitating conditions of securitization can be seen in Table 1.

### 2.1.1. Potential advantages and disadvantages of Securitization and the option of De-securitization

A recurring critique to securitization is its lack of a normative approach of whether securitization should be performed or not. According to Balzacq, the '...model of securitization specifically does not address the counter-factual question of whether particular securitizations were necessary; i.e. that some moves should be or should have been rejected.' (2011, p.122). However, literature has been written about the potentials advantages and disadvantages of securitization, which will be discussed in this section. This discussion will be followed by a description of de-securitization as the concept that refers to the process in which a securitized issue is taken back to the realm of normal politics.

According to the literature, the main advantage of the securitization of an issue is its prioritization, which might come with an increased funding and attention. Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, claim that this is why securitization also has 'tactical attractions', as it might be used to get preeminence on issues that otherwise are kept out of the agenda, like environmental problems (1998, p.29).

One of the disadvantages of securitization is the emphasis it puts on forceful strategies. Wæver points out that despite securitization has the ability to dramatize an issue, resulting in

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<sup>8</sup> The securitization process is inherently intersubjective due to the relation between the Securitizing actor and the audience. However, there's a tension between securitization's intersubjectivity and subjectivity. See more about this tension in Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka (2016).

a mobilization of resources and the prioritization of the issue; '[w]hen a problem is 'securitized' there is the risk of addressing it in particular ways: threat, defense, and state-centered solutions.' (1995, p.65). So it tends to '...produce thinking in terms of *us-them*' (Wæver, 1995, p.64), which places threats coming from outside the Referent Object. This in turn moves the attention away from the Referent Object's own contributions to the problem.

In relation to this Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka mention that scholars of securitization have highlighted the tendency of the field of security/insecurity<sup>9</sup> '...to conquer other fields and subsume them under their logic' (2016, p. 505). This means that issues like migration, asylum, terrorism and drug trafficking which have been securitized are '...handled through the exclusive lens of security, at the expense of other possibilities, such as social inequality or global injustice' (Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka, 2016, p. 505). Therefore, when an issue is securitized, and the security strategies aforementioned are implemented to non-military problems, it neglects other strategies and thus other causes of the problem.

Another disadvantage of securitization is the reinforcement of already existing power structures. As mentioned before, for the 'securitization move' to be successful it has to be uttered from a place of power, by elites. As the Securitizing actor makes part of the elites and has enlarged privileges due to the acceptance of its 'securitizing move'; its power has increased, usually on behalf of the marginalization of others. In a democratic society, a successful securitization '...may occur at the expense of liberal democratic principles and may lead to an erosion of civil liberties' (Çoskun, 2011, p. 10). At the end, securitization is always 'for someone and for something – it grants powers, privileges and positions to some and excludes others' (Balzacq, 2011, p.122).

Having this in mind is important to turn now to the concept of de-securitization which has remained largely untheorized by the Copenhagen School scholars (Çoskun, 2011, p. 18). This concept was first used by Wæver in 1995 in the chapter 'Securitization and De-securitization' of the book *On security*. Despite what was said at the beginning of this section, the Copenhagen School claims that a securitization of larger aspects of life is not desirable, thus more security is not better. Likewise, Wæver (1995, p.57) does have a normative approach regarding the 'effectiveness' and 'desirability' of securitization. According to him, securitization '...should be seen as negative, as a failure to deal with the issues as normal politics.' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, 1998, p.29).

In this sense, de-securitization entails moving the issue that was securitized from being considered a 'threat' to be considered a challenge, from it being dealt through special measures, to the ordinary bargaining of the political sphere '...so that violence will no longer be considered as a legitimate option' (Çoskun, 2011, p. 18). De-securitization is then when

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<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that the field of insecurity is the same of that of security, as this two concepts are construed based on each other. As Çoskun puts it '...security is always relational in the sense that one's insecurity/security centres [sic] on other(s)' insecurity/security – the classical formulation of a security dilemma' (2011, p.12).

the issue is not defined in terms of security or insecurity. This can be then described as ‘asecurity’ or ‘non- insecurity’ (Wæver 1998:81 quoted by Çoskun, 2011, p. 19).

As the concept has remained untheorized by the Copenhagen School scholars, authors like Oelsner (2005) and Çoskun (2011) have tried to develop the concept further so that they can use it in the case analysis they intend. Oelsner (2005) uses it to analyze the relation between some states in Latin America while Çoskun (2011) does it to analyze the case of Israeli-Palestinian relations. Çoskun (2011, p.21) infers the components for the desecuritization analysis, using the same components of securitization with some adjustments so that they refer to the opposite direction of the securitization process. Table 1 shows the components and facilitating conditions for both securitization and de-securitization, according to the attempt made by Çoskun (2011) to theorize about de-securitization.

*Table 1. Components of Securitization and De-securitization analysis*

	<b>Securitization</b>	<b>De-securitization</b>
<b>Components</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Securitizing speech act</li> <li>2. Securitizing Actor (SA)</li> <li>3. Audience(s)</li> </ol> [Results, if succesful]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. De-securitizing Language</li> <li>2. De-securitizing actor</li> <li>3. Audience(s)</li> </ol>
<b>Facilitating conditions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Grammar of security (RO, RS and way out)</li> <li>5. Social conditions: position of authority of the SA regarding the audience(s)</li> <li>6. [Context] ‘features of the alleged threats that either facilitate or impede the securitization’ (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, 1998, p.33)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. The change in the language used to define the previously securitized issue</li> <li>5. Social conditions: position of authority of the DA regarding the audience(s)</li> <li>6. [Context] conditions that point out the necessity for de-securitization</li> </ol>

Source: Çoskun, 2011, pp.13, 21.

In relation to this is important to mention that the lack of security speech that implies a redefinition or reinterpretation of the issues that were securitized, cannot consist on a speech affirming such a change. In other words, the politization of a former securitized issue can only happen away from security terms (Wæver, 1995, p.56) and not by explicitly saying so.

Now, according to Oelsner (2005, p.4) there are two ways in which a former securitized issue is de-securitized: the passive way and the active way. The former refers to an issue that ‘...loses its threatening image’ (Oelsner, 2005, p.22) while the latter is about an issue being reassessed in its relation with the Referent Object. Regarding the ways in which an issue can be de-securitized, Huysmans (2006, pp.143-144) claims that the political sociology of everydayness, could ‘...de-dramatize security questions’ as it broadens the context and puts in the image the complex mediations of daily life of ‘the Other’, the Referent Subject. This gives place to other policies to address the issue at stake.

Finally, it is important to point out that the De-securitizing actor can also be the one which previously encouraged a process of securitization (Çoskun, 2011, p. 20). However, this is not

to say that this de-securitization process will necessarily be accomplished due to it being promoted by which was once the Securitizing actor. This process would probably depend on the context and the discourses that the ‘securitizing move’ has produced already, which are related but independent of the ‘securitizing move’. In relation to this, Aradau claims that the Desecuritizing actor ‘...should not be the self-same agents of securitisation [instead they] should be from within the previously silenced ‘other’.’ (Çoskun, 2011, p. 20)

One of the contributions of the practice-approach of securitization is that it shows why practices regarding the securitization of an issue are important in its construction as well as in its continuity as a securitized concern. In relation to this, Bigo’s argument is that ‘...securitization circulates and produces effects through the daily routines of the insecurity professionals’ (Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka, 2016, p. 506). This means that the practices, the bureaucracy and the expertise generated by the securitizing speech act reproduces, in a daily basis, this security approach. These daily routines make it more difficult to break free from the securitization approach, which is why it remains so difficult to de-securitize a subject once its securitization has been institutionalized.

### 2.1.2. Securitization of drugs at an international level and the place of the US in this process.

Crick (2011) shows how at an international level the issue of drugs has been securitized and portrayed as an existential threat. She does so analyzing the prologue of the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1988 UN Convention against Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and Russia’s 2010 ‘Rainbow-2’ Plan to eradicate opium production in Afghanistan. The importance of analyzing Russia’s speech act, is that it allows her to show how an international framework legitimizes other countries to pursue similar securitizing approach to drugs (Crick, 2011, p.412). She identifies in these speech acts the main components of the securitization theory: Referent Object, Securitizing actor, Referent Subject, audiences and results. I’m going to focus on the first two speech acts, as those are the ones that show how drugs are securitized at an international level.

In the case of the 1961 UN Convention, the entity that’s at risk, the ‘Self’ (Referent Object) is portrayed as ‘mankind’ in opposition to the vital threat, the ‘Other’ (Referent Subject) that is presented as the ‘serious evil’ of drug addiction. In the 1988 UN Convention, the ‘Self’ is the society and the state, while the threat is the ‘production and trafficking of drugs and the links with organized crime and terrorism’ (Crick, 2011, p.410). Crick notes, based on Herschinger’s (2011, p. 96) claims, that the metaphor of evil in the 1961 UN Convention gave ground to the war-metaphor that switched its focus from ‘mankind’ to the state (2011, p. 411). The war metaphor can be clearly identified in Nixon’s speech in 1971 where he placed ‘drug abuse’ as ‘America's public enemy number one’ and in Ronald Reagan’s, who in 1982 stated ‘...we're going to win the war on drugs’ (Shimko, 1991, p.79). According to Wisotsky (1986, p.5 quoted by Shimko, 1991, p.81), Reagan ‘...succeeded in literally



militarizing what had previously been a rhetorical war by deploying the military forces of the United States in drug enforcement operations’.

US attitude towards drugs greatly defined the attitude at an international level in this regard. Actually, Crick (2011) points out that although the UN is the Securitizing actor in both UN Conventions, the US had an important leading role and influence in both, especially in the 1988 UN Convention (Crick, 2011). This influence is acknowledged by Stewart (1990, p. 388) who claims that the similarities between legal approaches already done in the US and the 1988 UN Convention itself were in line with this country’s active participation in the negotiation.

This gives us ground to argue that the prohibition of drugs through the international system reveals the US massive influence at international institutions, and thus the existence of a power structure among states. In fact, Pryce (2006, p. 605) points out that the ‘...menu of prohibited substances largely reflects the assumptions, prejudices, customs and above all economic interests of the United States and Western Europe who dominated the League of Nations in the 1920s and 30s and the United Nations post 1945’.

In this sense, the definition of what is a prohibited drug, in contrast to those that are legal, is not only related to the harm that those drugs cause. Instead the prohibition of certain drugs can be ‘...partly explained by ‘otherness’ and ‘xenophobia’ (Pryce, 2006, p.604), as it was those drugs that were new in a community and whose effects were unknown, the drugs that were feared, prohibited and racialized (Murji, 1998).

In relation to this is relevant to quote the answer of John Ehrlichman, the Watergate co-conspirator during Nixon’s administration, in an interview conducted in 1994:

The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I’m saying? We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did. (Baum, 2016)

So drugs securitization does not only put on evidence international power structures between states, but also those within states. Hesselroth (2015, p.61) precisely shows that when she claims that Bolivia’s antinarcotics policies from mid-twentieth until 2006, are result of external and internal colonialism. The former refers to US pressure and the latter to the elite in the country; both of which made possible the implementation of antinarcotic policies that went against the country’s population (Hesselroth, 2015, pp.69-74).

Finally, in Crick’s analysis (2011), the audiences of the UN Conventions she analyses are the UN country representatives and member states’ national governments. The results, that Crick calls ‘extraordinary measures’; is the ‘global prohibition of certain drugs through the international regime’ with 1961 UN Convention and the ‘[i]ncreased militarization of law enforcement and eradication strategies’ with the 1988 UN Convention (Crick, 2011, p.410). These results show, according to the securitizing theory, that the enabling audiences accepted and agreed on the ‘securitizing move’ and thus legitimized the ‘extraordinary measures’.

These extraordinary measures can be practically identified in US foreign drug policies in Andean countries, which can be classified in policies with mechanisms of control and policies with mechanisms of aid (Hesselroth, 2005, p.3; Hesselroth, 2015, p.66). The former include ‘...forced eradication of coca crops, military assistance and the process of certification’ (Hesselroth, 2015, p.66) and the latter entail ‘...economic assistance to promote a variety of counternarcotics efforts’ (Hesselroth, 2015, p.67), like Alternative Development Programs and trade agreements to exempt from tax certain goods from Andean Countries (Andean Trade Preference and Drug Eradication).

It is important to note that the process of certification, from the mechanisms of control, constitutes an annual evaluation of the counternarcotic efforts of drug-producing and drug-transit countries. In case the country is not certified, it could face not having US aid to non-drug-related programs, not having access to trade deals and ‘...US opposition to requests before multilateral development banks’ (Hesselroth, 2015, p.66). These global mechanism, which started in 1986, was further legitimized by the 1988 UN Convention (Crick, 2011). In case this is not enough to show the importance of US foreign policies in imposing and implementing a securitized approach to tackle drug trafficking in drug-producing and drug-transit countries in the region, then it is worth mentioning that there was an increased militarization since 1980s, with US military members training and equipping anti-narcotic forces in ‘host countries’, increasing funding to focus drug control from a military perspective and support of militarized crop eradication policies (Hesselroth, 2005, p.6; Bagley, 1988, p.189).

As the theoretical description of securitization already suggested, this process of framing an issue as a security threat can be identified in the use of language as well as in the practices and processes implemented. The consequences of framing an issue as a war are an all-out expenditure to ‘combat’ the enemy, ‘...restrictions on behavior and rights that are typically protected but come to be viewed as unaffordable luxuries during wartime’ (Shimko, 1991, p.79) and the focus on forceful and military solutions. Indeed, the provision of US military aid increased “...the militarisation of rural areas and human rights violations, creating a serious risk for fragile Andean democracies that has a negative affect on their anti-narcotics efforts.” (Hesselroth, 2005, p.8). Certainly, “...the rhetorical ‘War on Drugs’ at times becomes a very real war as in [...] Colombia, Mexico or Afghanistan.” (Crick, 2011, p.413).

## 2.2. Ripeness and Readiness theory.

I am going to use the ripeness and readiness theory as a tool to show how a ripe moment in a violent conflict can make possible taking decisions towards a change of paradigm, in this case drug policy, even when not being entitled to do so, at an international level. With this objective in mind, this section will start with a description of the main elements of ripeness

theory, which was first conceptualized in 1985 by Zartman; to then describe what Pruitt (2005) built as a 'clarifying derivative' of the ripeness theory, called readiness theory.

Ripeness theory intends to explain why and when conflicting parties could turn to a negotiated resolution of the conflict (Zartman, 2007, p.232). The main two elements of a ripe moment, the moment when the conflicting parties search a negotiated resolution of the conflict, are the perception of a Mutually Hurting Stalemate and the perception of a Way Out. On the one hand, the Mutually Hurting Stalemate is the moment when the present and its current course in the future (continuing conflict) seem less preferred than a negotiated solution. In this sense, continuing conflict seems like a deadlock, as the escalation will not take any of the parties to the victory and it '...is painful for both of them...' (Zartman, 2007, p.232). On the other hand, the Way Out, the second element of the ripe moment, entails the possibility of the actors to perceive that a negotiated solution to the conflict is available. To sum up, the conflict is ripe for negotiations towards a resolution '[i]f the (two) parties to a conflict (a) perceive themselves to be in a hurting stalemate and (b) perceive the possibility of a negotiated solution (a way out)' (Zartman, 2000, p.229).

Now, it is important to keep in mind that the identification of a ripeness moment does not mean that the entire process is going to be successful. This means that the fact that the conflict is ripe does not mean that it will lead necessarily, to a successful outcome, a negotiated resolution of the conflict. In this sense, ripeness theory is not predictive about what will happen after the dialogues start or when will it be a ripe moment in a conflict. However, ripeness theory can help '...identifying the elements necessary (even if not sufficient) for the productive inauguration of negotiations. This type of analytical prediction is the best that can be obtained in social science...' (Zartman, 2000, p.228).

The ripe moment just refers to the elements that make possible for the actors of the conflict to look towards a negotiated solution. These main elements (the Mutually Hurting Stalemate and the Way Out) are defined mainly by the perceptions of the actors and the objective reality they rely onto. The perception of the actors is fundamental to define the ripeness of the conflict, as it is actors' perception what makes operative the ripe moment. In other words, '...it is the perception of the objective condition, not the condition itself, that makes for an MHS' (Zartman, 2000, p.229). That is to say that even though there is an objective reality, facts and evidence that would account for a ripe moment, it is the subjective perceptions of the actors of that reality what defines (by itself) if there is a ripe moment or not. However, as Zartman concedes, '...the greater the objective evidence, the greater the subjective perception of a stalemate and its pain is likely to be...' (2000, p.230). This focus on the perception of the actors is shared by readiness theory which is why the analysis that will be carried out with this theoretical framework is going to focus on the official statements of both disputants to identify their perception of the conflict.

Readiness theory, the 'clarifying derivative of ripeness theory' (Pruitt, 2005), adds a readiness stage before the ripe moment. This previous stage to the ripe moment, that Pruitt calls 'readiness', is a stage that allows the theory to '...look at the motives and perceptions

that make up ripeness on each side separately rather than focusing attention on joint states of mind such as a mutually hurting stalemate.’ (Pruitt, 2005, p.6).

Moreover, readiness theory uses a multiple causal factor model. This means that the antecedents of the readiness stage, which are the perceptions of the actors of the conflict and the environmental conditions, are treated as variables that ‘...can substitute (that is, compensate) for less of another...’ (Pruitt, 2005, p.9). This results in the possibility of being able to explain that actors come to a readiness moment, through different processes, and having different main sources of the motivation to end the conflict. This model, Pruitt argues ‘...fits reality better than ripeness theory, which requires a uniform hurting stalemate for all cases.’ (2005, p.9).

In relation to this compensatory model approach, the two main antecedents of readiness, which parallel those of ripeness theory are Motivation to end the conflict or simply ‘Motivation’ and Optimism about the outcome of negotiation or simply ‘Optimism’ (Pruitt, 2015). To start, Motivation is what results from the disputants’ belief of being in a counterproductive conflict. This conception can be the result of the perception of the conflict as dysfunctional and/or the pressure of a third party. It is important to note that I will only focus on the description and the analysis of the first possibility, purposely leaving out the pressure of a third party as one of the antecedents of the motivation to end the conflict. This is due to space restraints and the active decision of focusing on the two main disputants of the conflict in this analysis.

According to Pruitt (2005), there are three ways of perceiving a conflict as dysfunctional. First, the perception that the conflict is being lost or not being won, which would relate to the hurting stalemate proposed by Zartman. Second, the perceived cost of the conflict which could be related and operationalized by the number of casualties. Third, the perceived risk of running out of resources, escalation of the conflict or alienating the other party. In Pruitt’s view (2005), the greater the perception of failure, costs or risks, the greater the Motivation. When one of the disputants has Motivation, that means it is in a readiness stage. When all of the disputants involved have some degree of Motivation, there is a ripe moment to address the conflict through negotiation. It is important to note that both readiness and ripeness are considered to be states that can be more or less likely to achieve and not something that is for certain defined.

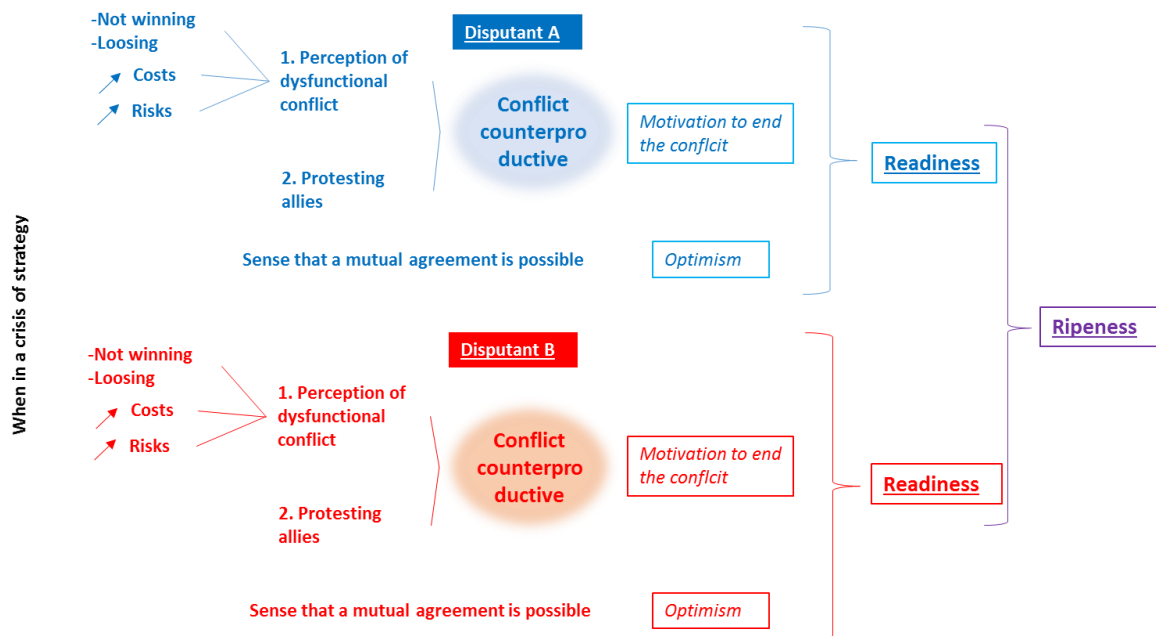
The perception of a dysfunctional conflict could mean that there’s a crisis of tactics or a crisis of strategy. The main difference between these crises is that the former leads to an escalation of the conflict, whereas the latter will lead the disputants to have Motivation. According to Pruitt the initial aim of leaders, after perceiving the conflict is dysfunctional, is to ‘look for a better way to wage the conflict not to end it’ (2005, p.16). This initial perception of a conflict as dysfunctional is considered a crisis of tactics and is followed by a revision of those tactics, which can be done in three different ways: escalation of the conflict, co-optation and/or coalition building. Escalation refers to the tactics that are changed in order to achieve, militarily, the defeat of the adversary. Co-optation consists on making concessions to the opponents’ allies, so that they separate from them. Coalition building, refers to getting allies

or strengthening the bonds that already exist with the objective of improving military and political strength. Again, all of these revised tactics have the objective of continuing the conflict and it is only when these fail, that a crisis of strategy comes into frame. That is, the possibility to have a negotiated solution to the conflict.

Conversely, when there is a crisis of strategy the conception of a dysfunctional conflict leads disputants to have Motivation. This means that, if each disputant has certain degree of Motivation, there is a degree of readiness, which means that the conflict has certain degree of ripeness, which in turn means that it is likely that disputants would want to look for a negotiated end to the conflict. To this effect, '[n]egotiation will only start if there is some degree of readiness on both sides and, hence, some degree of ripeness.' (Pruitt, 2005, p.7).

Now, the other main element in readiness theory is Optimism which refers to the perception of the disputants that a mutual agreement can be achieved. This element is based on 'working trust' and the perception of a valid spokesmen. Working trust refers to the belief that the disputant is also motivated to end the conflict through negotiation and so, it is willing to make concessions. In the same vain, Optimism also depends on the perception of having a valid spokesman on behalf of the disputant. A valid spokesman is a spokesman who can make meaningful commitments and concessions on behalf of its side that is, commitments and concessions that can and will be implemented (Pruitt, 2005, p.8). How Motivation, Optimism, Readiness and Ripeness make part of the same theoretical framework can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2 From strategy crisis in the conflict to ripeness of the conflict



Finally, Pruitt (2005, pp.19-21) identifies five mechanisms of the Motivation that influence Optimism. This relation between both elements of the ripeness theory allows disputants to

increase the degree of Optimism and Motivation, beyond the initial moment of readiness. These mechanisms are: scaling down of aspirations, looking at new information of the enemy, wishful thinking, conciliatory spiral and third parties optimism. All of these mechanisms influence positively the optimism about the negotiating process. The scaling down of aspirations makes divergence between the disputants smaller. Looking at new information about the enemies challenges previous perceptions about them. Wishful thinking refers to selectively looking at positive information to reinforce the idea that the other party also wants to end the conflict through negotiation. Conciliatory spiral refers to the spiral that can sprout from signals given by one of the disputants of being open to negotiate. These signals can create a similar conciliatory response in the other disputant(s). Third parties optimism works similarly to the conciliatory spiral, as it can increase disputants' optimism.

It is important to note that the analysis that is going to be conducted here, is going to focus solely on the first two mechanisms that operate once there is Motivation. The main reason for this is that these mechanisms could be considered as the most influential to Optimism. In the case of the wishful thinking, it can be included already in the analysis of the process of changing the perception of 'the Other'. The reason is that the change of perception of the enemy entails looking at new information to transform that idea of 'the Other' as an enemy, into someone my party can have a dialogue with. Regarding the signals between the disputants, this is a mechanism that refers to a certain degree of detail that the analysis pursued here, does not need. At the end, the signals and the conciliatory spiral will again reinforce the process of change of perception of 'the Other'. Finally, the last mechanism is not going to be included because this thesis' emphasis is on the two main disputants of the Colombian conflict around 2010s: FARC and Colombian government.

### 2.3. Securitization/de-securitization theory and Ripeness/readiness theory as a theoretical framework to explain the change of strategies to fight coca plantation in Colombia.

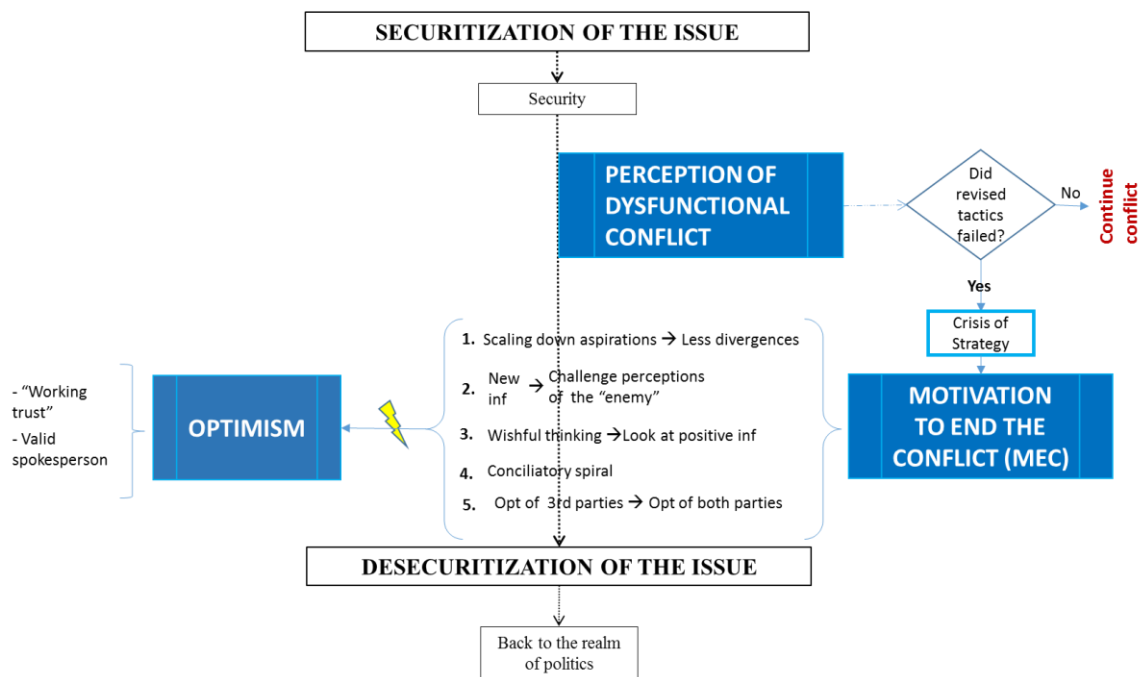
Building on these two general theories, I argue that coca eradication policies in Colombia are part of a securitization of drugs at an international, regional and national level. This means that coca plantation has been discursively constructed as a vital threat to 'the Self', which according to the securitization theory, allows and legitimizes the use of extraordinary methods to address the problem. In this case, these extraordinary methods have their extreme representation in militarization, with which the discursive war against the vital threat becomes a real war.

The approach to coca plantation envisioned in the 2016 Peace agreement is a move towards the de-securitization of coca plantation, an attempt to move coca plantation back to the realm of politics. This de-securitization, would promote an approach to the issue that focuses on causes and contexts that are not related to security, but to the needs, traditions and uses of the population that grow coca.

In order to explain why it became de-securitized, we can draw on ripeness/readiness theory. In this sense, what ripeness/readiness theory gives to the analysis is the possibility to further understand the context of this change, what were the characteristics of the moment that made possible a peace negotiation. More specifically, ripeness/readiness theory allows to revise the changing aspirations and perceptions of ‘the Other’ between former enemies. I claim that this change of aspirations and of perception of ‘the Other’ is fundamental not just to increase the Optimism of both disputants to have a negotiated end to the conflict, but most importantly, to de-securitized a former securitized issue. Taking issues back to the realm of politics, which is what de-securitization is, implies and is done through reconsidering the perception of ‘the Other’ and reconsidering your own aspirations.

The Colombian case thus represent an ideal scenario for theory-building whereby I integrate both of these theories into a single framework that can be applied to conflicts that are characterized by multiple ‘securitized’ threats. Figure 3 shows how the securitization/de-securitization theoretical framework can merge with ripeness/readiness theory to help us explain why there is a change in the strategies to combat coca plantation in Colombia, during the Peace agreement.

Figure 3. Transformation from Securitization to Desecuritization, through the ripeness/readiness moment of a conflict.



## 3. Analysis

The objective of this chapter is to use the theoretical model described before to explain the change of strategies to fight coca plantation in Colombia. Following this model, the analysis that is going to be developed here will start showing the securitization of coca plantation in Colombia. Then the chapter will focus on the analysis about the ripeness/readiness moment of Colombia's internal armed conflict, which will be followed by the analysis of two of the Motivation's mechanisms to influence Optimism. Finally, the last section of the chapter will explore the changes in the strategy to fight coca plantation proposed by the 2016 Peace agreement, as an attempt to de-securitize coca crops.

Before continuing, it is important to keep in mind that this document does not have the objective of analyzing the peace dialogues between FARC and the Colombian government as such. Instead, the analysis will focus on the context and the perceptions of the actors that led them to change strategies against coca production.

### 3.1. Successful securitization of coca plantation and the resulting extraordinary measures of eradication.

The main objective of this section is to show how coca eradication policies in Colombia can be explained under the light of securitization/de-securitization theoretical framework. More specifically, this section's goal is to show that coca eradication policies in Colombia before 2016 have been securitized. I will identify the elements of securitization in the National Policy against Drugs. Then, I will make special emphasis on the consequences of the implementation of the policies that resulted from the successful securitizing move.



### 3.1.1. Securitization of coca plantation in the National Policy against Drugs.

As mentioned before, the grammar of security entails the construction, through a securitizing speech act, of a vital threat to a Referent Object ('Self'). The fact that the Referent Subject is defined as an existential threat, leads to a no return point, which the Securitizing actor presents to the audience(s) as the reason why certain special measures have to be taken. These components of securitization as well as its facilitating conditions will be explored in the National Policy against Drugs.

The Securitizing actors are mainly the US and the Colombian government. To start, the US is a securitizing actor for two reasons. First, for its significant influence placing drugs as a security issue at an international level. This was already discussed in section 2.1.2. Second, due to its relation with Latin America and specifically with Colombia. In general terms we can say that the relation between the US and Latin America has been used to keep control over the region (Dominguez, 1999). During the Cold war this was evident in the way the US supported dictatorships and military forces in Latin America to keep communism from rising in such countries where inequality was and still is rampant. Moreover, Colombia has been one of the main receivers of US aid in Latin America since the 2000s. In fact, between 2000 and 2006 Colombia was the largest recipient of US aid in Latin America (USAID, 2017) and remains to be among the top recipients in the region (Meyer, 2016).

The Colombian government is the other securitizing actor because it has ratified both 1961 and 1988 UN Conventions and implemented policies that show the militarized approach to coca plantation. On the one hand, one of Colombia's declaration upon the signature of the 1988 UN Convention was that the criminalization of the cultivation of coca '...must be harmonized with a policy of alternative development, having in mind the rights of the indigenous communities involved and the protection of the environment' (United Nations Treaty Collection, 1988). Despite the reference of Colombian government to indigenous traditions, the fact that there is no resistance to the criminalization of coca plantation overlooks other uses of coca leaf, including those of indigenous communities. It is important to point out that, other countries with population with a long tradition of coca use, like Peru and Bolivia, were way much drastic in their positions regarding the criminalization of coca plantation in the 1988 UN Convention. For instance, Peru formulated an express reservation regarding the paragraph that included as a criminal offence the cultivation of coca, as it did not present '...the necessary clear distinction between licit and illicit cultivation [of coca]' (UN Treaty Collection, 1988). Bolivia, for its part, expressed a reservation to that same paragraph, referring to the medical uses of coca, its wide consumption by Bolivia's population and the difference between coca and cocaine (UN Treaty Collection, 1988).

On the other hand, regarding the implementation of policies of a militarized approach to coca plantation, the best example of such an approach is Plan Colombia. For that matter, the first two Fiscal Years of US aid for this plan was exclusively focused on funding interdiction and eradication programs (AC/ACP) and giving support for aerial eradication (Air Wing) as can be seen in Figure 4. The following years, from FY2002 to FY2007, US aid for Plan Colombia

remained heavily focused on the military strategy, which besides the ones mentioned before, also included military financing (FMF), military education and training (IMET) and support for the nonproliferation, antiterrorism, demining and related programs (NADR). It is only with FY2008 where assistance for security was reduced and economic support (ESF), which included funding alternative development projects, increased.

According to the numbers in Figure 4, in total, over \$9 billion of US assistance was given through Plan Colombia from 2000 to 2013. If we subtract the money given to the Department of State (DOD) through these years, as they ‘...could reallocate these funds throughout the year in accordance with changing needs.’ (Beittel, 2012, p.36); we have \$7.340,9 billion with a known specific destination. 73% (\$5.330,1 billion) of this money, was destined to fund military strategies to fight narcotics, including manual and aerial eradication, training, equipment transfers, etc. Indeed, ‘...policy attention naturally centres on where the money is [and] ‘soft issue’ funding was an inexpensive, secondary component of the proposal, and viewed as a necessary element to appease US non-governmental organizations and congressional Democrats.’ (Crandall, 2002, 165). Undoubtedly, Plan Colombia’s approach represents the results of the securitizing move that is done at an international level, led by the US through the UN; and implemented locally in Colombia.

Figure 4. U.S assistance for Plan Colombia, Fiscal Years 2000-2013 (millions \$)

**Table I. U.S.Assistance for Plan Colombia, FY2000-FY2013**  
(in millions \$)

	ACI/ACP	ESF	FMF	IMET	INCLE	NADR	Air Wing	DOD	Total
FY2000	60.1	—	—	—	—	—	38.0	128.5	226.6
P.L. 106-246	832.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	100.7	932.7
FY2001	48.0	—	—	—	—	—	38.0	190.2	276.2
FY2002	379.9 <sup>a</sup>	—	—	—	—	25.0	38.2	117.3	560.4
FY2003	580.2 <sup>b</sup>	—	17.1	1.2	—	3.3	41.5	164.8	808.1
FY2004	473.9	—	98.5	1.7	—	.2	45.0	178.2	797.5
FY2005	462.8	—	99.2	1.7	—	5.1	45.0	155.3	769.1
FY2006	464.8	—	89.1	1.7	—	—	45.0	140.5	741.1
FY2007	465.0	—	85.5	1.6	—	4.1	37.0	129.4	722.6
FY2008	244.6	194.4	55.1	1.4	41.9	3.7	39.0	119.9	700.0
FY2009	230.1	196.5	53.0	1.4	45.0	3.2	12.4	127.9	669.5
FY2010	c	201.8	55.0	1.7	243.9	4.8	12.9	129.4	649.5
FY2011	—	184.4	47.9	1.7	204.0	4.8	3.6	110.4	556.8
FY2012 (est)	—	179.0	37.0	1.7	160.6	4.8	8.3	97.9	489.3
FY2013 (req)	—	155.0	30.0	1.6	142.0	3.3	N.A.	85.6	417.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,241.4</b>	<b>1,111.1</b>	<b>667.4</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>837.4</b>	<b>62.3</b>	<b>403.9</b>	<b>1,976.0</b>	<b>9,316.9</b>

Source: Beittel, 2012, p.38

Continuing with the exploration of the components and facilitating conditions of securitization of coca plantation in Colombia, I turn now to identify if there is a securitizing speech act: the identification of an existential threat to ‘the Self’ and a way out of it. According to the language present in the official documents, policies and programs implemented before the Peace agreement; a construction of coca plantation as a vital threat to the Colombian state as such, its institutions and national security can be identified. In this light, the National Policy against Drugs states that the industry of illicit drugs has ‘...undermined economic development, health and citizen security’ (My translation, República de Colombia, 2010, p.49). Likewise, this Policy states that, ‘...as a criminal phenomenon, drug trafficking [...] has constituted a threat against [Colombia’s] institutional life.’ (My translation, República de Colombia, 2010, p.25). Here there is an emphasis on drug production and trafficking as the main threat. However, there is no reason to think that production and trafficking are considered different from coca plantation. In fact, the Territorial Consolidation Policy claims that:

Today Colombia faces a central challenge in its public policies, which is the consolidation of the effective presence of state institutions on the territories with the highest historical incidence of *illegal armed organizations, illicit crops and drug trafficking gangs, which are the major threats to national and citizen security* [my italics], and have prevented Colombia from reaching its growth potential and prosperity’ (My translation, UACT, 2014a, p.22)

In this sense, drug trafficking, armed organizations and illicit crops are put at the same level and are considered ‘major threats’ (Referent Subject) to national and citizen security (Referent Object). This definition of ‘the Self’ explains why the policies and programs to fight coca plantation make part of a broader legal framework that focus mainly on security. In this sense, the 2010 Policy of Manual Eradication was conceived to support the objective of the Policy of Defense and Democratic Security.

Furthermore, the construction of coca crops as a menace can also be evidenced in the 2008-launched campaign ‘La mata que mata’. The name of the campaign literally means the bush that kills, making reference to coca, marijuana and poppy crops and it had the objective of persuading people from growing these crops (Lewin, 2009). The campaign’s script reads:

If you do not grow the bush that kills, many things will change in the countryside. The mines will disappear, the rivers of blood will dry up, the rain of bullets will cease, the people will weep with joy, the dark nights will end, displaced people will return to the countryside, healthier crops will grow. Coca, poppy and marijuana kill. Do not grow the bush that kills (My translation, IMAKIFILMS, 2013)

With this campaign, it becomes evident that coca crops, and not just the general drug problem, are presented as a vital threat. Indeed, this campaign presents coca, along with the other *illicit crops*, as crops that kill. Furthermore, these crops are the reason there is violence (‘rivers of blood’, ‘rain of bullets’, ‘dark nights’) and the reason why people are displaced from their homes and cannot grow ‘healthier crops’. The demonization and stigmatization of the plant is unmistakable in the image that is used in the videos of the campaign, which can be seen in

Figure 5. In sum, the campaign presents *illicit crops* as an existential threat, it kills and it is the cause of rural violence.

Figure 5. Representation of a coca bush in the campaign 'La mata que mata'



Source: IMAKIFILMS, 2013.

To sum up, in the programs and policies that address coca plantations before 2016, coca crops are discursively built as a vital threat. On the one hand, coca crops kill, which is why they are a threat to citizen security. On the other hand, coca crops make part of and fuel a criminal industry, which is a vital threat to Colombia's institutions and national security. Along with this discursive construction of an existential threat personified in coca, poppy and marijuana crops; is the definition of these crops as illicit. Indeed, article 375 of Colombia's Criminal Code prohibits the cultivation, conservation or funding of '...marijuana plantations or any other plant from which cocaine, morphine, heroin or any other drug that generates dependence; may be produced' (My translation, Congreso de Colombia, 2000).

Both the construction of coca plantation as a vital threat and its criminalization, led to policies that are focused on the complete eradication of these crops. It is hardly surprising that official policies and plans share the objective and are mainly focused on eliminating *illicit crops*. This is what the securitizing actors present as a way to overcome the existential threat to 'the Self', to eliminate the crops. In line with this, the second objective of the National Policy against Drugs is to 'articulate strategies for the *elimination* of illicit crops' (My translation, 2010, p.49).

The objective of eliminating coca crops are reflected on the focus given to eradication in the official policies and plans, over alternative development strategies. These strategies have been present in Colombia since the early 1980s, but have been only complementary tools to the repressive approach that has been implemented since 1994 and that was strengthened with Plan Colombia (Zorro, 2005, p.116). The use of alternative development as a complementary tool can be evidenced in the place it has in the strategy of voluntary manual eradication. In this case, the access to programs of alternative development is conditioned to a complete eradication. For instance, one of the principles of 2010 Manual Eradication Policy

is that eradication must be a previous condition to begin any intervention regarding alternative development in the community (DNP, 2010, p.27). To this effect, the document that regulates eradication and post-eradication strategies, calls for a certification of ‘zero illicit crops’ as a condition for growers to get into the process of post-eradication (UACT, 2012).

Besides the voluntary manual eradication, there are forceful oriented strategies that keep the focus on eradication. These strategies are extraordinary measures related to the cultivation of coca, which are justified by the discursive construction of drug and coca as an existential threat. The strategies used to accomplish forceful eradication of *illicit crops* in Colombia are the mobile groups of eradication, the manual forced eradication made directly by the National Police and the aerial herbicide fumigation. The reasons why these measures are extraordinary is something that is going to be addressed with more detail in subsection 3.1.2.

Finally, regarding the existence of an audience to legitimize the international securitizing move, the enabling audience in the case of the policies implemented is the Colombian Congress, which sanctioned Plan Colombia and the Laws that made possible the incorporation of the UN Conventions in the national legal system. Table 2 presents the components and facilitating conditions of securitization, which were just identified in the strategies used to fight coca plantation before the 2016 Peace agreement.

*Table 2. Securitization components and analysis of Colombian strategy to fight coca plantations before the Peace agreement*

	<b>Securitization</b>	<b>Colombian strategy to fight coca plantation before the Peace agreement</b>
<b>Components</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Securitizing speech act</li> <li>2. Securitizing Actor</li> <li>3. Audience(s)</li> <li>4. [Results]</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coca crops are illicit. Cultivating coca crop is a crime.</li> <li>2. UN, US and the Colombian state</li> <li>3. Colombian Congress</li> <li>4. Exceptional measures: Manual forced eradication and aerial herbicide fumigation</li> </ol>
<b>Facilitating conditions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Grammar of security (RO, RS, way out)</li> <li>5. Social conditions: position of authority of the SA regarding the audience(s)</li> <li>6. [Context] ‘features of the alleged threats that either facilitate or impede the securitization’</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Coca, as all the other <i>illicit crops</i> (Reference subject) kill and are a threat to Colombian institutions and national and citizen security (Referent Object). This is why they have to be completely eliminated.</li> <li>6. UN US’ position of influence in internal affairs of Latin America, especially in those of Colombia Colombian Government, empowered to take decisions on behalf of the Colombian population.</li> <li>7. Colombia was almost a collapsed state due to the incursion of the drug economy.</li> </ol>

### 3.1.2. Results of the successful securitizing move: extraordinary measures to eliminate coca crops

The most visible result of a successful securitizing move are extraordinary measures. These extraordinary measures are allowed to be implemented due to acceptance of the securitizing move by the audience, which legitimizes what are deemed to be *needed* measures. This subsection will focus in highlighting why the eradication strategies are extraordinary measures.

The idea of facing an existential threat means that your existence is at such risk that it is you (Referent Object) or them (Reference Subject). This dichotomy puts the audience in the position to accept what otherwise would not be allowed. Strategies of coca crops eradication are not different, which is why they have continued despite the results they have had. The consequences of these strategies can be put in three categories: (1) they ignore growers' livelihoods, (2) they marginalize indigenous traditions and (3) they are harmful to *campesinos*- small-scale peasants.

First, eradication strategies ignore that growers' livelihoods depend on coca plantation. Despite the fact that all the policies make emphasis on the 'vulnerability' of coca growers to the threat of *illicit crops* (UACT, 2012), the strategies implemented do not seem to recognize the position of the growers. In this sense, the fact that *campesinos* who grow coca because they cannot make a living with any other crop; is completely overlooked with 'zero illicit crops' condition to access alternative productive projects and the criminalization of cultivation. To this effect, the principle of 'effective prosecution' of the 2010 Manual Eradication Policy states that when forced eradication takes place, a penal process must start for the crime of conserving or funding illicit plantations, as well as forfeiture (DNP, 2010, p.28). This means that growers who do not comply with 'voluntary' eradication are considered criminals, regardless of their reasons and the actual possibility they have to make a living growing other crops.

Second, eradication strategies marginalize indigenous traditions. This is closely related to the fact that indigenous communities were not an enabling audience of the securitizing move. The fact that chewing coca leaf, '...a ritual and a cultural expression of Andean indigenous identity' (Hesselroth, 2015, p.68), was specifically banned in 1961 UN Convention; speaks about the power structure of banning what the 'Self' considers immoral. The 'Self' is then represented by a western elite, which can be represented by specific countries, like the US or national elites from less powerful countries, like the Andean countries.

Third, eradication strategies are harmful to *campesinos*. The consequences of state interventions to forcefully eradicate coca crops -mainly but not solely focused on aerial spraying of glyphosate- are: forced displacement of peasants (Palacios, 2012; Rincón-Ruíz and Kallis, 2013); increasing violence on the territory (Rincón-Ruiz, Correa, León and Williams, 2016; Ross, 2004); health risks due to contamination of food crops and water sources (Defensoría del pueblo, 2003; Vargas, 2004), displacement of crops to other

vulnerable areas (Lupu, 2004 ; Rincón-Ruíz and Kallis, 2013) and deforestation (Chadid et al., 2015; Dávalos, Sánchez, and Armenteras, 2016).

The reactions to the banning of glyphosate in Colombia in 2015, which was by the way, the last Andean country to do so (Neuman, 2015); evidence the extraordinariness of the measures and the resistances that arise to change a securitized approach that has been institutionalized. After 20 years of use of glyphosate spraying of coca plantations from US-piloted crop dusters, Santos banned its use ‘...following a World Health Organisation decision to classify it as a carcinogen’ (The Guardian, 2016). Despite this, ‘...conservative critics warned that without glyphosate Colombia would soon be awash in coca’ (The Guardian, 2016). Along the same lines, ‘...the United States had pressed the Colombian government to continue the spraying program’ (Neuman, 2015) before the decision was taken.

To claim that the elimination of coca crops is more important than peasants’ health, which is what a claim for continuing aerial eradication is; is definitely an evidence of strategies that have come above politics and rules. The fact that this has been done for such a long time, regardless of the critiques for the negative consequences it had for the environment and people’s health, shows the institutionalization and legitimization of extraordinary measures achieved by the securitizing move. Moreover, the fact that there are sectors that still support the measure even when it has been officially proved to have harmful effects, shows the degree of polarization between ‘the Self’ and the threatening Other.

In relation to this, Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde argue that ‘[s]ecuritization is not fulfilled only by breaking rules [...] nor solely by existential threats [...] but by cases of existential threats that legitimize the breaking of rules’ (1998, p.25). Indeed, the consequences of the strategies to eliminate coca plantation are accepted due to the emergency call of the ‘securitizing move’ that allows the securitizing actors (the US and the Colombian state) to go beyond moral limits. In other words, the violence that these strategies entail for *campesinos* and indigenous communities in Colombia, has been made legitimate or at least bearable to the enabling audience, due to the success of the securitizing move.

Now that I have identified the securitization of coca plantation in the policies and strategies implemented before the Peace agreement, the following two sections (3.2 and 3.3) will use ripeness/readiness theory in order to explain what happened for the peace negotiations to begin.

## 3.2. Readiness of the actors to attempt a de-securitization of strategies to fight coca plantation in Colombia

This section will explore the concepts of crisis of tactics and crisis of strategy in the 1999 and 2012 peace dialogues and the concepts of Motivation and Optimism in the perception of the conflict of Colombian government and FARC. This means that the section will identify if the disputants were at a readiness stage and thus if the conflict was ripe: if they both had Motivation and Optimism in the 1999 and the 2012 peace dialogues.

With this objective in mind, I will first succinctly mention (a detailed analysis is available in Appendix 1) why 1999 peace talks can be considered a result of a crisis of tactics of the conflict- an attempt made by the disputants to improve their position in the conflict. Then, the section will focus on 2012 peace talks and the readiness of the actors then, the ripeness of the conflict. According to the evidence, I claim that 2012 peace talks are the result of a crisis of strategy.

Given the analysis of Appendix 1 Crisis of tactics in 1999 Peace negotiations in Colombia, I argue that the 1999 Peace talks between FARC and Pastrana, the president of Colombia at the time; were the result of a crisis of tactics. This means that both actors used peace talks to find new ways of continuing the ongoing conflict through escalation and coalition building.

The 1999 Peace talks were the result of a crisis of tactics because the conflict was not ripe: not FARC nor Colombia's government were at a readiness stage. On the one hand, FARC didn't consider the conflict was dysfunctional because the end of the 1990s was in fact their best moment as a guerrilla and the period they were closer from their military and political objective. Accordingly, FARC did not have Optimism either. On the other hand, Colombian government considered the conflict was dysfunctional. Indeed, Colombia was at risk of being a failed state. However, the clear power imbalance between both disputants could hinder the possibility of Optimism about having a negotiated end to the conflict. Furthermore, following Pruitt (2005), as this perception of dysfunctionality of the conflict was initial for Colombia's state, it is probable that it would lead to a revision of tactics rather than a revision of strategies.

In contrast with the 1999 Peace talks, in the 2012 Peace dialogues, Colombia's government and FARC had some degree of Motivation and Optimism that would show they had some degree of readiness and thus, that the conflict had some degree of ripeness.

In the case of FARC, it is fair to say that in 2012 there was more ground for them to perceive the conflict as dysfunctional in comparison with 1999 Peace negotiations. To start, it is likely that FARC perceived increasing costs of the conflict, due to successful attacks conducted by the Colombian National Army, like 'Operación Fenix' or 'Operación Jaque'. With these attacks Colombia's Army managed to kill one of the members of FARC's secretariat 'Raúl



Reyes' in 2008 (El Tiempo, 2016f) and 'Alfonso Cano', FARC's top leader in November 2011 (El Tiempo, 2011b).

These blows to top leaders of FARC had psychological consequences in FARC's guerrilleros. Aware of this, Colombia's government launched in 2010 a campaign to promote their demobilization (Revista Semana, 2014b). According to the data of Colombia's governments, from 2003 to June 30 2010, 15.852 guerrilleros of FARC demobilized and 45% of this demobilizations occurred between 2006 and 2008 (El Tiempo, 201-). Besides the risk of having increased demobilizations, there was also the risk of alienating again the disputant. In fact, the period between 2002 and 2010 was a period when the Colombian state not only increased its militarization and strived for the goal of eliminating guerrillas, it was also the period when FARC lost their recognition as a political subversive group, to be called instead 'terrorists'<sup>10</sup>.

Accordingly, FARC's perception about the conflict matched the context. In this respect, FARC were aware of their losses in the conflict but were still proud of their capacity to resist it and fight back. Along these lines, in 2012 Timochenko said:

FARC and the Colombian popular movement as a whole, were successful, not without errors or regrettable losses, in face of a campaign of devastation that tried to eliminate us in only one year and that already adds more than a decade without being able to wipe us off the map (My translation, FARC, 2012)

According to this, it seems reasonable to claim that in 2012 FARC perceived the conflict was dysfunctional due to the increasing costs and risks of military operations and the perception of not winning the conflict.

In the case of Colombia's government, although there was a feeling of triumphalism after the military blows given to FARC, there were also reasons for this disputant to consider the conflict was dysfunctional. On the one hand, despite the increased control of the Colombian state in urban areas, the guerrilla still hold back in some rural areas. In this sense, analysts stated that the internal conflict was 'bogged down' (Ávila-Martínez, 2009, p.2). To add up to this perception of not winning the conflict, '...the number of known and suspected terrorists killed, captured, or surrendered fell.' (U.S. State Department, 2012, p.158).

The risks of the conflict also seemed to increase: '...the number of attacks and casualties rose...' as FARC reverted their tactics back to *guerra de guerrillas*- and focused on attacks 'rather than large unit encounters' (U.S. State Department, 2012, p.158). Another increasing risk was the unsustainable high expenditure on Defense. In point of fact, between 2002 and 2015, the expenditure on Defense of Colombia's government remained around 3,5% and 4% of Colombia's GDP<sup>11</sup> (Otero-Prada, 2016, p.49) without an achievable defeat of guerrillas on the near horizon.

According to this, I can argue that both disputants had a certain degree of Motivation. Moreover, it is also likely that both disputants had a certain degree of Optimism as they

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<sup>10</sup> For a more detailed analysis on how different aspects in 2002 came together to change the perception of FARC from a subversive group to a terrorist, see Appendix 1.

<sup>11</sup> Colombia is among the countries with largest ratio of military spending to GDP (González, 2014)

perceived the disputant's representative was a valid spokesman. This can be evidenced in the way both disputants refer to their adversary when the official negotiations started, as a group that has shown so far seriousness in the process (El Tiempo, 2012). To this extent, both the Colombian government and FARC had certain degree of Optimism to continue with the negotiations that started in 2012.

### 3.3. Mechanisms of the Motivation to end the conflict to influence Optimism in a dialogue process. Analysis of Colombia's government and FARC.

Now that I have established that in 2012 there was a crisis of strategy and that both actors had certain degree of readiness, because they have some degree of Motivation and Optimism; is time to take the next step in the analysis. In this sense, this section will focus on the analysis of two of the mechanisms that Motivation has to influence Optimism: the scaling down of aspirations and the change of perception of the enemy.

#### 3.3.1. Scaling down of disputants' aspirations

Let us start the analysis addressing the scaling down of disputants' aspirations. According to the evidence, this scaling down of aspirations can be identified in Colombia's government as well as FARC, in at least two aspects: the conditions to start a peace negotiation and the goals of the armed conflict.

**First, the conditions to start a peace negotiation.** After the failure of the 1999 peace negotiations, which was unilaterally ended by Pastrana, FARC continued with their claim of wanting a political end to the conflict. By contrast, a hard –line approach to the conflict came with Uribe's mandate. This new approach focused on militarily recovering national territory from *terrorists* while trying to have secret meetings with FARC to start a peace process.

In the case of FARC, they have always discursively<sup>12</sup> insisted on their willingness to go back to the peace dialogues with the conditions that were previously accorded in San Vicente del Caguán. In this sense, during Uribe's mandate their conditions were, to sign a 'humanitarian exchange' (FARC, 2003), the demilitarization of the departments of Caquetá and Putumayo (FARC, 2003), similarly to the DMZ Pastrana granted them previously. Finally, they insisted

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<sup>12</sup> I mean in their official *Comunicados* they have always insisted in wanting a political solution to the conflict.

that being recognized as a belligerent force, would be a great step towards peace (Fundación Seguridad y Democracia, 2007).

Now, let us turn to Colombia's government side. As shown before, Uribe's mandate characterized for having a hardline, military approach towards FARC. In this sense, Uribe's objective was to militarily defeat FARC, as 1999 peace dialogues failed. This was backed-up by having a discourse which consistently denied Colombia was in an internal armed conflict and defining FARC as terrorists. This resulted in a huge polarization of public opinion. Indeed, Leal-Buitrago (My translation, 2015) observes that 'the disregard of an internal armed conflict, describing it as a terrorist menace, lead to a visceral hate of FARC by public opinion and the need of exterminating them'. This, he continues, lead to a vicious political polarization inclined towards Uribe.

However, according to information released in 2014, that harsh military approach towards FARC was not the only strategy Uribe used. Between 2002 and 2010, Uribe also explored the possibility of starting peace dialogues with FARC. Public talks between the Colombian government and FARC were about the exchange of what FARC called 'war prisoners' (Revista Semana, 2014a). Uribe's position about the exchange reinforced the relentless approach of his mandate against guerrillas. In this sense, he assured that a humanitarian accord, an exchange of war prisoners in FARC's language, would only be possible in a peace process with cessation of hostilities. Moreover there was a key difference in what both sides considered as an exchange. On one side, Uribe's approach to the exchange was to set free FARC prisoners who were incarcerated for rebellion for them to reintegrate to civil life. On the other side, FARC expected that prisoners that were left free were allowed to come back to FARC, as a guerrillero. (Fundación Seguridad y Democracia, 2007). Both their approaches appeared as unacceptable for the other side.

Additionally to this tough approach, Uribe had secret contacts with 'Catatumbo', one of FARC leaders; trying to start a peace process with them (Coronell, 2014). Despite the repeated efforts to meet FARC (26 accepted by the former president), FARC refused to do so as they alleged a lack of guarantees (Las2orillas, 2014). This concern remained even after Uribe, supposedly offered FARC the demilitarization of two municipalities in Colombia, security for FARC representatives and a bilateral ceasefire (Coronell, 2014). The only aspect Uribe's government was not willing to change was to acknowledge that Colombia was in an internal armed conflict and not *just* a victim of a terrorist menace (Revista Semana, 2014a, Las2orillas, 2014). This specific aspect is going to be addressed when analyzing the mechanism that challenges the perception of the enemy.

To sum up, Uribe was open to concede some of the conditions demanded by FARC, demilitarization and bilateral ceasefire, for instance. However, there was one condition he would not concede to start a peace process: FARC's cease of hostilities and acknowledging there was an internal armed conflict. Uribe argued the cease of hostilities was the way FARC could show they were not terrorists. In this sense, only when a ceasefire was in place, the government would consider the possibility of considering FARC as something different from terrorists and maybe considering the existence of an internal armed conflict. Conversely,

FARC considered that request a lack of respect, as they consider their armed organization has a political *raison d'être*, and they are fighting to achieve those political objectives. As Monojoy, one of the founders of FARC and its top leader until he died of natural reasons in 2008, said in his last interview:

They [the government] have not payed attention to us. They want peace of people on their knees and that does not work with us. We respect to be respected. We are not going to spend 50 years [fighting] to say [at the end] that armed struggle is outdated (FRIU 2011)

Indeed, Uribe's conditions were more towards achieving a process of demobilization, and not a peace process that would include any political agenda (Revista Semana, 2005).

In 2012, when both Santos and Timochenko officially announced the peace dialogues, they referred to the conditions of the peace negotiations in the following way. The Colombian government emphasized that there would not be any military concessions, so no demilitarized zone in Colombia and no halt of military activities against FARC. (Presidencia de la República de Colombia, 2012). FARC also continued with their military activities when the peace dialogues started; but did not appreciate the fact that the Colombian government had taken the immovable decision of not making any military 'concessions' (FARC, 2012). This, according to Timochenko's speech (FARC, 2012), showed that FARC was being besieged to force them drop their political aspirations. However, he insisted, FARC were optimists.

According to Pruitt, one of the mechanisms of the motivation to end the conflict to increase optimism, is the scaling down of aspirations. However, what I have showed previously shows there is no uniform scaling down of aspirations. Instead, it seems like optimism can result of a mixture between aspirations scaling down and up for the disputants. What appears to be the most important here is that the aspirations that are being scaled down seem less important than those that are being scaled up by the disputants.

So we can explain this agreement over a different set of conditions, some of which had scaled up for the Colombian government, in the following way. Colombian government's aspirations regarding negotiating conditions went up in the military field. These conditions seemed more important for the Colombian government, due to the failure of 1999 peace talks and the need to differentiate the current process from that one. On the other hand, government's aspirations went down regarding the recognition of the existence of an internal armed conflict, which was unbearable for the previous government. Meanwhile, FARC scaled down their aspirations in the military field but kept high what appears as the most important condition for them: to be recognized as an insurgent group which was a possibility that opened with the public recognition of the existence of an internal armed conflict in Colombia.

In this sense, what seems important is not the aspirations' scaling down per se, but the possibility of finding a way in which each disputant can scale down some aspirations but keep the essence of those that seem untouchable. Now let us turn to the analysis of the changes regarding the goals of the armed conflict.

### **Now, the scaling down of goals of the armed conflict.**

It is fair to state that there is a difference between FARC's aspirations in 1964, when a group of peasants decided to arm themselves to fight Colombia's social and economic injustices (FARC, 1964), and FARC's aspirations to officially start a peace process in 2012. In this sense, in their 1964 Agrarian Program, FARC stated that they wanted a change of regime. A change they were forced to strive for through armed revolution. Armed revolution to fight for the power (FARC, 1964). FARC, as all the guerrillas from mid-twentieth century in Latin America, fought for taking over the power of the State to transform it into a socialist State (Uribe Calderón, 2007, p. 228). The success of Cuban revolution, was of great importance to nurture this idea of guerrilla's fighting being a feasible way to take the power and change the regime.

In general, I can say that the start of 2012 peace process, represented for FARC a scale down of aspirations. FARC aspirations went from striving to achieve social justice through a forceful establishment of a socialist state in Colombia; to achieve social justice through peace dialogues. Hence, the scaling down of aspirations is specifically about Colombia becoming a socialist state through a military revolution. However, there is not- at least not discursively- a change about FARC aspirations for social justice. In fact, social justice, along with these other concepts: sovereignty, true democracy and democratic peace; are present at least in one of the *Comunicados* released every year, from 1964-1992<sup>13</sup>, to 2017 (FARC, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2002b, 2005, 2008b, 2010b, 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2013a, 2016, 2017b).

Now let us turn to the case of Colombia's government. In general terms again, its main objective went from defeating terrorists, the name used to refer to guerrillas; to achieve peace. The objective of defeating guerrillas corresponded to the two mandates of Uribe, who characterized for being highly militarized<sup>14</sup>.

In this sense, between 2002 and 2010 Uribe persistently referred to the effort and the sacrifice of Colombian population as a whole, and of course the armed forces; to defeat terrorists. Accordingly, Uribe claimed in 2005 that:

We have paid a very high sacrifice of our soldiers, of our policemen, of our citizens. And with our decision of defeating terrorism and implement that decision every day, we are going to honor that sacrifice so that new generations of Colombians can live happily in this country (My translation, Presidencia de la República, 2005)

This clear goal of defeating guerrillas was accompanied, after the killing of Raúl Reyes in 2008, with a strong 'triumphalism', the feeling of being very close to achieve that ultimate objective (Ávila-Martínez, 2009, p.5). In this sense, the commander of the Colombian Armed Forces in 2009, General Padilla, assured that '...we are in the end of the end, [...] in the path to victory' (Padilla, 5 June 2009 quoted by Granada, Restrepo and Vargas, 2009, p. 31). Even Santos, who was Uribe's Minister of Defense at the time, said 'we have to crush the beast of

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<sup>13</sup> The first politic declaration of FARC was the Agrarian Program of guerrilleros, in 1964. However, this Program was not published online until 1993 (for obvious reasons regarding access and development of internet). It is not until 1992, that FARC started to periodically release public *Comunicados*.

<sup>14</sup> This can be seen with more detail in Appendix 1 Crisis of tactics in 1999 Peace negotiations in Colombia

terrorism' referring to guerrillas. Then he continued with the opening of the presentation of the strategy that was intended to recover the last territories FARC had: 'the beast in wounded and we have to give the final blow, to take it to the point of no return' (El Tiempo, 2009). Needless to say, 'the beast' never died. Instead, FARC reorganized itself and although military forces recovered urban space from them, the subversive group kept its high military capacity (Ávila-Martínez, 2009, p.6).

In September 2012, Santos made official the initiation of peace dialogues with FARC in La Habana, Cuba. With his speech, he made a differentiation between the previous objective of defeating the enemy and that of achieving peace. He said:

We can talk today about peace due to the successes of our Military Forces and our Police, and due to the increasing presence of the State in all the national territory.

We can talk today about peace thanks to the daily effort of our soldiers and our policemen, to whom I want to pay tribute in this moment.

I know what war is because I was Ministry of Defense in a crucial moment and knew first-hand the sacrifice of our men.

We can talk today about peace because the vision of my government is comprehensive: we DO NOT combat for the sake of combating; we combat to achieve peace. (My translation, Presidencia de la República de Colombia, 2012)

In this sense, from 2012, the objective is not anymore defeating the enemy, but achieving peace. This is a key differentiation anytime it opens the possibility to accomplish the objective through a different path. A path that does not need the military victory and the surrender of the enemy. In other words, once the goal is peace and not defeating the enemy *per se*, negotiating seems a plausible route.

The change of objectives of both the disputants, is of fundamental importance as it redefines or clarifies what victory is for each of them. This redefinition is crucial anytime that, as Ghosn has pointed out, negotiating with the rival '...can be costly for it not only could be seen as a means of acknowledging the enemy but also as betraying those who have given their lives against the enemy' (2010, p.1060). Wholly aware of this, the day both disputants made officially public that they were having dialogues to find an end to the conflict; they redefined what victory was. Santos did so focusing on the objective of achieving peace, whereas Timochenko's speech ended with the exclamation 'We've sworn to defeat and we will defeat!' (FARC, 2012c). Peace negotiations were indeed, considered a way to defeat and accomplish their objective. Finally, Table 3 succinctly shows the analysis just done about the scaling down of the disputants' aspirations.

Table 3. Scaling down of aspirations. Colombia's State and FARC

	Colombia's State	FARC-EP
<b>Motivation to end the conflict</b>		
<b>1. Scale down of aspirations (that are not considered fundamental)</b>	<p>(a) <u>Conditions to have peace dialogues</u>  <b>From (2002-2010):</b> DMZ, bilateral ceasefire, cease of hostilities to open up the possibility of not being terrorists.  <b>To (Santos):</b> recognition of internal armed conflict in Colombia, no DMZ, no bilateral ceasefire or humanitarian exchange.</p> <p>(b) <u>Objectives</u>  <b>From</b> 'defeating FARC' (Uribe, 2009), 'give FARC the final blow' (Santos, 2009) <b>to</b> achieve peace with FARC (Santos, 2012)</p> <p>→Redefinition/Clarification of what victory is: 'We fight to achieve peace' (Santos, 2012)</p>	<p>(a) <u>Conditions to have peace dialogues</u>  <b>From (2002-2010):</b> Humanitarian exchange, DMZ, Bilateral ceasefire.  <b>To:</b> recognition of internal armed conflict in Colombia, no DMZ, no bilateral ceasefire or humanitarian exchange.</p> <p>(b) <u>Objectives</u>  <b>From</b> 'change the regime through an armed revolution' (FARC, 1964) <b>to</b> 'have deep modifications of the existing order' (Timochenko, 2012)</p> <p>→Redefinition/Clarification of what victory is: having a real democracy with social justice</p>

### 3.3.2. Change of disputants' perceptions of the enemy

Having just showed the scaling down of Colombia's government and FARC's aspirations, let's now turn our attention to the disputants' perception of each other. Specifically, I will address how the perception of 'the Other' changed from enemy to a political adversary.

As an insurgent group, FARC's enemy is the establishment and Colombia's state. Now, regarding FARC's perception of that enemy, it is important to note that there are differentiations between FARC's perception of the Colombian State, the politicians that represent it, the cadres of the Army and the soldiers they fight on the battle field.

On the one hand, there are the degrading perceptions about the enemy. In this sense, FARC refer to the Colombian state, as 'paramilitary' (FARC, 1997, 2002a, 2005, 2008c, 2008d, 2011, 2012a) and 'terrorist' (FARC, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2002b, 2008d, 2010, 2012a), for implementing policies, like that of National security, that criminalizes social protests and considers people and their own national brothers as enemies that have to be crushed in an internal war (FARC, 2008d). Likewise, the Colombian State is perceived as paramilitary and terrorist for promoting a counterinsurgent strategy, developed by the Army, which objective is to defeat guerrilla through the killing of civilians (FARC, 1999).

In regard to the politicians who have represented that State so far, FARC consider them an elite who are responsible for initiating and continuing the internal armed conflict. In this sense, FARC refer to them as 'dominant predatory class' (FARC, 1964), 'exclusionary

oligarchy' (FARC, 1993, 1997, 2008c, 2012b, 2013a), 'corrupt oligarchy' (FARC, 2008b) or 'reactionary, bloodthirsty, terrorist and submissive [oligarchy]' (FARC, 2010a). Accordingly, for FARC, the oligarchy is guilty of Colombia's internal armed conflict and have been accomplice of Colombia's surrender to neoliberal and foreign policies.

Similarly, regarding the cadres of the Army, FARC perceives them as 'unpatriotic' (FARC, 2012) and 'mercenaries of the oligarchy and the empire' (FARC, 2008c) for defending foreign interests against Colombian people. So too, according to FARC, the Colombian Army characterizes for '...violating human rights and promoting paramilitaries, who massacre defenseless civilian population and send tons of cocaine to the US' (FARC, 2000).

On the other hand, there is the perception of 'the Other' as someone who is not completely responsible of her/his actions. In this sense, FARC perceive Colombian Army soldiers as 'brothers'. A study pursued by Medina-Arbeláez (2008) about the socialization of people in illegal armed groups in Colombia, shows this stark difference between soldiers and the other representatives of the establishment FARC opposed to. According to the testimonies of FARC ex-combatants, soldiers are 'inocent', 'deceived', 'poor', '*campesinos*' and 'equal to the guerrilla' (Medina-Arbeláez, 2008, p.37). One of them described that they were told in FARC, when they were about to fight the National Army, that '...they are *campesinos*, just like you, they are sons of poor people. They are human beings who need [to get into the Army] because they need to get the military passbook, or some others because they are unemployed' (Medina-Arbeláez, 2008, p.38). The FARC ex-combatant even describes that, before, when the cadres of the Army had distinctive badges, they were told to kill them, instead of the soldiers Medina-Arbeláez, 2008, p.38).

Some of these perceptions have changed due to the start of the peace dialogues in 2012 and its successful closures<sup>15</sup> in 2016. According to the official speeches of Timochenko in 2012 and 2016, there was a change of some of the perceptions of the enemy. The main change is the perception of the Colombian state, which he concedes as a 'courageous interlocutor, capable of sorting out with composure the pressures and incitements from warmongering sectors' (El Tiempo, 2016e), of having 'proved intentions' to build the peace agreement (El Tiempo, 2016e).

In the case of the political elite, FARC's perception slightly changed. The main difference is that the concept oligarchy, was not used by Timochenko in any of the discourses of 2012 or 2016. However, the concept is still used in the public *Comunicados* FARC publish in their webpage, but there is a difference on the way the concept is used. In the *Comunicados* after 2012, oligarchy mainly appears as part of the final statements like 'against oligarchy, for the people!' that goes along with other claims like 'against imperialism, for the country!' (FARC, 2012b, 2013a). In this sense, FARC use the concept to politically position and differentiate themselves from the political elite and the decisions they take while dropping the use of the strongest demeaning adjectives given to oligarchy, like 'terrorist' or 'bloodthirsty'.

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<sup>15</sup> I say successful because it ended with a Peace agreement signed by the Colombian Government and FARC that, although was not approved by the popular referendum, was approved through the Senate. This is also why I refer to closures in plural, as they were two, one before and one after the referendum.



Accordingly, FARC states in a *Comunicado* that they are the result of a set of issues and weapons, used by the Colombian oligarchy to put themselves in the rulers of the State until the end of times (2013b).

Regarding FARC's perception of the Colombian Army, the main change is the moderation of some of their statements. In this sense, Timochenko states in 2012 that there are *some* elements, who completely indoctrinated by the National security rhetoric, are 'ambitious and warmongers who allow themselves to be part of the dirtiest purposes' (FARC, 2012c). Thereupon, Timochenko also acknowledges that there must also be in the military cadres be 'patriot, honest militaries who question their role in supporting an unfair order...' (FARC, 2012c).

On the other hand, FARC's perception of the soldiers they fought in the battle field as 'brother *campesinos*' did not change. In this sense, Timochenko addressed to them in his 2012 speech in the following way:

Nobody like the guerrillas to attest the strength and courage of Colombian soldiers and policeman. We combat them on a daily basis throughout all the national territory. They cause our casualties and are in turn reached by the fire of our weapons. They know well that need have pushed them to risk their lives, that they feed their families with permanent fear to death or invalidity. They are Colombians from the populace, who love live and dream to make it longer. (My translation, FARC, 2012c)

In this sense, soldiers are still considered as equals, *campesinos* like the guerrilleros. People who do what they do for need, to feed their families; people who ultimately do not want war to continue.

Regarding the change of perception of the enemy of Colombia's Government, the one and most important, undeniably, was the change that acknowledged FARC as a political insurgent actor after being defined as a terrorist for over a decade. Before we get to this turning point, it seems reasonable to succinctly show how FARC was perceived before Uribe's government. This might help explain why the change that happened during Santos government was key to the peace process.

To start, in 1964 before FARC was even officially founded, the official representatives of the government referred to this group that was about to become FARC; as 'antisocial', 'communists' or 'bandits' (Alape, 1989). In 1966 FARC officially became a subversive group that claimed to be inspired on Marxist-Leninist ideology. Given the context of the Cold war, the ideological contest it was and the success of the Cuban Revolution; these groups were considered a threat for the *security* of the hemisphere and for US hegemony. In other words, the sprout of subversive groups in Latin America represented a communist threat for the hemisphere and the US. Not in vain, US interventions in Latin American countries, which included the promotion or orchestration to overthrow a government; responded to what was perceived as an ideologically threat (Dominguez, 1999). That is, the threat to have a 'second Cuba' in the continent.

In 1991, guerrillas that had not demobilized, were called 'dinosaurs' by the chief negotiator of Colombia's president Gaviria (1990-1994) (Farah, 1994). Guerrillas, the armed revolution

and overall communism, was perceived as outdated. This view was also shared by the intellectuals of the time, who wrote a letter in 1992 to the Simón Bolívar Guerrillera Coordinating Board, stating that guerrillas war was going ‘in the opposite direction of history’, that ‘it had lost its validity’ (My translation, *El Tiempo*, 1992).

This position can be understood if we are aware of the context, where capitalism presents itself after a long Cold war, as the only and one true path of history. At the end of the 1980s and during the 1990s decade, the communist world fell, the Berlin wall in 1989 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Farah, 1994). And so, western liberal democracy appeared triumphantly, like the only possible path due to the inexistence of viable alternatives. Not for nothing, Fukuyama claimed, in his renowned 1989’ article ‘The end of history?’, that the end of Cold war was also ‘...the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government’ (Fukuyama, 1989, p.1).

To this effect, during the 1990s FARC’s political claim was recognized as such, as political, despite it was perceived as outdated by the ‘intellectuals’ and the Colombian government. Now, as it was showed before, the mid and the end of the 1990s was a key moment for Colombian conflict due to way drug trafficking and the policies against it, improved funding for illegal armed groups.

It is important to note that during the various peace dialogues that the Colombian government had with FARC, they were recognized as a political actor (Revista Semana, 2008). With Law 782 of 2002, the Colombian government was not required anymore to recognize illegal armed groups with whom it wanted to start peace dialogues (Revista Semana, 2008). In this sense, the last time FARC were recognized as a political actor was during 1999 peace dialogues. From 2002, with the end of dialogues and the new hard line president, FARC started to be considered as terrorists and the internal armed conflict a ‘terrorist menace’ (Revista Semana, 2005; *El Tiempo*, 2011). Moreover, the possibility of a peace negotiation was out of any political implication, no recognition as a political actor and no political agenda. In fact, this was what happened with the demobilization of paramilitaries.

In 2011, Santos acknowledged that Colombia was in an internal armed conflict, once he ‘...endorsed the inclusion of an article in the Law of Victims with that concept, to prevent victims of common crimes to slip through into the benefits of the Law’ (My translation, *El Tiempo*, 2011a). Although this acknowledgement meant a crucial change in the path towards peace, the government decided to downplay it presenting it as a legal technicality that had no major political consequences. This argumentative move was done to avoid polarization and try to look for consensus<sup>16</sup>. Nonetheless, it did have major political consequences.

Regarding the perception of FARC as such it is important to note that no claims about FARC’s status as a political actor was made while the peace dialogues were taking place. At

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<sup>16</sup> For a complete and detailed analysis of discourse regarding the way this decision was handled by Santos see Rhetorical construction of armed conflict through the presidential address of Juan Manuel Santos (<http://revistas.unal.edu.co/index.php/anpol/article/view/43499/44785#1>)

the beginning of the dialogues, Santos declared that, if FARC approached the next phase of the negotiations with the *same seriousness*, ‘we have good prospects’ (El Tiempo, 2012). This, of course is a positive change from the terrorist discourse. A change of Colombia’s government perception of FARC goes beyond ‘seriousness’ during the speech that closed the peace process. In this sense, in 2016 Santos referred to FARC’s decision to pursue their convictions through the political arena in the following way: ‘changing bullets for votes, weapons for ideas, is the bravest and most intelligent decision a subversive group can take’ (El Tiempo, 2016d). Indeed, in 2016, after a peace agreement was reached, Colombia’s government openly recognized FARC as an armed actor with political convictions, a subversive group instead of a terrorist.

It is relevant to note that, conversely to this non-reference to the political status of FARC at the start of the peace dialogues, Timochenko emphasized it from the very beginning saying: ‘we have come back to the negotiating table acknowledged like military and political adversaries’ (My translation, FARC, 2012). This, of course, is related to the important position the political recognition had for them. As it has been stated before, to be recognized as an insurgent and political actor was for FARC a fundamental condition to start peace dialogues. To have it otherwise, was not acceptable for FARC as it ignored their *raison d’être*.

To conclude, there is evidence to claim that there is a change on how the perception of ‘the other’ goes from being an enemy, a terrorist, to a political adversary. This change can be highlighted in two additional common features both FARC’s and Colombia government discourse share. First, not Santos nor Timochenko used during their speeches in 2012 or 2016, the word ‘terrorism’ to refer to each other. This, despite the fact that both Colombia’s government and FARC, had largely used the word to characterize each other’s actions.

Second, both disputants insist that their ideas continue to be very different and that they have large disagreements. However, they emphasize they have agreed on being disputants in a political arena, without appealing to violence. To this effect, Timochenko stated that ‘Here nobody has renounced to their ideas [...] we have agreed that we will keep on openly confront our ideas on the political arena, without violence...’ (My translation, El Tiempo, 2016e). Meanwhile, Santos assured that ‘I [...] will defend, with as much determination as I have had to defeat you, your right to express and continue your politic struggle through legal channels; even if we never agree’ (My translation, El Tiempo, 2016d)

Table 4 Change of perceptions of the enemy. Colombia's state and FARC

	Colombia's State	FARC-EP
<b>Motivation to end the conflict</b>		
<b>2. Change perceptions of the enemy</b>	<p><b>From</b> (1960s) 'antisocial', 'communists', 'bandits'</p> <p><b>To</b> (1990s) 'dinosaurs', 'outdated'</p> <p><b>To</b> (2002-2010) 'terrorists', 'terrorist beast', 'terrorist menace'</p> <p><b>To</b> (2012) 'serious counterpart in the peace dialogues' (Colombian state) // 'Military and political adversaries' (FARC-EP)</p> <p><b>To</b> (2016) subversive group with political convictions</p> <p>→ No use of the term 'terrorism' to refer to FARC-EP</p> <p>→ 'The Other' is a political adversary</p>	<p>(a) <u>Of the Colombian state</u>: <b>From</b> 'Paramilitary state', 'Terrorist state' <b>to</b> 'courageous interlocutor' with 'proved intentions' for a peace agreement</p> <p><u>Of Colombian politicians</u>: <b>From</b> 'reactionary, bloodthirsty, terrorist oligarchy' <b>to</b> 'oligarchy'</p> <p>(b) <u>Of Cadres of the Army</u>: <b>From</b> 'mercenaries of the oligarchy and the empire' <b>to</b> 'there must be some patriotic, honest militaries'</p> <p>(c) <u>Of soldiers</u>: brother <i>campesinos</i> like guerrilleros</p> <p>→ No use of the term 'terrorism' to refer to Colombian state</p> <p>→ 'The Other' is a political adversary</p>

### 3.4. Attempts to de-securitize coca plantation in the Peace agreement.

In 2016, the Colombian government and FARC signed a peace agreement to put an end to more than half a century of internal armed conflict. One of the six items that these disputants agreed upon was on finding a 'solution to the problem of illicit drugs'. This solution is based on three main programs: the substitution of crops for illicit use program (thereafter 2016 Substitution program); the consume prevention and public health program and the program for the solution of production and commercialization of narcotics. This section will focus on the first program and explore the elements of de-securitization. In this sense I will identify the de-securitizing language, the change of the language used regarding coca plantation, the de-securitizing actors and their position of authority; the audience(s) and the contextual conditions of the agreed program for the substitution of crops for illicit use. The main results of this analysis can be seen in Table 5Table 5.

Regarding the language to address the issue of coca plantation, the 2016 Substitution program shows fundamental changes in comparison with the previous policies. These changes in the language can be grouped in two: definition of coca, cannabis or poppy crops and objective of the program. All these changes in the language can be considered as part of a move towards de-securitization.

The first change refers to the definition of coca, cannabis and poppy crops. On this point, the 2016 Substitution program coins the term *cultivos de uso ilícito* (illicit use crops) instead of *cultivos ilícitos* (illicit crops). The importance of this, relies on the fact that the term *illicit use crops* emphasizes on the use of the crops and not on the crop itself. In other words, the new term denotes that growing coca bushes is not a crime *per se*, that there are different uses of the crop, that coca is different from cocaine; that coca does not kill, like the 2008-launched campaign argued. In this sense, the change of the term attempts to take away from coca crops the image of being inherently threatening and damaging.

In line with this, the 2016 Substitution program takes a step out of the securitizing speech, dropping the reference to threats and menaces to refer to the issue of coca crops. To this effect, the program refers to illicit use crops as a *problem*. This can be considered a de-securitizing language as it evidences the discursive attempt to take coca plantation from the realm of security to that of normal politics.

Now, the second change in the language used in the 2016 Substitution program refers to its objective. Once coca plants stop being considered just a shorter name for cocaine, because other uses of the plant are acknowledged in its definition; coca stops being the bush that kills. Hence, coca by itself is no longer considered a threat. As a result, the *elimination of coca crops* is not anymore the main objective of the policies developed in the 2016 Substitution program and eradication is not its main strategy.

As the name of the 2016 Substitution program itself points out, the program is about *crop substitution* and not any form of *eradication*, as was the case before. In this sense, one fundamental principle of the Program is the *voluntary substitution of crops*. The principle reads that '[a]n undisputed basis for a definitive solution to the problem of illicit use crops lies on the voluntary and concerted nature [...] the willingness of communities to [...] move towards alternative paths to illicit use crops' (My translation, República de Colombia, FARC, 2016, p.107). Important to note that although *voluntary substitution of crops* would equal *voluntary eradication* in terms of cutting down coca plantation with the consent of coca growers; the term *eradication* is avoided in the 2016 Substitution program. Again, this can be explained as an attempt to move from the repeated emphasis that has been put on eradication as a solution, to the voluntary substitution of these crops.

This strong focus on voluntary substitution and its importance in guaranteeing a long term solution of the illicit use crops problem, shows an attempt to focus on the solution on causes that are not security-related. That is to address the social conditions of the communities that grow coca crops. Hence, the first objective of the 2016 Substitution program is:

To overcome poverty conditions of communities, [...] through the creation of conditions of well-being and buen vivir on the territories; and contribute to structural transformations in rural society that will result from the implementation of the Integral rural reform... (My translation, República de Colombia, FARC, 2016, p.104).

This focus on non-security related causes of coca plantation can be considered as part of a de-securitization process. While securitization '...can often obscure alternative

understandings and causal chains' (Balzacq, Léonard and Ruzicka, 2016, p. 505), de-securitization would make them visible and reclaim back their importance.

This change of strategies from eradication to substitution, is what the new concept of *illicit use crops* entails, performs; an attempt to de-stigmatize coca, take away its image of vital threat and de-securitize coca plantations. The outcome of this change is that militarized and forceful strategies are no longer the main strategies to address coca plantations.

Continuing with the identification of the elements of de-securitization, the de-securitizing actors are the Colombian government and FARC. The audiences are the Colombian population, the political opposition, the US and the international community. The reasons why these actors have a position of authority to attempt a de-securitization differs from one another. In the case of the Colombian government, its authority comes from the possibility it has to readdress policies and funding, according to the approach. FARC, on the other hand, has an authority position that is related to its experience: as they partially funded themselves from the economy of drug trafficking, through taxation of traffickers. Moreover, guerrillas experience in drug trafficking also included safeguarding '...the interests of the peasants who cultivate these illegal crops by making sure that traffickers (a) pay on time and (b) pay the market value' (Richani, 1997, p.48). In this sense, FARC's position of authority as a de-securitization actor could be related to their first-hand experiences about coca growers' livelihoods, needs and perceptions of the problem. Having this in mind, the de-securitizing attempt is conducted by a former securitizing actor and, Colombian government; and FARC, which could be considered as representative of coca growers, 'the previously silenced Other' (Coskun, 2011, p.20).

As a result, the 2016 Substitution program presents some fundamental changes regarding the perception of coca growers in the chain of drug production and trafficking. To start, coca growers are considered, along with drug consumers, the weakest link of drug production. As a consequence of this and the deprived conditions of coca growers, the 2016 Substitution program includes a differentiated treatment to coca growers. This means that Colombia's government agreed to temporarily renounce to exert any criminal punishment against coca growers (República de Colombia, FARC, 2016, p.108). Besides, the previous 'zero illicit crops' condition to access alternative development projects, changed in the 2016 Substitution program for an agreement of all the community and a schedule of gradual eradication to have access to the program. This shows a more understanding approach about coca grower's livelihoods. If they grow coca to live, because there is no other option for them, asking them to eradicate their main source of income without having yet anything to replace it; was overlooking their context.

Along the same lines of putting back in context what was consider a threat, several reports about the human face of coca plantation have been published since 2016. In these reports, media present the stories of people who live from growing coca or being *raspachines*, people who pick up the coca leaves. In these reports, people from different regions are presented in a short video or quote, showing their faces and telling their story. Most of them mention as reasons for doing what growing or picking up coca: lack of infrastructure, lack of access to

rural credits, unemployment and in general lack of opportunities for people in rural areas (Especiales Semana, 2017). This new interest on coca growers' and *raspachines*' lives can be framed as well as an attempt to de-securitize coca bush, putting people who grow it, in a context of everyday practices and concerns. This can help 'de-dramatize' the securitized question, as Huysmans put it (2006); and address them within their context. This addressing of a securitized issue within a context means to look at the other aspects that relate to the securitized issue, to take back into consideration everyday aspects that were left out in the securitizing move.

The last element of de-securitization for the analysis are the conditions that point out the need for it. On the one hand, we have the already existing Latin American context, which pointed out for a need of de-securitization, although without further results for the national reality of Colombia. In fact, in 2009 the Latin-American Commission about Drugs and Democracy declared that according to the evidence, the war on drugs was a failed war, which had not produced the expected results. Indeed, the Declaration reads 'we are farther away from the goal of drug eradication' (My translation, 2009, p.5); which is why the Commission proposed a new paradigm based on an approach of public health, prevention and focus of repression on organized crime (2009, p.8). Santos pointed towards the same direction, but he did so only at an international level, leaving national strategies untouched.

On the other hand, according to the analysis conducted in the previous sections, I argue that the external conditions that facilitated the attempt to de-securitize the strategies towards illicit use crops is the fact that both disputants challenged their perceptions of a former enemy and scaled down their aspirations; during peace dialogues. In this sense, it is this encounter with new information about the other and 'the Other' him/herself what allows a challenge of previous perceptions. The reason why this is fundamental in explaining the change between securitization and de-securitization, is that the challenge of the perception of the other in readiness theory, can be paralleled with the de-securitizing move of changing the language and moving away from the threat definition. This means that de-securitization as well as peace negotiation processes are based on the redefinition and recognition of 'the Other', 'the threat', 'the enemy' in different terms from those already existing. The different components and facilitating conditions revised in this section can be found in Table 5.

Finally, it is important to note that I claim that the Program proposed by the 2016 Peace agreement is *an attempt* to de-securitize coca plantation due to the position of Colombia at the international arena and the long standing institutionalization of the securitized strategies. This means that Colombia has not the discursive nor the economic power to overthrow or change by itself the paradigm of the war on drugs and that the successful securitizing move about drugs has kept the same extraordinary measures on place for decades. In this context of unequal state power and securitizing routines to address drugs and coca, the 2016 Program is an *attempt* to de-securitize coca that faces resistances. To take a case in point, Donald Trump, current US President, demanded the renewal of the spraying with herbicide after Santos halted the implementation of the policy. In this sense, the US Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, said: 'We have told them [Colombia] that we have to get back to the spraying, we

got to get back to destroying these fields...’ (C-Span, 2017). To make evident the institutionalization of the securitizing move, it is relevant to point out that Tillerson referred to ‘cocaine fields’ when talking about coca crops.

*Table 5. De-securitization components and analysis of Colombian strategy to fight coca plantations in the Peace agreement*

	<b>De-securitization</b>	<b>Peace agreement 2016</b>
<b>Components</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. De-securitizing Language</li> <li>2. De-securitizing actor</li> <li>3. Audience(s) [Results: Resistances]</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Moving out of the securitizing speech, tacitly and not explicitly. No reference to threats or menaces, but problems.</li> <li>2. Colombian state and FARC</li> <li>3. Colombian population, Colombian political opposition, US, international community</li> </ol>
<b>Facilitating conditions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. The change in the language used to define the previously securitized issue</li> <li>5. Social conditions: position of authority of the DA regarding the audience(s)</li> <li>6. [Context] conditions that point out the necessity for de-securitization</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Changes in language used. -Definition: From Illicit crops to Illicit <i>use</i> crops. -Objective. From eradication/ elimination of crops to substitution of crops /structural transformation of territories</li> <li>5. Colombian government: state apparatus. FARC: authority position related to their connection with drug economy to fund themselves, closer to coca growers’ perception</li> <li>6. Ripe conflict and readiness of the actors.</li> </ol>



## 4. Results and conclusion

This thesis presents a possible explanation for the change of strategies to address coca plantation in Colombia before and after the 2016 Peace agreement. This explanation was done based on the theoretical model drawn on securitization/de-securitization theory and ripeness/readiness theory. Chapter 2 presents the description of both securitization/de-securitization theoretical framework (in section 2.1) and ripeness/readiness theory (in section 2.2) as well as the proposed theoretical model that merges both theories to explain the attempt to de-securitize coca plantation in a context of conflict (in section 2.3).

According with the theoretical model presented in the subsection 2.3, Chapter 3 started with the analysis of the public policies and strategies used to fight coca plantation before the 2016 Peace agreement and identified its securitization components (section 3.1). In sections 3.2 and 3.3, I used ripeness/readiness theory in order to explain the context of the peace negotiations that gave birth to the 2016 Peace agreement. More specifically, section 3.2 explored the concepts of crisis of tactics and crisis of strategy in the 1999 and 2012 peace dialogues and the concepts of Motivation and Optimism in the perception of the conflict of Colombian government and FARC. According to the analysis, 1999 peace dialogues were the result of a crisis of tactics of the conflict wheatear 2012 peace dialogues were the result of a crisis of strategy, and so there was certain degree of readiness of the disputants and thus certain degree of ripeness of the conflict. This means that in 2012 peace talks, the disputants had Motivation and Optimism to end the conflict. Section 3.3 focused on the analysis of the two mechanisms that Motivation has to influence Optimism that are most relevant for this investigation: the scaling down of aspirations (in subsection 3.3.1) and the change of perception of the enemy (in subsection 3.3.2). Finally, section 3.4, identifies the de-securitizing components of the 2016 Substitution program from the Peace agreement.

In line with this analysis, this thesis has three main results. First, that the strategies to address coca plantation before 2016 were the result of a successful securitizing move at an international level, implemented in Colombia through Plan Colombia. In this sense, coca was construed as a vital threat ('illicit crop', 'the bush that kills') and as such, policies to address coca crop aim to completely eliminate, eradicate it; regardless of the consequences (extraordinary measures).

Second, the 2016 Substitution program is an attempt to de-securitize coca plantation in Colombia. In this sense, coca plantation went from being considered a vital threat, to be

considered a challenge and a crop that is not by itself dangerous. In this sense, the language to refer to coca crops went from 'illicit crop' to 'illicit *use* crop', change that acknowledges the existence of the other uses of the plant. Accordingly, the 2016 Substitution program focus on substitution of coca and the structural transformation of territories, rather than coca elimination. Moreover, this attempt to de-securitize coca has encountered resistances from previous securitizing actors, like the US. These resistances can be explained as the result of the institutionalization of the successful securitizing move and the power structures between states.

Third, the change of strategies (from securitization to de-securitization) can be explained by the change of aspirations and of perceptions of 'the Other' by the main disputants of the Colombian conflict. In this sense, the most important changes regarding these two mechanisms were the redefinition of victory and the objectives of confrontation and the acknowledge of 'the Other', the former enemy as a valid interlocutor. On the one hand disputants' aspirations changed from defeating FARC (Colombian government) or changing the regime through armed revolution (FARC), to achieve peace (Colombian government) and have a real democracy with social justice (FARC). On the other hand, regarding the change of perceptions of 'the Other', both disputants stopped referring to one another as terrorists and instead were recognized as a valid interlocutor: a political subversive group (FARC) and a courageous interlocutor (Colombian government).

To sum up, the attempt to de-securitize coca plantation at a national level in Colombia- and not only discursively at an international level- that the 2016 Peace agreement represents; can be explained by the scaling down of aspirations and the change of perception of 'the Other' that was done due to the ripeness/readiness of the Colombian conflict. This means that the attempt to de-securitize coca plantation in 2016 Peace agreement, can be explained by the ripeness/readiness of the Colombian conflict. More specifically, the de-securitizing attempt can be explained by the change of aspirations and of perceptions of 'the Other' by the disputants of a conflict.

Now, the relevance of this thesis can be framed in academic and political terms. To start, this investigation has sought to create a dialogue between securitization theory and theories about conflict resolution. In relation to the literature of securitization associated with the Copenhagen School, this thesis contributes to the group of attempts to apply securitization to empirical cases and the small group that tries to do so in non-European cases. Moreover, the emphasis on both securitization and de-securitization, allows an analysis that contributes to the further development of the untheorized concept of de-securitization. Regarding the political relevance of this thesis, it is important to point that given the fact that the 2016 peace agreement is being currently implemented, this analysis could inform public policy processes as well as the construction of a political stand that is more aware of the political implications and difficulties of this move and the probable new coming conflicts.

Finally, further research about the matter studied in this thesis, could focus on the role and the position of other actors that were and still are part of this attempt to de-securitize coca plantation in Colombia like: international organizations, facilitating states during the peace

negotiations, other states (i.e. US), indigenous organizations, coca growers (who have started to organize themselves) and other armed actors.

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# Appendix 1 Crisis of tactics in 1999 Peace negotiations in Colombia

In 1998 Andrés Pastrana was elected president of Colombia, and as promised in his campaign, he started a peace dialogue with FARC. Pastrana met FARC's condition of demilitarizing five municipalities of the southeast of Colombia (FARC, 1998). This demilitarized zone (DMZ), was approximately 42.139 km<sup>2</sup> big (El Tiempo, 2010b), about the size of Switzerland. Consequently, on January 1999 the peace talks table with FARC were installed in one of the municipalities of the DMZ, San Vicente del Caguán. These talks had several moments of crisis, due to various reasons, that in their majority can be related to two big questions.

First, the negotiations were stuck due to the disagreement about some of the conditions to be met to continue the negotiations. For instance, the government insisted on the need to have a commission of verification for the DMZ, so that it was not used for military purposes (Bolívar Ramírez, 2006). From June to September 1999 the dialogues were broken, as FARC did not agree on having such a commission. It was not until the Colombian government desisted about the requirement of a verification commission or an accompanying commission, that the dialogues could continue (Bolívar Ramírez, 2006). Similarly, on October 2001, the peace talks were in crisis due to the governmental decision of controlling the limits of the DMZ. This measure was unacceptable for FARC (Bolívar Ramírez, 2006).

The dialogues were also frozen for what FARC claimed as an 'insufficient fight against paramilitaries'. FARC had repeatedly claimed that 'paramilitarism was a State's counterinsurgency strategy, developed by Colombia's Army, whose absurd objective was to defeat guerrillas killing civilians' (1999). In fact, paramilitaries' expansion and crimes were committed with the support of Colombia's Army (Verdad Abierta, 2012). And according to Restrepo and Spagat (2004, p.14), 70% of paramilitaries' activities consisted on massacring civilians.

The other set of reasons why the peace talks went through several crisis, was the continuation of violent acts while having the peace dialogues. Indeed, between 1996 and 2005 there was an escalation and intensification of the conflict, a period with a major upsurge in the conflict (Restrepo, Spagat y Vargas, 2006, p.106). During this period, a person was injured by an antipersonnel mine each day and a person was kidnapped every eight hours (GMH, 2013, p.34). Terrorist acts went from 10 before 1995 to 63 between 1996 and 2004 (GMH, 2013,

p.102). 70% of the big massacres committed during the internal conflict were committed in this period of escalation (GMH, 2013, p.50). Consequently to the rising violence, the number of people displaced in Colombia went from 819.510 before 1995 to 2.014.893 in 2002 (GMH, 2013, p.71).

These two set of crisis ultimately a great amount of distrust between the actors. On the night of the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2002, after FARC hijacked a commercial airliner and kidnapped Senator Jorge Gechem (Beittel, 2012, p.14), Pastrana announced the end of the peace negotiations.

FARC and the Colombian government were not in the 'readiness' stage when the peace talks started in 1999. This means that the conflict was not ripe for a negotiated solution. Instead, these peace talks were part of a revision of tactics of the conflict, and as such an instance to mainly re-arm themselves. To evidence if the actors were in a readiness stage it is important to first define if they perceived the conflict as dysfunctional. To recap, a conflict is perceived as dysfunctional if (a) the actor perceives the conflict is not being won or that it is being lost or the actor perceives continuing the conflict results in (b) increasing costs or (c) increasing risks.

In the case of FARC, for instance, it is improbable they would consider the conflict was dysfunctional. At the end of the 1990s, FARC were stronger than ever, with '...an estimated of 18.000 full-time members and 12.000 militia members in 1999' (Chernick, 2005 quoted by Jonsson, Brennan and O'Hara, 2016, p.547) and the control of 40% of the national territory according to some observers (Beittel, 2015, p.5). Consider that during the 1990s FARC were able to occupy six military bases in five different departments of Colombia (Medina Arbelaez, 2008, p.11). Additionally, the economic bonanza pushed by their incursion into drug trafficking, gave them the resources '...to a steady increase in recruitment, armed actions, geographic mobility, military capacity, and technological prowess' (Chernick, 2005, p.179).

In this sense, it was unlikely that FARC would perceive they were losing the conflict, or that the costs or the risks were too high to continue. Instead, they considered the conflict was about to be fruitful, as their ultimate objective to take over the state's power, was closer than ever. This can be evidenced in the change of their attitude towards the local political class of regions they had social and political influence. In 1997, it changed from coexistence to absolute animosity against any state presence (GMH, 3012, p.164). Even Colombians thought FARC would someday take the power by force, as was revealed by the results of a poll published in 1999 (DeShazo, Mendelson Forman, and McLean, 2009, p.10).

The case of Colombia's state was different, they did consider the conflict was dysfunctional. According to what was described before, during the 1990s, Colombia experienced the expansion of drug trafficking, insurgent groups and paramilitaries while having a weak state power and institutions to face them. Washington's perception about Colombia was that it was about to implode (Crandall, 2002, 163). Indeed, Colombia was facing a 'potential state failure'

(DeShazo, Mendelson Forman, and McLean, 2009, p.1). And undoubtedly, that was also the perception of Colombia's new head of state in 1998, Andrés Pastrana. At his presidential inauguration speech, he referred to the 'deep damages that the narcotraffic phenomena has had in Colombia' which included environmental destruction, the promotion of corruption, violence and an increasing drug consumption. He then continues stating that '*if Colombia survives* despite so many disgraces is only because of the moral strength of a population to face them' (Andrés Pastrana Arango, 2015a). This means Colombia's state perceived it was losing the conflict and as such, the conflict was perceived as a source of great risk. Admittedly, Colombia's traditional state was at stake.

So FARC had no reason to perceive the conflict as too risky or costly, whereas Colombia's state was almost collapsed, and as such perceived the conflict as dysfunctional. The peace process with FARC, could be read as a reflection of Colombia's readiness stage, as it perceived both the dysfunctionality of the conflict, which constituted a Motivation to end the conflict and the Optimism of having a negotiated way out of it (Pruitt, 2005). However, according to Pruitt, the initial perception of a conflict being dysfunctional would likely lead the disputant '...to seek a better way to wage the conflict, not to end it' (2005, p.16). It was indeed, the first time that Colombia seemed about to lose the conflict against a guerrilla. Moreover, it seems unlikely that the Government of Colombia was at a readiness state, looking for a negotiated end to the conflict, given the distrust and the power imbalance between the actors. This power imbalance was something both actors were aware of, which is why Colombia's government kept on giving in and FARC kept on showing its strength. In fact, this imbalance of power could as well make evident for Colombia's state that FARC had no reason to be in a readiness stage.

In short, nor FARC or Colombia's state were at a readiness stage. On one side, FARC didn't consider the conflict was dysfunctional. On the other, Colombia's state considered the conflict was dysfunctional, but at the same time was aware of the power imbalance in the peace process or fighting the conflict. Furthermore, following Pruitt (2005), as this perception of dysfunctionality of the conflict was initial for Colombia's state, it was probable that it would lead to a revision of tactics rather than a revision of strategies.

For these reasons, I argue that 1999 peace talks were used by both actors to fulfill interests that were beyond the negotiations, which is the objective of peace dialogues that are done to deceive (Iklé, 1964, p.51 quoted by Ghosn, 2010, p.1058). These interests beyond the peace negotiations were the revision of tactics to continue the conflict. As it was already mentioned, the revision of tactics can be done in three ways: escalation of the conflict, co-optation and/or coalition building. The 1999-initiated peace talks between Colombia's government and FARC, evidence two of them. I will develop this idea in the following paragraphs, as I refer to what each actor did during the peace process.

In the case of FARC, the preparation to escalate the conflict can be evidenced in the 'misusage' of the DMZ. This was one of the main accusations of Pastrana when he ended the

peace dialogues in 2002. During his speech Pastrana showed the results of the DMZ surveillance he ordered to General Tapias. This report, he says, proves that FARC have used the DMZ for purposes beyond the purpose they agreed on, that is to have the peace talks. According to the report, FARC had built in the DMZ about new 25 clandestine airstrips, facilities, roads into the forest and training camps; they had also expanded the plantation of coca crops and used the DMZ to have contact with international terrorists (Andrés Pastrana Arango, 2015b). Indeed, after the peace dialogues, the estimates of FARC combatants rose to 20.776 (Noticias RCN, 2015) and between 1999 and 2002, FARC kidnapped 43% of all the people kidnapped by FARC in 40 years (Cifras y Conceptos, 2017). Additionally, Colombia presented in 1999 and 2000 the highest number of hectares of coca bushes cultivated (160,119 and 163,289 respectively) and the highest projected manufacture of cocaine (680 metric tons and 695 metric tons respectively) (UNODC, 2002, p.57)

On the other hand, Colombian government revision of tactics were focused on preparing for escalating the conflict and collaboration building with the US, specifically. In this sense, Colombia's new president, Pastrana, meant a resurgence of bilateral relations with the US. In this sense, Colombia's government had, in March 1999, the first Defense Bilateral Working Group (BWG) with the US. This BWG offered a '...clear break with the Samper years and clear[ed] the way for specific progress on human rights, military justice reform, and military institutional reform as well as counternarcotics issues' (U.S. Congress, 1999a). In this sense, Colombian Army started creating in 1999 '...a special Counternarcotics Battalion with US Army assistance [to support] the CNP [Colombian National Police] in their efforts to move counterdrug operations into the Putumayo region.' (U.S. Congress, 1999b). To add to this military aid strategy, on July 2000 the US president, sanctioned the legislation that supported Plan Colombia. This plan provided \$1.3 billion for counternarcotics (Crandall, 2002, p.160) and was exclusively focused on interdiction, eradication programs and giving support for aerial eradication (Beittel, 2012, p.36).

Moreover, Pastrana started a professionalization of soldiers and a militarization of the State, through 'Plan 10.000'. This Plan was announced shortly after Pastrana's inauguration and its objective was to '...professionalise the army by training 10,000 new soldiers per year in *counterinsurgency* not drug interdiction (as such)' (Mendez, 2017). The US funded such training. As a result, '...between 1998 and 2002, the armed forces in Colombia grew by 60% to 132.000' (Beittel, 2015, p.11).

In this sense, Colombia's government not only revised its tactics through escalating the conflict, re-arming itself; it also built a coalition with US, to reinforce the militarization of the State through Plan Colombia. Although the coalition built with paramilitary groups is not going to be explored here, it is significant to mention that it existed (GMH, 2013). This coalition between paramilitary groups and the Military forces continued until the former group demobilized in 2005.

Now, both ways of revising tactics escalation and coalition building, were acknowledged by FARC, who persistently accused Colombian government of being hypocritical as it

...demanded from FARC 'peace gestures', while at the same time escalates the confrontation with the formation of the Military Forces and the Police, encourages the terrorism of paramilitary groups with the open participation of military commanders and develops Plan Colombia which was commanded by the US (FARC, 2002)

Given the evidence, I can argue that indeed, when Pastrana installed the peace talks table with FARC, it was due to a crisis of tactics. This means that both actors used peace talks to find new ways of continuing the ongoing conflict through escalation and coalition building. In fact, Granada, Restrepo and Vargas agree that '...it was not just about the military adjustments of FARC, taking advantage of the peace negotiations and the DMZ. The escalation was deeply related with the organization restructure, the strategic reorientation, the doctrine changes and the use of new technologies by the public forces of the state; all of which started with Pastrana's administration' (2009, p. 40).

The escalation that started in Pastrana's administration and continued with next president's mandate, Álvaro Uribe. In fact, Restrepo, Spagat and Vargas (2006, p.106) observe that there was an escalation and intensification of the conflict, between 1996 and 2005, a period with a major upsurge in the conflict. This continued intensification of the conflict after the peace dialogues ended, responded to a change of status of FARC, from an armed insurgency group to a terrorist organization. This discursive change from insurgency to terrorism, happened at an international and a national level.

When Plan Colombia was presented to the US Congress, Clinton's administration showed that US aid was specifically to fight the war on drugs in one of the source countries and not to support counterinsurgency. This was done with the goal of guaranteeing political support in the US Congress, so that the concern of Plan Colombia leading the US to 'another Vietnam' was dissipated. However, this discursive differentiation between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency in US' aid blurred after the events of September 9<sup>th</sup> 2011.

In this direction, when Pastrana ended the peace talks with FARC on February 2002, he made specific emphasis on the change of their status, and their decision of going from a political actor to a terrorist organization. He said that FARC

...have denied themselves a political space in the country. After the horrible events of last 9th September, I told the guerrilla [...] that it was up to them to define themselves through their acts, either they are a group of political insurgency or they are a terrorist organization. [...] Sadly, today they sign their own definition and nobody can doubt that between politics and terrorism, FARC chose terrorism' (My translation, Andrés Pastrana Arango, 2015b)

Finally, along the same lines of fighting terrorism, Uribe, who 'promise[d] an uncompromising 'hard hand' against the insurgents' (Forero, 2012), won the presidential elections of 2002. Within his mandate, FARC and drug trafficking were issues that were no



longer treated as separate issues (Beittel, 2015, p.11), which was something that matched perfectly Bush's approach (Benneyworth, 2016, p.108).

About this, it is important to note that this change in their status will be something fundamental for the following stage of the conflict and a central issue to consider the possibility of a dialogue in 2012. It is due to this change of status that the difference between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency completely blurred away. Before, 9/11 helping to defeat guerrillas, as insurgent groups, was to overstep on other countries sovereignty, as was the case of US involvement in Vietnam (Crandall, 2002). Conversely, the war on drugs or the war on terrorism, allowed for special measures, as happens with every successful securitizing move, as showed in Chapter 2. Following this idea, supporting the Colombian government to defeat guerrillas was not anymore a matter of sovereignty, it was an issue of global security, of defeating terrorism.

This change of status of FARC and guerrillas in general in Colombia, in hand with the global war on terrorism that followed the 9/11; made a more aggressive military actions against FARC something desirable for the US and something that they would economically support (Crandall, 2002, p.159; Beittel, 2002, p.31). This explains the escalation of the conflict that followed the end of the peace dialogues and Uribe's mandate.

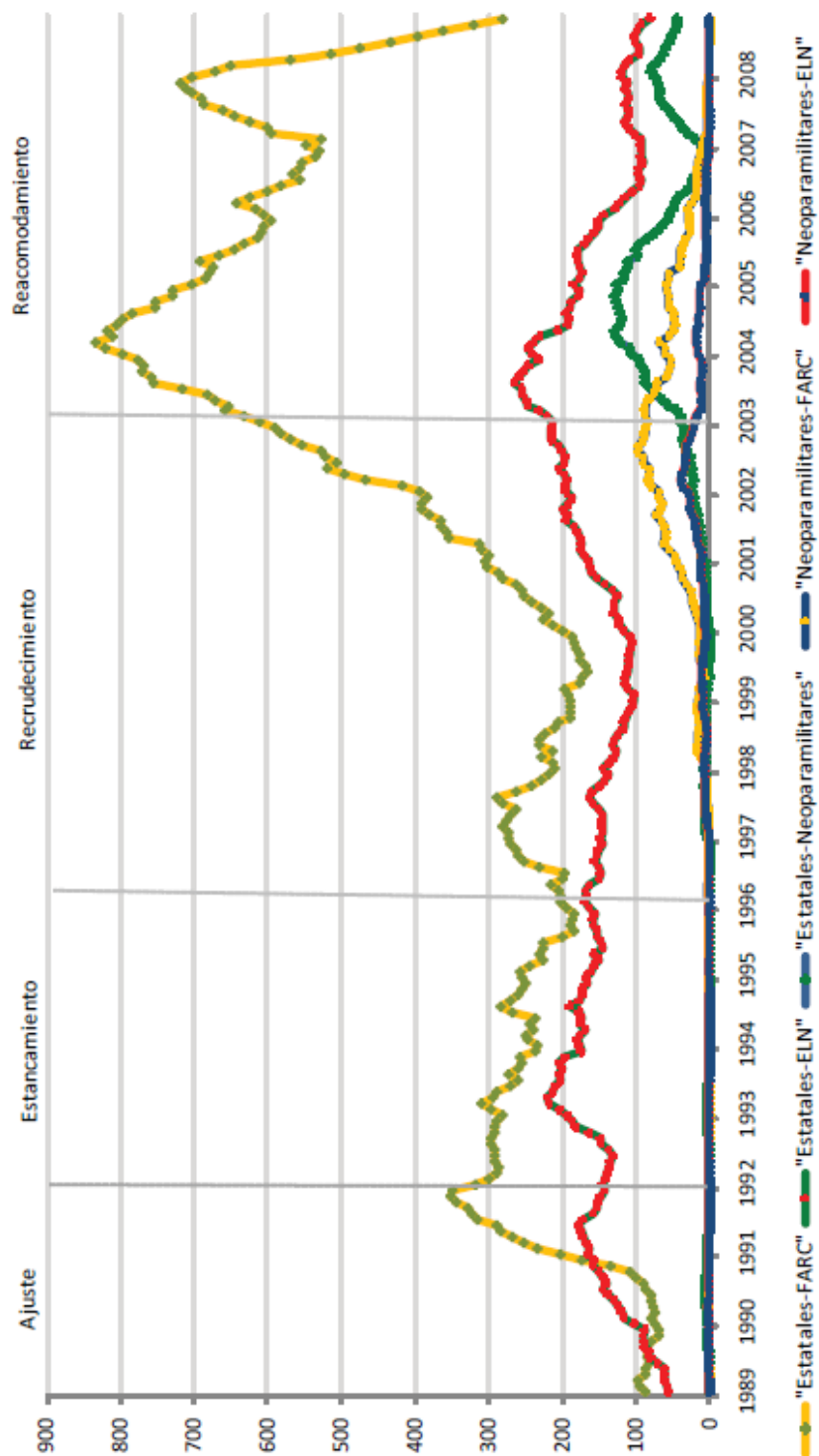
Uribe's mandate went around the 'Democratic security policy', which focus was to defeat guerrillas (Beittel, 2015, p.12). As part of this policy, at the end of 2003 and the beginning of 2004, Plan Patriota was launched (Beittel, 2015, p.12). This Plan was the mayor offensive done against FARC in the last 40 years. It had the objective to take back urban areas of the country and the southern region of Colombia, which was considered FARC's rear (Semana, 2006). It was the start of a strong counterinsurgent offensive. This military effort increased Colombia's troop strength to 445.000 in 2010 (GMH, 2013, p.179) and the expenditure on Defense reached in 2003 and 2009 more than 4% of Colombia's Gross Domestic Product (Otero-Prada, 2016, p.49). The military expenditure of Colombia, between 1998 and 2012 was 12% of government spending, having its peak in 2008 with 13,9% (SIPRI, 2017).

In this sense, the conflict continued and escalated in a different way. As it is shown in Figure 6, combats between the National Army and FARC started increasing since 1999 and continued to do so until it reached its mayor peak in 2004. This explains the change of number of deaths directly produced by the conflict, which switched from being mainly civilians before to 2002 to be predominantly combatants after 2002. This can be seen in Figure 7. Indeed, it was a different escalation of the conflict.

This analysis allows to point out certain aspects about readiness theory. First, non-honest peace talks can be a reflection of the crisis of tactics and the revisions that are trying to be made, as they are used as a way to gain time to go back better armed to the battlefield. Second, it is not necessary to perceive the conflict as dysfunctional to revise your own tactics, as was the case of FARC. Although they did not consider the conflict as being dysfunctional, they

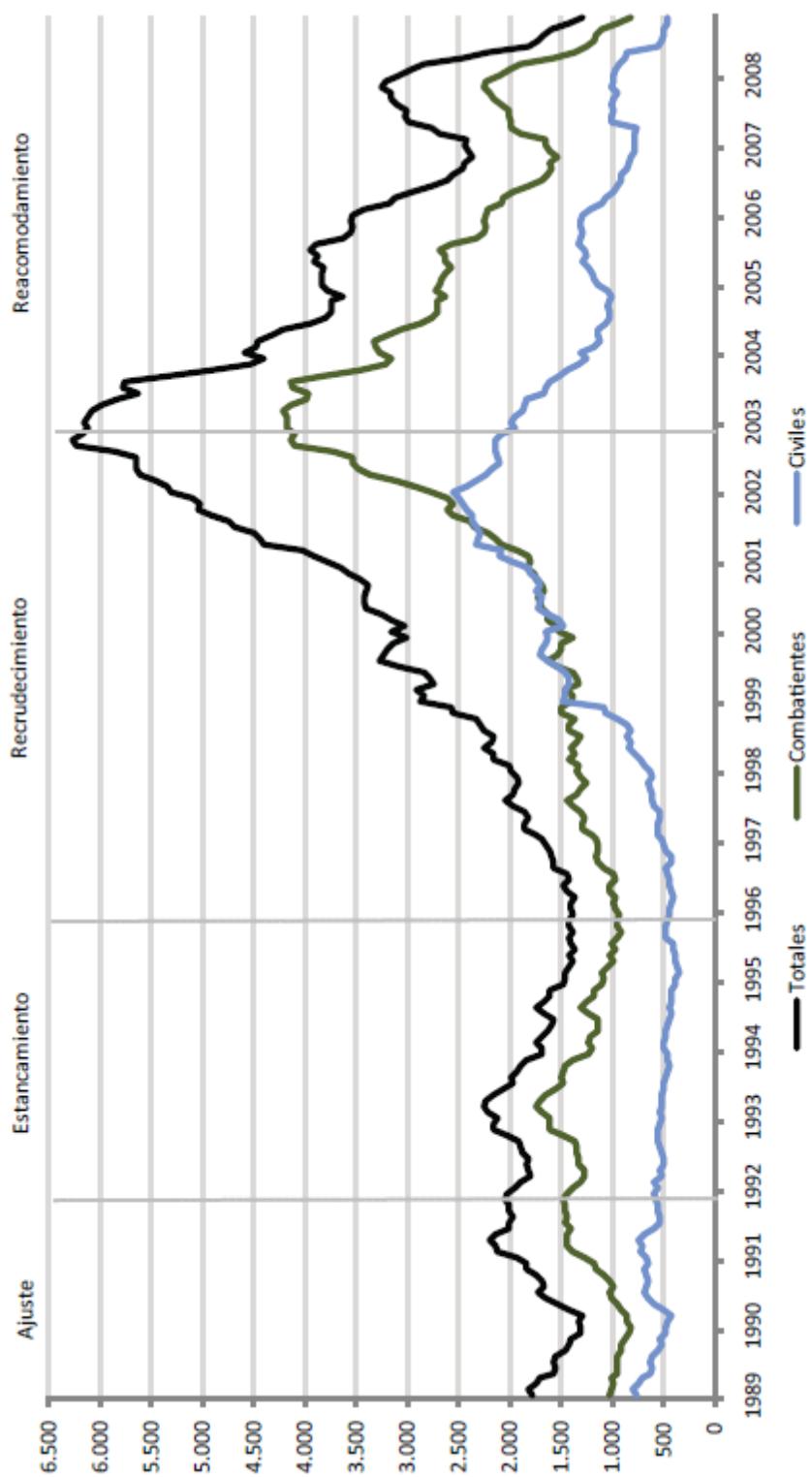
did accept to be part of the peace talks even if just to strengthen themselves. Third, to analyze the position of both actors in a separate way, as Pruitt (2005) suggests, is important as it allows to approach the ripeness moment in a more accurate way.

Figure 6. Combats per dyadas, Colombia 1988-2008



Source: Granada, Restrepo and Vargas, 2009, p.41.

Figure 7. Direct deaths of the conflict, Colombia 1988-2008



Source: Granada, Restrepo and Vargas, 2009, p.41.