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The Medellín and the Cali Cartel  
The Effects of the Drug Industry on the State Sovereignty

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## **Abstract**

The illegal drug industry had dramatic impact on Colombia's development and sovereignty. In no other country has the illegal drug industry had such dramatic social, political, and economic effects. This research paper provides a theoretical framework that is applied in the Colombian context analysing the consequences caused to the Colombian state, and concludes that its overall impact has been extremely negative. It studies the emergence and development of the drug cartels, their complex operations and their participation in the industry. The size of the illegal industry and its economic effects are also examined and its effects on the political system analysed. To form a comprehensive picture about the impact of the drug trade, other effects are also taken into account such as the increasing corruption, violence, illicit funding, organized crime and their connection with the state and the government.

Also, the paper explores the foreign policies of the United States applied in Colombia, and focuses on the US involvement in Colombia's national affairs through the policy known as "war on drugs" and the Extradition Treaty, underlying the consequent erosion of the state sovereignty by their interference. The thesis emphasizes the strategies adopted by the United States in order to combat the illegal drug imports, as well as their counter insurgency assistance to the Colombian government. The project ends with a discussion of the evolution of government policies and social attitudes toward the industry that highlights the roots of the problem, and underlines why the drug industry still thrives today.

Keywords: drug industry, drug cartels, sovereignty, United States, Colombia, drug trafficking

## **Resumo**

A indústria do tráfico ilegal de drogas teve um impacto dramático no desenvolvimento e soberania da Colômbia. Nenhum outro país tem sido afetado social, política e economicamente como a Colômbia. Este trabalho de pesquisa fornece um quadro teórico que é aplicado no contexto colombiano, tendo em conta as consequências causadas ao estado da Colômbia, e conclui que o impacto em geral tem sido extremamente negativo. Estuda a emergência e desenvolvimento dos cartéis de drogas, suas complexas operações e sua participação na indústria. O tamanho da indústria ilegal e os seus efeitos económicos também são pesquisados e os efeitos no sistema político são analisados. Para formar uma imagem compreensível do impacto do tráfico de drogas, outros efeitos também são tidos em conta como a crescente

corrupção, violência, dinheiros ilícitos, crime organizado e sua conexão com o estado é o governo.

Também, o trabalho explora as políticas internacionais dos Estados Unidos aplicadas na Colômbia e foca-se no envolvimento do Estados Unidos nos assuntos nacionais da Colômbia através da política conhecida como "guerra às drogas" e do Tratado de Extradução, subjacente à consequente erosão da soberania do Estado pela sua interferência. A tese enfatiza as estratégias adotadas pelos Estados Unidos para combater as importações de drogas ilícitas, bem como sua assistência contra insurgência ao governo colombiano. O projeto termina com uma discussão sobre a evolução das políticas governamentais e atitudes sociais em relação à indústria, que destaca as raízes do problema, e destaca por que a indústria do tráfico de drogas ainda prospera hoje.

Palavras chave: indústria da droga, carteis de droga, soberania, Estados Unidos, Colômbia, tráfico de drogas

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## **Introduction**

Colombia was the home of international drug trade and occupied the highest homicide rate in the world. Although the immense drug cartels, especially the Cali and the Medellin, were demolished, to this day Colombia is considered to be the center of drug trafficking and all because governments, authorities and law enforcements failed to elucidate and fix the root causes of the problem.<sup>1</sup>

The angle from which I am trying to analyze and determine the solution arises from the following thesis question, which is:” How did the drug cartels and drug trafficking affect the Colombian state sovereignty?” By examining this question, I came to the conclusion that the Colombian authority has been undermined internally (by the drug cartels) but also externally (by the United States intervention in Colombia’s national affairs). So, we can see a double erosion of the state sovereignty which is going to be developed later in this research paper.

Primarily, to be able to understand in a more precise way, I will start by providing a theoretical framework about the most relevant aspects, about the state sovereignty itself and its connection with the organized crime. .

The development and evolution of organized crime is mostly related to weak and powerless governance structures, lack of economic opportunities and lastly, lack of imbalance and inequality. All these negative factors of a functioning government are providing support for criminal activity which has a damaging and vulnerable impact on peace, security and the states well-being, therefore the protection of its citizens and their trust is dropping promptly.

Along these lines and besides all these negative aspects we are facing, organized crime and criminal activity can in a way challenge and confront the state’s stability and democratic governance. If we take a closer look to the following statement: “Organized crime evolves from a public security problem into a national security challenge.”<sup>2</sup>, we can see that the problem stands with the governments fail to pay attention to the pivotal structural causes of the illicit activities, and therefore they respond with strong security measures rather than trying to understand the relation between governance and organized crime to design strategies to prevent the emergence of criminal organizations and organized crime.

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah Becker, *The effects of the Drug Cartels on Medellin and the Colombian State*, Master Thesis, Brandeis University, 2013, p. 5, <https://bir.brandeis.edu/bitstream/handle/10192/25053/BeckerThesis2013.pdf?sequence=1>, accessed on 15.07.2018.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, *Choices and Consequences; the perspectives of an errant economist*, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2005, p.180.

Furthermore, corruption proceeds from institutional weaknesses and vulnerability due to the fact that the state is incapable to keep the monopoly of its force and to enforce the rule of law which allows criminal organizations to penetrate governmental and state institutions.

On the other hand, globalization is another important factor that highly contributed to the emergence and the prevalence of organized crime. Although, it has many positive effects that played a huge role in integrating the world, harmonizing the communities and connecting the people, globalization had a big downfall too, as it opened the doors for criminal organizations to be able to trade and smuggle illicit products worldwide.

In the second chapter, I am altering my analysis to the history of Colombia, dating back to the *La Violencia*, in order to deeply understand and identify the roots that led to the emergence of the Medellin and the Cali Cartels. In consequence, in this chapter my aim focuses on to proving that poor institutional organization of the state, poverty and the lack of rule of law are the causes that facilitate the advent of criminal organizations.

Moreover, I am meaning to explore the U.S – Colombian complex bilateral relation mainly because their partnership involves several key issues that connect the two nation's governments, such as, fighting communism, the war against drugs, and their struggle against terrorism and so on. They grounded a strong and long-lasting relationship which was based on mutual respect, cooperation, common aims, purposes, objectives and goals. In addition to this I am diving further into the details regarding the two nation's collaboration in order to tackle the problem, to takedown the drug cartels and to win the war against drugs.

In the third chapter I choose to focus only on the two immense drug cartels of Colombia that were the most well-known, the most violent and sophisticated drug trafficking organizations of the world. They represented huge and successful empires with an inconceivable amount of violence; criminal organizations, however, excellent businesses that were not much different from a legal global corporation. I am trying to describe both organizations in a detached way while also giving a comparative analysis of their operations.

Subsequently, the ending of my paper consists in me examining and researching the dramatic social, political and economic effects of the drug trade on Colombia, concluding with the lessons learnt from the drug cartels and emphasizing that when a certain state is weakened and has no control over its territory, criminal businesses will always find a way to flourish and prosper. Until there is demand for illicit goods the drug trade will thrive. Finalizing with possible solutions, policies and strategies that the authorities could undertake in order to tackle or prevent future similar issues.

## I. State, Government and Organized Crime in the Globalization Era

In this chapter, my aim is to cover the main operational concepts that will ultimately be of use in supporting my research about the development and the advancement regarding criminal organizations and the precise factors that affect and erode state sovereignty. Conclusively, I will gather all the definitions that for me personally seem to be the most pertinent to that effect.

*“Organized crime can be defined as the criminal activity that, through violence or threatening people, seeks to the extract illegal or legal rents from the community.”*<sup>3</sup> It involves activities such as: smuggling, undocumented immigration, prostitution, illegal substances etc., but the most dangerous of its activity, is extorting the rents of the society.

Thomas Schelling emphasized that *“the core business of organized crime is extortion, based on the threat of injury, along with efforts to monopolize legitimate business lines, by physical destruction or intimidation of competition.”*<sup>4</sup>

Drug trafficking and organized crime are two different concepts; however they are intertwined and correlated concepts as the criminal organizations’ main financial income, usually, originates from drug trafficking. Organized crime tends to intrude into state/governmental institutions and take control over territory and law enforcement agencies. When the organized crime takes control over the monopoly of use of power and authority, and the more expands over national territory, is more likely to become a national or even an international security threat. Hence, *“organized crime evolves from a public security problem into a national security challenge.”*<sup>5</sup>

The emergence of organized crime usually is related to weak governance structures, lack of economic opportunities and inequality. All these negative aspects of a government nourishes criminal activity which has a negative impact on the state, on peace, security and development; and which impedes the state to provide services, to protect its citizens, to maintain trust of citizens in government, to enforce the law and so on. Thus, organized crime, criminal activity challenges state stability and democratic governance.<sup>6</sup>

Organized crime is described with a high rate of violence, and the problem is that instead of paying attentions to the pivotal structural causes of illegal/illicit activities, governments

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<sup>3</sup> Felipe Caderon, “Drug Traffickign and Organized Crime”, *Harvard International Review*, 2005 <http://hir.harvard.edu/article/?a=11786>, accessed on 02.02.2018.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, *Choices and Consequences; the perspectives of an errant economist*, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2005, p.180.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup> FRIDE, DPA, ” Organized Crime, The State, and Democracy; The Cases of Central America and the Caribbean”, *The Conflict Prevention and Peace FORUM*, 2007, New York, pp. 1-5, [http://fride.org/download/cr01\\_organized\\_crime\\_en\\_may07.pdf](http://fride.org/download/cr01_organized_crime_en_may07.pdf), New York, accessed on 02.02.2018.



usually respond by strong security measures. Therefore, it is essential to understand the complex relation between governance and organized crime in order to tackle and to prevent threats imposed on state stability. Further, it is important to notice and understand the complex interrelation between democratic governance, security, development and organized crime to design strategies which can address and prevent organized crime.

According to FRIDE, the level of violence, crime and corruption are astonishing, especially in countries whose geographic location facilitates the transit of drugs, arms, people, natural resources, as for example Central America and the Caribbean.<sup>7</sup>

Experts have underlined that a state which has supremacy on the monopoly of use force and respects individual and collective rights can better prevent the emergence of organized crime because it has the power to control the territory, uphold its internal legal order, assure the security of its citizens and provide public services.

Therefore, the emergence and the prevalence of organized crime are related to state crisis and its incapacity to maintain the monopoly of force and to enforce the rule of law. “*As organized crime generates new forms of violence, it threatens territorial sovereignty, weakens institutions, damages the maintenance of public values through law, and discredits states before the international community.*”<sup>8</sup>

Weaknesses of law enforcement institutions, the enormous corruption practices and the lack of rule of law allows organized crime and criminal organizations to penetrate state institution, thus taking over the legal and legitimate authority. Therefore, corruption and intimidation stems from institutional weaknesses and vulnerability.<sup>9</sup>

Each country faces organized crime to some extent; however its level depends in the capabilities of a state to prevent and resist the infiltration or penetration of organized crime into state institutions. Organized crime prevails in countries which are weakened, and prone to corruption. “*Institutional weakness leads to impunity and impunity is exacerbated as the size of the problem grows. The vicious circle creates an unbelievable spiral of violence.*”<sup>10</sup>

Felipe Caderon showed the evolution of organized crime through 3 stages: predatory stage, parasitic stage, symbiotic stage. In the first stage, criminals are only involved into gangs but with no power to challenge the state. In the second they seek to increase their profits, thus, they use bribery, and corrupt some of the members of the state, elites, and governmental officials. In the last stage, criminals gain so much power and grown to such an extent that the State is unable to control it anymore. At this stage, criminals already established a firm position

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 1-2

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Felipe Caderon, *op.cit.*.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*.

within the state, even able to take decisions inside the institutions, creating a “symbiosis” between crime and authority.<sup>11</sup>

### *Corruption*

The problem is that corrupt elites and criminal organization prefers a weak state because this way it gives cover for their illegal activities and it’s easier for them to negotiate their position in the international system. Impunity and illegal activities increase where the state cannot guarantee effective law enforcement and security for its citizens. Thus, the challenge is to recover the monopoly of use of force by the state and to take control over areas which are threatened by criminal actors/organizations.<sup>12</sup>

*“Organized crime undermines democratic governance by exacerbating corruption, eroding the rule of law, creating dynamics of social exclusion and limiting political participation...Criminal elements are not at the margins of society, but are permeating the central institutions of the state.”*<sup>13</sup>

Viewing corruption as a bargaining act between organized crime, political officials, elites, business and other actors, organized crime can be characterized as an actor which penetrates, infiltrates into the state by using corruption as its asset or power.<sup>14</sup>

Corruption is facilitated by the weakness of the political parties. The corruption of public officials and the distortion of political campaigns are the reasons why the power and money of organized crime penetrate into state institutions. Corruption facilitates criminality.<sup>15</sup>

Corruption is the key tool for criminal organizations to subsist and grow because assures and nurtures impunity; it facilitates illegal activities to occur and gives cover to it, and it favours the rules of the game according to criminal interests. It occurs on several levels, as for example occasional, involving the bribery of low-level public officials; the corruption of the judiciary system; on systematic level where high level officials are involved and which pervades state institutions; funding electoral campaigns and political parties.<sup>16</sup> As for example, in Colombia the government was mainly the problem, and not the solution in the fight and struggle against drugs.

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>12</sup> FRIDE, DPA, *op.cit.*, pp. 2-3,

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic, Denisa Kostovicova, Mariana Escobar, Jelena Bjelica; “Organised crime and international aid subversion: evidence from Colombia and Afghanistan”, *Third World Quarterly*, 2015, London, [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/62748/1/Bojicic-Dzelilovic\\_Binder1.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/62748/1/Bojicic-Dzelilovic_Binder1.pdf), pp. 8-10, accessed on 02.04.2018.

<sup>15</sup> FRIDE, DPA, *op.cit.*, p.3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

It was also identified by the U.S. General Accounting Office that corruption was the main cause for Colombia's growing trafficking problem.<sup>17</sup>

According to the United Nation Convention, systematic corruption is also considered as a form of organized crime or they are interrelated, as it involves 3 or more persons, who act for a longer period of time, committing heavy crimes in order to obtain directly or indirectly financial or other benefits. However, it does not involve the same coercion and violence as many definitions are related to organize crime, but it's highly entrenched at all levels and it is involved more traditional criminal activities, such as money laundering.<sup>18</sup> Also it was underlined by other scholars that “*organised crime is dynamic, driven by multiple motives, and endogenous to local power politics.*”<sup>19</sup>

### *Political parties and illicit funding*

Illicit funding of political parties is another form of organized crime as dirty money enters into politics through it. The occurrence of it is prevalent in weak states because it facilitates the access for criminal organizations to penetrate state and governmental institutions. It undermines the credibility, accountability and legitimacy of political systems, and further erodes the state's authority and sovereignty. Illicit funding stems from structural problems and weak legal regulations of the state.<sup>20</sup>

In order to prevent illegal party funding and criminal organization to enter into politics, comprehensive party funding rules should be introduced that provides equal opportunity and independence for them from powerful elites and illegal interests.

### *Organized crime, state development, state security*

Organized crime highly affects governance but also has a huge impact and influence on the development on the state. According to Laura Jaitman and to the estimation of the inter-American Development Bank<sup>21</sup> the cost of crimes in Latin America and the Caribbean is around 5 and 10 % of GDP. Although, it was highlighted that 50% of the economy in Latin America is informal, and there is a distinction between informality and illegality, however, informality has

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<sup>17</sup> Ron Chepesiuk, *op.cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>18</sup> FRIDE, DPA, *op.cit.*, p.4.

<sup>19</sup> Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic, Denisa Kostovicova, Mariana Escobar, Jelena Bjelica; “Organised crime and international aid subversion: evidence from Colombia and Afghanistan”, *op.cit.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>20</sup> FRIDE, DPA, *op.cit.*, pp. 5-9.

<sup>21</sup> Laura Jaitman, “The Costs of Crime and Violence”, *Inter-American Development Bank*, New York, 2017, p. 5, <https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/handle/11319/8133/The-Costs-of-Crime-and-Violence-New-Evidence-and-Insights-in-Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean.pdf>, accessed on 10.02.2018.

some relation to criminal activity which assist criminal organization, but is mainly embedded in poverty and inequality. Therefore, poverty and inequality induces people to be involved in illegal activities which assure social advancement that cannot be found through legal activities. Also these criminal organizations and criminals provide basic services for the population that the government cannot provide, thus, growing their power in the community.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, there is a high connection between low level of governance and development, as poor governance prevents the provision of quality services and development; thus, poor governance gives incentive for crimes to grow and criminal organizations to emerge and affects the economic environment. This highlights that improvements in governance would in turn contribute to greater equality and development. Therefore, the level of governance, development, security and casualties are interrelated. Usually, the high occurrence of crimes and corruption are related to low governance, and their roots mostly can be traced back to the centres of power in party politics; and which consequently leads for further disadvantages in a state.<sup>23</sup>

Hence, it is important to first analyse the social, political and economic relations that enables organized crimes to be embedded within the social, political and economic processes. It was also highlighted by researchers that its emergence stems from local politics of power and it's shaped by local relations.<sup>24</sup>

### *Violence*

The roots of organized crime and violence lay in the weakness of the state, as of a state cannot exert the monopoly over the use of force, criminal actors take over. However, if a state can maintain accountable governance, keep corruption at a low level and it's able to successfully enforce the law, its risk is at a low level to confront high rates fatal violence. But, if a state cannot guarantee the establishment of a legitimate authority, its struggles to prevent and to reduce homicide will be of a great challenge. It was further highlighted by Juan Carlos Garzón Vergara that the extent of organized crime infiltration of state institutions and their influence on the economy also depends on how government authorities respond to it. He further proved in his paper that state's reaction by using repressive approaches to eliminate criminal economies and structures is not an effective method, as it created an offensive reaction from criminal actors,

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 6-8.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 6-11.

<sup>24</sup> Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic, Denisa Kostovicova, Mariana Escobar, Jelena Bjelica, *op.cit.*, pp. 3-5.

leading to an increase in violence and homicide. Thus, it is more effective to reshape their behaviour, making them less visible and violent.<sup>25</sup>

However, according to Juan Carlos Garzón-Vergara, “*in Latin America, low murder rates in areas influenced by organized crime are attributable to organized crime’s ability to influence the state rather than the state’s effectiveness in shaping the behavior of criminal factions.*”<sup>26</sup>

Organized crime and transnational organized crime erodes the rule of law, and it leads to disastrous consequences, as for example to high crime rates, violence etc. Hence, deteriorates the social order and individual liberties, challenges state authority, threatening democracy and the state by displacing and substituting law enforcement entities and institutions; by other words, overtaking the government and the monopoly of use of force.<sup>27</sup>

Therefore, in the following chapters, I will evaluate and analyze the Colombian case by the hypothesis of the concepts mentioned above, and also discern how the lack of authority of the Colombian State contributed to the emergence of the Cali and Medellin Cartels. In addition, I will further investigate the Colombian contexts which consist in the factors and causes that allowed drug cartels to take control over territory, law enforcement agencies, monopoly of use of power and finally the reasons that led to the erosion of state sovereignty.

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<sup>25</sup> Juan Carlos Garzón Vergara, “What is the relationship between organized crime and homicide in Latin America?”, *Igarapé Institute*, June 2016, pp. 1-16, <https://igarape.org.br/en/what-is-the-relationship-between-organized-crime-and-homicide-in-latin-america/>, accessed on 10.02.2018.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 16.

<sup>27</sup> Felipe Caderon, “Drug Traffickign and Organized Crime”, *Harvard International Review*, <http://hir.harvard.edu/article/?a=11786>, 2005, accessed on 02.02.2018.

## II. The Colombian State and the Drug Trafficking: a Historical Approach

Most of the problems of Colombia (including drug trafficking, economic, land inequality etc.) that aggravated its conflict stems from a weak state. The absence of state institutions and corrupted institutions cause the marginalization of the population and the emergence of parallel structures that consequently challenged the Colombian state's authority and monopoly on violence.<sup>28</sup>

According to Fernan Gonzalez, Colombia's recent conflicts are related to the colonization of the peripheral areas of the country's territory.

“Since the beginning of the sixteenth century the most isolated and inaccessible territories were settled by marginalized groups. In these areas of peripheral colonization the organization of social relations was left to individuals and social groups, and the state lacked the monopoly on justice and the legitimate use of force. It was created by a constant expulsion of poor campesinos towards areas of unclaimed frontier...where the presence of the state's regulatory institutions and interaction with the rest of society and the national economy was minimal.”<sup>29</sup>

Thus, in the areas where the Colombian state was absent, a vacuum has been created which gave the possibility for other actors to emerge; (elite landowners, drug traffickers, guerrillas, paramilitaries etc.) gain power and take control over it to fill the empty spaces. This structural failure of the state is also closely related to land inequality and political exclusion.<sup>30</sup>

Consequently, we can understand the emergence of independent republics that appeared during the *La Violencia* in the 50s and which challenged state sovereignty. The state response regarding this was to integrate them by force rather than providing social, economic development projects and to increase the state's presence.

Pablo Escobar is another example, and the emergence of his cocaine trafficking empire which emphasizes how the weakness of the state aggravates the conflict. He and his cartel/organization emerged because of the poor institutional organization of the state, poverty and lack of rule of law. He also acted as a state would; he strived to maintain the monopoly of force, and confronted with violence the ones who attempted to challenge his authority.

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<sup>28</sup> Joel Gillin, “Understanding the causes of Colombia's conflict: Weak, corrupt state institutions”, *Colombia Reports*, 2015, <https://colombiareports.com/understanding-colombias-conflict-weak-corrupt-state-institutions/>, accessed on 15.02.2018.

<sup>29</sup> Fernan E. Gonzalez, “The Colombian Conflict in historical perspectives”, *Reconciliation Resources*, 2004, <http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/colombian-conflict-historical-perspective>, accessed on 15.02.2018.

<sup>30</sup> Joel Gillin, op.cit.

Illicit funding of electoral campaigns further aggravates the situation as states institutions are too weak to combat the influence of outside forces from influencing local elections, and to prevent the penetration of criminal organization into state institutions. And we can see, that connections and relations between criminals and political actors/state officials are deeply entrenched which creates a huge obstacle for the state to restore its authority and its monopoly on use of force.<sup>31</sup>

The fundamental cause of conflict, violence and the emergence of criminal organization is the weak presence of the Colombian state throughout of its territory. However, the causes of the conflict are multi-casual and combinations of multiple factors contribute to it and shape it. Thus, we have to look to the whole country's segments in order to understand the origins and the cause of the conflict.<sup>32</sup>

Colombia in the 80s-90s was close to become a narcodemocratic state as criminal/drug trafficking organizations gained power in state institutions by corrupting the state's economic, social, political and economic institutions/sectors which further aroused worries in the United States. Drug related corruption was a huge problem in Colombia's most governmental institutions, including the Congress, courts, armed forces and the Colombian National Police.<sup>33</sup>

In Colombia during the 80s the drug cartels grown their organization and increased their power and influence to such an extent that they could directly challenge the government's sovereignty.<sup>34</sup> The 1980's were considered the golden decade of the Medellin Cartel, as its annual profits were estimated around 25 billion dollars. The Cali Cartel, the Medellin Cartel's biggest rival, managed to earn around 8 billion dollars annually. Their combined profits reached 31% of Colombia's official GDP.<sup>35</sup> *"These huge sums provided the Medellin and Cali Cartels with the resources to buy influence with politicians and any other official at virtually any level of power in Colombia."*<sup>36</sup>

Luis V. de la Torre highlights that in states where illegal drugs are produced and distributed, some degree of drug-related corruption will prevail, especially, in the institutions such as the police, and judiciary which are the closest to the problem.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>32</sup> Fernan E. Gonzalez, *op.cit.*

<sup>33</sup> Luis V. de la Torre, "Drug trafficking and police corruption a comparison of Colombia and Mexico", *Calhoun: Institutional Archive of the Naval Postgraduate School*, Monterey, California, 2008, p. 43, [https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/4074/08Jun\\_DelaTorre.pdf?sequence=1](https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/4074/08Jun_DelaTorre.pdf?sequence=1), accessed on 24.03.2018.

<sup>34</sup> Gonzalo Z. Francisco, "Armed Conflict and Public Security in Colombia; Public Security and Police reform in the Americas", *University of Pittsburgh Press*, 2006, Pittsburgh, p. 98.

<sup>35</sup> Roberto Steiner and Alejandra Corchuelo, "Economic and Institutional Repercussions of the Drug Trade in Colombia", *Universidad de los Andes*, December 1999, Bogota, Colombia, <http://www.mamacoca.org/feb2002/DrugTrade.PDF>, accessed on 24.03.2018.

<sup>36</sup> Luis V. de la Torre, *op.cit.*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 44.

The conflict and the relation between drug-trafficking and violence in Colombia is a complicated one. It is argued that the drug trade highly contributed and aggravated the situation in the country, however, the main cause and the root of the conflict are the structural problems of the country, namely, economical, political and social. The emergence of drug traffickign organizations in Colombia are merely a response to the structural factors, as such, weak state insitutions, lack of rule of law, insuficcient economic opportunities and so on. The expansion and the emergence of drug cartels is explained by the increased demand for drugs and the inability of a weak state to prevent their involvement in the trade.<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, it was highlighted by Joel Gillin that the origins of the conflict are related to the structural problems of the country; and the origins of the conflict can be traced back to the La Violencia. The bloodshed caused by the conflict between the Liberal and the Conservative parties, starting in 1948 with the assassination Jorge Elicier Gaitan, and continued until 1957 when the two parties signed a power sharing agreement, the National Front. Thus, violence and conflict was prevalent way before the drug trafficking industry became a serious player in the Colombian society.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Joel Gillin, "Understanding Colombia's armed conflict: The role of drugs", *Colombia Reports*, January 2015, <https://colombiareports.com/understanding-colombian-conflict-drugs/>, accessed on 24.03.2018.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*.



### III. Internal and External Erosion of State Sovereignty: The Colombian Case

The Colombian State and sovereignty have been immensely affected by the production and trafficking of drugs, which can be perceived in both an internal and an external dimension.

Internally, the authority of the State has been undermined by the drug cartels' criminal organization, which, in turn, has led to the erosion of the state sovereignty. As the state was weak, it failed to control its territories and enforce the rule of law. Given this instability, the drug lords were in a position that by promoting extreme violence, they managed to exert their power over the government, and, eventually, Colombia's economy. In concrete, through bribes, corruption and the illicit funding of political campaigns, they undermined the formal economy, frightened off foreign investment, and destroyed the social and political landscapes of the country. This led to the complete demobilisation of the State, undermining the legitimacy of the government. Virtually, the drugs economy controlled the whole country in all parts and at all levels of society.

Externally, Colombia became the main focus of the United States' international narcotics prevention efforts in the 1980's, by when the country had developed a monopolistic cocaine market and was selling its products across US borders.

As Colombia's crisis was jeopardising the States' foreign policy and national security, the US and their representatives stepped up to become directly involved in Colombia's national affairs through the implementation of several policies and the enforcement of the extradition treaty concerning drug trafficking and criminal activities. These interventions were aimed to spur the Colombian economy, stimulate social development, and fight, weaken and dismantle drug traffickers and other illicit organizations. However, Colombia end up losing autonomy over its internal drug issues and it also led to the erosion of its state sovereignty.

Next, I will explain my investigation over two important dimensions considering the Colombian case during the 70s and the 80s, and the erosion of its state sovereignty. The first approach analysing the internal dimension on which I break down to the emergence of the drug cartels and their complex operations. And secondly, I explore Colombia's connection with the United States that I designate on the external dimension.

#### **3.1 Internal Dimension**

Colombia is well known for some of the most violent and sophisticated drug trafficking organizations and cartels in the world that began to emerge in the 1970s. All of this started with a

small drug smuggling business that in 30 years turned into a huge, highly sophisticated and multinational cocaine empire. Over the time, drug traffickers became very powerful, and accumulated so much wealth that they could afford to build sophisticated, high tech smuggling equipment, as for example, a submarine; which later was discovered by the Colombian National Police. The drug traffickers were able to hire expert engineers from Russia and the United States to plan, design and build a submarine that was used to smuggle large quantities to the U.S.

In the beginning, as in the mid-1970, traffickers started with plain and unassertive ways to smuggle drugs, as for example, they only exported small quantities of marijuana, hiding it in small suitcases and so on. And later on, we could see the sophisticated process of smuggling drugs, as they could afford to hire the best experts in the world to plan for them high tech machines so smuggle drugs. This shows the amazing evolution of the drug smuggling process.

### 3.1.1. The Medellin Cartel

The Medellin Cartel was a huge and successful empire and an inconceivable violence. At its peak made 4 billion dollars a year and controlled 80% of the cocaine supply and trade in the US, leaving thousands of people dead in its wake.<sup>40</sup> It was a criminal organization, however, also an excellent business that was not much different from a legal global corporation, but it wholly operated outside the law. It was a criminal syndicate that throw an endless supply of cocaine to the market, and let the market settle the price of cocaine.<sup>41</sup>

*“Pablo Escobar was the mastermind behind the most successful criminal operation in history, as well as the brutal force behind the years of chaos and violence that plagued Colombia. He was the larger than reality figure vilified and loved by the people of his country.”*<sup>42</sup>

Pablo was born during the period of *La Violencia* (1948-1965) which was a period of partisan violence between the liberals and conservatives in the rural Colombia which caused the death of 200 thousand people. After this turmoil many leftist terrorist groups have been formed, such as M-19, FARC and so on.<sup>43</sup>

Due to the uprisings, turmoil and insurrections that were going on in Colombia, large parts of the country fallout from the government’s control, which gave the possibility for the Medellin Cartel to set up a cocaine processing camp, the *Tranquilandia* which became one of the

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<sup>40</sup> Peter S. Green, “The Syndicate: How Cocaine Traffickers from Medellín Transformed the Multibillion Dollar Global Drug Trade”, *Cocainomics*, *Wall Street Journal*, <http://www.wsj.com/ad/cocainomics>, accessed on 29.08.2018.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>42</sup> Roberto Escobar, *Escobar. Drugs. Guns. Money. Power.*, Hodder and Stoughton Edition, UK: 2009.

<sup>43</sup> James L. Zackrison, “La Violencia in Colombia: An Anomaly in Terrorism,” *Conflict Quarterly*, Vol 9, No 4, 1989, pp. 5-9, <file:///C:/Users/noran/Downloads/14865-19653-1-PB.pdf>, accessed on 04.04.2018.

biggest cocaine processing labs, a territory controlled by the FARC and guarded by the rebels. However, in a stable country where the state has control over its all territories, is unthinkable and even impossible that a criminal group of such a size would have the opportunity and the possibility to so openly build a major drug processing center on the scale of *Tranquilandia*.<sup>44</sup>

The Evolution of the drug trade can be seen in the following decades:

- In 1960 Argentina, Brazil and Chile were the leading countries in the cocaine trade. Colombia wasn't a major player yet, thus, they smuggled cocaine along with marijuana.
- In 1970 the market moved to the north, and Pablo Escobar seized the opportunity to expand its market to the US. And by 1975, Colombia was exporting 4 thousand kg per year to the US.
- In 1980s the Medellin Cartel was at its peak, and already controlled 80% of the global cocaine trade. In this decade was when Carlos Lehder bought its own property on Norman's Cay, a property that the drug planes used to refuel and then export the drugs to the US.
- In 1990, after Escobar's death, new players emerged in the cocaine business, especially, Mexicans became specialists in smuggling cocaine to the US. By the end of the 90s, 80% of the cocaine entered through Mexico.
- In 2000 cocaine sales dwindled in the US, therefore, other powerful markets emerged, as for example, Europe. Cartels began to smuggle drug to Europe through Spain.<sup>45</sup>

### *The evolution of the Medellin Cartel*

Escobar started off as a small swindler, contraband, being involved in small illegal businesses to make money, and then he continued as a small trafficker of cocaine, and then developed a huge market which controlled 80% of the cocaine trade globally. He built an empire that was highly organised and viciously savage which made 60 million dollars or more a day.<sup>46</sup>

The Medellin cartel's success initially was granted by Carlos Lehder's contacts, connections and amazing infrastructure network of cocaine smuggling and transportation. Carlos Lehder met George Jung, a marijuana smuggler in an American prison. Thus, he realized that cocaine could

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<sup>44</sup> Guy Gugliotta and Jeff Leen, "Kings of Cocaine: Inside the Medellin Cartel: An astonishing true story of murder, money, and international corruption", New Orleans: Garrett Country Press, 2011.

<sup>45</sup> Peter S. Green, *op.cit.*

<sup>46</sup> Tim Rutten, "Book Review: 'The Accountant's Story' by Roberto Escobar with David Fisher," Los Angeles Times, February 25, 2009, <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/feb/25/entertainment/et-rutten25>), accessed on 22.07.2018

be smuggled the same way as marijuana, through the use of small planes. Therefore, he smartly combined his connections of cocaine smugglers from Colombia with Jung's connections of drug traffickers and sellers, and the exportation of huge amounts of cocaine directly to US started, avoiding dangerous, tricky ways of drug trafficking and countless trips with suitcases. Carlos made so much profit during his stay in jail that after leaving, he was able to buy an island on the Bahamas, the Norman's Cay, which later was used as a base to refuel and export cocaine to the United States.<sup>47</sup>

The cartel began to grow when Pablo Escobar met Carlos Lehder and joined up with him. Pablo Escobar was one of the first drug traffickers who began to use Carlos Lehder's transportation routes. Therefore, he exported cocaine through the Caribbean, and worked together with Carlos Lehder and George Jung, and using their routes that went to South Florida through the Bahamas. And when Carlos Lehder bought its island on Norman's Cay, Escobar used it for its planes to refuel. From there, cocaine was smuggled in small planes that were able to fly below the US radar and landed on dirt roads in Florida's Everglades.<sup>48</sup>

The large demand and desire for cocaine in the United States led to huge profits which gave the opportunity for the cartel to build more sophisticated labs, better airplanes, and also they could afford to use the Caribbean island to refuel their airplanes.<sup>49</sup> However, the DEA, the FBI and other government agencies find out about the Colombia-Bahamia-Florida route; and the Bahamian government forced the traffickers out from Norman's cay.<sup>50</sup> But this didn't prevent the traffickers of smuggling cocaine; they just outsmarted the police by shifting the supply chain. They found several tactics to smuggle drugs, as for example, inside the insulation of refrigerators, inside TV, Chilean wine, Ecuadorian cocoa, even inside jeans that was later removed by chemists in the US and so on.<sup>51</sup>

Gustavo Gaviria, the cousin of Escobar, he was the brain of the cartel, who developed, planned and controlled the key routes to smuggle cocaine, which was actually the logistics of the legitimate corporations of exporting good around the world.<sup>52</sup>

*"The Medellín syndicate was involved in every part of the drug trade, from coca farms in Colombia to street dealers in the United States. From plant to powder."*<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Guy Gugliotta and Jeff Leen, "Kings of Cocaine: Inside the Medellín Cartel: An astonishing true story of murder, money, and international corruption", *New Orleans: Garrett Country Press*, 2011.

<sup>48</sup> Mark Bowden, *Killing Pablo*, New York: Penguin Books, 2002, pp. 30-35.

<sup>49</sup> Jena Bowley, "Robin Hood or Villain: The Social Constructions of Pablo Escobar", *Honors College*, Main, 2013, pp. 20-27, <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1108&context=honors>, accessed on 16.05.2018.

<sup>50</sup> Peter S. Green, *op. cit.*

<sup>51</sup> Roberto Escobar, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-90.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 90-95.

<sup>53</sup> Peter S. Green, *op. cit.*

The cartel also started to smuggle cocaine through the Panama, from the Mexican smugglers took it and smuggled to the US through the Mexican border. This how Mexico came into the picture and this helped the foundation of some Mexican cartels, such as the Sinaloa, Juárez and Tampico. Since then Mexico became a narco-state.<sup>54</sup>

The Medellin cartel was a wholesale organization, and in order to control the movement of cocaine through Southern Florida and over the Mexican border to the streets of America they hired and used distributors and retailers from US organized groups to local drug kingpins and Colombian emigrants. Violence, bribes and loyalty definitely helped the cartel to control them.  
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### *Pablo Escobar*

Pablo Escobar knew how to gain support from Colombia's citizens. He stepped into the areas where the government didn't, into the impoverished areas. He built complexes, houses, and buildings for the poor. Therefore, people respected him for this act; they even praise him today for his benevolent acts of helping the poor.<sup>56</sup> If people were not loyal, the cartel used brutal violence as its weapon. Anyone who crossed Escobar was killed by his sicarios, who were only kids of 14 years or less from the ghettos of Medellin, who were paid well by Escobar. "*Violence was a masterful substitution for the merger and acquisition tactics of legitimate businesses.*"<sup>57</sup>

Another key element of the Medellin cartel was: bribes. The bribe of the organization was the perfect criminal equivalent tool of the legitimate corporations for hiring lobbyists and paying regulatory fines.<sup>58</sup> The Medellin cartel used a lot of money to bribe law enforcement and government officials, and still, bribes were not a subtle or tiny threat, as Escobar's motto was: "Plata or plomo", namely, take the bribe or you are shot dead.<sup>59</sup>

Loyalty, violence and bribery: the key element and weapons of the Medellin cartel; the tactics that helped it to become the most ruthless, most violent and financially successful organization of the world, however, the cartel dissolved after Escobar's death.<sup>60</sup>

### *The Medellin Cartel, Politics and the Extradition Treaty*

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>56</sup> Roberto Escobar, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-100.

<sup>57</sup> Peter S. Green, *op.cit.*

<sup>58</sup> Guy Gugliotta and Jeff Lean, *op.cit.*, pp. 100-105.

<sup>59</sup> Peter S. Green, *op.cit.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem.*

As cocaine was flowing into the United States, and as cheap and toxic crack was severely damaging and devastating the inner cities of it, the US government stepped up and initiated their war on drugs. They seized a huge amount of cocaine, however, that didn't have a change on the price in the market which showed that it was a failure to dent the supply of it. Therefore, they put pressure on the Colombian government to capture the drug lords of the Medellin cartel and extradite them for trial to the US. Thus, the United States and Colombia agreed and signed the extradition treaty.<sup>61</sup>

So, the main political aim of the Medellin cartel and of Escobar was to fight the extradition treaty. Consequently, violence became the main weapon of the Cartel's political arsenal, and this is how all the terrorism and all the bloody violence started in Colombia.<sup>62</sup> The unique and special aspect of the Medellin Cartel was the involvement in its own community through political and social outreach.<sup>63</sup>

Escobar co-opted for the Liberal Party and won a seat in the parliament in 1982, becoming an alternate representative of the Congress. He was the man of the people; he helped the poor by building houses and schools for them. *“Escobar's political and social activities follow the logic of insurgencies that rely on the goodwill of the community that they operate in to evade state capture, and while he was a member of the Congress, Escobar was also immune from prosecution.”*<sup>64</sup>

The Medellin Cartel was greatly involved into politics, thus it had significant impact and influences on it; and as Pablo was a member of the Congress, he started his opposition campaign for the extradition treaty, and pressured the legislators to abdicate the extradition treaty.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, state authority was replaced by the drug cartels that led to the erosion of state sovereignty. However, the huge success and profits of the Cartel, and Pablo Escobar's paradoxical behaviour attracted the attention of the government.<sup>66</sup> Because if in one hand he was considered a man of the people, who loved to help the poor and those in need, on the other hand, he also loved to show off the wealthy and luxury life his business provided to him and his

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<sup>61</sup> Guy Gugliotta and Jeff Lein, *op.cit.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>63</sup> Leon Whyte, “The Medellin Cartel: The politics of Wholesale Cocaine”, *Small Crowded World*, 2014, <https://smallcrowdedworld.wordpress.com/2014/03/12/the-medellin-cartel-the-politics-of-wholesale-cocaine/>, accessed on 22.07.2018.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>65</sup> Larry Rohter, “Former Smuggler Ties Top Officials Of Cuba and Nicaragua to Drug Ring,” *The New York Times*, November 21, 1991, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/11/21/us/former-smuggler-ties-top-officials-of-cuba-and-nicaragua-to-drug-ring.html>, accessed on 22.07.2018.

<sup>66</sup> Jena Bowley, “Robin Hood or Villain: The Social Constructions of Pablo Escobar”, *Honors College*, Main, 2013, <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1108&context=honors>, pp. 20-27.

family. It didn't last long passing unnoticed. Soon, Colombia's government, the police and the US government was on the top of him, working on strategies to dismantle the whole cartel.<sup>67</sup>

Also, it came to Lara Bonilla's knowledge that Escobar is a drug kingpin, who was brave enough to speak up, and force him out of the parliament, and pledging to bring the Medellin cartel to justice. Lara Bonilla paid with his life for this heroic act. He was shot dead by a sicario in 1984. This attack outraged the government officials and urged them to take action and attack the drug lords.<sup>68</sup> Pablo Escobar was blamed for his assassination; however, he was not condemned for it. Afterwards, Belisario Betancur declared war on the drug traffickers.<sup>69</sup>

So, after the assassination of Lara Bonilla, the cartel had to switch away from its mainstream participation in the political process to a single minded terrorist campaign against extradition. Thereafter, Colombia was consumed with all the bloody violence, terrorism and bombings as the Medellin, the government, the leftist and the right wing groups began to fight each other. The Medellin cartel was accountable for the lives of thousands of people, got involved in 19 car bomb attacks, also the bombing of the Avianca flight 203; responsible of the murder of 250 or more policeman, as well as the assassination of Luis Carlos Galan, a presidential candidate for the Liberal party during the 1990 elections. "*The country's decades-long civil war stretching beyond politics to control of the increasingly lucrative drug trade.*"<sup>70</sup>

The Medellin cartel continued its bloody terrorist campaign and drug trafficking business until 1993 when Pablo Escobar was killed by the police, which also marked the dissolution of the cartel.<sup>71</sup> The cartel began to dismantle and fall apart as the violence and the power grew. "*But just as legal corporations find the roots of their failure in their very success, the violence that Escobar wielded eventually led to his downfall and death.*"<sup>72</sup> The strong violence, and Pablo's obsession with violence, led to his downfall and of the Medellin Cartel. He killed too many people, innocent people, even some of his allies that led some fellow traffickers against him, and also he was no longer being precautious which led to the end of his life and the downfall of the Medellin cartel.

Pablo was traced on the phone by a Colombian police lieutenant when he was talking too long with his son. He was surrounded by hundreds of police men and shot dead on a rooftop in 1993.<sup>73</sup> The other members of the cartel were either killed by the Colombian police, or they gave

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*, 2-7.

<sup>68</sup> Larry Rohter, "Former Smuggler Ties Top Officials Of Cuba and Nicaragua to Drug Ring," *The New York Times*, November 21, 1991, <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/11/21/us/former-smuggler-ties-top-officials-of-cuba-and-nicaragua-to-drug-ring.html>, accessed on 22.07.2018.

<sup>69</sup> Peter S. Green, *op.cit.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*.

up the fight and turned themselves into the Colombian government for indulgent, tamed and shorter prison terms.<sup>74</sup>

### 3.1.2. The Cali Cartel

The overthrow of the Medellin Cartel was due to their rival, the Cali cartel which was founded and led by the Orejuela brothers and Santacruz Londono. The Cali cartel, compared to the Medellin cartel, was much more subtle and sophisticated and much less ostentious and flashy. The the leaders of the cali cartel were humble and modest, they preferred to do their business in a secret, hidden way, not attracting too much attention. They conducted and managed their drug trafficking business in a highly refined way, silently reinvesting their money in legitimate businesses. Unlike the Medellin cartel who loved to show off with the luxuries and wealth their drug business provided them, which attracted attention and led to the downfall of their business.<sup>75</sup>

The Cali cartel began to attack the Medellin cartel as they became very powerful and their business became highly violent. They also formed a group, named Pepes, whose target was Pablo Escobar, and they attacked and threatened his homes, business, family and lieutenants. The cali cartel also worked together with the DEA and the Colombian police and continuously informed them about Pablo Escobar's whereabouts, and strongly collaborated with them to track Pablo Escobar down. Later on, this triggered regret from the side of the Cali cartel because as the Medellin cartel disappeared, all the attention was focused on the Cali cartel.<sup>76</sup>

However, several years before the Cali cartel began to dominate much of cocaine trade. The infrastructure of their business was highly sophisticated and complex, thus it was very hard for the police to trace and discover the central point of their business, and was hard to understand how it operates as their business was running through many lines. They copied and used the technique of terrorist groups, separating their workers into cells, with each cell knowing little about the other groups or employees.<sup>77</sup>

They also hired outstanding lawyers to study the operation, processes and moves of the DEA to always be one step ahead of them. They also trained and hired prestigious and reputable engineers to create and design machines and equipments for their business to easily smuggle huge quantities of cocaine or communication devices that couldn't be bugged. Technology was a

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<sup>74</sup> Mark Bowden, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-200.

<sup>75</sup> Ron Chepesiuk, *The Rise and Fall of the Cali Cartel*, Dublin: Maverick House Publishers, 2017.

<sup>76</sup> Bruce Bagley, "Drug Trafficking Political Violence and U.S. Policy in Colombia in the 1990s", *University of Miami*, 2001, pp. 7-12, <https://www.as.miami.edu/media/college-of-arts-and-sciences/content-assets/international-studies/documents/publications/Bagley%20Drugs%20and%20violence%20final3.pdf>, accessed on 15.06.2018.

<sup>77</sup> Ron Chepesiuk, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-270.



pivotal tool for the business of the Cali cartel.<sup>78</sup> Their business was flourishing, and when the demand for cocaine in the United States dropped, they began to expand their business to other continents, such as, Europe and Asia.

The leaders of the Cali Cartel were known to own huge lands of Colombia, and very running many successful and legitimate businesses in the country. Therefore, they were also clever and sly enough to invest in political protection, ergo, Ernesto Samper, the former president and many congressmen and politicians were accused to accept financial campaigns from the Cali leaders.<sup>79</sup>

But after a lot of search and with the collaboration of Colombian officers with the USA and the DEA, the leaders of the Cali Cartel were tracked down and arrested in 1995. After all, with the innovation of technology was easier to catch them; and obviously with the size of their business they wouldn't have lasted more, it attracted too much attention.<sup>80</sup>

However, as we can see it today the destruction of the Medellin and the Cali Cartel didn't stop the drug trade and export, it just fragmented it. Drug traffickers learnt from the mistakes of the others, and realized that big organizations are more vulnerable and is much easier to be attacked and tracked down by US and Colombian authorities. Thus, they formed smaller and more controllable groups, dividing into sections and assigning different responsibilities to each category. As for example, one group is only dealing with the smuggling process from Colombia to Mexico; the other group is transporting the coca base to labs, another one is controlling the labs and so on and on.<sup>81</sup>

It is believed by the DEA and the Colombian national police that 300 or more drug organizations are operating in Colombia. It became a worldwide business, and drugs are exported and smuggled to every single industrialized nation around the world, and the profits gained by the drug business is extremely high.<sup>82</sup>

### *The complex operations of the Cali Cartel*

Most probably the Cali Cartel was the history's biggest and most powerful drug trafficking organization and the most organized crime syndicate. In the 80s-90s the leaders of the Cali Cartel made their organization to be the world's top supplier of cocaine which made billion

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<sup>78</sup> Juanita Darling, "Submarine Links Colombian Drug Traffickers with Russians", *Los Angeles Times*, 2000, <http://articles.latimes.com/2000/nov/10/news/mn-49908>, accessed on 17.06.2018.

<sup>79</sup> Ron Chepesiuk, *op. cit.*, pp. 260-270.

<sup>80</sup> Bruce Bagley, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-15.

<sup>81</sup> J. L. Chappell, "The Colombian Heroin Threat: Demand and Supply", *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1996, pp. 360-366.

<sup>82</sup> Ron Chepesiuk, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-283.

of dollars. They were very innovative and smart as they revolutionized the way any criminal organization did business. In 1994 they almost turned Colombia into a narco-democracy by buying the presidency with their donation of 10 million dollar for the presidential campaign of Ernesto Samper, who eventually became the president of Colombia.<sup>83</sup>

*“Pablo Escobar and other Medellin Cartel godfathers are called the Henry Fords of cocaine trafficking because they pioneered the transportation routes that got the product to the market,”* explained Lou Weiss, a retired DEA agent who investigated the Cali Cartel. *“We need to go one step further with the Cali Cartel and call it the McDonald’s of cocaine trafficking because its godfathers turned drug trafficking into a major corporate enterprise.”*<sup>84</sup>

The Cali cartel succeeded in the drug trade as no other criminal organization, and its success can be accredited to its style of managing its operations and its highly innovative approach to criminality.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, the Cali Cartel let its rival, the Medellin cartel to create a high profile while they were building up their empire silently. The Medellin Cartel loved the attention, and tried to participate in the Colombian political establishment, (Pablo Escobar wanted to become the President of Colombia) and the leaders of the Cali Cartel loved that their counterparts was always in the spotlight. Eventually, the Medellin Cartel went to war with the state, fighting the extradition treaty, and by the terror they created in Colombia the narco-terrorism term was introduced in the political lexicon.<sup>86</sup>

On the other hand, the Cali Cartel adopted more businesslike approach and built its massive criminal empire silently, avoiding violence and terror as means to acquire power and to reach its objectives. Their guiding philosophy was to buy Colombia rather than terrorize it. However, it could be as savage as agangster group if it was necessary. The cali cartel in order to reach its goals preferred to use bribes, collect intelligence informations about its enemies, and applied the latest telecommunication technology to coordinate its activities. Most probably the *„cartel’s intelligence system was the difference in its successful war of attrition with the Medellin cartel.”*<sup>87</sup>

„The Cali Cartel ran its commodity empire more on the model of a multinational corporation than a criminal enterprise. It created its members like company employees, hired the best persons for the job, used business strategy to market its illegal product, and shifted

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 270-272.

<sup>84</sup> Lou Weiss, DEA agent.

<sup>85</sup> Ron Chepesiuk, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-273.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 175.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 274.

operations from one locale to another as economic and political conditions necessitated.”<sup>88</sup> They created their criminal business into a massive corporate enterprise.

Compared to the Medellin Cartel, the Cali Cartel did not kill any government official or leading citizen of Colombia nor engaged in narco terrorism. As the government’s biggest concern was security and terror the Medellin Cartel created, they did not perceive the Cali Cartel as a huge threat, thus, it allowed and enabled them to build and grow their criminal enterprise right in front of the US law enforcement, however, the cartel’s low key, humble profile helped them to build expansive and comprehensive distribution networks. After the discovery of the cartel’s existence, it was extraordinarily hard for the authorities to penetrate and to dismantle this criminal enterprise. „The cartel operated with the compartmentalization of a terrorist organization”, thus, its associates were afraid to inform about them to the authorities because they knew if they go to jail their families are safe and the cartel takes care of them, but if they inform the consequences are unbelievable cruel and harsh.<sup>89</sup>

After the death of Pablo Escobar, the Cali Cartel realized that it is impossible to avoid the focus and the attentions of the law enforcement and of authorities. They knew it’s just a matter of time till they became the main target of law enforcement, thus, they tried to negotiate their way out of it. The Cali Cartel was the size of a multinational company with a global reach and thousands of employees which was involved in all levels and aspects of the trade, so it was impossible to escape and to get out of the sight of the government. „ The sheer size of mafia operations require their explicit coordination of many transactions, as well as a system of information gathering and record keeping. Cocaine syndicates are too big and too complex to escape detection, and they are too vulnerable to penetration by law enforcement agents.”<sup>90</sup>

As the cartel has grown to a multinational corporation more often began to appear on the law enforcement’s radar screen. The authorities deeply and successfully investigated the cartel’s operations and infrastructure which made the cartel very vulnerable. Also after the capture of Harold Ackerman who became a loyal informer for the US authorities and investigators, made it easier for law enforcement to pervade the cartel’s financial structure. Another mistake of the cartel was its micromanagement. Micromanaging can work when a company is small and authorities have minor suspicion about its activities, but when a company becomes a size of a multinational enterprise micromanaging becomes a liability and something that is easy to detect.

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<sup>88</sup> *Loc. Cit.*.

<sup>89</sup> *Loc. Cit.*.

<sup>90</sup> Rensselaer Lee, *White Labryinth: Cocaine and Political Power*, Brunswick N. J. , Transaction Publishers, *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, Vol. 23, 1991, p. 190.

<sup>91</sup> Ron Chepesiuk, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-276.

So after the takedown of Pablo Escobar the Cali Cartel became the main focus of the US and Colombian authorities. The Colombian government allocated 500 soldiers and police to the Search Block to track and takedown the leaders of the cartel and their subordinates. With the help of informants and testifiers the authorities successfully captured Miguel and Gilberto. However, it came to their attention the brothers were still running their business and trafficking drugs behind the bars. In 2006 the Orejuela brothers pleaded guilty to the federal charge for importing drug to the US and they were sentenced for 30 years in prison. And even though the Cali Cartel godfathers are captured and spend their whole lives behind bars the international drug industry is still thriving with the emergence of cartelitos drug traffickers.<sup>92</sup>

### **3.2. External Dimension**

The United States and Colombia has a long and complex relationship which evolved from mutual amity during the 19th and the 20th Century until a recent partnership that continues today which connects the two nation's government and involves several key issues, such as, fighting communism, the war against drugs, the struggle against terrorism and so on . They grounded a a strong and longstanding relationship which was based on mutual respect, cooperation, and common aims, purposes, objectives and goals. During the last decades, the different governments of the United States and their representatives became directly involved in Colombian affairs through the implementation of several policies concerned with issues that were enumerated above.<sup>93</sup>

Their complex relationship began in 1810 when Colombia declared independence from Spain, and the United States was the first country which recognized the new republic, and established a resident diplomatic mission. They also had been allies in many international conflicts (which also contributed to their strong partnership) which involves the Korean War where Colombians fought and lost their lives alongside the Americans under the United Nations banner; the conflict in Afghanistan where Colombian highly contribute with their expertise in fighting drug trafficking and terrorism; their recognition of Kosovo independence; the Libyan civil war, where Colombians voted in favor of the United Nations Security Council Resolution of 1973 to support foreign military intervention.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ibidem, pp. 269-278.

<sup>93</sup> \*\*\*, "History of Partnership", *The Embassy of Colombia, Washington DC*, <http://www.colombiaemb.org/partnership>, accessed on 12.04.2018.

<sup>94</sup> Ibidem.

In the 1960s and 1970s the United States provided assistance to Colombia in order to help the nation to ease its external balance of payments problems; to increase its economic development through industrialization; and also establishing social and agrarian reforms.<sup>95</sup>

Furthermore, there are some other salient cases which prove the strong partnership between Colombia and the United States, as for example:

- during the 1980s we could see the prevalence of their strong cooperation and collaboration to fight drug trade and illicit crimes;
- the 1990s involved several agreements between the two countries, such as, environmental protection, civil aviation, asset sharing, chemical control, and maritime ship boarding agreement which meant the allowance for search and inspection of suspected drug-smuggling vessels;
- in 2000, the two countries elaborated and launched the Plan Colombia, a bilateral program to fight against drug trafficking and to prevent drug cultivation and production.<sup>96</sup>

### *The drugs question*

President Richard Nixon declared war on drugs in 1968 in response to the increased use of illicit drugs, and to the high occurrence of drug related violence that has consumed public policy around the world that is still continuously and aimlessly fought today. Colombia became the main focus of the United States international narcotics prevention in the 1980s, when Colombia has developed a monopolistic cocaine market and was selling its product across the United States border.<sup>97</sup>

The use of drugs in the United States occurred as a problem in the early 19th century, however, the state had no direct, explicit and central control over its use. Thus, consumption increased accordingly. When the negative effects of the use of narcotics came into surface, the government realized that a huge drug problem emerged, thus, it took action, as for example outlawing doctors to provide drugs, and further restricted its use. However, as cocaine was produced in Colombia, the nation also didn't consider the use of cocaine to be a problem in their

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<sup>95</sup> Dan Restrepo, Frank O. Mora, Brian Fonseca, and Jonathan D. Rosen, "The United States and Colombia: From Security Partners to Global Partners in Peace", *Center for American Progress*, Foreign Policy and Security, 2016, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2016/02/02/130251/the-united-states-and-colombia-from-security-partners-to-global-partners-in-peace/>, accessed on 13.04.2018.

<sup>96</sup> \*\*\*, "History of Partnership", *The Embassy of Colombia, Washington DC*, <http://www.colombiaemb.org/partnership>, accessed on 12.04.2018.

<sup>97</sup> Kinley Morrison, *The War on Drugs. U.S.-Colombia relations*, Final Paper, EDGE Spring Quarter, 2004, pp. 1-3.

country, thus, restrictions were not imposed on its production and use. Nevertheless, according to the U.S.' huge and power, Latin American countries couldn't ignore its complaints about the increased drugs being trafficked across the border. And taking into consideration that Colombia was primary and main source of the flow of cocaine, „the United States initiated a unique relationship with this country that has helped shape the tactics used in the war on drugs.”<sup>98</sup>

The development of the drug relation between the United States and Colombia has several phases. The first drug related ties between the two countries appeared in the 1960s, when in Colombia a small scale of marijuana cultivation emerged. However, the trade caused some violence but didn't seem to be too problematic on the national level, and it didn't prompted action from the government. Nevertheless, as the time passed, the market was expanding and it also added the cocaine export to this drug trade relationship. Furthermore, major drug cartels emerged in the Medellin and in the Cali city which later dominated 70-80 % of the Colombian cocaine trade. President Alfonso Lopez Michelsen at that time didn't see the emergence of these cartels as a threat to the nation, and he also facilitated later the money laundering.<sup>99</sup>

Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala also coped with the drug related issue with lack of interest, thus, giving free reign to drug traffickers to handle their businesses. However, in order to maintain good relations with the U.S. he passed the extradition law, which in turn caused some conflict between the Colombian government and the traffickers.<sup>100</sup>

Drug trafficking reached its peak in the 1982 as the drug cartel's importing foreign exchange reached \$800 million-\$2 billion, equivalent to 10-25% of Colombia's net exports.<sup>101</sup> This huge wealth, however, went to only a small group of people, who treated themselves to the finest luxuries. Nevertheless, the population became fascinated by their success and also appreciated their financing of sport centres, newspapers, schools etc. The drug cartels became very powerful, and as they grown, they became a national security threat, creating an era of confrontations with guerrillas and the government.<sup>102</sup>

The war on drugs was primarily initiated to only a domestic extent, however now it became the United States' international interdiction efforts to combat the issue. Thus, the first official agreement between the two countries to combat the drug related issue in Colombia was launched in 1973. This agreement allowed the U.S. to transfer aid. Therefore, the relationship began to evolve between the United States and Colombia.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibidem*, p.3.

<sup>99</sup> Joyce Elizabeth, "Latin America and the Multinational Drug Trade", London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1989.

<sup>100</sup> Kiney Morrison, *op.cit.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>101</sup> Joyce Elizabeth, *op.cit.*, p.69.

<sup>102</sup> Kiney Morrison, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>103</sup> Crandall Russell, "Driven By Drugs: U.S. Policy Towards Colombia", London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000, p. 7.

Former Foreign Service officer Robert Drexler highlighted the constant increasing of U.S. aid in Colombia:

“By 1978...the drug syndicate had grown so powerful that the Colombian authorities had insufficient strength to overcome them...[We] had not foreseen it three or four years earlier...American authorities had become concerned about drug trafficking in Colombia in the early 1970s and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) stationed a small number of agents in our embassy in Botega. There was no sense of crisis in connection with the DEA operation, however, and narcotics issue was only one of several diplomatic problems facing the embassy when Viron P. Vaky was the ambassador, never the most important one.”<sup>104</sup>

In the 1970s awareness about the Colombian drug trade became raised, however, it still didn't prompt the government to make a public policy issue. Nevertheless, when Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala became president, he declared war on drugs, drug traffickers and cartels, by which he forged closer and friendlier relationship with the United States. Thus, they tried first to prevent marijuana production and trade with herbicide paraquat, however, it was unsuccessful because it only relocated the production of marijuana and gave incentives for cocaine production. Nevertheless, this attempt proved to be a failure, as it didn't affect or decreased cocaine or marijuana production and sale, but it definitely helped to establish a healthier relationship with the United States.<sup>105</sup>

In the 1980s drug trafficking became an enormous issue in the United States, thus, it also became the primary focus of the U.S. regarding its relation with Colombia. Therefore, when Ronald Reagan became president, he took action and initiated an aggressive international interdiction policy. The Colombian government also took serious action against the drug cartels, when the Colombian justice minister Lara Bonilla was assassinated by expressing his anti-drug sentiments.<sup>106</sup>

Also in 1978 the Colombian President Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala signed the extradition treaty which meant that the government allowed the accused drug traffickers to be extradited to the United States and face trial according to their laws. Furthermore, during this time U.S. also increased its monetary aid to Colombia in order to help finance the Colombian military to have

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 24.

<sup>105</sup> Vallance Theodore R., *Prohibition's Second Failure: The Quest for a Rational and Humane Drug Policy*, London: Praeger Publishers, 1993, p. 42.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 43.

better equipment at their disposal to fight the drug traffickers. Thus, many laboratories were destroyed and many Colombian citizens were extradited to the U.S. which resulted in violence, as a serious threat emerged for the drug lords to maintain their business, and therefore violence was their response to defend to maintenance of drug trafficking. And the drug cartels were fighting against the extradition treaty by attacking and threatening the Colombian judicial system.<sup>107</sup>

At that time violence escalated to an extreme level, and the situation in Colombia was highly severe, many people were murdered. Not only citizens, but also more than 50 judges, members of the Supreme Court etc., also Luis Carlos Galan, presidential candidate. By 1991 violence in the country was increasing.<sup>108</sup>

The drug Lords, Pablo Escobar and Rodriguez Gacha, the leaders of the Medellin Cartel and the Cali Cartel initiated several terrorist attacks to show their dislike and to fight extradition. In the end they came up with a proposal for the government, suggesting that they would stop with their business, if the government won't extradite them to the U.S., and they can keep their fortunes, and receiving judicial amnesty. However, no agreement was reached between the government and the drug lords, thus, they continued with their act of violence.<sup>109</sup>

Nevertheless, as corruption was still extremely high at that time in the Colombian police and court system, it was impossible to stop the drug production, as drug lords proved to be stronger than the government. They accumulated such a wealth through their drug trafficking business that it enabled them to buy off the police and the judges. "*They paid police to inform them about upcoming drug raids and rewarded judges for dismissing their charges or lightening their sentences if actually convicted.*"<sup>110</sup> As long as corruption prevailed in the country, the government proved to be ineffective in stopping drug production.

In the late 1980s president George H. W. Bush was elected president of the United States and he said: "*The logic is simple. The cheapest way to eradicate narcotics is to destroy them at their source.... We need to wipe out crops wherever they are grown and take out labs where they exist.*"<sup>111</sup> Thus, he tried to attack the producers, in order to stop production, but the drug lords responded accordingly, and turmoil broke out in Colombia again. During this time several politicians were assassinated, including Luis Carlos Galan, who was considered to be a reliable partner to the United States, and eager to warm relations with them. This act aroused fierce anger in the United States; therefore they expanded their support towards Colombia. Therefore, an

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<sup>107</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>108</sup> Wisotsky Steven, *Beyond the War on Drugs: Overcoming a Failed Public Policy*, Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1990, p. 161.

<sup>109</sup> Joyce, *op.cit.*, p.72.

<sup>110</sup> Kinsey Morrison, *op.cit.*, pp.7-8.

<sup>111</sup> Crandall Russell, *op.cit.* p. 33.



additional \$65 million of counter narcotics aid was sent to Colombia. Also president George H. W. Bush launched the Andean Initiative which covered a \$2.2 billion aid package for 5 years. However, despite of all these aids and struggle to fight narcotics production, no decrease was shown in the volume of drug sales in the United States.<sup>112</sup>

In the 1990s Colombia lost autonomy over their internal drug issues, and the United States took control over and enforced more influence over their national policies. Some conflict occurred in the U.S. – Colombia relation when Ernesto Samper was elected as president because it was said the he accepted donations and he was bribed by the Cali Cartel. However, he denied this accusation but the United States still opposed his presence in the government. The U.S. put a huge pressure on Samper and made him to remove the chief police and also other things; seemed that Samper is losing power in his own country, and U.S. was taking slowly complete control over Colombia's national drug policies. Therefore, they wanted Colombia to break all the ties with the drug traffickers and adhere/adapt to their policies. However, Colombia failed to stick to those demands.<sup>113</sup>

Nevertheless, some tape recordings popped up which proved that communications occurred between Samper and the Cali Cartel during the electoral campaigns. Also Defense minister Fernando Botero stated that communication indeed happened between them. However, the investigation against him proved to be inconclusive, and Samper remained tainted in U.S.' eyes, and infected to some extent their relations.<sup>114</sup>

However, a turn occurred in Samper's administration when Bill Clinton, elected president of the United States in 1992, decertified Colombia. This made Samper to take serious actions against the drug issues, conducting more arrests, crop eradications, and drug seizures. He also promised heavier sentences to drug traffickers and better compliance/collaboration with the U.S. Nevertheless, "*the Leahy Amendment to the international affairs budget was passed in 1996 to act as another safeguard. It banned assistance to any military unit "if the Secretary of State has credible evidence to believe such unit has committed gross violations of human rights unless the Secretary determines and reports to the Committee on Appropriations that the Government of such country is taking steps to bring the responsible members of the security forces to justice."*<sup>115</sup> This highlighted the need to take into consideration the human rights during this war.

The U.S emphasized its dislike about Colombia's uncooperative behaviour regarding in the drug war; and their discontent that Colombia didn't take any aggressive action against the drug cartels. But Robert Gelbart's statement spurred Colombia to take action, as it follows:

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<sup>112</sup> Kinsey Morrison, *op.cit.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>113</sup> Joyce, *op.cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>114</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>115</sup> Crandall, *op. cit.*, p.106. ; Kinsey Morrison, *op.cit.*, pp.7-8.

“Three countries were given national interest waivers for the first time: Colombia, primarily for its failure to take action promised against the Cali cartel. We applaud the positive steps Colombia took last year against narcotics trafficking, most notably the decision to eradicate coca cultivation through aerial spraying. Our concern with Colombia, however, is its failure to address the most serious challenge- the kingpins and their vertically integrated trafficking organizations. Police and other officials on the front lines showed considerable determination to bring drug traffickers to justice... nevertheless, the trafficking organizations and their leaders continue to operate with virtual immunity.”<sup>116</sup>

Therefore, Colombia began to take serious actions, and caught the top seven drug lords. Later, Samper made money laundering illegal, and also sent his elite troops to Cali in order to fight and arrest the drug traffickers. Thus, we could see that Samper was trying to ease his relationship with the U.S and also showed great effort to please them. Later on, he appointed General Serrano as head of the Colombian National Police in 1995, which was considered to be a great step in the war on drugs because in the beginning of his career he fired all the officers that were suspected of being corrupt, and formed an elite police squad that were operating under his control.<sup>117</sup>

This elite police proved to be highly effective against the drug cartels, they found evidence against the drug lords and also uncovered connections between politicians, government officials, and the Cali members. Serrano’s efforts proved to be very successful in their fight against drug traffickers, and also achieved to improve the relationship between Colombia and the United States. And even though the relationship was improving, the U.S. was still sceptical about Samper’s governing, thus, the following year the U.S. government decertified Colombia.<sup>118</sup> Robert Dole explained the reasons behind this decision:

“Based on clear evidence presented by President Samper’s closest personal confidants and collaborators, and the firsthand information obtained in this report, I recommend that the United States decertify Colombia this year with no national interest waiver.... No government can be completely committed to obliterating the drug cartels, drug

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<sup>116</sup> Crandall, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 113.

<sup>118</sup> Kinsey Morrison, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

corruption, and drug related violence, nor effective in the achievement of these goals, if its senior officials owe fealty to drug kingpins. The Colombian government will never be dedicated to fighting drug corruption as long as Ernesto Samper is its leader, if its politicians, police, and judiciary are all guided by the money of drug kingpins.”<sup>119</sup>

The decision of decertification was only based on U.S’ distrust of Samper, and they claimed that they would only cooperate with Colombia if Samper resigns or is going to be no longer the president. However, Samper responded accordingly, and took a strong standpoint claiming that he won’t let Colombia to take exams every time in order to always prove themselves. However, despite this strong reaction the U.S. decertified Colombia again, but told that this act can be reversed if the extradition is made legal again. Therefore, Samper’s government legalized the extradition treaty. Therefore, the relationship began to improve gradually from 1997, and also because U.S. realized that by continuing with their tough approach on Samper would harm their relationship with Serrano. And as a consequence of their harsh position regarding Samper, and by limiting Samper’s power and weakening him led to and allowed the emergence of a powerful guerrilla. During this time the paramilitaries could gain so much power that a weak country as Colombia could barely control them.<sup>120</sup>

Under Pastrano’s administration (1998-2002) things began to worsen in Colombia as he didn’t take such a strong effort as Samper against drug trafficking, and was not as cooperative as Samper was, which gave space and allowed internal manipulation and corruption to occur again. Thus, Colombia became an even bigger international concern. And on the top of this, Colombian Defense minister Rodrigo Lloreda resigned, followed by 50 other high ranking military officials, proving the illegitimacy of Pastrano as an ineffective leader.<sup>121</sup>

As a consequence to all these issues Colombia became a heavy crisis, jeopardizing the U.S. foreign policy; and becoming a national security problem. Therefore, a 1 billion aid package was granted for Colombia, and Bill Clinton launched the Plan Colombia which was conceived by both U.S. and Colombia to spur the Colombian economy; to stimulate social development; to fight, destroy and dismantle illicit groups, drug traffickers; stop drug cultivation and so on. This plan consisted of 7.5 billion dollars assistance, a military aid from the United States and a humanitarian assistance from the European Union. The plan was passed and came into force on January 11<sup>th</sup> 2000.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Crandall, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

<sup>120</sup> Crandall, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-133.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 140-146.

<sup>122</sup> Kinsey Morrison, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Crandall, pp. 148-150.

However, the main reason or goal of the Plan was to fight drug traffickers but also to some extent to help Colombians in their internal conflict, therefore, we could see that the plan was delivered with the same purposes, and brought the same changes as the previous plan. As the plan came into law, a 1.2 billion dollar was planned to be sent to Colombia in 2 years. However, the main changes under this Plan Colombia the United States was not only working with national police but also with the Colombian Armed Forces in order to create more and better counter narcotics battalions. Moreover, there was a huge decrease in the funds that were supporting the peace process in Colombia. Only 3 million dollars were delivered for this purpose, which insignificant compared with the fund to fight against drugs. But a huge increase was in the aid to defend human rights. 51 million dollars were sent for this purpose, but the main aim was still to fight the drug war.<sup>123</sup>

Plan Colombia was strictly and precisely about fighting the war on drugs, as we could see that from the 860.3 million dollars of aid 60% was delivered for military assistance for fighting drug lords and traffickers, and a merely a 0.3% of the fund went for promoting human rights. Thus, we could see the main purpose of the aid was to only fight drugs, and they never really intended to help the Colombian economy to recover and develop, or to support and promote peace.<sup>124</sup>

Also some problems and concerns emerged as they began to launch the Plan because the plan was to commence it immediately, however, the delivering of helicopters and other materials were delaying, and thus, most of the initiatives could be started only the following year, in 2001. Therefore, this woke concerns in the U.S. representatives, fearing that the plan will be just another failure.<sup>125</sup>

Moreover, they began to spray herbicide over the drug crops that was stated to exist in Colombia which purpose was to diminish and destroy half of the acreage. However, it turned out that there are far more drug acreages than it was estimated before, thus, the plan was irrelevant and just another failure. Another miscalculated estimation was the total amount of cocaine production in Colombia. 580 tons of cocaine was estimated to be produced annually, however, it turned out that it's around 800-900 tons are produced annually. And therefore, we could see that crop extirpation was a failure, underlined/proved by fact that after the herbicide spraying the street price of cocaine did not decrease. Naturally if the plan has succeeded, the supply would

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 18.

<sup>125</sup> Brian J. Page, "Plan Colombia: An ineffective policy", *The political economy of Latin America*, Carleton College, November 24, 2003, pp. 5-10, <https://pol.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/conferences/2004/Page20.pdf>, accessed on 06.05.2018.

have decreased as expected, and the prices would have risen following the supply-demand law.<sup>126</sup>

The expectations and objectives of the Plan Colombia were not met unfortunately; rather, it brought some negative effects on the Colombian citizens, economy and country. As for example, not only the illegal crops were destroyed but also the legal farms. All these negative consequences of the plan created a strong enmity and hostility in the citizens against their government and the United States. As the Plan only created undesirable outcomes instead of the original established goals of it, an uprising began to emerge in Colombia. This was the least the country wanted to face or confront when already 2 left-wing guerrillas emerged and became extremely powerful.<sup>127</sup>

Therefore, we can get to the conclusion that war on terrorism and the war on drug are highly interlinked and connected; and one cannot be demolished and destroyed if the other one perpetuates to exist. Consequently, an effective plan must be conceived to combat drug traffickers/lords and terrorists, and to dismantle their complex infrastructure of revenue that is gained through drug trade, which in turn funds and supports their illegal activity.<sup>128</sup>

After the 9/11 attack in 2001, the United States began to concentrate exclusively on the international fight against terrorism, and therefore, its interest in the Colombia's war on drugs was neglected. However, considering Colombia's problems, it still stayed at the centre of US interests. Although the event did not alter the US policies towards Colombia, but it changed the way the US politicians viewed the situation. Nevertheless, with the IRA terrorist scandal in the despeje, the rising ELN attacks on the Colombian pipelines, made the United States to perceive Colombian guerrilla groups as "narco-terrorists".<sup>129</sup> Thus, the US concern was no longer only about drugs, but also terrorism. President Bush and the congress changed the previous Clinton administration restrictions on funds being allocated to counter-insurgency in order to help Colombia fight the rebellious groups. Therefore, George W. H. Bush administration made a remarkable change in the US policy towards Colombia.<sup>130</sup>

President Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2010), successor of Pastrana, identified himself with this policy, and highly supported, and he instantly began to use the support provided to attack and fight insurgents. He strongly focused to reinforce the power of the Colombian police and

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<sup>126</sup> Ibidem, pp. 15-20.

<sup>127</sup> Kinsey Morrison, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibidem*, p.20.

<sup>129</sup> Emma Bjoernehed, "Narco-Terrorism: The Merger of the War on Drugs and the War on Terror", *Global Crime*, 2014, pp 305-324,

[http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/publications/2005/Emma\\_Narcoterror.pdf](http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/publications/2005/Emma_Narcoterror.pdf), accessed on 18.09.2018.

<sup>130</sup> Jana Sramkova, "The US Foreign Policy towards Colombia: Its Impacts and Motivations", Palacki University on Olomouc, Thesis, 2012, pp. 67-68, [https://theses.cz/id/427jk6/DP\\_-\\_rmkov\\_-\\_US\\_Foreign\\_Policy\\_Towards\\_Colombia.pdf](https://theses.cz/id/427jk6/DP_-_rmkov_-_US_Foreign_Policy_Towards_Colombia.pdf), accessed on 18.09.2018.

army, and also to increase of military capability for security in general.<sup>131</sup> President George Bush appreciated and favoured a lot the new Colombian president, especially, because of his strong support for the US foreign policy and the fact that under Uribe, Colombia presented an important counterweight to the growing regional influence of the leftist Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez.<sup>132</sup>

In 2004 the Plan Colombia and the US policies to counterattack insurgencies and drugs were confirmed by President George Bush. Therefore, the US congress increased the US military personal in Colombia to 800 military and 600 contractors. However, this mutual cooperation was endangered by the so called Paragate scandal in 2006 because there were some allegations that some members and officials of the Colombian congress funded and supported insurgents. As Plan Colombia was presented as 6 year plan, with the US involvement it was expected that I will be finished by 2006 but according to The Government Accountability Office (GAO) report from 2004 the Colombian army and police were incapable to continue the counter-narcotics programs without the US' funds and support. Thus, they decided to continue the Plan Colombia programs through the Andean Counterdrug Initiative.<sup>133</sup>

President Bush second administration focused on economic issues within the US-Colombia policy because he considered critical to provide licit jobs and economic alternatives to violence. In 2006 the US-Colombia Free Promotion Agreement was signed, and in 2007 it was ratified by Colombia. Also, the Colombian involvement in Free Trade Area of Americas was a long states objective that seeks to integrate all Latin American economies into a single block, and it is considered to be beneficial for US economic and foreign policy reasons.<sup>134</sup> According to Doug Stokes, through such agreement the US has the right to challenge the national law of the country, if the policies of any Latin American country seem to be harmful to the interests of transnational institutions.<sup>135</sup>

Over the years, Colombia and the United States have expanded their relations, thus, now they have a very complex partnership which embraces a broad range of issues, including: fighting drug trafficking; anti terrorism initiatives; hemispheric security etc.<sup>136</sup>

Lately, they elaborated and launched Colombia-U.S. High-Level Strategic Security Dialogue (HLSSD) which gives room for both countries to discuss and establish new, innovative strategies

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 68.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 69.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 70.

<sup>135</sup> Doug Stokes, "Better Lead than Bread? A Critical Analysis of the Plan Colombia", *Civil Wars*, 4 (2), 2001, pp. 59-78, [http://kent.academia.edu/DougStokes/Papers/1202009/Better\\_Lead\\_Than\\_Bread\\_A\\_Critical\\_Analysis\\_of\\_the\\_USs\\_Plan\\_Colombia](http://kent.academia.edu/DougStokes/Papers/1202009/Better_Lead_Than_Bread_A_Critical_Analysis_of_the_USs_Plan_Colombia), accessed on 19/09/2018.

<sup>136</sup> Dan Restrepo, Frank O. Mora, Brian Fonseca, and Jonathan D. Rosen, *op.cit.*

to stop, prevent and counterattack threats, such as drug smuggling, terrorism, transnational organized crime etc; and also to strengthen and deepen their bilateral relations.

Furthermore, in 2010 the two countries established and launched a more innovative agenda in their bilateral relation, the so called, Colombia-U.S. High-Level Partnership Dialogue which includes several issues: social and economic opportunities and development; science and technology, climate change and environmental protection; energy; culture and education; institutional strengthening; democracy and human rights; peace consolidation; security cooperation and good governance.

Therefore, we can see the high collaboration and cooperation between the two countries, and their commitment to enhance greater cooperation, maintain and strengthen it.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibidem.*

#### IV. The Consequences to Colombia

The drug cartels had dramatical social , political and economical affects on Colombia; and it was profoundly felt by marginalized and mainstream members of the society who interacted or came into contact with the consequences of the cartels' actions.<sup>138</sup>

Colombia was the nest and the center of the international drug trade and had the highest homicide rate in the world.<sup>139</sup> The economy of the drug trade and those who were affected by the experiences of it, highly influenced and shaped the country in many aspects; and altered the way the society and the ingenious people interacted with their physical and social environment. The Drug Kingpins „*promoted extreme violence as a means of exerting power over the Colombian economy.*”<sup>140</sup> As for example, they promoted violence by creating employment opportunities, especially for the youth as drug traffickers or assassins and sicarios.<sup>141</sup>

Therefore, the Colombian drug empires, international drug trade and the violence created and perpetuated by the cartels affected the economic, social, political and even the physical landscape of Colombia.<sup>142</sup>

##### *Economic Effects*

According to scholars „*in no other country has the illegal drug industry had such dramatic social, political and economic affects.*”<sup>143</sup> The illegal drug trade was a booming industry, however, it had a negative economic reflection on the country, as well as heavy social and political consequences. The drug industry promoted violence, corruption, undermined the the legal activity and the government, frightened off foreign investment, and destroyed the social landscape of the country, therefore, it tottaly demobilized the country, and took the power over the government.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Magdalena Cerdá, Jeffrey D. Morenoff, Ben B. Hansen, Kimberly J. Tessari Hicks, Luis F. Duque, Alexandra Restrepo, and Ana V. Diez-Roux, "Reducing Violence by Transforming Neighborhoods: A Natural Experiment in Medellín, Colombia", *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 2012, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/223984661\\_Reducing\\_Violence\\_by\\_Transforming\\_Neighborhoods\\_A\\_Natural\\_Experiment\\_in\\_Medellin\\_Colombia](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/223984661_Reducing_Violence_by_Transforming_Neighborhoods_A_Natural_Experiment_in_Medellin_Colombia), accessed on 30.06.2018.

<sup>139</sup> Sarah Becker, op. cit. , p. 5.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.

<sup>141</sup> *Iibd.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

<sup>143</sup> Francisco E. Thoumi, "Illegal Drugs in Colombia: From Illegal Economic Boom to Social Crisis.", *Sage Journals*, 2012, p. 30, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/000271620258200108>, accessed on 30.07.2018.

<sup>144</sup> Jennifer S. Holmes and Sheila Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, "The Illegal Drug Industry, Violence and the Colombian Economy: A Department Level Analysis", *University of Texas at Dallas*, 2012, p. 2, [http://www.mamacoca.org/docs\\_de\\_base/Cifras\\_cuadro\\_mamacoca/holmes.pdf](http://www.mamacoca.org/docs_de_base/Cifras_cuadro_mamacoca/holmes.pdf), accessed on 01.08.2018.



In the beginning, some members of the society felt the advantages of the drug trade, as it created job opportunities for rural peasants in the cultivation and production area, however, it made other industries less profitable, and reduced jobs in legal cultivations, as for example, coffee. While there it was an immediate increase in prosperity and economic growth, especially, in the agrarian employment, on the long term it increased the unemployment rate by 6%, as well as a displacement for those who chose not to participate in the illegal drug trade. The government also gave up to eradicate the illicit crops because the chemicals also destroyed the legal crops.<sup>145</sup>

Another heavy impact on the economy made by the drug industry was their complex system of money laundering.

„The most common method of money laundering is by trafficking contraband. Drug traffickers purchase goods abroad using dirty money, smuggle the goods into Colombia, and then sell them, often at a ‘loss’. The sale of these items...undercuts legitimate businesses because the drug traffickers are likely to sell for less, given they have already gained profit before the sale. ...The industrial and business sectors most affected by smuggling are household appliances, clothing, textiles, footwear, liquor, and cigarettes. ... [T]he more typically trafficked items displace products of the labour intensive and non specialized economic sectors in which Colombia products should have a comparative advantage, further undermining employment.”<sup>146</sup>

Dirty money infiltrated in every pole of the country, even into the most highly monitored industries and institutions of the Colombian society. Bribes and corruption of the drug economy controlled the whole country at all level, including the judiciary, the army, the church, the government.<sup>147</sup>

The drug industry involved participants from all levels of the society, and its members ranged from uneducated people to chemist, and from illegal drug traffickers to the most legitimate professionals of the society, such as lawyers, politicians, police and so on. They created a very complex system of relations, and therefore it was easy for the drug cartels to penetrate dirty money into the state and into its highest institutions, and also to export and traffick a huge amount of cocaine each year.<sup>148</sup> “*The fabricated social support network provides*

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<sup>145</sup> Jennifer S. Holmes and Sheila Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, "Drug, Violence, and Development in Colombia: A Department-Level Analysis", *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vol. 48, No. 3, p. 4.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 8.

<sup>147</sup> Pilar Riaño-Alcalá, *Dwellers of Memory: Youth and Violence in Medellín, Colombia*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2010, p. 1.

<sup>148</sup> Francisco E. Thoumi, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

*protection to the illegal industry, mostly at a price, and constitutes the main channel through which the illegal industry penetrated and corrupted social institutions.”*<sup>149</sup>

It is stated that at the peak of the drug industry's success, the drug cartels owned 1/3 of the country's agricultural land, and during their reign the inequality between the rich and the poor even sharpened.<sup>150</sup> While in the short term they provided a financial relief and a boom in employment opportunities for a specific group of the society, in the long term it displaced many and it further distorted and heightened the inequalities between the rich and the poor in Colombia.<sup>151</sup>

It is estimated that in the 80s-90s the drug cartels owned 30% of the country's wealth.<sup>152</sup> They actually took advantage of the unskilled and uneducated people who had no opportunities in Colombia, and in order to have more workers, the cartels provided them jobs. The ones who did not want to participate in the drug trade and wanted to escape from the regions controlled by them, often moved to urban slums. Therefore, is one of the reasons why the country socially, politically and economically was distorted.<sup>153</sup>

### *Political Effects*

The drug industry and the drug empires undermined the legitimacy of the state, thus, disturbing Colombia's political landscape. Pablo Escobar had an ambition to become Colombia's President, and in 1982 he was elected an alternate member of the Congress. It was suspected that he joined politics because he wanted to dissemble his illegal activity, while others state that he wanted to help the poor.<sup>154</sup>

Pablo Escobar came from a poor background, he was the generation after *La Violencia*, thus, he understood the plight of the unfortunate people. He was different, he wanted to help the poor and to improve their situation. Therefore, he built schools, built houses for them, and provided with goods that they needed. This way, he easily earned their support.<sup>155</sup>

Lara Bonilla draw the attention of the government about Pablo's illegal activities, thus he was removed from the Congress. The Colombian government introduced the extradition treaty, which was the catalyst for the Cartel to initiate its terror on the country. So they started a bloody turmoil and killed anybody who stood in the way of the cartel's success. The fear and terror they

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<sup>149</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 108.

<sup>150</sup> Jennifer S. Holmes and Sheila Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, "Drug, Violence, and Development in Colombia: A Department-Level Analysis", *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vol. 48, No. 3, pp. 9-10.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 10-12.

<sup>154</sup> Sarah Becker, *op. cit.*, p. 19

<sup>155</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 19.

created in the country successfully quieted some of the ones opposing them, and reached a compromise that was advantageous and suitable for the cartel, as the extradition treaty was dropped and he surrendered to the authorities and went to a luxurious prison which he created and where he continued his drug business.<sup>156</sup>

However, we should note that the cartels and the drug trade are not the only causes for the political turmoil in Colombia; guerrilla groups are also responsible to a high extent for the violence experienced in the society. Coca cultivation occurred on the regions and land owned by the insurgent groups. Drug traffickers often paid a tax to use the land for their needs; therefore, the cartels financed the right and left wing guerrilla and right-wing paramilitary groups.<sup>157</sup>

Moreover, this huge income provided by the drug cartels from the coca cultivation for allowed the rebellious groups to expand into an immense army and send fighters to USSR and Vietnam for high level military training. These groups actually became the terrorist of the drug cartels, and were responsible for the assassination of many people, including politicians, judges, and innocent people and so on.<sup>158</sup>

Political violence was highly correlated with the economic decline, as the government diverted its focus to policies aimed to undermine the power of the drug cartels and insurgent groups instead of fostering and facilitating economic growth. Ergo, state money was pumped into the military to resist illegal and armed groups rather than investing in education, infrastructure. Between 1990 and 1994 Colombia experienced a sharp economic decline. During this period the government's main concern was safety and security, thus, its focus on fostering and regulating the economy or improving the quality of life of the society was neglected.<sup>159</sup>

With increased pressure from the US government, Colombia revoked the extradition treaty, thus, Escobar went on the run until he was caught. Following his death, Colombia experienced a heavy increase in unemployment. This was dramatically felt in the comunas who worked in informal markets. Those who live in the slums and for those the State couldn't provide conditions began to trust the leaders of criminal enterprises as the ones which can provide conditions and, thus behave according to their laws. After the death of leader of the cartel, the laws ruling the society on the periphery ceased to be enforced. Therefore, the former workers of the cartel for survival turned to random illegal activities to earn money, such as, robbery, kidnapping and so on.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 20.

<sup>157</sup> Francisco E. Thoumi, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>158</sup> Steven Dudley, *Walking Ghosts: Murder and Guerila Politics in Colombia*, London, Routledge, 2004, 47-60.

<sup>159</sup> Jennifer S. Holmes and Sheila Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, "Drug, Violence, and Development in Colombia: A Department-Level Analysis", *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vol. 48, No. 3, p. 170.

<sup>160</sup> Sarah Becker, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

*“In the absence of a common contract that ties people to restrictive rules, and in the absence of authorities who are able to enforce that contract, there exists a war of all against all. When the social contract fails, people revert to violence of the state of nature, that is to feud, retaliation, and revenge”.*<sup>161</sup>

### *Social Effects*

The impact of the drug trafficking and drug trade highly affected the country at a social level. It created an erosion of social values as drug cartels promoted violence and created employment opportunities for the youth by recruiting them into gangs.

The most severe impact of the drug cartels on the social landscape of Colombia was the birth of sicarios and youth assassins who earned huge amounts of money per murders. Consequently, drug cartels created an erosion of social values and further promoted violence because it showed marginalized teens what it was to earn money fast and in an easy way, and also created an attitude where they believed they don't have to work hard for money. And therefore, the media also represented the youth as a social threat and criminal other, further distorting the social landscape of the country.<sup>162</sup>

There are also several reasons why the youth felt tempted and motivated to work for drug cartels, such as, promised financial stability, support, peer pressure and so on. Crime seemed to be the only option for the youth because the drug cartels could provide economic opportunities and social services what the State long time failed to deliver. And Escobar knew how to take advantage of the unemployed, poor and uneducated young people.

Therefore, here the government is to be blamed for the participation of the youth in illegal activities because the government failed to create economic opportunities for the poor to mount in the society.

*“In the absence of state legitimacy, Colombians lacked the belief in the state as a form of representation, and as drug traffickers became social role models for an extensive sector of society, violence increased dramatically.”*<sup>163</sup>

Nevertheless, the illegal drug industry had many negative consequences, but it also had some positive ones, as for example on the physical make-up of the city, especially on Medellin and Cali. The drug kingpins allocated money to build up their cities. Bogota, Cali and Medellin were in competition, so they poured money into the beautification of their own city. *“Violence*

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<sup>161</sup> Riaño, Alcalá Pilar, *Dwellers of Memory: Youth and Violence in Medellín, Colombia*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, The Oral History Review, Vol. 23, 2006, p. 174.

<sup>162</sup> Sarah Becker, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 31.

*silenced by beauty.*” While the cities were becoming more beautiful and luxurious, the social fabric and the licit economies of the country disintegrated.<sup>164</sup>

### *Awareness and the Medellin Political Project*

During the reign of the Medellin and the Cali Cartel Colombia was drained by the violence and chaos caused by them. They are to blame for the turmoil and for the decline in the economy. However, after the dissolution of the cartels, officials gained ambition for recovery and to place center-periphery social issues on the agenda. Often, crime and violence are due to the marginalization of the lower class serially ignored by the State. By all this terror and advent of the drug cartels, Colombia became aware of its problems.<sup>165</sup>

Colombia’s situation consisted of social unrest rather than political turmoil, and it still faces sharp level of inequalities, as well as a tendency to earn fast and easy money. Therefore, it requires to initiate many innovative social policies and programs to tackle the problem.<sup>166</sup>

Therefore, they launched some political projects in response to urban violence, drug wars of the early 1990s, and the subsequent urbanization of the Colombian civil war by reshaping its urban governance and economy.<sup>167</sup>

Over the past decades the city has shown huge developments and an astonishing decline in violence due to developmental policies. The project known as social urbanism which was implemented for the urban development of the city, was enacted in the late 90s and early 2000 to address the ‘historical social debt’ owed by the city’s elites to marginalised and poorer areas. Furthermore, investments in infrastructure, public transport and architecture were projects designed to address the inequitable developments of the past that had led the outskirts of the city to be excluded and neglected.<sup>168</sup>

Urban violence imposes a great challenge on a state’s democracy and development. Violence stems from poverty, and the mixture of both heavily impacts the marginalized population in a negative way which further ensures inequality in a society. Furthermore, insecurity accompanied by lack of trust in state institutions easily creates vigilantism in a state. Violence prevents economic growth, deteriorates the legitimacy of state institutions which has a complex and disastrous effect on political behaviour. However, *“the wave of decentralization*

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<sup>164</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 40.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 62.

<sup>166</sup> *Loc. Cit.*

<sup>167</sup> Eduardo Moncada, “Urban Violence, Political Economy, and Territorial Control”, *Latin American Research Review*, Barnard College, Columbia Univeristy, p. 225, [https://lasa.international.pitt.edu/auth/pub/Larr/CurrentIssue/51-4\\_225-248\\_Moncada.pdf](https://lasa.international.pitt.edu/auth/pub/Larr/CurrentIssue/51-4_225-248_Moncada.pdf), accessed on 31.03.2018.

<sup>168</sup> Kate Maclean, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

*that washed over much of the developing world starting in the late twentieth century has equipped cities with a range of powers and resources with which to confront urban violence.*"<sup>169</sup>

Nonetheless, with the dissolution of the drug empires, the replacement of the organized crimes by the state sovereignty took place once again. The Colombian government enduringly understood that the root of the problem laid in the weakness itself due to the poor institutional organization of the state, poverty, lack of rules and law, and lastly the insufficient economic opportunities. Therefore, this led to the reconsideration and re-evaluation of the socioeconomic and political drivers of the conflict and it emerged to establish political, economic and social reforms to bring back the country's stability.

#### *Dynamics and factors of the violence: the "State return" to Medellin*

There are many factors that affect and enhance the level of violence, as for example one dynamic that highly influenced the rate of it was Colombia's illicit drug trade. The increased global demand for cocaine led to the emergence of powerful drug-trafficking organizations, including the Medellin Cartel.<sup>170</sup>

The efforts of the state to take down the cartel led to the increase of violence as the cartel showed its resistance by enrolling armed groups for its aid. Funds and weapons provided by the cartel helped other groups to increase their coercive force over some territories and protect illicit markets. The destructive dimensions of the conflict, violence led to the reconsideration of socioeconomic and political drivers of the local conflict, *"as well as mobilization by actors whose interests were threatened by demands for more inclusionary forms of local governance."*<sup>171</sup>

Another factor that heavily influenced the rise of the conflict was the decades-long civil war between left wing uprisings, the state and right wing paramilitary forces. The war occurred in the countryside; however, it negatively affected its process of urbanization in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, impacting the cities in several ways. The case of Medellin was affected by the arrival of rebellion and paramilitary groups and confrontations between adversary groups for influence and control over territories and illicit markets.

The conflict of Medellin didn't represent the features of the civil war; however, the conflict was connected with previous local cleavages, as for example with the long existing spatial and socioeconomically inequalities and divisions between armed groups.

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<sup>169</sup> Eduardo Moncada, op.cit., p. 226.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 226-227.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 227-228.

Thus, as a response to urban violence, the state established some national political reforms, including the direct elections of mayors and the establishment of a new constitution and a power shift to municipalities which would create a more participatory democracy. Furthermore, decentralization of security policy making gave the possibility for political projects in response to violence to create and advance particularistic interests.<sup>172</sup>

Furthermore, in the 1990s in Medellín we could see the disengaged relations and low coordination of territorial control, thus, president César Gaviria established the *Consejería Presidencial para Medellín* to prevent local violence. The leader of the organization was María Emma Mejía, who worked along together with other civil society organizations, such as, the *Corporación Region (CR)* and the *Instituto Popular de Capacitación (IPC)*. The IPC was responsible for sustainable community development and political participation, while the CR supported decentralization and participatory forms of governance. Their focus was to address historical socioeconomic and political inequities, and to reconstruct Medellín's social structure. Therefore, they invested in poor districts where conflicts were prevalent, promoting inclusionary forms of political participation to disrupt the connection between drug traffickers and communities, and also to weaken clientelist exchange.<sup>173</sup>

However, by several challenges that occurred during this phase, and the lack of commitment of the mayor's for political change and his only focus to protect his particularistic interests led to the failure of the objective to restructure local governance.<sup>174</sup>

Nevertheless, in 2000 we could see some changes and the establishment of collaborative relations and high coordination of territorial control. In 2003 Sergio Fajardo, a political independent, became the mayor of the Medellín city. He used novel violence prevention measures and deepened political participation through transparent and participatory governance.<sup>175</sup>

He established and implemented several key projects to prevent violence and inequality. One of them represented socioeconomic investments (education, health, housing) focusing on the poorest districts. Later on, Alonso Salazar, Fajardo's successor continued this plan, and also established the *Compromiso Ciudadano* movement. Thus, 86% of the municipal investments went to social investment, which in turn increased tax rates and the economic growth. And in order to tackle corruption, Fajardo made transparency as a priority, especially in the use of tax revenue, and made information about Medellín's finances and acquisitions publicly available.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 228-229.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 228.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 228-230.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 231-245.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 247-255.

Furthermore, *the Agencia de Cooperación e Inversión de Medellín y el Área Metropolitana* (ACI) was established whose objective was to attract foreign investments. By high coordination in territorial control led to a noticeable drop in violence. Thus, foreign investors claimed that the decline in violence highlights that security condition improved in the city and the government is also able to effectively address and tackle key issues and challenges. “Both collaborative relations and high coordination in territorial control thus facilitated economic conditions needed to produce revenue for socioeconomic investment as major component of violence prevention efforts.”<sup>177</sup>

Fajardo in order to prevent and stop corruption and inertia in local governments implemented several social urbanism policies and established the Urban Development Corporation (EDU).<sup>178</sup> And in order to reshape and restructure state society relations implemented the *Proyectos Urbanos Integrados* (PUI) initiative which involved the equitable distribution of public transportation to connect the poor districts with the city centre.<sup>179</sup>

Moreover, the PIU project involved more programs simultaneously, such as “the Parque Explora, a park with a free science museum in it; the Botanical Gardens, site of the octagonal Orquideorama; ten new school buildings; five ambitious library-parks in the comunas of Santo Domingo, La Quintana, La Ladera, San Javier and Belén; a cultural centre in the run-down district of Moravia; and the completion and extension of the Metrocable”.<sup>180</sup>

Last but not least, Fajarado deepened political participation. Collaboration between the government and the private sectors promoted the deepening and strengthening the political participation of social sectors that were previously excluded from local governance. High coordination and control over territory influenced the development of participatory initiatives. Thus, in 2004 Medellín implemented participatory budgeting through which community resident and leaders could vote about local investment projects. Thus, participatory budgeting encouraged and supported the participation of resident in formal political activities; and further provided and ensured institutional space for those communities who were once excluded and marginalized to have political voice.

Finally, we could see that in 1990s the lack of collaboration between local governments and business elites was connected with low coordination in territorial control which caused some challenges for the political project. However, a decade later by Fajarado’s initiatives and policies

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<sup>177</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 239.

<sup>178</sup> Cosina Malandrino, “On the Medellín Miracle and the Social Urbanism Model”, *Laboratory for the governance of the city as a commons*, 2017, <http://www.labgov.it/2017/10/11/on-the-medellin-miracle-and-the-social-urbanism-model/>, accessed on 09.04.2018.

<sup>179</sup> Eduardo Moncada, *op.cit.*, pp. 239-240.

<sup>180</sup> Cosina Malandrino, *op.cit.*



to promote collaborative relations, participatory-transparent-accountable governance and high coordination in territorial control led to the decline in violence and increased development.<sup>181</sup>

### *Today's drug traffickers*

Globalization has many positive effects as it connects the world and the people, and it opened its doors for international trade and relations; and facilitated the free movement of people, informations, goods and currency. However, it also had several negative affects as the neoliberal policies and the enormous evolution of international trade, and the one of technology promoted a higher unemployment rate, creating less employment opportunities and conditions prone to and favorable to transnational crime.<sup>182</sup>

The free flow of goods, the increase of international trade and the heavy increase in transnational immigration made it very difficult to detect the transit and the movement of illicit goods across borders. Therefore, globalization highly contributed to the evolution of the drug trade/industry at a global level, and its movement across borders.<sup>183</sup>

Today, drug traffickers form looser and smaller organizations that have no kingpins and work with low profile, low visibility and less control over their markets due to Colombia's police and U.S. law enforcement pressures, but silently exporting and smuggling cocaine and drugs all over the world developing a thriving market in Brazil and Argentina. These businesses thrive and will always flourish where the state is weak, has no control over its territory and the police, government officials are corrupt.<sup>184</sup>

According to Myles Frechette, after the takedown of the Cali cartel the drug trafficking situation is not much different in Colombia. Corruption is still visible at all levels in the Colombian society, especially at the local one, where it's easier to bribe and manipulate. Colombia is still considered to be one of the most corrupt countries in the world.<sup>185</sup>

The dissolution of the Medellin and Cali cartel provided a great lesson for today's drug traffickers, who learnt that the more complex and the larger a criminal organization is, the more vulnerable is for a takedown or detection. Therefore, today we have a different kind of drug trafficking organizations. Instead huge cartels that reached a global level, small *cartelitos* or

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<sup>181</sup> Eduardo Moncada, *op.cit.*, pp. 240-243.

<sup>182</sup> Robert J. Kelly, Jess Maghan, and Joseph Serio, "Illicit Trafficking", *A Reference Handbook*, Santa Barbara, 2005, p. 7.

<sup>183</sup> Sarah Becker, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>184</sup> Peter S. Green, *op.cit.*

<sup>185</sup> Ron Chepesiuk, *op. cit.*, pp. 272-273.

small cartels emerged operating their business in a low profile as the Cali cartel did but without using sophisticated organizational structures or communication systems.<sup>186</sup>

The drug traffickers of the Cali Cartel used cell phones in order to manage their businesses. Today's drug traffickers and criminals prefer to use face to face meetings which prevent them from easy detection and also from the use of micromanagement. They prefer to use the Internet as their means of communication, and sell their product directly to the Mexicans, so they are immune to extradition.<sup>187</sup>

This shift from huge cartels to small groups of drug traffickers began to appear in the early 90s before the Rodriguez brothers were caught and their empire collapsed. By the mid 1993 it was believed that 200 criminal trafficking groups operate their business throughout Colombia. And 6 years later it was reported by the DEA and the Colombian National Police that approximately around 300 drug trafficking groups are active that smuggle drugs everyday worldwide and the profits still remain extremely high.<sup>188</sup>

The Cartelitos not only became smaller in size but they have also diversified, and they also began to smuggle other from Colombia other than Cocaine and marijuana. Authorities and the law enforcement are highly concerned about Colombia's role in the drug trade and in the drug trafficking, especially the drug Ecstasy which is highly demanded, particularly in the European market.<sup>189</sup> *“Putting the Cali and the Medellin Cartels out of business caused only minor disruptions to the flow of illicit drugs from Colombia to the U.S. and European markets.”*<sup>190</sup>

It is assumed that the today's cartelitos' income is low compared to the predecessor immense cartels, and encounter difficulties to smuggle their product to the markets worldwide. However, that's a mistake to believe because they use the latest technologies and also the lessons learnt from the Cali cartel helped them to thrive easily. The Cali cartel created strategic alliances and the today's cartelitos took advantage of these relations. The Cali Cartel during its reign forged close ties with the Russian mafia who supplied them with military equipment in return for cocaine. Later they built a submarine to smuggle easier tons of cocaine to Russia. And the discovery of the submarine was pure evidence that Colombia's new small drug trafficking groups nurse a close relationship/partnership with the Russian mafia.<sup>191</sup> It is also stated that

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<sup>186</sup> U.S. Congress, House, Testimony of Former DEA Administrator Thomas A. Constantine, presented to the House Subcommittee on National Security, International Affairs and Criminal Justice, June 6, 1996.

<sup>187</sup> Ron Chepesiuk, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

<sup>188</sup> \*\*\*, “Drug Wars, The Business, The Colombian Traffickers”, *Frontline*, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/drugs/business/inside/colombian.html>, accessed on 11.09.2018

<sup>189</sup> Ron Chepesiuk, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 277.

<sup>191</sup> Juanita Darling, “Submarine Links Colombian Drug Traffickers with Russians”, *Los Angeles Times*, 2000, <http://articles.latimes.com/2000/nov/10/news/mn-49908>, accessed on 17.06.2018.

Colombian traffickers had several meetings with Chinese, Russian and Japanese criminals to discuss how to be more efficient and how to coordinate their activities better, as for example, distribution, smuggling and so on. Organized crime truly reached a global level.

“Ironically, globalization, the trend that seeks to integrate the world community financially and economically, has spurred the growth of international drug trafficking. National borders have declined in importance, and customs and security safeguards have weakened with the creation of free trade bodies such as NAFTA and the European Community. This trend has made it easier for international organized crime to move into new markets, distribute illegal goods and services, and shift their profits around the world to countries that may be eager to serve as safe havens for cash deposits and laundered transactions.”<sup>192</sup>

Since national borders have been abolished, immigration from one continent to another searching for a better life became very common. Some people immigrate to avoid ethnic conflict or to escape war but also for a variety of other reasons. Thus, it should be noted that with these immigrants also criminals join up but for another reason, to “*exploit immigrant communities for illegal means and use those communities as strong bases from which to launch their criminal activities.*”<sup>193</sup>

These developments show that the strategy the authorities used in the War on Drugs, meaning that they focused on a single target to dismantle the drug cartels and they ignored the harsh truth that when you dismantle or destroy a criminal organization there always another one present to fill the void. As long as there is demand for illegal items and drugs, these markets will thrive, which is amazingly illustrated by the rise and the fall of the Cali cartel.<sup>194</sup>

Even though the governments face difficulties to stop the drugs to reach the marketplace, they can definitely conceive more efficient strategies to make it more difficult to traffickers to succeed. Authorities and government officials should learn for these criminal enterprises and build more effective strategic alliances. They should develop and establish close partnerships to tackle the international problem and find the root causes of the drug trafficking problem. As for example, they should provide and create opportunities and alternatives to farmers and for the less fortunate for whom the participation in criminal activities seems to be the only life choice for survival. “*It is far easier to single out an enemy but far more difficult to forge a lasting strategy*

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<sup>192</sup> Ron Chepesiuk, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-279.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 279.

<sup>194</sup> *Loc. Cit.*

*to deal with the conditions that allow the cartels to thrive and which remain in place after their leaders were removed.”*<sup>195</sup>

Colombia is a great example to show how enterprising groups or criminal organizations are willing to enter a profitable market such as the drug industry if the opportunity presents itself. As long as the root cause of the problem is not attacked, there are low chances to win the war against the drugs. Because as we can see authorities seized tons of drugs, destroyed hundreds of drug labs, caught corrupt officials, and Colombia is still the world’s drug trafficking center, while politically on the verge of disintegration because it ignores the roots of the issue. As long as there is demand for drugs the illegal market of drugs will thrive.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> *Loc. Cit.*

<sup>196</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 282.

## Conclusion

Throughout this research paper I tried to read the Colombian historical process at the light of my conceptual framework. By applying the concepts provided in the first chapter into the Colombian case, I analyzed the connection between organized crime and the government while understanding the erosion of the Colombian state sovereignty on the internal and the external dimension.

It was clearly proved by the emergence of the Colombian drug Cartels that the roots of organized crime and violence lays in the weakness of the state, and it's related to poor governance stuctures, lack of economic opportunities and inequality. The advent of the drug trafficking organizations in Colombia were just a mere response to the structural problems (social, political, economic) of the country. Poverty and inequality induces people to be involved in illegal activities which assures social advancement that cannot be found through legal activities.<sup>197</sup>

The fundamental causes of conflict, violence and the emergence of criminal organization was the weak presence of the Colombian state throughout its territory which gave the possibility for other actors to fill the void and gain power.<sup>198</sup> This facilitates organized crime to take control over the state's monopoly of use of power and authority which leds to the erosion of state sovereignty.

Also weak states facilitates the access for criminal organizations to penetrate state institutions through corruption, bribes and illicit funding which further undermines the credibility, acountability and legitimacy of political systems.<sup>199</sup> However, the extent of organized crime infiltartion of state institutions and their influence on the economy also depends on how the governemnt authorities respond it. As it was demonstrated by the Medellin case that when the government took a repressive approach to eliminate criminal economies, it turned out to be a highly ineffective method, as it created an extreme offensive reaction that turned into terrorism, leading to a dramatic increase in violence.

The drug industry has had extreme and dramatic social, economic, and political effects on Colombia, which have been felt particularly by those who had come into direct contact with the cartels' operations.

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<sup>197</sup> FRIDE, DPA, *op.cit.*, pp. 6-8.

<sup>198</sup> Fernan E. Gonzalez, *op.cit.*

<sup>199</sup> FRIDE, DPA, *op.cit.*, pp. 5-9.

While in the beginning, the society benefitted from the drug trade as it generated employment opportunities and provided financial relief for the less fortunate, in the long term, it sharpened the economic inequalities between the poor and the rich segments even further.

The drug industry's illicit business infiltrated into every segment of society, as it involved participants ranging from uneducated people to chemists, and from drug smugglers to the most legitimate professionals of the state. Taking into consideration the complex relations it created, illegal money easily penetrated even the highest institutions of the state, including the judiciary, the army, the church, and the government. Undoubtedly, the drug empire completely undermined the legitimacy of the state.

In addition, the political decisions that were made during this period to a great extent contributed to the economic decline, as the government shifted its focus to policies aimed at counterbalancing the power of the drug cartels, instead of striving to foster economic growth and thereby improve quality of life. State money was allocated to the military rather than to investments in education and infrastructure.

The drug trade also led to the gradual erosion of social values as across the young generations, engaging in illicit business activities and violence soon became seen as a viable alternative to make a living in a fast and easy way. That is, the cartels provided economic opportunities, social services and financial stability that the State had failed to deliver a long time ago.

Furthermore, as Colombia's increasing crisis was threatening to influence the United States' international ties as well as its own national security, the latter decided to intervene by introducing a number of social and economic policies aimed at improving the situation. Among others, these were focused on generating employment, closing the inequality gap, and putting a stop to the widespread operations of the drug cartels, through which the US took a dominant role in regulating the country's economy.

In short, the drug industry clearly had negative implications over Colombia both internally and externally: internally, the cartels promoted violence, fomented corruption, and destroyed the social landscape of the country, undermining the government's legitimacy and authority; externally, the cartels' activities brought the country to the international spotlight, resulting in a number of major interventions on part of the United States aiming to improve the situation, which further curbed the sovereignty of the Colombian state.

Although Colombia became aware of its aggravating problems, it faced immense difficulties in attacking the root causes of these. The disruption of the Cali and the Medellin cartels by no means prevented the flow of illicit goods as where the State is weak and has no control over its territory, illegal organizations and businesses will always survive and thrive.

Thus, the fundamental cause of the emergence and expansion of drug trafficking organizations in Colombia stem from not only an increased demand for drugs, but, more importantly, the weakness of the government's authority to control these groups from exerting power. Indeed, the absence of the State in some sectors and regions created a vacuum which provided the possibility for other actors to emerge, gain power, and take control over it to fill the empty spaces.

Accordingly, the big drug empires were replaced by many cartelitos or 'baby cartels' that continue to successfully run the drug trafficking business on a global level, building upon the lessons learnt from their predecessors. Their operations are further facilitated by the processes brought about by globalization: as national borders were abolished and international trade increased, it became ever more difficult to detect the movements of illicit goods, hence creating favourable conditions for transnational crime to flourish.

Not only did the drug trafficking situation not improve, but corruption is also still ingrained at all levels in the Colombian society; especially at the local one, where it is the easiest to bribe and manipulate. Corruption remains an enormous challenge as it further weakens the state's authority and all its institutions, rendering it too weak to fight or even resist the influence of outside forces.

In conclusion, it is obvious that the Colombian problem is far from being solved, and it is important to realize that as long as the root causes of the issues are not addressed, it is highly unlikely that the war against drugs could be won or even the expansion of illicit activities be prevented. The way forward should consist not in the introduction of repressive methods, which may only provoke enhanced violence, but in the implementation of accountable governance that ensures a more successful law enforcement and lower levels of corruption. Given the complexity of the issue, another potential solution could be to build international strategic alliances and close partnerships to identify and tackle the root causes on global level.

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