The Role of International Actors in the Negotiation Process Between the Colombian Government and the Farc-Ep: a Necessary and Controlled Participation

Rol de Actores Internacionales en el Proceso de Negociación de Entre el Gobierno Colombiano y las Farc-Ep: Una Participación Necesaria y Controlada

O Papel dos Actores Internacionais no Processo de Negociação Entre o Governo Colombiano e a Farc-Ep: Uma Participação Necessária e Controlada

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Abstract

One of the major objectives of the Juan Manuel Santos´ (2010-2018) administration was the consolidation and completion of the negotiation process for an agreement with the FARC-EP to end the armed conflict between these parts. To achieve this, it was necessary to mobilize and align the state apparatus, including foreign policy. The objective of this article is to determine the role played by the international community in the negotiation process between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP guerrilla group in the Cuban capital. The above, concealed by a qualitative method based on the press' documentary review and official speeches. This article demonstrates that Colombian foreign policy established as objectives, on the one hand, to internationalize the process to obtain legitimacy and support in a possible post-conflict phase, but also to limit, between negotiations, the participation of the different international actors.

Keywords: Colombian Foreign Policy, Havana´s Negotiation Process, Neoclassical Realism, Internationalization.

Resumen

Uno de los grandes objetivos de la administración de Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) fue la consolidación y finalización del proceso de negociación de un acuerdo con las FARC-EP que pusieran fin al conflicto armado entre estas

partes. Para su logro, fue necesario la movilización y alineación del aparato estatal, incluyendo a la política exterior. El objetivo del presente artículo consiste en determinar el rol jugado por la comunidad internacional en el proceso de negociación entre el gobierno colombiano y el grupo guerrillero Farc-Ep, en la capital cubana. Lo anterior, bajo un método de corte cualitativo, basado en la revisión documental de prensa y de discursos oficiales. El articulo evidencia que la política exterior colombiana estableció como objetivos, por una parte, internacionalizar el proceso con la pretensión de lograr legitimidad y respaldo en una eventual etapa de posconflicto, pero también limitar, durante las negociaciones, la participación de los diferentes actores internacionales.

Palabras Clave: Política Exterior Colombiana, Proceso de Negociación de la Habana, Realismo neoclásico, Internacionalización.

Resumo

Um dos principais objetivos da administração de Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) era a consolidação e conclusão do processo de negociação de um acordo com as FARC-EP que pusesse fim ao conflito armado entre estas partes. Para o conseguir, foi necessário mobilizar e alinhar o aparelho de Estado, incluindo a política externa. O objetivo deste artigo é determinar o papel desempenhado pela comunidade internacional no processo de negociação entre o governo colombiano e o grupo guerrilheiro das FARC-EP na capital cubana. O acima exposto, sob um método qualitativo, baseado numa revisão documental da imprensa e em discursos oficiais. O artigo mostra que a política externa colombiana estabeleceu como objetivos, por um lado, internacionalizar o processo com o objetivo de conseguir legitimidade e apoio numa eventual fase pós-conflito, mas também limitar, durante as negociações, a participação dos diferentes atores internacionais.

Palavras-chave: Política Externa Colombiana, Processo de Negociação de Havana, Realismo Neoclássico, Internacionalização.

Introduction

Colombia´s foreign policy during the two Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) administrations, experienced a turning point regarding the way the previous administration was conducted. This change is expressed in aspects such as the restoration of battered relations with neighbouring countries (Ecuador and Venezuela), reincorporation into regional dynamics, active participation in multilateral spaces, the use of South-South cooperation as a foreign policy instrument (GONZÁLEZ; MESA; MONTOYA, 2018), among others. However, perhaps the main bet of both government periods was the consolidation of the negotiation process with the FARC-EP. While the search for resolution of the armed conflict is largely at the root of domestic policy, because of the different levels of internationalization achieved by the Colombian conflict, much of the country´s foreign policy was directed towards this main objective. One of the aims of the country´s foreign policy, before and during the formal commencement of negotiations, was to involve the international community, seeking to legitimize the process, to obtain political support and to procure commitments in international cooperation for the post-conflict phase. Therefore, the objective of this article is to characterize the international commu-

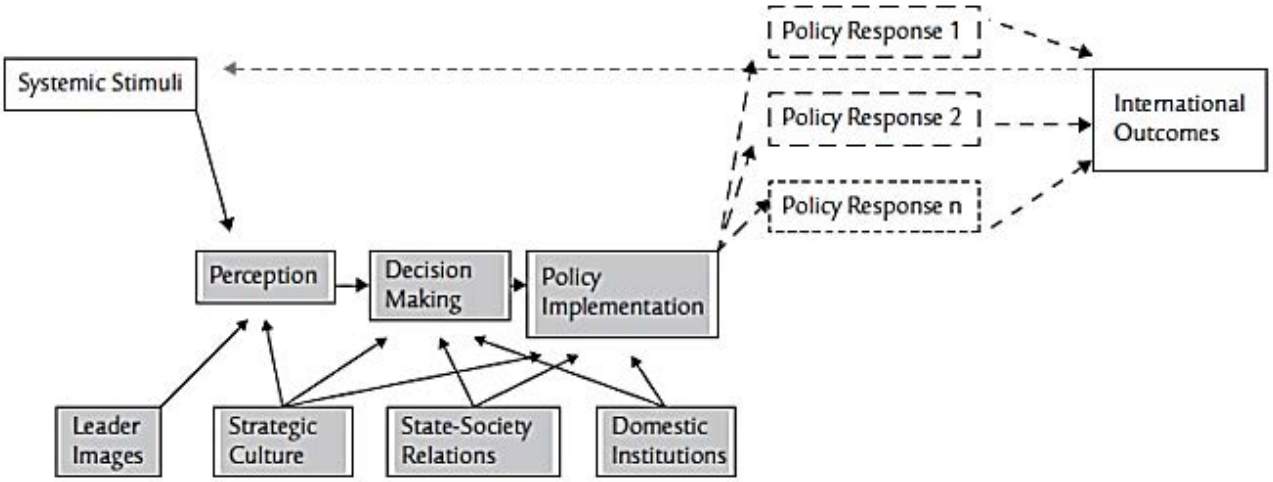
nity´s participation in the negotiation process. It is based on the assumption that such participation was limited and controlled by the Colombian government. That is, the country´s foreign policy, understood as a strategic and intentional construction, incorporated as one of its objectives, limited participation of the international community in the process. This article is structured in four parts. The first is responsible for presenting and justifying the selection of the theoretical reference, which consists of an adaptation of the neoclassical realism developments. The second section is responsible for presenting a brief contextualization of the Colombian armed conflict and the manners in which it has internationalized and influenced the State´s foreign policy. The following analyses the different roles, limits and scopes of international participation during the negotiation process in Havana. Finally, a series of reflections and conclusions are given.

Theoretical and conceptual references

This article is developed based on the neoclassical realism theory (NCR). The neoclassical realistic research program has a renewed interest in reconciling the relationship between internal, external, and ideational factors (GONZÁLEZ; MUÑOZ, 2020, p. 26), which are assumed as diatomic by various theories of International Affair.

Based on this argument, the theory postulates four dimensions, the first being the independent variable, which corresponds to the stimuli perceived from the international system. Then, there are the so-called intervening variables, which consist of variables of the level of units: perceptions of leaders making foreign policy decisions, the strategic culture of the state, institutional design around foreign policy and the State-Society relationship. Concerning the introduction of the variables involved, (FERNANDES, 2015) states that it results in the possibility of relativizing the assumption of rationality of agents, considering contexts of distortion and incomplete information, as well as perceptions nuanced by institutional and historical features (FERNANDES, 2015, p. 206). The third group of variables, at the intermediate level, is the foreign policy process: the realisation of the perception process, decision-making and the subsequent policy implementation; that is, that these factors work to "channel, mediate and (re) direct" foreign policy (SCHWELLER, 2004). Finally, there is the dependent variable, which corresponds to the foreign policy response made by the State.

Figure 1: Neoclassical Realism Model



Source: (RIPSMAN; TALIAFERRO; LOBELL, 2016, p. 34)

Another aspect highlighted by the NCR is that it places importance on foreign policy executives (FPE). In high proportion, a state´s foreign policy is influenced and formulated by a small group of high-level leaders and officials. Neoclassical realists consider that foreign policy is not a faithful and accurate reflection of the state´s power capabilities, since, at the moment of the design and decision-making process, involving elites and leaders, there are distortions mediated by the perceptions of those decision-makers and limitations regarding the use of such resources. But these distortions do not necessarily imply inhibition of the implementation of foreign policy and objectives, more than that, they can also facilitate and expedite this process.

For this analysis, emphasis is placed on the variables involved in perceptions of decision-making leaders in foreign policy and the state´s strategic culture.

About the former, leaders make such decisions based to a large extent on their perceptions and calculations of the relative power and intentions of other states. The leader´s images are presented as cognitive filters that intervene the time leaders process information from the international environment: what they pay attention to, when and how to prepare to respond to possible threats and opportunities (TALIAFERRO, 2006, p. 485) and (RIPSMAN; TALIAFERRO; LOBELL, 2016, p. 34). Strategic culture is due to all interrelated beliefs, norms and assumptions; it is assumed as a state memory, which intervenes as guidance to leaders and decision-makers about possible paths, methods and strategies to be employed in response to a foreign policy situation. It provides information to decision-makers, about what is appropriate or inappropriate, based on the country´s tradition of external behaviour. This is a political calculation, sometimes the level of threat or opportunity can lead to action against the strategic culture.

For this analysis and following the theoretical references, the foreign policy shall be understood as a state strategy with projection towards other states, actors and conditions at the international level where the priorities, objectives, means and instruments necessary to achieve them are mani-

festly, intentionally and consented to. It is formulated by people in official or authority positions. The formulation process involves both actors (interest groups, elites, organised civil society, the media, subnational governments, non-governmental organizations, among others) as well as factors (the image of decision-makers, ideational, cultural, state institutionality, state-to-society relationship, among others) (GONZÁLEZ, 2021, p. 22)

A short brief on Colombian internal armed conflict.

The researchers´ group of the National Centre for Historical Memory of Colombia (2014), divide the Colombian armed conflict into four stages. The first between 1958 and 1982, a stage characterized by the transition from partisan to subversive violence, in this period the creation of guerrilla groups were energized. The second, between 1982 and 1996, a stage essentially marked by international influenced, the decline of the Cold War along with the positioning of drug trafficking on the global agenda, as well as an almost exponential expansion of the guerrilla groups that marked the state´s institutionality. The third, between 1996 and 2005, a stage influenced by an issue that redrawn the international stage in military terms, and the fight against terrorism, fuelled by the escalate of armed conflict due to the simultaneous expansion of guerrillas and paramilitary groups. The fourth, between 2005 and the present, a stage marked by a state´s military offensive in terms of counterinsurgent fighting and peace process that developed Juan Manuel Santos's government with the FARC-EP, a process supported by the international community.

It should be emphasized that there is no consensus at the beginning of Colombia´s internal armed conflict. Different authors have postulated that the conflict in Colombia dates to the beginning of the republican stage at the beginning of the nineteenth century, others start the stage of the violence, initiated after the assassination of the liberal warlord Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. There is also a legal precedent that frames the beginning of the internal armed conflict in 1985, this precedent is law 1448 of 2011 which entered into force during the Juan Manuel Santos government, a law that, among others, recognises the existence of the conflict and its political and social causes (YEPES, 2018) cited by (MESA; YEPES, 2020).

There is also no consensus on the dates of foundation of Colombian guerrillas, however, there is a coincidence that the creation of these takes place in the 1960s, in which the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC for its acronyms in Spanish), The National Liberation Army (ELN for its acronyms in Spanish) and the People´s Liberation Army (EPL for its acronyms in Spanish) are simultaneously born (MESA; YEPES, 2020).

It can be said that there is a common ideological denominator in the creation of the Colombian guerrilla organizations, composed of the peasant heritage of land struggles and discontent with the restrictions on political participation of the *Frente Nacional*[4] (the National Front), the influence of the Chinese and Cuban revolutions and even the May revolution of ´68 in France and the mobilization against the Vietnam War in the United States, as well as the lack of guarantees for political participation (MESA; YEPES, 2020). In fact, this latter aspect was the trigger for the

4. In the history of Colombia it is known as "***El Frente Nacional*** (The National Front)", a period between 1958 and 1974 during which, thanks to a great agreement, the main Colombian political parties, Liberals and Conservatives divided power, excluding from it all the other political movements that existed at that historical time in Colombia (MESA, 2009, p. 159).

creation of the April 19th Movement (M-19), created in 1970 because of voter fraud in that year´s presidential elections.

Between 1970 and 1980, different subversive organizations emerged whom gradually signed peace processes. These include the Worker´s Revolutionary Party (PRT for its acronyms in Spanish) and the *Quintín Lame* Movement, the latter in the claim of indigenous territories.

In addition to the guerrilla groups, the phenomenon of paramilitarism emerged in the 1990s (GRUPO DE MEMORIA HISTÓRICA, 2014). In the beginning, they were considered "Cooperatives of surveillance and private security", they led to the creation of the so-called United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC for its acronyms in Spanish), considering themselves as "a Political-Military movement of an anti-subversive nature in the exercise of the right to a legitimate self-defence" (*EL TIEMPO*, 1997).

Given the previous context, it can be said that from the middle of the twentieth century to the present day the armed conflict has been part of Colombian political history, therefore domestic and foreign policy has suffered from conditioning. As Carolina Yepes (2018, p. 9) states "domestic policy on the end of the armed conflict in Colombia, has largely conditioned and directed the formulation, design and implementation of the foreign policy of the different Colombian governments"

One of the first recognitions of the armed conflict as a political problem was carried out by President Belisario Betancur (1982-1986). Prior to this date, this issue was considered more of a problem of public order and internal treatment in government policy, but from that point onwards there was a kind of political recognition to the uprising in arms (GRUPO DE MEMORIA HISTÓRICA, 2013). Belisario Betancur was the first president to devise an international strategy to support his efforts to achieve peace at a local level, i.e., the design of a foreign policy strategy. Although this strategy cannot be defined in the strict sense as an internationalisation strategy, it was an important effort to validate the peace process and make it more coherent (BORDA, 2012).

The government that succeeded Betancur, that of Virgilio Barco (1986-1990) accelerate a peace process with the M-19. To this end, it prevented the armed conflict from permeating the country´s foreign policy agenda, as the main interest in this policy focused on obtaining resources for strengthening the economy. However, at the end of this government, as García (1992, p. 187) mentions, there was an interest in negotiating with the FARC-EP, who proposed as mediators, former US President Jimmy Carter and Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez "which meant a new interest in linking the conflict to the international context" (MESA; YEPES, 2020) and, therefore, a new foreign policy strategy, designed and implemented from an internal condition.

Between 1990 and 1994 during the Cesar Gaviria government, it was characterized in foreign policy by the restoration of bilateral relations with Cuba in the context of the process that was ahead with the M-19, so that it is again observed, the domestic nuances in the State´s foreign policy.

> Even amid the sharp escalation of violence during the last two decades of the twentieth century and the deployment of an extensive repertoire of peace initiatives, as occurred during the administrations of […] Belisario Betancur

> (1982-1986), Virgilio Barco (1986-1990) and César Gaviria (1990-1994) administrations, there was no considerable external participation. Nor was there any strategy to link the peace processes in place to multilateral actors such as the UN or the OAS, although there were some calls in this regard from different sectors (FAWCETT, 2012, p. 117).

On the other hand, in Ernesto Samper´s government (1994-1998) several developments in international relations and foreign policy took place and had a direct connection to the armed conflict. This is the case with the submission to the Congress of the Republic of Additional Protocol II to the Geneva conventions, which involves regulations relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts, this is a clear example of how internal and external stimuli coexist in the formulation of the Colombian State´s foreign policy strategies.

Attempts at peace with the FARC-EP and the ELN were constant in the Samper government, while as Tokatlian (2000) argues, the president´s attempts to seek greater support abroad for his initiatives were constant, through different actions in the pursuance of his government´s foreign policy.

Although the foreign policy was often conditioned in these periods, previous dynamics of cases of internationalisation of the armed conflict were isolated and unsystematic. Nevertheless, as Borda (2012) highlights, subsequent governments (Pastrana and Uribe) had clear foreign policy strategies concerning the armed conflict.

One of the most active governments in international dynamics, given the peace process that went ahead with the FARC-EP, was that of Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002). This negotiation, known as the *Caguán* peace process, turned the interest of the international community to the country. A clear demonstration of this was the US interest in supporting a dialogued solution to the conflict with this guerrilla group. In fact, as Rojas (2007, p. 49 - 50) indicates:

> At the beginning of the negotiation process with the FARC, the United States was inclined to support this alternative, albeit with some discrepancy. The State Department thought it was possible to apply in Colombia the strategic approach undertaken in El Salvador in the late 1980s. This approach avoided direct intervention and favoured escalating assistance in the form of equipment, training and intelligence technology, to defeat guerrilla groups and create conditions for a negotiated solution.

As Mesa and Yepes (2020) indicate, the Pastrana government begins one of the stages of further internationalisation of the Colombian armed conflict, since, through foreign policy strategies, the famous *"Plan Colombia"* (Colombia Plan) was signed. Although, at the outset, this plan was explicitly anti-narcotic in nature and not directly alluded to the subversive fight, after 11th September 2001, in the context of the World War against terrorism, the inclusion of counter-terrorism in the structure of the plan was facilitated.

> With strategies like this, war has ceased to be internal, it has become externalized, opening the way to interventions in the country´s internal affairs and its external relations. Its preponderance has been accentuated inversely proportional to the weakness or strength of the Colombian state on its triple front against drug traffickers, insurgency and counterinsurgency. Under the impact of the universalization of terrorism and drug trafficking, and in that direction although it cannot be said that the Colombian war is international, it is a war of international interest, with international effects and consequences (MEDINA, 2009, p. 36).

As noted in the first part of this section, the international context has always influenced the dynamics of the Colombian armed conflict both in the 1940s and at the dawn of the 21st century. Another event that directly influenced the characteristics of the Colombian confrontation was the 11th September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States.

For Yepes (2018) this event added an important tinge to the conceptualization of the Colombian armed conflict in the post-Pastrana administration since during the Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2010) governments, there was an alignment of domestic and external policy concerning direct military confrontation and the new international agenda to fight terrorism.

"In this context, the counter-insurgency fight takes the flags of the battle against international terrorism, thus eliminating the political recognition that previous governments had made to guerrilla groups and giving them a connotation of terrorists" (MESA; YEPES, 2020). In fact, the three major Colombian armed groups (FARC-EP, ELN and AUC) were identified by the U.S. Department of State as terrorist organizations and the involvement of FARC and paramilitaries, in the drug business (TICKNER, 2007).

> In this scenario, the dynamics of the conflict continued to be internationalising and, in some cases, regionally isolating the country. Two episodes were key to this isolation: the initiative to install U.S. military bases in the country and Colombia´s intervention to bomb a guerrilla camp in which FARC-EP number two would be dropped; Raúl Reyes, in Ecuadorian territory (MESA; YEPES, 2020).

Amid this diplomatic crisis, Juan Manuel Santos (2010-2018) assumes his role as president, who "in contravention of the thesis of the terrorist threat, accepts the existence of the internal armed conflict in Colombia, recognising the political foundation of the rebellion in which guerrilla groups have their action" (YEPES, 2018, p. 11) which paved the way for a possible negotiated settlement. In addition to this, Santos opted in the first three months of his government to lower the tension of battered diplomatic relations with neighbours such as Ecuador and Venezuela.

The Santos government´s peace process with the FARC-EP is perhaps one of the most successful of recent years. As will be seen in the subsequent paragraphs, the accompaniment of the international community was predominant, with mediation and guarantee by Cuba, Venezuela, Chile and Norway, the United Nations and the United States.

The Havana Negotiation process with the FARC-EP and the Colombian Foreign Policy

Commencement of the negotiation process and strategy; between the perception and the learning of the past.

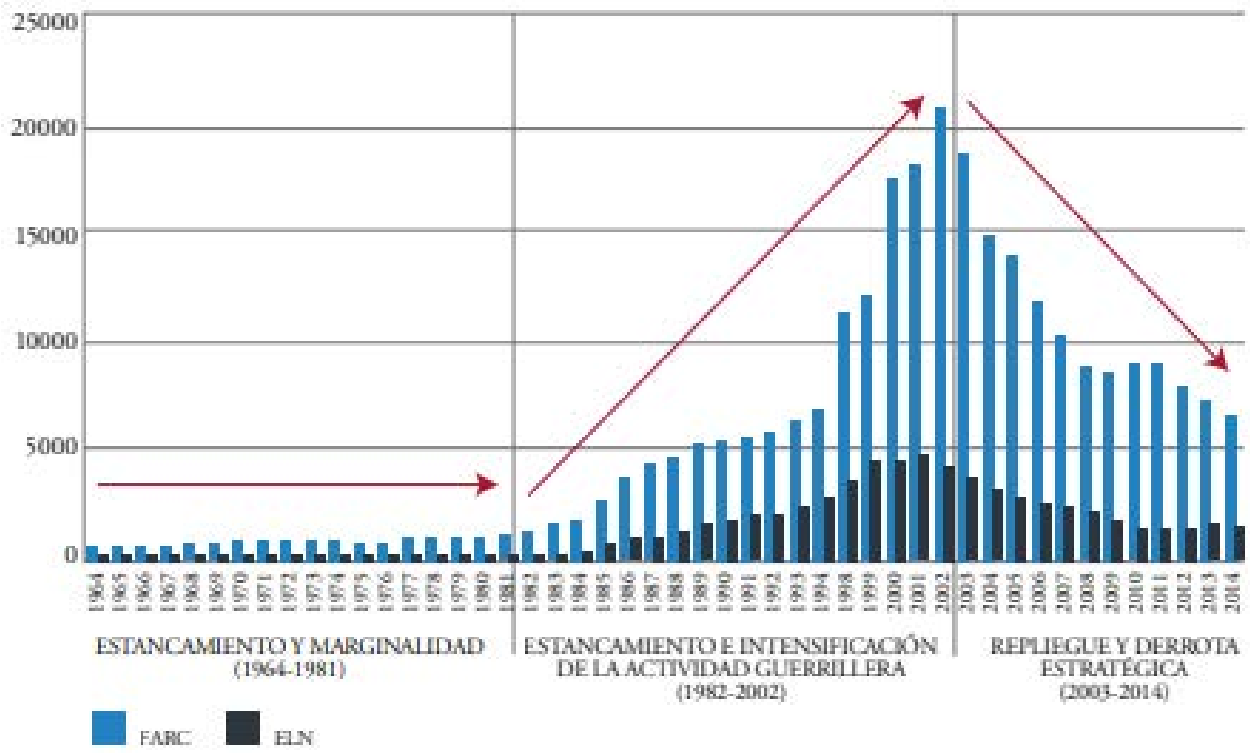
The strategy proposed by the Santos government, to advance the negotiation process with the FARC-EP, transitions between the perception of the head of state and the strategic culture shaped over decades of the negotiation process, which has left successes and misunderstandings, creating a state memory regarding methods and strategies to face future negotiations with guerrilla groups (GONZÁLEZ, 2021, pág. 111)

However, before proceeding with the argument of the previous statement, it must be specified the existence of material conditions conducive to undertaking a further attempt at the negotiating process. In the decade before the beginning of the Havana process, a change in the correlation of forces, state vs guerrilla groups, was evident in favour of the first actor.

Change driven, to a large extent, by the modernization of Colombian military forces, initiated even during the failed *Caguán* negotiations, the consolidation of the *Plan Colombia*, the beginning of patriot plans and consolidation, and by the strategy of direct confrontation during the administration of Alvaro Uribe (2002-2010). At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, The FARC-EP were in an unfavourable military and tactical position concerning the state military forces (GONZÁLEZ, 2021, pág. 111)

> The FARC, by 2010 end up retreating in peripherical departments, mostly frontier ones such as *Norte de Santander, Arauca, Chocó, Nariño* and *Putumayo*, or others related to them such as *Cauca* or *Caquetá*. Its municipal scope has fallen to 160 municipalities – half of which, in 2002, and its volume of armed actions is 724, almost half that of 1,278 in 2002. In addition, its strength has been reduced by almost 50%, from nearly 17,000 fighters to just over 8,000 guerrillas (RÍOS, 2015, p. 70).

Graph 1: Evolution of the Number of FARC-EP and ELN members (1964-2014)

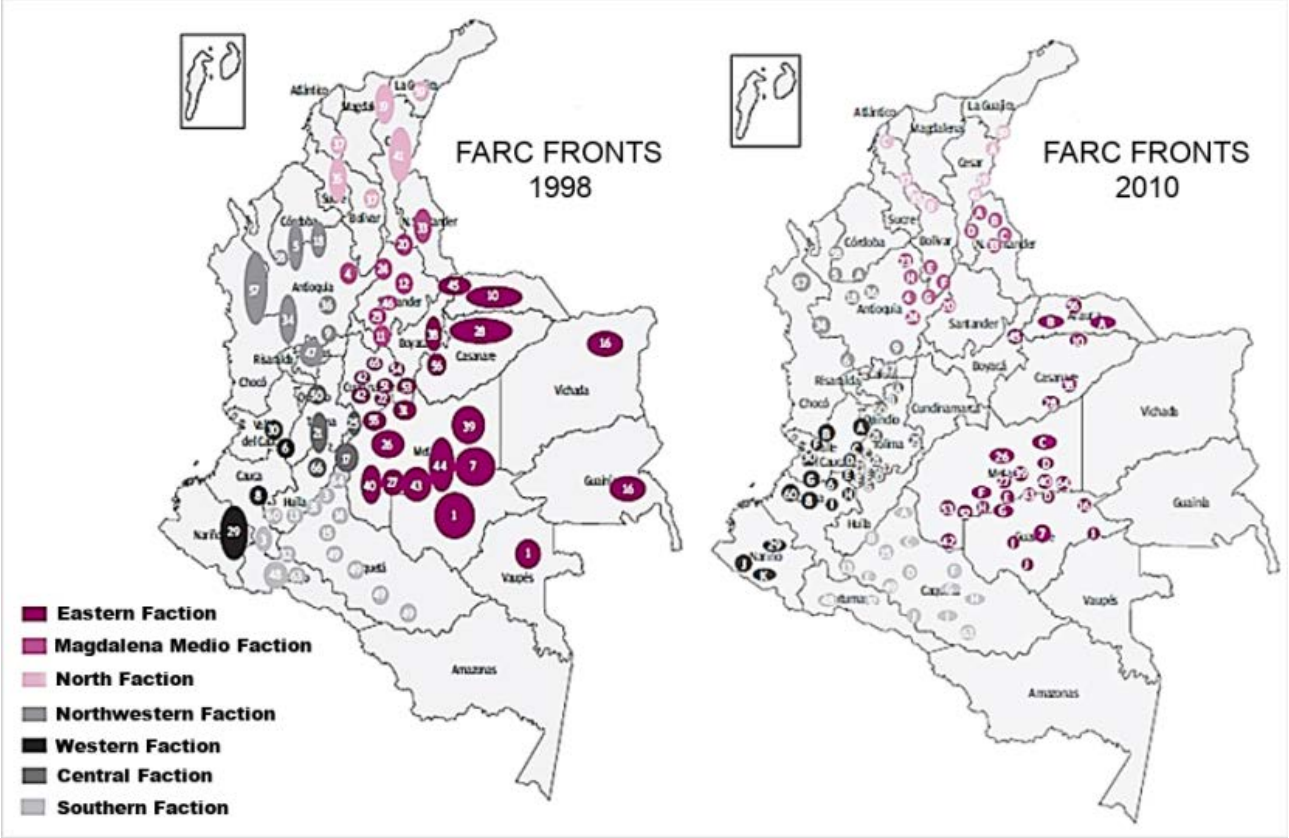


Source: (Echandia, 2015)

Despite the above, a definitive military defeat of the FARC-EP was not foreseen in the near time horizon. Military setbacks and the loss of members in their ranks generate a tactical retreat from this guerrilla group; they distance themselves from the main urban centres of the country and its surrounding areas, retreating to the jungle periphery and border areas. During this retreat, the FARC-EP retake the essence

of guerrilla warfare, a strategy they practised during the first decades of existence. The conflict would therefore enter a new, long-term stage (GONZÁLEZ, 2021, pág. 112)

Figure 1: FARC-EP´s Territorial presence. 1998 and 2010



Source: (ECHANDIA, 2015)

Under this scenario, two options were presented to the political elite: to continue the strategy of confrontation employed in the last decade, or to take advantage of the change in the correlation of forces in favour of the state, in search of a negotiated solution.

In 2010, Juan Manuel Santos assumes the head of state, which, although elected under the political flags of this predecessor, Alvaro Uribe Vélez, a particular perception regarding the reality and future of the armed conflict with the FARC-EP, led to the design of a negotiating strategy with them.

> Today we can talk about peace because my government´s vision is integral: we do NOT fight to fight; we fight for peace […] Today we can talk about peace thanks to the success of our military and police forces, and thanks to the growing presence of the state throughout the national territory […] (SANTOS, 2012).

The next step was to define the methods and strategies for conducting the negotiations. In the public opinion and the country´s political elites, the idea that the clearing zone was one of the reasons that led the *Caguán*[5] process to failure, was established. It was an area in which, during the dialogues, the FARC-EP strengthened militarily, transferred

5. The so-called clearing zone covered an area of 42.000 km2.

abducted from other parts of the country, consolidated their drug trafficking activity, and exercised territorial and social power more freely, to become a para-state organization with the ability to carry out exclusive state functions: public administration, construction of public infrastructure, regulations of commercial activities, settle disputes among area inhabitants, among others (GONZÁLEZ, 2021, pág. 113). Therefore, from hope and optimism at the beginning of these dialogues, over time, it became evident, the FARC-EP's scant will to reach a definitive agreement, the guerrilla group had a firm "determination to take advantage of the respective truces and to project their territorial expansion, which they otherwise considered irreversible" (*CENTRO NACIONAL DE MEMORIA HISTÓRICA*, 2014, p. 13)

In addition to the above, the media (*REVISTA SEMANA*, 1999), referred to the cleared zone as an independent republic, alluding to the areas of high influence of the guerrilla group that received this name in the 1960s, such as: *Tequendama, Urabá, Vichada, Territorio Vásquez, El Duda, Ariari, Guayabero, Pato, Riochiquito, Maruetalia*, among others (PENAGOS, 2013, p. 150).

Therefore, initiating a new negotiation process that would grant a zone free from the presence of state control, would entail high political costs and an increase in national mistrust of the new process. Then, instead of establishing a de-escalation zone, the decision was made to conduct dialogues outside the Colombian territory, which was a method of linking the international community. Thus, a direct way of linking foreign policy with the domestic policy of resolving the armed conflict was achieved (GONZÁLEZ, 2021, pág. 112).

Another learning of the *Caguán* process was in terms of the size of the agenda and the number of points to be addressed in the negotiations. As an example, the *Caguán* agenda was composed of twelve points and forty-seven subpoints. "In four years, both sides did not move beyond the first issue and no agreement was reached" (CHERNICK, 2015, p. 145), these points contained complex aspects, such as the revision of the economic and political structure of the state and the exploitation of natural resources, the reformulation of external debt, and international treaties, among others. Thus, the Havana agenda avoided these structural aspects of the state, seeking greater pragmatism and realism, by defining five points of discussion. "The first two items on the agenda such as the FARC-EP's historical claims: (1) the agricultural issue and (2) the political participation. Two other points as societal claims: (3) "solution to the problem of illicit drugs" and (4) victims; and the end of the conflict (5), addressed how the final agreement is implemented (REVISTA SEMANA, 2012).

However, in November 2011, months before the inception of the exploratory phase, the guerrilla group, in a letter addressed President Juan Manuel Santos, expressed the interest in resuming the *Caguán* agenda: "To question privatizations, deregulations, absolute freedom of trade and investment, environmental predation, market democracy, and military doctrine" (*EL ESPECTADOR*, 2012). To which, he closes any possibility of resuming that agenda, responding with a resounding: "¡Forget about a new Caguán!"

> When necessary, we must be prepared to fight, and it was up to me – as Minister of Defense and as President – to fight illegal groups in my country. I did it effectively and forcefully when the ways of peace were closed […] However, it is absurd to think that the end of conflicts is the extermination of the counterparty […] The final victory for weapons–when there are non-violent alternatives – is nothing more than the defeat of the human spirit […] To defeat by the weapons, to annihilate the enemy, to bring war until its last consequences, is to give up seeing, on the contrary, another human being, someone with whom one can speak (SANTOS, 2016).

Necessary but controlled internationalization

The end of the Colombian armed conflict, whether through the search for a negotiated solution or by military action, has permeated and influence Colombia´s foreign policy over the last few decades. Until the late 1990s "the issue of armed conflict neither in its implications nor its resolution, was part of the country´s international agenda. The country´s strategic culture in this area was characterized by treating it as a domestic policy issue against which any external intervention was an unhelpful or desirable interference" (ROJAS, 2006, p. 86).

Precisely, before the process undertaken by Juan Manuel Santos, three negotiation processes had begun to end the conflict with the FARC-EP: the first, from 1984 to 1987 in *Uribe Meta* in the Belisario Betancur´s government, then, between 1991 and 1992 in Caracas and Tlaxcala Mexico during the César Gaviria´s administration, and the third, between 1999 and 2002 in the municipality of *San Vicente del Caguán* in the department of *Caquetá* during the Andres Pastrana´s government. In the first two processes, the participation of international actors was null and in the dialogues of the *Cagúan,* marginal (BEJARANO, 2017).

In the Andrés Pastrana Arango´s administration, in the framework of the so-called diplomacy for peace, much of the country´s international agenda focuses on the internationalization of the Colombian conflict in pursuit of a negotiated solution. In fact, it can be defined as an intermestic foreign policy, being closely related to the country´s domestic policy (GONZÁLEZ, 2021, pág. 111).

On the one hand, diplomatic action focused on the *Plan Colombia´* approval which was initially anti-narcotics with an indirect link to the fight against subversive groups, but after 11th September 2001, it was linked to the fight against terrorism. Initially, it was intended to link a large part of the international community, especially the European countries, to the *Plan Colombia,* however, despite different meetings and presidential tours for this purpose, this initiative failed to gain the support of the old continent, being considered a militaristic initiative which could lead to a further escalation of the conflict and violation of Human Rights, despite being presented by the Colombian government "as the strategy that will enable the peace process to be consolidated through plans of economic recovery, strengthening democracy and the substitution of illicit crops, among others" (*EL TIEMPO*, 1999).

Even, the intention was to establish a donor table to channel funding to the *Plan Colombia*, the meeting would be held at the Spanish ca-

pital in July 2000, but due to the lack of consensus of the European countries and the objections to the *Plan Colombia,* the meeting in Madrid was focused no longer on obtaining financial resources for *Plan Colombia,* but on forming a group to support the negotiation process that initiated.

The diplomatic action of foreign policy "led to a significant support for government action for peace from governments and some non-governmental actors who form opinions worldwide" (*GARCÍA*, 2002, p. 191). In this sense, the tour of European countries stands out: Sweden, Norway, France, Spain, Italy and the Vatican, composed of a commission from the FARC-EP and the Colombian government (GONZÁLEZ, 2021, pág. 112).

The presence of international actors at the *Caguán* dialogue table consisted of two types of participations "The first is facilitation, which was in charge of Italy, Spain, Sweden and Norway; and the second, accompaniment, exercised by the same facilitating countries, accompanied by Costa Rica, Venezuela and Mexico" (MORENO, 2009, p. 151).

Table 1: The roles of participants in the negotiation process

Characteristics	**Accompaniment**	**Facilitation**	**Arbitration**
	Is an external observer. Clarifies the parties on points of which doubts arise during the development of the process. Seeks to create an environment of clarity and transparency of the actors involved.	Proposes techniques to solve the conflict. Is present at all stages of the negotiation process. Usually has a support team. Are essential and of leading character in the negotiation. Must know the issue, be impartial, creative and empathetic. Carries the thread of conflict.	The intervention of third parties, based on a discrepancy between them. Is not mandatory. Is confidential. Help the parties involved to make their decisions. Therefore, should not impose their own on any of the parties involved. Is not directly involved in the conflict.

Source: Own elaboration based on (FISAS, 2012)

In the age of Alvaro Uribe, under the so-called democratic security policy, foreign policy experienced a process of "securitization", in which the armed conflict was articulated to the discourse and dynamics of the international war against terrorism, allowing the United States to be directly linked to the fight against subversive groups. This linkage allows a change in the character of the *Plan Colombia*: from an anti-narcotics plan to an anti-terrorist plan (GONZÁLEZ; MESA; YEPES, 2018, p. 92). This articulation can be understood as a result of the perception of foreign policy executives who interpreted this change in the international system, as an opportunity to link the country´s anti-subversive and anti-narcotics struggle, with international dynamics.

For the present, it is called conflict externalization, as those consequences caused by the dynamics of the conflict, capable of generating effects and repercussions outside the country´s borders; "contagion" effect. This situation generates greater resonance in the international media and greater attention both from governments of affected states, as well as from different international agencies and non-governmental organizations. On its side, the internationalization of the conflict is due to an

autonomous, strategic and intentional decision of the belligerent actors of the internal conflict. When such a decision comes from the state, it is positioned as a foreign policy strategy in the face of an internal situation. On the part of the non-state armed actor, internationalization is expressed through the so-called parallel diplomacy.

The internationalization of the conflict is aimed at the search of three main objectives: official discourse and diplomatic resources are directed towards the search for support and legitimacy of the negotiation process or during the confrontation. When seeking to delegitimate or isolate the opposing group internationally. Finally, when international actors, with a particular role, are explicitly and consciously included at any phase of the conflict; hostility or negotiation (CUJABANTE, 2016, p. 211) and (BORDA, 2012, p. 11).

The above conceptual differentiation is done to avoid confusion and to facilitate the proposed analysis which revolves around the internationalization of the conflict, perhaps the most rigorous analysis of the internationalization of the Colombian conflict. Sandra Borda (2012), presents a division into two types: military and political. The first of these, respond to "[…] the actors more likely to be invited by the state and insurgent organizations to participate in their conflict to obtain military and logistical support […] to continue the war and to improve their military position against their adversaries". Political internationalization occurs by involving "[…] non-committed neighbouring countries, European countries, international organizations and international non-governmental organizations […] invited when parties are interested in obtaining political recognition and support, which usually happens, but not exclusively, during peace negotiations" (2012, p. 21-22). These two strategies are not mutually exclusive; they can be used simultaneously, such as the Santos administration's decision to start negotiations amid the fighting.

Prior to the formal opening of negotiations in Havana, the FARC-EP sought to actively involve international organizations and third countries. Moreover, regional authorities such as the Andean Community of Nations (CAN for its acronyms in Spanish), and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC for its acronyms in Spanish), through press releases expressed to the Colombian government, the intention to actively participate in the negotiation process, in the face of this intentions, president Santos took the opportunity to reiterate that the search for peace is a matter for Colombia: "For now the best way to help is to do nothing, I said in my possession that peace is an internal Colombian matter and we, Colombians will solve it" (*EL TIEMPO*, 2011a). Later, in 2013, within the framework of the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Head of State again expresses an interest in limiting the participation of international actors in the negotiation process:

> What we are asking to the UN and the international community is to respect the right of Colombia –and every nation– to seek peace […] We ask that we continue to be accompanied in this effort by respecting our decisions, our way of doing things, and trusting that our actions have never been alien to the sensitivities of the international community (*CANCILLERÍA DE COLOMBIA*, 2013).

In addition to these FARC-EP initiatives, involving international actors, after releasing the French journalist Roméo Langlois, the guerrilla group sent with him a letter to the then-president François Hollande, urging the Gallic country to get involved in the search for peace in Colombia. However, the French president´s response closed the possibility to that proposal, categorically noting that: "We want there to be a political resolution and that is all [...] We do not have to interfere with Colombia´s political life" (*EL TIEMPO*, 2012a).

Also, several non-governmental organizations, both national and international, and recognized personalities: Piedad Córdoba and the Colombian organization for peace, to name a few, made proposals to bring the government and the FARC-EP closer, in search of a formal start of negotiations. Given this, the government was emphatic in pointing out, "I do not think it is appropriate for anyone to seek parallel channels to dialogue with the guerrillas, and I disallow any attempt to […] When we consider that the moment exists and the opportunity is there, we will open that opportunity in the way we believe to achieve that goal" (*EL TIEMPO*, 2011b). This is in contrast to the *Caguán* negotiation process, where, as *Borda* and *Gómez* (2015, p. 166) state, the premise against president Pastrana´s international actors in the negotiation process was "the more, the better" (the more actors, the more pressure over the FARC to remain on the negotiating table).

The attention and participation of the international community in the negotiation process in Havana can be understood, on the one hand, as a response to the externalization of the effects of the conflict, in border areas, and on the other, precisely to a decision of the country´s foreign policy decision, of political and diplomatic internationalization of the conflict, through the explicit inclusion of international actors over specific roles.

Thus, during the beginning of the process the discourse of the country´s foreign policy was turned, to a large extent to legitimizing the process before the international community: "Peace in Colombia is peace in the region" (*El TIEMPO*, 2013a), "The support of the international community helps the process to move in the right direction; legitimizes the process" (*EL TIEMPO*, 2013a), words spoken by the Colombian Ambassador to Washington, Luis Carlos Villegas, before the U.S government and Juan Manuel Santos, respectively.

Colombian foreign policy sought to direct the participation of the different international actors towards the post-conflict process. "When the post-conflict arrives, we will have immense challenges to reintegrate the demobilized, to ensure the presence of the state in the areas affected by the conflict, and to guarantee citizen security. ¡What important would be then the contribution and competition of the international community, which we now call for! (CANCILLERÍA DE COLOMBIA, 2014)

The beginning of the negotiation process had such an international resonance, that together with Hugo Chávez´ death, the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, and the succession of whoever was the first Latin American Pope, Francis, was considered one of the most relevant historical events in the region in 2013, according to the annual survey conducted by the *Grupo de Diarios América* (GDA) (*EL TIEMPO*, 2013b).

Table 2: International support for the negotiation process.

Estates	**International Organizations**	**Non-Governmental Organizations**	**Other Actors**
Ecuador, in the words of the then President Rafael Correa: "the best news for Latin America would be the end of the armed conflict in Colombia" (*EL TIEMPO*, 2013c) The United States, from the outset, expressed its support for the process but clarified that it would continue to persecute FARC-EP members with debts to the justice of that country. France, repeatedly, the chancellery of the Gallic country celebrated the different progress of the process by reiterating its support. Uruguay. In 2013 President José Mujica offers Uruguay to Juan Manuel Santos as an alternate venue for negotiations. Countries such as Brazil, Bolivia, Venezuela and Ecuador expressed their congratulations on every progress in the process Brazil, in the first days of October 2012. Gilma Rousseff´s government releases a document entitled: "Brazil and South America support the rapid end of the armed conflict in Colombia", in which they express the support for the process that would begin in a few days, considering that it is an event of high relevance not only for Colombia but for all South America: qualifying the decision to initiate dialogues as a mature and patriotic decision (*EL TIEMPO*, 2012b)	European Union. During the negotiation process, it kept a distance, considering that this process was a matter for the state of Colombia and the guerrilla organization. However, since 2013, without specifying the amount, its pledge to finance the post-conflict scenario. Organization of American States (OAS) Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). World Bank (WB) Unasur. At the summit of Heads of State held in Lima in November 2012, they expressed their entire support. United Nations Organization. Both the General Assembly and the Security Council.	Global Action of Parliamentarians (PGA for its acronyms in Spanish) in December 2013 as part of a forum held in Bogota. In addition to their support, they offered to send a delegation, as a visit to the negotiating table. *The Elders*, a group of global leaders such as Kofi Annan, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Martti Ahtisaari; Jimmy Carter and Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Brazil) (*EL TIEMPO*, 2013d) International Committee of the Red Cross. On the visit of its Chairman, Peter Maurer, he expressed the committee´s for the process and the willingness to continue to be even in a post-conflict context.	Former President of the Spanish government, Felipe González. Oscar Arias, former President of Costa Rica and Nobel Peace Prize: "The world got bored with the war in Colombia" XXIII Ibero-American Summit in October 2013. Representative of the Vatican State, Pope Francis. In a private audience with Juan Manuel Santos, in May 2013, expressed his support for the processes and blessed it. Congressmen from the United States. Through a letter signed by near 14 Democratic congressmen and a Republican, express support for the process and asked Secretary of State, John Kerry to design a policy that would respond to needs emerging from it (*EL TIEMPO*, 2013e). José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, former head of the Spanish government.

Source: (GONZÁLEZ, 2021, págs. 126-127)

One of the reasons for the Colombian government´s control over the internationalization of the negotiation process is due to a pulse of force between the two sides of the conflict: on the side of the government, "so that the guerrillas could not tactically and strategically use the negotiating scenario to strengthen themselves in the military" (BEJARANO, 2017, p. 199).

Distrust between the parties involved in an armed conflict is perhaps the most complex barrier that must be overcome in the search for a negotiated solution. "The United Nations (UN) in coordinating the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism for the Bilateral and Definitive Ceasefire and Hostilities Agreement, and as a verification body for the abandonment of weapons by the guerrillas" (BEJARANO, 2017, p. 183).

The verification mission was established by the Security Council by resolution 2261 of 2016, which is established for 12 months and indicates the functions and purpose of the mission. Then, by resolution 2366 of 2017 the Security Council, at the request of the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP, extends the mandate of the Verification Mission for an initial period of 12 months under the leadership of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who was entrusted inter alia, with reporting every 90 days on mission activities.

Conclusions

The internationalization of the negotiation process between the Colombian State and the FARC-EP was a purported and objective issue on the part of the government which through internationalization it sought to add political support, legitimacy to the process and cooperation in its different forms, in the face of post-conflict. However, the involvement of different actors in international society took place in a calculated, streamlined and measured manner. That is, internationalization of the process, but with clear restraints. In this regard, as demonstrated in the article, some states were involved, with clear roles and above all with little capability for autonomous decision-making on issues inherent to negotiation. On the other hand, to international actors who sought a more active role, the government, in a sort of strategic evaluation and relevance, discarded these participations. Other actors such as France, remained expectant, but without pretending active participation as considering the process to be exclusive to the sovereignty and self-determination of the Colombian State.

The decision to control the different international actors´ participation was due to an objective of the Colombian foreign policy which can be read in the light of the theoretical developments of neoclassical realism under the intervening variable of leaders' perceptions and the states' strategic culture. As mentioned in the article, traditionally, the search for termination of the conflict through a negotiated solution was seen by the country´s political tradition as an issue of domestic policy to be resolved by Colombia, therefore, this way of perceiving the solution to the conflict, means an element of that state memory, which permeated the Havana process.

On its part, strategic culture, depending on the circumstances, affects how foreign policy executives perceive particular situations; is that tradition of state behavior that often enlightens and guides state leaders. In this particular case, President Juan Manuel Santos told the media, that achieving peace with the guerrilla group was a country´s internal matter. However, despite the controlled and sometimes limited role of Havana´s negotiation process, the international actors´ participation helped to generate security, which led to a break-up of the paradigms of distrust that delayed and hindered the implementation of the process in previous versions.

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