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The role of the FARC-EP's rebel

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Abstract

The research of nonviolent tactics used by rebel groups is now more relevant than ever, considering the increase of intrastate conflicts in the last decades. Some scholars are studying the strategic relations between insurgents and international actors to achieve political and military objectives, giving that conduct the name of rebel diplomacy. This dissertation takes as a case study the current Colombian peace agreement between the government and the guerrilla group Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP) to analyse the role of the group's rebel diplomacy during the peace process. Although the international relations of the FARC-EP were not as strong and strategic compared to other similar guerrilla organisations, they were consistent with their international policies over the years, gaining the support of governments, NGOs and individuals in Europe and Latin America, especially in Venezuela. Those relations were taken into account during the peace negotiations, giving the group the confidence and tranquillity to engage in the process and to remain until the end.

Key words: Rebel diplomacy, Colombian peace process, FARC-EP, intrastate conflicts.

Abbreviations

AUC	United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (known in Spanish as Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia)
Bacrim	Criminal gangs (known in Spanish as Bandas criminales)
Cominter	International Commission (known in Spanish as Comisión Internacional)
ELN	National Liberation Army (known in Spanish as Ejército de Liberación Nacional)
EPL	Popular Liberation Army (known in Spanish as Ejército Popular de Liberación)
EU	European Union
FARC-EP	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (known in Spanish as Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo)
FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (known in Spanish as Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional)
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IRA	Irish Republican Army
M19	April 19 Movement (known in Spanish as Movimiento 19 de Abril)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PCC	Colombian Communist Party (known in Spanish as Partido Comunista Colombiano)
UP	Patriotic Union (known in Spanish as Unión Patriótica)

1. Introduction

In 2012, the Colombian government and the guerrilla group Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP) started a peace negotiation process to end an internal conflict that began more than 50 years ago. It was not the first attempt to find a negotiated solution to the war[1], but it was the only one that succeeded. After four years of intense and complicated discussions between the government and the insurgents, a final document with the content of the peace accords was released in 2016. However, the country was considerably polarised between supporters and detractors of the agreement, which explained the results of a plebiscite called by the President Juan Manuel Santos to endorse the accords. The detractors won with 50,21% of the votes against 49,78% of the supporters. After this electoral defeat, the government made some amendments to the agreement[2] based on the recommendations of the opposition, which did not accept the new accord either. Therefore, the final peace agreement was directly approved by the Congress and signed by the parts the 24th of November 2016.

The polarisation of the Colombian population around a peaceful negotiation with this rebel group has to do, among other causes, with the complexity and long duration of the internal war that has generated a lot of hatred and mistrust among the civil society and the armed actors involved in it. The Colombian conflict is far from being a conventional civil war where two factions fight for power. In addition to the FARC-EP, there is another guerrilla group (the National Liberation Army -

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[1] Since the 1980s, three Colombian presidents engaged in unsuccessful peace negotiations with the FARC-EP: Belisario Betancur (1982-1986), César Gaviria (1990-1994) and Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002).

[2] The negotiation team received from the opposition a document with 500 proposed changes and included modifications in almost 60 topics. Some of them are: greater specificity about the conditions of the zones where the guerrilla members, convicted of war crimes, will serve their sentence; the Special Peace Jurisdiction will have no foreign judges and will only have 10 years to operate, with the possibility of adding 5 more; the accord will not be included as a block in the constitution, only the topics related to human rights and international humanitarian law will be included. Regarding economic resources and drug dealing, the insurgents must provide a complete inventory of their assets and detailed information about their relation with the drug trade. Besides, the charges for drug trafficking will be judged case by case (WOLA, 2016).

ELN) and several illegal actors, such as paramilitaries, drug traffickers and criminal gangs that represent a significant threat to the country's stability. Furthermore, most of the social and economic factors that originated or exacerbated the confrontation are still present in Colombia. Some of them are uneven access to land, corruption, illicit drug trade and social inequality.

The high levels of violence and the increase in drug trafficking in the 1990s drew the attention of the international community, which has played a role in the Colombian conflict ever since. Not only the government but also the illegal armed groups have established formal and informal relations with foreign actors, including governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and multinational companies, among others, to gain their support and to balance the war conditions in their favour. This behaviour is considered as a nonviolent tactic used during a conflict and is a common feature in most of the current civil wars in the world. When it comes to states, this practice, which may take the form of diplomacy, is regulated, accepted and even encouraged in the international system. Likewise, it has been widely analysed and documented by academics and politicians. On the contrary, there is not enough research about the reasons and ways in which insurgents establish strategic contacts with foreign actors. Some scholars (Coggins, 2015; Huang, 2016; Jones and Mattiacci, 2017; Kaplan, 2017) are using the term rebel diplomacy to describe and study this behaviour. Still, many aspects have not been researched, such as the influence of rebel diplomacy on the termination of a conflict.

In this sense, the Colombian case, with its particular characteristics, represents an ideal opportunity to conduct research that contributes to a better comprehension of this phenomenon. One of those features is, as already explained, the recent peace agreement signed between the government and the FARC-EP. The other relevant factor is that this guerrilla group meets most of the criteria used by the scholars to describe the practice of rebel diplomacy. For instance, the FARC-EP

created in the 1990s an International Commission to coordinate their relations with foreign actors. They also had an informal office in Mexico, and they sent delegates to Latin America and Europe to establish diplomatic relations.

1.1.   Relevance

The study of nonviolent tactics used by insurgent groups during internal conflicts seems to be now more relevant than ever. Firstly, it contributes to enhancing the knowledge about civil wars, which have risen considerably after the Second World War. Compared to the 25 interstate conflicts that occurred between 1945 and 1999 killing about 3.33 million people, there were 127 intrastate wars that caused the death of approximately 16.2 million people in the same period (Fearon and Laitin, 2003, p.75). Although there is significant academic literature about this subject, the majority focuses on the violent aspects of the conflict. However, as Arjona (2016, p.2) asserts, "…much more than violence happens during war." For instance, the relation between civil society, the international community and the combatant factions is shaped in different ways. Part of that interaction is driven by coercion, but there is also support, cooperation and complicity, given rise to phenomena such as rebel governance and rebel diplomacy. Therefore, the analysis of the nonviolent aspects of civil wars can offer a wider picture of their causes, consequences and possible solutions.

Secondly, the proliferation of non-state actors in the post-Cold War era makes it necessary to consider also their perspective when analysing armed conflicts. Those actors have challenged the traditional state-centric focus of the international system. Non-governmental organisations, multinational companies, terrorist groups and smuggling networks, among others, coexist in the same environment and establish relationships with each other and with national governments. According to Jo (2015, p.9), currently, almost 300 rebel groups are operating in the world, and the research about their violent and nonviolent conducts is

still scant. Many insurgents do not devote entirely to military struggle, they also pursue political and ideological objectives, placing a high value on their international legitimacy.

Thirdly, the formulation of foreign policies and intervention schemes of civil wars focuses mainly on military issues, "…but little attention has been given to the diplomacy dimension of rebel engagement…" (Jo, 2015, p.7) Therefore, studying the role of rebel diplomacy during a peace process can provide a better understanding of the different factors that might make negotiations more fluent and efficient or, by contrast, more entangled and slower. In this way, it also has a practical relevance by contributing to the development of political strategies to deal with civil wars more effectively. That means, to find solutions that prevent the unnecessary prolongation of the conflict and the suffering of civil society.

1.2.   Methodology

Bearing in mind the abovementioned arguments, this dissertation takes the Colombian internal conflict as a case study to address the following research question: what was the role of the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy in the peace process with the Colombian government? According to Bryman (2016, p.60), "(t)he basic case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case." On this occasion, the study focuses on a particular event that has all the necessary characteristics to investigate the phenomenon of interest: rebel diplomacy. First, there is a rebel group that engaged in diplomatic activities as part of its nonviolent tactics during the war. Second, that same group concluded a peace negotiation with the government through a process that counted on the support of foreign countries. Third, the long duration of this conflict allows for a study of the variations of the rebel diplomatic strategies during the different phases of the war, and in connection with other internal and external factors. Therefore, to answer the research question it is necessary to study the development of the FARC-EP's diplomatic

relations, and then focus on the period between the beginning of the exploratory dialogues in 2011 and the formal signing of the agreement in 2016.

The methods used to collect the data were primary sources (elite interviews and rebels' public statements) and secondary sources (academic texts, news articles and reports). A total of five interviews were conducted in Spanish, and translated by the author of this dissertation, with people from civil society that know about the international behaviour of the FARC-EP, due to their academic research or their work in a particular organisation. Among the participants, there were scholars, diplomats, journalists and social activists, who were contacted through Skype and cell phone. A semi-structured questionnaire was used during the interviews, and although the topics were the same for all the participants, some questions were adapted according to their specific area of expertise.

Regarding ethical considerations, the Ethics Committee of the College of Social Sciences approved the use of interviews for this dissertation (see Appendixes 7.2 to 7.5). Consequently, each participant received a plain language statement with information about the purpose of the study and the reason for their involvement. They also expressed, through a consent form, their willingness to participate and be identified by their names. Although the interviewees had the option of keeping their participation confidential, all of them agreed to be named in the study. While it is true that this research deals with a potentially sensitive subject (rebel diplomacy) and case (the FARC-EP), the ethical risk of the interviews was considered as low because they were centred on peace strategies adopted by this rebel organisation and not on illicit activities. Besides, all the interviewees were professionals in their field and had already gone on public record speaking about the FARC-EP's international relations, the peace process and the diplomatic activities of the Colombian government, among others.

The data obtained in these interviews were analysed through coding. After transcribing the conversations, the information was divided into fragments that received one or more codes and categories. Then, the codes obtained in all the interviews were combined and compared with each other and contrasted with the data of the primary and secondary sources. Some of the categories identified were types of diplomatic activities, goals of the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy, main countries of interest, and differences in the international relations depending on the Colombian government, among others.

With regard to the limitations of this method, the general critique of case studies is that their findings cannot be generalised. However, the objective of using this method is to identify in great detail the different factors and variables of a phenomenon, so they can contribute to enhancing its analysis. In any event, the Colombian conflict, despite its particularities, shares certain features with other civil wars that also have rebel groups conducting diplomatic activities. Therefore, the elements identified in this case can be used to study other similar situations. Likewise, time constraints made difficult to get more interviews and to contact people who were more involved in the peace process.

1.3.   Structure

The content of this dissertation develops as follows. Firstly, it addresses the importance of studying civil wars from a non-state perspective and the use of nonviolent means. It also offers a detailed literature review about the concept of rebel diplomacy, identifying the main gaps and stressing the contribution of this study. Secondly, it provides a general characterisation of the Colombian conflict, identifying the main actors, causes and consequences. Thirdly, it describes and analyses the diplomatic relations of the FARC-EP, since its origins until Alvaro Uribe's presidency. Finally, it engages in the analysis of the role that the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy played during the peace process with the current Colombian government.

It is important to clarify that as the conflict recently ended, not all the information is open for public access. Also, the confrontation with other armed groups is ongoing, which makes certain topics considerably sensitive. Apart from that, the completion of the disarmament process last June means that the FARC-EP stopped being an armed actor. The combatants are in the process of reincorporation to civil life, meaning that for a future study the contact with them could be easier in terms of security and ethical issues.

2. Rebel diplomacy

Most of the current wars in the world are happening within states rather than between them. Intrastate conflicts cause thousands of deaths, forced displacements and humanitarian crisis each year, attracting the attention of political leaders, civil society and scholars who try to comprehend and find solutions for this phenomenon. There is a large amount of academic literature about civil wars. However, the nonviolent tactics employed during the conflict, such as the use of diplomacy by insurgent groups, and the interaction of those tactics with other war variables like peace negotiations, have received little attention. In this regard, the present chapter contextualises the concept of rebel diplomacy, relying on the main scholars that are conducting qualitative and quantitative studies in the field. Since the study of this term is still at an exploratory stage, there is not a significant volume of available literature. Therefore, any new approach to the analysis of rebel diplomacy represents a significant contribution to enhance the understanding of this phenomenon. This chapter addresses, first, the importance of studying civil wars from the insurgents' perspective, while paying attention to their nonviolent means. Secondly, it explains the basic definitions of rebel diplomacy, the main types of diplomatic tasks, and the insurgents' reasons to carry them out. Finally, it summarises the relevance of the topic, and it holds that this research project might contribute to filling one of the many gaps in the area by analysing the variations of rebel diplomacy before and during the peace process between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP.

2.1. Changing landscapes of war

The international landscape after the Second World War has been characterised by a regular occurrence of intrastate conflicts. Only in the period from 1945 to 1999, there were approximately 127 civil wars in 73 states, with an estimate of 16.2 million of total deaths as a direct consequence of those conflicts (Fearon and Laitin, 2003 p.75).

Therefore, it is not surprising to find numerous research studies in different knowledge areas analysing civil wars. Most of those studies focus on aspects such as the onset, duration and termination of the conflict, the use of violence and recruitment techniques, and the post-conflict reconstruction (Arjona, 2009, pp.1-2). Likewise, some scholars have attempted to explain conflict variables, such as the severity, based on "…state-level characteristics rather than the incentives and motivations driving the behaviour of the combatants." (Reeder, 2015, p.808). As a consequence, elements like armed groups' governance (Arjona, 2009, pp.1-2), or the use of diplomatic means by rebels have been overlooked, hindering a comprehensive understanding of civil wars.

Compared to interstate conflicts, which confront two or more countries, civil wars entail the fight between a government and one or more insurgent groups within a state. Therefore, the study of all the actors involved in a civil war should receive equal attention, as well as the war tactics used by them, given that intrastate conflicts are more than just military confrontation; the pursuit of political legitimacy is also relevant (Jo, 2015, p.16). In the same way, it is important to take into account that the violent and nonviolent means employed by rebels cannot be studied from a state perspective since, most of the time, they act within an illegal framework, and they are at a military, economic and political disadvantage compared to the government.

Nonetheless, areas such as governance and diplomacy have been exclusively reserved to states as the central actors in the international arena, which might explain the scarce research of those topics in relation to insurgent groups. But reality has proved that rebels also engage in governance and diplomacy as part of their political, economic and ideological objectives, shaping their relations with their home states, civilians, and the international community. In the last decades, several scholars have been working to fill that gap, focusing on issues such as rebels' compliance with international law (Fazal, 2017; Jo, 2015); rebel

taxation and civilian warfare (Sabates-Wheeler and Verwimp, 2014); geographic aspects of revolutionary movements (McColl, 1969); guerrilla organizations and popular support (Kasfir, 2005); rebel service provision and conflict outcomes (Heger and Jung, 2015); mediation and external intervention in civil wars (Lounsbery and Cook, 2011; Regan and Aydin, 2006), and insurgent governance (Arjona, Kasfir, and Mampilly, 2015; Wickham-Crowley, 2015; Arjona, 2016; Mampilly, 2015).

More recently, a small body of scholars has become interested in nonviolent tactics employed by insurgents to interact with external actors. Some of them are using the term rebel diplomacy to describe such actions (Coggins, 2015; Huang, 2016; Jones and Mattiacci, 2017; Kaplan, 2017); hence their texts guide the development of this chapter. In this regard, Arjona, Kasfir, and Mampilly (2015, p.8) claim that: "Since rebels by definition do not possess sovereignty, analysis of rebel diplomacy requires relaxing the notion that diplomacy is restricted to strategic communication among sovereign states or the formal organizations states create." States are no longer the exclusive holders of diplomatic relations, and the conception of diplomacy as an institution gives way to the use of diplomacy as a behaviour (Kelley, 2010). In this way, rebels join a group of non-state actors, such as non-governmental organisations, citizens, celebrities, companies, and religious communities, among others, who have been conducting diplomatic activities in the last decades (Constantinou, Kerr and Sharp, 2016). All these actors establish relations with other nations and international organisations, in favour or against their own country, to advocate for causes as diverse as humanitarian initiatives, denunciation of human rights violations, promotion of trade agreements and formulation of public policies, giving rise to concepts such as public diplomacy, digital diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, citizen diplomacy and paradiplomacy.

2.2. What is rebel diplomacy?

According to Coggins (2015, p. 106), rebels practice diplomacy when they "…engage in strategic communication with foreign governments or agents, or with an occupying regime they deem foreign…". For her part, Huang (2016, p.90) argues that rebel diplomacy is a conduct of foreign affairs that intends to advance "military and political objectives". Kaplan (2017, p.5) builds on that last definition and uses the term insurgent diplomacy to explain how a rebel group shares information with third-party actors "to persuade or prevent a change" in their behaviour and to ask for their support. These definitions suggest that the decision of insurgents to engage in diplomatic activities is not fortuitous, but it often responds to specific and well-defined objectives. In any event, when rebels conduct diplomatic tasks they usually adopt a state-like behaviour using tactics in a similar way that states do (Coggins, 2015, p.105).

The previous three authors agree that rebel diplomacy is a wartime strategy, contrary to formal diplomacy that can be used both in peace and conflict periods. As any other wartime strategy, its practice implies some cost-benefit analysis by insurgents. For instance, Kaplan (2017, p.2) explains that when rebels engage in diplomacy, they have to take resources away from military activities; hence, they must carefully decide "how to expend their diplomatic efforts." Likewise, accepting the aid or intervention of external actors may lead insurgents to lose independence (Salehyan, Gleditsch and Cunningham, 2011, p.711). Therefore, even if diplomacy has been used by several insurgent groups, some of them may not demonstrate any interest in engaging in diplomatic activities. The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone is an example of a rebel group that relied on terror tactics with no concern about civilian support or diplomatic activities (Huang, 2016, p.104). Another example is the case of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, whose practice of diplomacy changed during different stages of the war, showing little or no interest in a period when international legitimacy and economic support were no longer important for the group (Huang, 2016, p.114-123). These cases suggest that the decision of conducting

diplomacy tends to be aligned with the main objectives of the insurgent groups during the conflict.

Huang's research (2016, pp.90-91) focuses precisely on these issues. She investigates why rebels engage in diplomatic activities instead of concentrating entirely on fighting, and why some of them conduct active diplomacy while others do not. Her findings reveal that "secessionist groups and groups concerned with domestic political organization" tend to engage easily in diplomatic tasks because domestic and international support is essential to achieve their objectives and to obtain benefits such as legitimacy, recognition and material assistance. She concludes that "rebel diplomacy is driven by a political logic" (2016, p.113). For his part, Kaplan (2017) considers that the variation in diplomatic strategies is given by the nature of the rebel group and the "domestic intra-insurgent dynamics". He inquires about the external actors chosen by insurgent groups to conduct their diplomatic activities, and when and why they select some actors over others. His conclusions point out that when a rebel group is highly fragmented it tends to focus on the "central government's foreign adversaries", and when it is more united, it relates with the "state's international allies" (2017, p.3). However, Salehyan, Gleditsch and Cunningham (2011, p.717) argue that: "…becoming too dependent on foreign patrons can cause rebel organizations to lose legitimacy at home if they are seen as pawns of a foreign power." This corroborates the idea that the domestic and international interests of the insurgent groups are closely linked when they are looking for recognition and support. In certain cases, they can balance both, for instance, when they accept the presence of NGOs in their territories improving their external reputation and the living conditions of civilians (Coggins, 2015, pp.115). In other cases, they might lose domestic legitimacy as a consequence of their international relations, like the case of the Iranian insurgent group Mojahedin-e-Khalq when it allied with Iraq that was considered an old enemy of Iran (Salehyan, Gleditsch and Cunningham, 2011, p.717).

In addition to the rebels' interest in communicating with foreign governments, Coggins (2015, pp.111-114) explains that they also carry out diplomatic activities with individuals and international organisations. Insurgents tend to use media or personal meetings to communicate their objectives and ideologies to individuals. For instance, "foreign diasporas" can become a determinant source of support and financing for rebels. One example is the relationship between the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and a group of Eritreans living abroad, which allowed the mobilisation of money and support from Europe and America (Coggins, 2015, p.112). Another well-known case was the Irish Northern Aid Committee (NORAID), an organisation founded in 1970 in the United States by a group of Irish-Americans with the objective of collecting funds for the families of the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) prisoners, "…but it came under the scrutiny of the Justice and State Departments, which believed it might be an IRA front sending both dollars and weapons to Ireland" (Arthur, 1991, pp.151-152). For its part, the contact of insurgent groups with international organisations might be limited to certain activities, such as humanitarian issues or intervention in peace negotiations because the participation in these organisations is reserved for states (Coggins, 2015, pp.113-114). Once again, all these international relations conducted by rebels show that, even if they try to adopt a state-like behaviour in terms of diplomacy, they have to use different strategies due to of their illegal or unrecognised status in the international system, which reinforces the importance of studying their diplomatic activities from their perspective and particular conditions.

2.3.   Types of rebel diplomacy

In her study, Huang (2016, p.94) limits rebel diplomacy to three particular acts during the conflict: open offices abroad; send representatives on international missions; or create a political body in charge of foreign affairs. However, she also mentions other activities

such as hiring public relations firms; participating in policy think tanks; using rebel group's diaspora population to manage international offices, and creating or obtaining the support of international organisations (Huang, 2016). The latter can take different forms, like the case of the Council of Khalistan, an organisation created by the Sikhs in India as a "foreign policy organ" to gain support and solidarity (Huang, 2016, p.97). There are also "rebel humanitarian organizations", whose purpose is to provide aid to refugees, displaced people, and civilians in the territories controlled by insurgents. However, by performing an activity that pretends to be apolitical and humanitarian, they can strengthen the domestic and international image of the rebels, and allow them to expend their resources entirely in military issues by releasing them from their responsibilities with the population (Coggins, 2015, pp.112-113). Lastly, there are some international solidarity organisations that have shown a special support for indigenous and guerrilla movements in Latin America even when those groups have employed violent tactics. That is the case of the Guatemala's Marxist insurgency and the sympathy that it gained among the "left-leaning audiences in Western Europe and North America" (Bob, 2002, p.41). The role of these international organisations has been addressed in some of the studies about civil wars, but framing it within the rebel diplomacy concept provides an opportunity to analyse this phenomenon as part of the international strategies employed by insurgents.

Apart from the diplomatic activities already mentioned, Coggins (2015, pp.111-112) also adds the creation of blogs and websites as an effective way to conduct rebel diplomacy, given that central governments cannot entirely control Internet content. In this same line, Jones and Mattiacci (2017, p.1) argue that rebels use social media as "…an instrument to offer international audiences their own narrative of the conflict and to present themselves as a credible, preferable alternative to the existing government…". According to these scholars, during a civil war, there is a clear disadvantage for the insurgents concerning the information that international audiences receive. Therefore, the use of

Internet and social media can help to alleviate that problem, reducing the "information asymmetry between the public and the government" (Jones and Mattiacci, 2017, p.4). The authors specifically investigate the use of Twitter as a tool for rebel diplomacy that helps insurgents to communicate their message in an effective and direct way.

2.4. Reasons to conduct rebel diplomacy

It is also important to analyse the reasons that lead insurgents to conduct diplomatic activities. According to Huang (2016, pp.91,98), rebel diplomacy is a way to obtain "visibility, credibility, and acceptance on the world stage" because insurgents are political actors looking for the "status and power of states", by toppling the current government or by creating a new state. However, there are other possible reasons for rebels to engage in diplomacy. Huang (2016) mentions some of them: getting access to global markets and humanitarian aid, discrediting the image of their home state, gaining domestic support, and disseminating their ideologies. For Kaplan (2017, p.7) the main motifs are concentrated in the possibility of addressing two types of threats for rebels: "combating the COIN [counter-insurgent] state and undermining intra-insurgent rivals." Therefore, it is also common that insurgent groups use diplomacy to obtain military assistance, such as access to weapons or training for their combatants.

When rebels want to obtain international legitimacy and support, they "… will emulate all sorts of behaviour associated with 'good citizenship' in the international system" (Huang, 2016, p.101). One way of doing this is by complying with International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Jo (2015, p.13) argues that this behaviour matches with those insurgents that seek a legitimacy that is "politically situated and audience-specific". This means that they have clear political objectives and are interested in relating to audiences that care about IHL; hence they tend to act accordingly. In the same way as rebel diplomacy, the practice of rebel compliance with international norms is a nonviolent

tactic that has not been widely studied and, as it happens with formal diplomacy, the laws that govern states are clearer that the ones that guide the conduct of insurgents (Jo, 2015, p.13). These two practices have a lot in common, and it is not unusual to find insurgent groups conducting diplomacy and complying with IHL as part of their international strategy. For instance, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador created in 1981 a Political Diplomatic Commission (Huang, 2016, p.89) and, at the same time, it demonstrated a humanitarian behaviour abstaining from using child soldiers and giving a decent treatment to the government army (Jo, 2015, p.3). Likewise, some of the scholars studying the concept of rebel diplomacy (Huang, 2016; Coggins, 2015) touch upon the argument of compliance with IHL to highlight insurgents' intentions of being part of the international system.

All the aforementioned reasons to conduct rebel diplomacy are based on the insurgents' perspective. However, Coggins (2015, p.108) considers both the interests of rebels and third parties, as part of a mutually beneficial relationship. For instance, she explains how foreign businesses can establish relationships with insurgents to exploit natural resources that are placed in the rebel territory. There are also legitimacy motifs when secessionists and revolutionary groups look for the recognition of third-party countries, which at the same time will ask for some benefits, such as preferential treatment, in return (Coggins, 2015, p.108). However, the role of foreign states requires a deeper analysis as it is not completely clear why and under which conditions they are willing to support insurgents, given that this action may be seen in the international system as a direct opposition to a specific government. Usually, when a country is openly in favour of a rebel group, it is due to years of diplomatic efforts made by the insurgents (Huang, 2016, pp.106-107). For instance, Huang (2016, p.106) mentions the case of the Free Aceh Movement in the Acehnese conflict in Indonesia, and how its leader, Hasan di Tiro, tried for several years to strengthen the groups' international relations to obtain support for the independence of the Aceh

region. Finally, he gained the cooperation of the Libyan government to train his fighters, using an old contact from his times in business.

2.5. Relevance of rebel diplomacy

The international repercussions of intrastate conflicts are now more widely recognised than ever. The refugee crisis in Europe, caused mostly by the civil wars in certain African and Middle East countries is just an example of this. Therefore, it is important and urgent to carry out a further investigation into the behaviour of rebel groups and their relations with domestic and international audiences.

For instance, Coggins (2015), Huang (2016) and Jo (2015) highlight the importance of understanding the use of violent and nonviolent means by insurgents. Rebel diplomacy is a nonviolent tactic that is commonly practiced by rebels but relatively unexplored by academics. Several scholars have addressed different aspects of the insurgents' diplomatic activities, using concepts such as internationalisation of domestic conflicts (Borda, 2009) or international marketing strategies (Bob, 2002). However, it would be useful to have a single term that covers all these activities and strategies, and that allows academics to build upon it. Furthermore, the study of rebel diplomacy can help scholars and politicians to "…better understand the dynamics of contemporary civil war" (Coggins, 2015, p.99). It also joins a wider literature about rebel governance that is under development, and that "…shows that rebel groups engage in a gamut of activities intended to cast themselves as political organizations that are capable of governing territories and populations, creating order, and administering laws in the midst of armed conflict" (Huang, 2016, p.92).

In terms of political relevance, Huang (2016, p.93) explains that if states can better understand the objectives of insurgents' diplomatic efforts, and which of them are more likely to use these tactics, they can find more effective ways to deal with rebels and exert certain pressure in

terms of human rights compliance or peace talks involvement. As already explained, "…it appears that groups that need support from the international community might be especially likely to signal their intention to abide by IHL" (Fazal, 2017, p.74). Therefore, if insurgents want to be recognised and gain domestic and external legitimacy, they must adapt themselves to the norms of the international system. Likewise, Kaplan (2017, p.51) claims that "(i)n order to make informed decisions on how and when to support armed non-state actors, policy-makers must understand the strategic and organizational motivations driving rebel groups' requests for support."

Although the scholars leading research about rebel diplomacy have provided useful analytical tools to understand this phenomenon, there is much more to be done. For instance, none of them has analysed the role of rebel diplomacy before and during a peace process. Huang (2016, p.91) recognises that the scope of her study is the use of diplomacy for "securing political or material advantages", and not for negotiating the end of a conflict. For her part, Coggins (2015, p.114) explains that mediation is a frequent purpose of diplomatic interventions during civil wars, but she does not go deeper into the role that rebels play in those mediations through their diplomatic efforts. Likewise, Arnson (1999) addresses the role played by international institutions, like United Nations, and foreign countries during the peace processes in El Salvador and Guatemala but without referring to the diplomatic relations of the insurgent groups, which in the case of the FMLN in El Salvador were quite significant. Finally, Kaplan (2017, p.2) asserts that "…scholars still cannot explain the substantial variation in insurgent diplomatic strategy, or the ways in which diplomacy is employed by groups over time." For all these reasons, a new study about rebel diplomacy focusing on the peace processes during civil wars can contribute to expand the academic knowledge and to provide more political tools for the mediation of current intrastate conflicts.

3. Characterisation of the Colombian armed conflict

The complexity of the Colombian internal conflict rests on multiple social, political and economic factors that have evolved during more than half a century of war, hampering a definitive solution. As a baseline, there has been a profound social inequality related, among others things, with unequal access to land, limitations to political participation and uneven development in certain regions of the country, like those inhabited by indigenous and Afro-Colombian minorities. However, Arjona (2016, p.86) explains that "…the Colombian conflict is a class-based conflict, not an ethnic one. In addition, rebels have a centre-seeking agenda, not a secessionist one." The insurgent groups challenging the government do not want to create a new state but to take power, and they were mainly born from discriminated communities by their social class, like peasants. Nevertheless, the ethnic minorities have also been direct victims of the war, experiencing forced displacement, selective assassinations and impoverishment (GMH, 2016, pp.284-287). Another particular factor is the variety of illegal armed actors involved in the conflict, including several guerrilla groups, paramilitary factions, drug cartels and criminal gangs. Likewise, the engagement, in different degrees, of all these actors with the production and trafficking of illicit drugs and the continuous violation of human rights, both by illegal groups and by the state military forces, have attracted the attention of the international community. Foreign governments, NGOs and multinational companies have played a role, for better or for worse, in this conflict, interacting not only with the Colombian government but also with non-state groups. In order to understand the FARC-EP's relations with the international community, this chapter offers a chronological characterisation of the conflict, touching upon the key moments of the war, its main actors and its consequences.

The onset of the current Colombian conflict is usually associated with the period known as *La Violencia* (The Violence), which caused the death of almost 200.000 people between 1946 and 1964 (Pecaut, 1997,

p.900). It was a confrontation between the Liberal and Conservative parties that led peasants to kill each other in different regions of the country because of their political ideals. However, some authors argue that the inequality problems that fuelled the conflict during the twenty century date from the Colombian independence from Spain in 1810 (Arjona, 2016, p.88). Indeed, the bipartisan model created in the nineteenth century was part of a national context where "…some regions of the country had certain autonomy, the internal market was not well integrated, the peasants were on the margins of the agricultural system and the state-building process was quite fragile" (CHCV, 2015, p.9).

One of the most critical events during The Violence was the assassination in 1948 of the Liberal leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, which caused the anger of his followers and contributed to intensifying the conflict. The solution that Conservatives and Liberals found to put an end to the violence was to create a political system called *Frente Nacional* (National Front), where they alternated the power every four years, between 1958 and 1974. Although there was a decrease of the violence during that period (Arjona, 2016, p.89), most scholars agree that the National Front did not solve the main problems behind the conflict. On the contrary, it increased the popular feeling of not being represented in the political decisions of the country. It was regarded "…as a gentlemen's agreement in which the social bases of each party did not participate" (Borda, 2009, p.43). As a consequence, some of those excluded groups resorted to the armed struggle because they considered that it was a legitimate and unique alternative to face the "fake democracy" (Pecaut, 1997, p.901), and to defend themselves from the abuses of the government. Thereby, three guerrilla groups, influenced by the Cuban and Chinese revolutions and by communist ideas (GMH, 2016, p.123-129), were created in the 1960s: the FARC-EP, the ELN and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL). A fourth group, the April 19 Movement (M19), emerged in the 1970s with a stronger presence in the cities. These groups joined a Latin American movement of guerrillas that also emerged in other countries in that same period. However, during

their first years, the Colombian guerrillas remained politically and militarily underdeveloped with a low influence in the national context (GMH, 2016, p.133). Only by the end of the 1970s some of them started expanding their operations, for instance the FARC-EP increased their military fronts and changed their defensive strategy for an offensive one, and the M19 moved from urban to rural areas (GMH, 2016, p.141-142).

A new element came into play in the 1970s: the growth in the production of illicit drugs. Before this period, there was an incipient market of illegal drugs, related to the privileged geographic position of Colombia, which allowed the transit of legal and illegal products from South to North America. However, during that decade, drug trafficking increased considerably due to factors such as the violence and the illegal economy. López (2006, pp.409-411) explains that some of the first drug dealers came from families that had experienced the violence of the previous decades or that had worked in the smuggling and black market, so they knew the routes and the contacts to move products out of the country. Additionally, Pecaut (1997, p.907) argues that the presence of insurgent groups in different regions of the country guaranteed the protection of the illicit crops. Some of them engaged in drug trafficking, kidnapping, extortion and taxation to finance their military struggle (Arjona, 2016, p.89). At that time, the Colombian government did not pay much attention to this new phenomenon that developed with a relative lack of control. Between 1974 and 1982, Colombia was the main producer and exporter of marijuana in the world, and during the following decades, it became a larger exporter of cocaine and heroin (López, 2006, p.413). Furthermore, it housed two of the most important drug cartels in the planet: the Medellín and Cali Cartels, which also established certain alliances with the guerrillas (Pecaut, 1997, p.908).

Precisely, the drug business was a determinant factor for the consolidation of another armed group in the 1980s: the paramilitaries. Pecaut (1997, p.907) explains that the drug traffickers created a paramilitary structure in 1981 called Death to Kidnappers, which aim

was to fight guerrilla groups. Similarly, other paramilitary structures were established by regional and local elites, landowners and cattle farmers, as a defensive measure against guerrillas' actions (Arjona, 2016, p.90). Some of those groups counted on the support of the Colombian military forces (GMH, 2016; Palma, 2013). At the same time, the President Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) proposed a peace negotiation with some guerrilla groups that ended in failure due to "(t)he guerrilla's very weak political will and the constant opposition by the military establishment…" (Borda, 2009, p.50). As a result of that process, the political party Patriotic Union (UP) was created in 1985 to allow the FARC-EP's insurgents and some members from left-wing movements to participate in politics. However, the vast majority of UP militants were victims of a massive killing by paramilitaries, drug dealers and the state army, causing that many of the survivors looked for asylum in European countries and that the FARC-EP developed a sceptical position about agreements with the Colombian government.

The 1990s began with the demobilisation of the EPL and M19, and the enactment of a new Constitution. Nonetheless, the Colombian internal conflict was far from improving. At this point, all the actors involved in the war: guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, drug dealers and military forces, engaged indistinctly in the three main fields where the violence took place: politics, drug economy and social tensions (Pecaut, 1997, p.906). Besides, these groups made different alliances between them to fight the enemy factions, putting the civil society in the middle of the confrontation, forcing it to take sides while committing multiple human rights violations. The FARC-EP went from having eight fronts in 1975 to sixty-five in 1995 (Arjona, 2016, p.91), they created an elite and mobile unit and achieved major military victories against the Colombian armed forces (Pizarro, 2004, p.85). Likewise, the paramilitaries expanded their actions, increased their combatants and some of them grouped under an organisation called United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC). Regarding the drug traffickers, this decade witnessed the dismantling of the Medellín and Cali Cartels (GMH, 2016, p.162),

which resulted in the emergence of several small cartels with a significant influence in local powers dynamics (Pecaut, 1997, p.928). In 1998, Andrés Pastrana reached the presidency with a new peace negotiation proposal with the FARC-EP, which also failed. This process was based on three problematic premises: the implementation of a demilitarised zone, the continuity of the war during the talks and an open agenda for the negotiations (Palacios, 2012, pp.190-191). The FARC-EP took advantage of these circumstances to expand their military and political actions, and to establish new international contacts. The negotiations broke down in 2002 leaving the country and members of the international community with a feeling of scepticism about the intentions of the guerrilla group.

The mix of all these factors led to one of the most critical periods in the history of the Colombian conflict. Between 1996 and 2005 the internal confrontations reached their maximum levels with the presence of different sources of violence, such as massacres, forced displacement and aggression against civil society (GMH, 2016, p.162). Under this context, the President Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010) took office and remained for two consecutive periods with an aggressive military strategy against guerrilla groups. During the first years of this government, the state regained control of significant regions of the national territory that were ruled by illegal armed groups, and it started peace talks with the AUC. Additionally, there was a reduction of the homicide rates, individual kidnappings, bombings and attacks on civil society (Palacios, 2012, pp.193-194). However, the second period of Uribe's administration faced multiple problems such as accusations of human rights violations, nexus between paramilitary groups and politicians, and the deficiencies of the peace agreement with the AUC that contributed to the creation of criminal gangs (Bacrim), formed by demobilised members of the paramilitary structures (Arjona, 2016, pp.92-93). At the end of this administration, the FARC-EP were militarily undermined but far from being completely defeated.

In 2010, Juan Manuel Santos, who had served as Minister of Defence under Uribe's administration, became president of Colombia with an agenda that was going to continue with the policies of his predecessor. However, once in power, Santos distanced himself from those policies and proposed another peace negotiation with the FARC-EP, which lasted four years and counted on the support of the international community while facing a domestic environment of political polarisation. This last factor explains why, after both parts signed an agreement to end the conflict in 2016, 50,21% of the national population rejected it during the plebiscite held that very year. After the defeat, the government modified certain points of the agreement, incorporating recommendations made by the opposition, led by the Democratic Centre Party. Although the opposition did not accept those changes, the Colombian Congress finally approved the agreement at the end of 2016, and currently, it is in the initial stages of implementation. Bearing in mind the complex nature of the Colombian conflict, this peace agreement with the FARC-EP only represents one part of the solution. Actually, it continues being highly contested by different sectors of the society and by other armed actors, such as the criminal gangs or the neo-paramilitary groups, who have been targeting human rights activists (Arjona, 2016, p.94). Therefore, the post-conflict scenario represents a major challenge for the Colombian society.

As a final remark for the characterisation of the Colombian conflict, it is important to point out some of the main figures and consequences of this prolonged war. According to the report of the National Centre for Historical Memory (GMH, 2016), between 1958 and 2012 approximately 220,000 people died because of the conflict, 81.5% of those deaths were civilians and 18.5% combatants. Other significant figures mentioned by this report are 25,007 missing people, 1,754 victims of sexual violence, 6,421 children and adolescents recruited by armed groups, and 4,744,046 displaced persons (GMH, 2016, p.39). The most common violent tactics used by all the armed groups have been selective assassinations, kidnapping, massacres, forced disappearances,

terrorist attacks, torture and sexual violence, among others. Furthermore, Colombia is the second country in the world with the highest number of anti-personnel mine victims. All these figures explain the deep wounds that the internal war has caused among the Colombian population with hundreds of orphaned children, destroyed families and young people that grew up seeking revenge, perpetuating the cycles of violence.

4. Development of the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy

Being one of the oldest and largest guerrilla groups in the world, the FARC-EP have played a determinant role not only in the Colombian conflict but also in the relationship between the country and the international community. The different Colombian governments that have been in power since the creation of this group have experienced diplomatic crisis and criticism, or have established specific alliances with other governments in response to the international actions of the FARC-EP. At the same time, this guerrilla organisation has developed a diplomatic strategy that has gone through different stages according to internal situations and global phenomena such as the war on terror. Therefore, to understand the international engagement during the current peace agreement it is essential to learn about the historic background that led to that particular outcome. As already explained, there is much more happening during the war than just violence, and when a conflict ends through negotiation, the nonviolent tactics used during the confrontation, such as diplomacy, gained a special relevance. Hence, this chapter presents a short description of the origins and structure of the group to subsequently focus on the evolution of the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy, based on four key moments: relationship with the Colombian Communist Party, creation of the International Commission, Pastrana's peace negotiations as an international platform, and war on terror and isolation. This division is the result of the information obtained in the interviews and the primary and secondary sources that highlighted specific situations as determining factors in the group's rebel diplomacy.

According to the FARC-EP's web page, they were born in 1964, and their founders were 48 peasants from the region of Marquetalia, in the department of Tolima, led by Manuel Marulanda and Jacobo Arenas (FARC-EP, 2016). However, there are versions about a previous origin at the end of the 1940s when the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) promoted the creation of self-defence peasant groups as a response to the state violence. Some of those peasants gathered in certain areas that were

beyond the government control, known as 'independent republics' (Pizarro, 2006, pp.177-178). One of them was Marquetalia, which was attacked by the Colombian army in 1964 with the support of the United States, as a strategy to fight against "leftist rebels" and to stop the propagation of the communism in Latin America (Borda, 2009, p.44). That episode marked the transformation of those self-defence groups into a guerrilla movement (GMH, 2016, p.129), which took the initial name of Southern Bloc. Two years later, during the Second Conference of the Southern Bloc in 1966, they named themselves FARC (Safford and Palacios, 2002, p.356) and during the Seventh Conference in 1982, the group added 'People's Army' to the name.

Since their beginning, the FARC-EP have sought to seize political power in Colombia, and they resorted to arms because "…the doors to a legal, peaceful and democratic political struggle were closed…" in the country (FARC-EP, 2016). This guerrilla group has a formal and hierarchic structure, organised in blocs and fronts that operate both in rural and urban areas. They also have a defined chain of command led by the Central High Command, which is responsible for taking the strategic and operational decisions (Cunningham, et al., 2013, p.482). Although the total number of combatants has never been confirmed, some authors indicate that there were almost 28,000 fighters in 2002 divided into 62 fronts, with presence in 622 municipalities (GMH, 2016, p.168). The members of the FARC-EP do not receive a salary, and they have to make a lifelong commitment to the organisation, which interferes with their personal lives in issues such as intimate partners or the possibility of having children (Arjona, 2016, p.97). Likewise, the commanders regulate the relationship with civilians, and any misconduct of the combatants is harshly punished (Arjona, 2016, p.98). Regarding its economic recourses, the FARC-EP have mainly relied on incomes obtained through drug dealing, kidnapping and illegal taxation (Pecaut, 1997, p.909).

The scope of action of the FARC-EP during its early years was not significant, neither in the country nor in the international realm. They

were regarded by many as the military wing of the PCC (Safford and Palacios, 2002, p.356; Trejos, 2015, p.75), although some scholars refute this idea claiming that it was one of the many arguments used by the United States during the Cold War to interfere in other countries (Borda, 2009, 154). At that time, the actions of the group were confined to the Colombian territory, with a minimum presence in the border regions (Ramírez, 2006b, p.127). Nevertheless, in the 1990s, when they started increasing their military capacity and the number of their combatants, as well as gaining territory and engaging in the illicit drug business (Pecaut, 1999, p.144), they began to be noticed by the international community. From this point until the sign of the peace agreement, this guerrilla group conducted several international activities that, according to the concepts developed in the first chapter, can be described as rebel diplomacy.

4.1.   Relationship with the Colombian Communist Party

The first international contacts of the FARC-EP took place through the PCC. For instance, this connection allowed the group to receive "…organizational and financial support from the Soviet Union" (Arjona, 2016, p.96). The relationship was also evident in the actions of both the political party and the guerrilla group. For instance, Trejos explains (2015, pp.74-81) how the FARC-EP started alluding to the revolutionary movements in the world from its first political declarations and how the PCC embraced the idea of combining 'all forms of struggle', using guerrilla and self-defence groups as instruments to reach its political aims. Likewise, the Marxist-Leninist ideology that accompanied the birth and early years of the FARC-EP was linked to that political party and, at the same time, to the international communist movement. Nevertheless, it is not possible to assert that, during this period, the FARC-EP had the intention or considered necessary to develop an international activity by themselves.

By the end of the 1970s and the beginning of 1980s, the FARC-EP abandoned their defensive strategy. During their Seventh

Conference, they designed a strategic plan to take power and they self-named as a people's army. Likewise, they augmented their fronts, became more militarised and distanced themselves from the PCC (GMH, 2016, p.141). Other factors that contributed to that aloofness were the recognition of the guerrilla commanders as "political protagonists" during the peace process with President Betancur, and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, which undermined the legitimacy of the PCC (Safford and Palacios, 2002, p.356). Although this period cannot be considered as part of the group's rebel diplomacy, it explains how the FARC-EP reached political independence concerning their discourse and their actions. In this regard, Palma (2013, p.127) explains that "(g)uerrilla leaders became both the military and the political commanders of the organization, and as such, they became part of both dimensions." Additionally, compared to other guerrilla groups in the region, they survived the end of the Soviet Union largely because they stopped needing economic resources from communist countries when they engaged in the illicit drug business. Another reason is that they modified their ideological stance and started embracing the ideas of the Liberator, Simón Bolivar, and the Bolivarianism as a way of establishing solidarity relations with all the groups of the region and the world that shared the same ideals (Torrijos and Pérez, 2012, p.32; The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011, p.29). This last element will be determinant in the diplomatic strategies of the groups, as it is explained in the next sections.

4.2.   Creation of the International Commission

Several authors agree that the FARC-EP's decision of conducting a systematic and organised international strategy took placed during their Eight Conference in 1993 (Palma, 2013; Borda, 2009; Trejos, 2015). In this meeting, the group established a "…firm plan for seeking political support from the international community by lobbying governments and other political actors…" (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011, p.30). They also created the International Commission

(Cominter), a political body whose aim was to strengthen the ties of friendship between the FARC-EP and socialist countries, and to communicate their ideas and projects to gain recognition for their struggle (Semana, 2000). The Cominter was an idea of the guerrilla commander Raúl Reyes, who led and defined the objectives of this entity with other two members of the group, Rodrigo Granda and Olga Lucía Marín (Palma, 2013, p.186). By 1995, Reyes was in charge of the Cominter. He moved to Costa Rica and then to Mexico to coordinate the foreign activities of the insurgent organisation (Borda, 2009, p.157-158; Trejos, 2015, p.103).

According to Pérez (2008), some of the Cominter's tasks included contacting foreign governments' officials, parliamentarians, NGOs, leftist parties, insurgent groups, arms-trafficking networks, refugee communities and solidarity organisations. It also sought to participate in political and academic international events, to establish support groups and to create instruments of diffusion and information in other countries. The main areas of interest of the Cominter were Europe and North, Centre and South America, where the guerrilla group opened offices in countries like Mexico and Costa Rica and sent guerrilla representatives to others (Trejos, 2015; Borda, 2009). Those offices were formed by Colombian refugees and members of the Committee (Palma, 2013, p.187). Additionally, this entire platform leant on a communication strategy that used new technologies to spread their anti-imperialist and Bolivarian ideas to international audiences. They launched their own website (www.farc-ep.co) and got the support of independent news agencies and online media (e.g. Anncol and ABP), most of them located or operated in Europe (Trejos, 2015, p.141-143). By 1990, FARC-EP had then created an international strategy, with actions and characteristics that can be considered as rebel diplomacy.

In parallel to the beginning of the FARC-EP's diplomatic strategy, the Colombian conflict also gained international visibility during this decade due to the increased of drug trafficking and violent

confrontations, which were seen as a significant threat to the international community. Therefore, the involvement of foreign governments in this war equally augmented. On the one hand, the United States offered support in terms of military capacity and counter-narcotic programs. On the other hand, some European and Latin American countries were more concerned about supporting peace negotiations and the defence of human rights (Schultze-Kraft, 2012, p.297). Several scholars draw upon this argument. For instance, Rojas (2006) claims that the participation of the United States changed the dynamic of the Colombian war, leading to a confusion between the antinarcotics and the counter-insurgent fights, which simplified a conflict that was much more complex. For her part, Ramírez (2006a, 2006b) explains that the image of the Colombian government in Europe was quite negative based on two situations: the impunity after the systematic assassination of UP members, and the scandal about the financing of the President Ernesto Samper's (1994-1998) electoral campaign with money from drug trafficking. As a consequence, the guerrilla groups "…began to be seen in certain Latin American and European circles as justified opponents of a corrupt regime" (Ramírez, 2006b, p.130).

This last situation was exacerbated by the government's foreign policy. According to Trejos (2015, pp.62-63), Colombian international activities relied largely on its relation with the United States, overlooking important links with its Latin American neighbours and with other countries in Europe and Centre America. The FARC-EP took advantage of those empty spaces left by the state diplomacy to strengthen their foreign relations. However, Borda (2009, pp.154-155) asserts that the FARC-EP's international ties were not as strong as those of other guerrillas in the country and the region. This can be explained by the "peasant component" of this organisation that handled the conflict with a local perspective and did not have much in common, "ideologically and strategically" with other similar groups. In the same way, Arno Ambrosius, a former Dutch diplomat that was interviewed for this research (2017), explained that the FARC-EP's intensions of

establishing foreign contacts were slightly exaggerated. He had a direct contact with the insurgents due to his previous jobs: consultant for the Colombian government in the Amazon in the 1980s, official of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2000 and 2001, and Deputy Head of Mission in the Netherlands Embassy in Bogota from 2002 to 2006. Those approaches and the conversation with some rebels, gave him the impression that they were quite closed, rigid and categorical during their encounters with international actors: "They only cared about their vision and used to accuse everyone else of being capitalist, without even listening different arguments and opinions" (Interview with Ambrosius, 2017).

Another element to take into account here is that the role of the Cominter was not only political, its members also engaged in military and criminal activities (Palma, 2013, p.187). In the 1990s, the FARC-EP's connection with the drug trafficking business was evident. It represented an important source for financing their struggle (Pecaut, 1997, p.909), giving them a wider margin of manoeuvre and independence from any international actor. In this regard, according to the interview made to Nestor Osorio (2017), the Colombia's Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, what the FACR-EP had in that period was a sophisticated networking for establishing contacts and trading weapons and drugs with the international terrorism. However, it does not necessarily mean that their political objectives were in a second place. Another interviewee, Luis Eduardo Celis, post conflict advisor for the Colombian organisation *Fundación Paz & Reconciliación*, argued that the FARC-EP were not looking for material assistance, they did not have economic difficulties, hence "they got out into the world to make a defence of their armed uprising" (Interview with Celis, 2017).

In summary, one could claim that during this phase of the FARC-EP 's rebel diplomacy, the group was in a period of transition. They were just finishing their separation from the PCC and the communist

ideologies, and they were gaining certain political and economic independence that would determine their relationship with the world. They established a whole diplomatic structure, opening offices abroad, sending representatives on missions, contacting the Colombian diaspora communities, creating a political body in charge of international relations and using online media to spread their message. Nonetheless, their international presence at that time was timid, probably because they did not need the economic assistance of other countries to survive and because they were just starting to develop their new political discourse based on the Bolivarianism.

4.3. Pastrana's peace negotiations as an international platform

The arrival of Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002) to the Colombian presidency represented an opportunity for a new peace negotiation with the FARC-EP, which involved a significant presence of the international community with a specific group of facilitating countries from Europe and the Americas. The government decided to look for the support of foreign actors because the process did not have the necessary legitimacy of domestic audiences and the guerrillas were augmenting their military capacity (Borda, 2009, p.62). In parallel, the United States got engaged in the conflict with a strategy known as *Plan Colombia* that focused mainly on the link between armed groups and drug trafficking, and paid little attention to the "economic, social and political aspects" of the war (GMH, 2016, pp.173-175). Additionally, as explained in the previous chapter, one essential factor of the peace process was the implementation of a large demilitarised zone in the south of the country (it had the size of Switzerland). That area was misused by the FARC-EP to boost their military, political, diplomatic and criminal activities. As a consequence, the negotiations developed in an environment of mutual mistrust and contradictory actions that finally led the process to failure.

These negotiations were the major platform that the FARC-EP had to strengthen their rebel diplomacy. By being exposed to a large range of foreign actors, the group "…identified resources it could obtain from the international system and that could eventually improve its political and military position vis-à-vis the Colombian state" (Borda, 2009, p.156). The diplomatic decisions taken by the insurgents in that period were influenced by the state diplomacy. The FARC-EP went from having a relatively low international visibility, to gain massive attention around the world, taking advantage of spaces created by the government. In an interview made to Sandra Borda, a Colombian researcher and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the *Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano*, she reinforced that argument:

> The FARC-EP reluctantly accepted all this international participation in the peace process because the government was using it systematically. That is to say that the international alliances emerged as a response to the strategies used by the counterpart. Hence, if the government is internationalising its labour, building many alliances and looking for international legitimacy, then, the insurgents also assume that task and try to strengthen themselves politically through foreign alliances. (Interview with Borda, 2017)

Under this scenario, many European countries also decided to participate in the peace process, in part because they believed that the political and socioeconomic causes of the Colombian conflict demanded a negotiated solution, but also because they were against the *Plan Colombia* (Schultze-Kraft, 2012, p.288-289). Indeed, the FARC-EP's diplomatic presence in Europe, which officially started in that period, relied on three main messages: the violation of human rights by state officials, the corruption of the government and the links between the state and paramilitary groups (Trejos, 2015, p.110). When he was working for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Arno Ambrosius received three visits of the FARC-EP delegates, led by Olga Lucía

Marín. He explained that those were semiformal visits where the insurgents talked the whole time about how terrible the Colombian government and the *Plan Colombia* were, and they did not show any interest in the Dutch officials' opinions. "…I believe that it was more like a mandatory task to make visible their international presence…" (Interview with Ambrosius, 2017). This could be another evidence of a diplomatic behaviour that was more focused on counteracting the state diplomacy than on defending the group's political ideals.

Nonetheless, the FARC-EP were quite strategic in other aspects of their international relations. They took advantage of the negative image that the Colombian government had in certain Scandinavian countries to present themselves as a group that fought for justice and social equity. To do so, they relied on the refugees that went to those countries after being victims of political persecution in Colombia, such as many ex-members of the UP (Trejos, 2015, pp.110-111). Likewise, there were three significant episodes regarding their international linkages during that time. First, the meeting between the FARC-EP delegates and Philip Chicola, a U.S. State Department official, in Costa Rica in 1998. That approach ended when the Colombian insurgents killed three American indigenous rights activist in 1999 (Palacios 2012, p.185-186). The other two episodes happened in 2000 and were linked to military activities: the training that the guerrilla group received by members of the IRA in the demilitarised zone, and the weapons they tried to buy with the complicity of Vladimiro Montesinos, top adviser to former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori (Borda, 2009, p.162).

Regarding the actions of the Cominter, by 1999 it counted "…with 17 operatives managing activities in 27 Latin American and European countries, helped by sympathisers in various support groups" (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011, p.30). Simultaneously, the FARC-EP had implemented a series of political strategies to "…increase its sympathy through communities and individuals, and to establish connections with existing social and political organizations…"

(Palma, 2013, p.161). After the Eight Conference, they created their own political party, the Clandestine Colombian Communist Party and then, they established the Bolivarian Movement for the New Colombia. Those decisions brought the FARC-EP closer to Venezuela, especially when Hugo Chávez reached the presidency in 1999. However, the relationship of the guerrilla group with that country started at the beginning of 1990's with a Border Policy that prevented military actions or attacks in the neighbouring states. According to The International Institute for Strategic Studies (2011, p.42), the Cominter "adopted a quasi-diplomatic structure" in Venezuela, having a permanent delegate in Caracas since 1996 and establishing contacts with the government of President Rafael Caldera (1994-1998). The relationship with Chávez also aroused before his accession to power, but it was strengthened thanks to the Bolivarian ideologies that he shared with the insurgents:

> Both the president [Hugo Chávez] and the guerrillas have focused on Latin America's emancipation from foreign centres of political and economic power, which they characteristically described as 'imperialist' in international relations and 'neoliberal' in economic policy. (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011, p.55)

The Chávez administration was against *Plan Colombia* and declared itself neutral regarding the Colombian conflict, granting the FARC-EP a political status. Additionally, during the time of the peace negotiations, some Venezuelan militaries met with guerrilla members in the border regions to set an agreement of cooperation between both parts (Trejos, 2015, pp.120-121). These actions triggered a diplomatic tension with the Colombian government that reached its highest point in Álvaro Uribe's presidency.

To conclude this period, it is equally important to mention that the FARC-EP increased their efforts for being recognised as a belligerent force, which means for countries to assume a neutral position, treating

both parties involved in the conflict as equals. This status is given to a group when it controls part of a territory, exercises administration tasks over that area and complied with the laws of war (Lootsteen, 2000, p.109). However, the FARC-EP never achieved this goal, which is considered as a big failure of their diplomacy according to Luis Fernando Trejos, another interviewee and a Colombian researcher and professor in the Department of Political Sciences and International Relations at *Universidad del Norte* (2017). When President Pastrana officially terminated the peace dialogues in 2002, he used the global context of the war on terror to ask the international community to include the FARC-EP in the list of terrorist groups. The request surprised many European and Latin American countries that found hard to understand how a government that had granted the insurgents the status of political rebels was assuming such a radical position (Ramírez, 2006a, 2006b). The United States had already included this guerrilla group in the list of terrorist organisations since 1997 (Palacios, 2012, p.197), but the European Union (EU) had been reluctant to do the same. However, the worldwide impact of the 9/11 attacks led the EU to take that measure in 2002, without major consensus among its members. (Schultze-Kraft, 2012, p.301-302). The failure of the negotiations, and being listed as a terrorist group would place the FARC-EP in a new phase of their diplomatic relations.

4.4. War on terror and isolation

After Pastrana, the new President Álvaro Uribe came to power in 2002 and implemented a military strategy called Democratic Security that intensified the war against the insurgent groups. For their part, the FARC-EP also increased the attacks, planting bombs in urban areas such as the capital Bogotá, and kidnapping and killing politicians, which caused the outrage of the national and international community. At the same time, they insisted on the humanitarian exchange of prisoners, but their violent actions made them lose legitimacy and credibility about

their intensions (GMH, 2016, p.187-188). Uribe's administration defined two main objectives to deal with this guerrilla group: eliminate its leaders and liberate the kidnapped people. As a result of this policy, the government carried out several military operations, including an attack in Ecuadorian territory in which guerrilla leader Raúl Reyes died, and the successful rescue mission of former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt (who also has French nationality) along with three American citizens and several policemen (Palma, 2013, p.139). As a consequence of this offensive approach, the FARC-EP suffered a significant weakening: some of their fronts disintegrated or disappeared; various combatants demobilised or surrendered; they withdrew from many areas and concentrated in the South and the border regions of the country, and they were forced to return to a "strategic defensive stage". Likewise, during that period, their main leader Manuel Marulanda died of natural causes in the jungle, "in extreme conditions of isolation" (Palma, 2013, p.139-142). He was replaced by Alfonso Cano.

In terms of international relations, the new government denied any political status to the FARC-EP, treating them as "…a simple group of narco-terrorists who were attacking a fully legitimate State" (GMH, 2016, p.185). The intention was that the FARC-EP remained internationally isolated and that their members could not travel or engage in any activity with other countries. Nonetheless, many European sectors did not agree with the rejection of the political nature of the conflict by Uribe's administration and criticised the human rights and the IHL violations (Ramírez, 2006a, pp.87-89). The answer of the government was to expel from the country several members of European NGOs, to blame some organisations of helping perpetuate the guerrillas' actions and to criticise International Amnesty and Human Rights Watch for that the government consider as biased reports about the conflict (Ramírez, 2006a, p.91). Arno Ambrosius himself was removed from his position in Colombia as well as other diplomats at that time because they were critical of the methods used by the government to deal with the conflict (Interview with Ambrosius, 2017). This approach also caused the

relations with Venezuela and Ecuador to worsen. The killing of Reyes in 2008 in Ecuadorian territory generated a diplomatic crisis due to the Colombian violation of Ecuadorian sovereignty but also to the presence of the insurgent group in Ecuador. During that operation, the Colombian government seized the laptops and data-storage devisees of Reyes, which contained valuable information about the FARC-EP's international relations that compromised diverse organisations and governments, especially the Venezuelan and Ecuadorian (Semana, 2009a, 2009b). The Interpol proved the veracity of that material, but several countries dismissed it (Trejos, 2015; The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011). Even so, the Colombian government used that material to denounce "…the active and passive collaborations of the neighbouring countries with the FARC-EP, as an attempt to destabilise and influence in Colombian politics" (Torrijos and Pérez, 2012, p.40-41).

None of the situations described above prevented the FARC-EP from continuing with their diplomatic activities. By 2008 they had 30 delegates in Europe, trying to establish contacts with parliamentarians (Trejos, 2015, p.112). Iván Márquez replaced Reyes as head of the Cominter, which started working with European people more than with Colombian expatriates (Palma, 2013, p.190). The FARC-EP developed collaborative relations with several organisations, such as *Rebelión* and Fighters and Lovers in Denmark (Trejos, 2015, p.113), and they achieved certain recognition of their labour when a Dutch woman, Tanja Nijmeijer, joined the guerrilla group (Torrijos and Pérez, 2012, p.40-41). But one the most significant achievement of the FARC-EP during that time was the use of diplomacy for military purposes, creating alliances with armed groups and criminal organisations (Palma, 2013, p.143). In this regard, Sandra Borda pointed out that the Democratic Security strategy used by the government strengthened the military internationalisation of the FARC-EP:

One of the reasons that push insurgent groups to look for internationalisation has to do with the military asymmetry that they experienced in certain periods of the conflict (…) In other words, if they are losing the war, in military terms, they have a clear incentive to internationalise their actions, to find allies that contribute to their military strengthening. (Interview with Borda, 2017).

However, the lack of coherence between the FARC-EP's political discourse and the continuous violation of human rights and attacks against civil society was isolating them from their international allies. Trejos (2015, p. 115) explains that one of the big failures of the group's diplomacy in Europe was not being able to prevent its inclusion in the international terrorist list, and despite its multiple efforts, it was not excluded from the list at that time because the "…European governments categorically rejected the FARC-EP's links with drug dealing, the use of kidnapping and the IHL violations." Additionally, the romantic vision of the guerrillas, present in certain European sectors, was left behind (Ramírez, 2006a, p.95). The FARC-EP then faced an international community that had no tolerance for terrorist acts; their office in Mexico was denounced and closed, and they received the rejection of part of the international public opinion that once supported them (Pizarro, 2004). Likewise, the Latin American countries that were more akin to the guerrilla group were worried about the political consequences of supporting an armed organisation that was considered terrorist, and they started distancing themselves from the group that was more isolated than ever (Interview with Trejos, 2017).

To summarise, based on the four phases described above, one could claim that the FARC-EP effectively developed a diplomatic strategy to achieve their political and military objectives during the war. They allocated resources to create a structure with offices abroad, delegates and online platforms to reach international audiences. However, many authors and some of the interviewees of this dissertation coincide that the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy was not as stronger and strategic as the

diplomacy of other guerrillas in the region. There are two possible reasons to explain this. The first one is that they had enough economic resources to operate so they did not depend on any foreign country, and the second one is that their political discourse was not sufficiently solid to gain the full sympathy of a broad sector of the international community. Nevertheless, when the Colombian government strengthened its diplomatic relations and looked for the support of several foreign governments to deal with the internal conflict, the FARC-EP did the same in an effort to counteract the state diplomacy. In this kind of diplomatic confrontation, the domestic behaviour of both the government and the insurgent group, and global phenomena such as the war on terror, also affected the international relations of the FARC-EP leading to the support or rejection of the international community during different stages of the war. All these elements will be determinant to analyse in the next chapter the role of rebel diplomacy in the current peace process.

5. The role of the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy in the Colombian peace process

When President Juan Manuel Santos took power in 2010, the national and international community believed that he was going to continue with the policies of his predecessor Álvaro Uribe. Santos had been the Minister of Defence under Uribe's administration, leading the main military offensives against the FARC-EP in that period. However, his plans for the future of the country were quite different. Once in the presidency, he assumed a position different than expected, improving the diplomatic relations with the neighbouring countries and starting a peace negotiation with the FARC-EP. These decisions caused a breakdown in his relationship with Uribe and produced a significant polarisation in the country that contributed to a negative outcome in the plebiscite to endorse the final peace accord with the guerrilla group. As already explained in the previous chapters, after that polls defeat, the Colombian Congress approved the agreement at the end of 2016 and currently, the country is starting the post-conflict phase.

Compared to the previous peace processes, this one had certain features that, according to some academics and politicians, can explain its success. For instance, the participation of the international community was limited to the specific needs and demands of the government and the FARC-EP, and only four countries were directly involved in the negotiations. Likewise, there are multiple factors that are being studied to understand the reasons that led the guerrilla group to participate in new peace talks, to accept conditions that it had rejected in the past and to remain until the end of the process despite some moments of crisis. Most of those factors have to do with domestic situations, such as the military defeats that the insurgents were facing and the negative image they had among the majority of the Colombian population. However, there are also international variables, like diplomatic relations, that could have an influence on the group's behaviour and have not been thoroughly analysed. Hence, the aim of this chapter is to address the research

question: what was the role of the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy in the peace process with the Colombian government? To answer that enquiry, it presents, firstly, the successes and failures of the insurgents' international relations to understand the situation of the group before getting involved in the negotiations. Secondly, it offers an overview of the general characteristics of the process focusing on the international participants. Finally, it concludes explaining the role of the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy.

5.1. Successes and failures of the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy

During more than 50 years of armed struggle, the FARC-EP maintained certain continuity in their structure and policies, which represented an advantage over the Colombian government. Pizarro (2006, pp.185-186) explains that the insurgents knew how to manage time and designed a long-term strategic plan in 1982 that had little changes over the years, contrary to the state that has been governed by multiple presidents with dissimilar priorities and ways of managing the conflict. This also applies to their diplomatic relations:

> The Cominter members were always the same, there was a line of continuity that generated more confidence and allowed long-lasting processes (…) Its members were designated, because they knew and were convinced about what they were doing, their script did not change, always telling the same story. On the contrary, Colombian diplomacy has been a government diplomacy not a state one. (Interview with Trejos, 2017)

Indeed, as explained in the last chapter, all the Colombian presidents have changed their discourse about the conflict and the FARC-EP, creating confusion and criticism among the international community. For its part, the long-term diplomatic strategy of the rebel group allowed it, for instance, "…to build a state foreign policy not a governmental one

with Venezuela (…) It has been a relationship cultivated and consolidated over time, that has produced tangible political and military benefits for the FARC-EP" (Interview with Borda, 2017). This may be an example of Huang's argument (2016, pp-106-107) about the willingness of a country to openly support a rebel group when this one has dedicated years to its diplomatic tasks.

Another element to consider is that "…the rebel diplomacy moves in different levels, it is not as vertical as the traditional diplomacy…" (Interview with Trejos, 2017). In this sense, even if the FARC-EP did not interact directly with presidents or prime ministers in Europe, they reached several NGOs, parliamentarians, civil organisations and universities, among others. They found a particular interest in certain sectors of the European social democracy that were influenced by the Colombian political refugees and regarded the FARC-EP's cause as a political struggle (Interview with Celis, 2017). In Latin America the linkage with the presidents of countries like Nicaragua, Ecuador and Venezuela was more direct and there was a kind of permissiveness towards the guerrilla group (Palma, 203, 197-201). Indeed, those last two countries along with Brazil did not declare the FARC-EP as a terrorist organisation, despite the efforts of Uribe's administration to gain the support of the region (Ramírez, 2006b, p.147). For Luis Fernando Trejos (2017), those levels of acceptance in certain sectors of Europe and Latin America were the result of the group's diplomacy.

Nevertheless, Borda points out that "…the government and the media in Colombia might have exaggerated the FARC's international linkages since information has always been scattered" (2009, p.158). For instance, they never achieved one of the main objectives of their diplomacy: obtaining the belligerency status. Similarly, they failed in their attempts of not being listed as terrorists by the EU. In May 2002, they sent an open communication to the EU countries advocating for their cause (Reyes, 2002), however, by June of the same year they were already part of the terrorist list. These factors, along with the fact that

they did not depend economically on any foreign actor so they did not have to create solid bonds, let the group in a state of isolation with a reduced margin of action in the international realm.

Although the FARC-EP survived the end of the Cold War and adopted the ideas of the Bolivarianism, their political discourse was no longer strong and appealing for a vast international audience. Three of the interviewees of this dissertation reinforced that argument: Nestor Osorio (2017) said that the political ideology of the FARC-EP was exhausted 15 years ago with the end of the Soviet Union; Arno Ambrosius (2017) asserted that their ideas were obsolete and their dialogue was too poor, and Sandra Borda (2017), signalled that their political discourse was disconnected from the contemporary international context. In fact, their closest ally in the region, Venezuela, was not as unconditional as it appeared to be. President Chávez did not hesitate to turn his back on the FARC-EP several times when the national and international conditions were not favourable for him to support the group (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011).

5.2. International participation in the peace process

Both the successes and failures of the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy can explain the role that this conduct played during the peace process, but first it is important to offer an overview of the background and development of the negotiations. According to Chernick (2015, p.148): "Timing is everything in peace negotiations, and this time, both the FARC and the government seemed ready to negotiate and committed to studying and learning from past mistakes." After the strong military offensive against the guerrilla group during the eight years of Uribe's presidency, it was evident that the FARC-EP were undermined, specially in urban areas, but it was also clear that they were not going to be definitively defeated by these means. Santos understood that situation and started promoting a series of measures to open the path for a peace agreement. For instance, the government enacted the Victims and Land

Restitution Law to provide reparation to the millions of victims of the conflict since the 1980s (Chernick, 2015, p.145). It also seems that President Santos's foreign policy tried to correct the errors or gaps of his predecessors, who sent contradictory messages about the conflict and could not engage properly with the Latin American and European countries (Ramírez, 2006a, 2006b). At the beginning of his administration, he restored the diplomatic relations with Venezuela and Ecuador, two countries that were close to the FARC-EP's political cause.

For their part, the FARC-EP also demonstrated their willingness to engage again in a peace process with the government. Alfonso Cano, their main leader, released a video in 2010 expressing their desire to negotiate (Chernick, 2015, p.146). Those conciliatory intentions were tested when the Colombian armed forces killed Cano during a military operation in 2011. Nevertheless, the negotiation plans continued with Timochenko as the new guerrilla leader. During the interviews with Luis Fernando Trejos and Luis Eduardo Celis (2017), they pointed out that the dynamics of the internal conflict, meaning the military offensive and the national repudiation that the FARC-EP were facing, might be the main factors that led them to the peace process. However, they claimed that the international isolation, especially from the countries of the region, also contributed to that decision. Indeed, when the guerrilla group engaged in the dialogues, it started complying with international human rights norms and IHL in what seemed to be an effort to recover some of the national and international legitimacy that it once had. For instance, in 2012 they declared that they were going to stop using extortionate kidnapping as one of their tactics (GMH, 2016, p.187-188). Likewise, they engaged with Geneva Call, an NGO that advocates for the banning of anti-personnel mines, the protecting of children and the prohibiting of sexual violence during a conflict. According to Jo (2015, p.232), this compliant behaviour fits with the pursuit of political legitimacy that in the FARC-EP's case was related to their desire of gaining "leverage in the negotiations."

The peace talks started with some initial approaches in 2011 between delegates of the FARC-EP and the government, who met in the border with Venezuela. Then, the secret phase of the process developed in Havana, Cuba, from February to August of 2012, to establish the joint agenda. Finally, the public phase began with the official announcement of the process during an event in Norway, the 18 of October 2012. The negotiations were entirely held in Cuba, they lasted four years and gave, as a result, an agreement that includes the following topics: comprehensive rural development, political participation, end of the conflict, solution to the problem of illicit drugs, victims, and implementation and verification (Negotiation Table, 2017). According to Segura and Mechoulan (2017, p.4), three main factors were determinant for the development of the process and differentiated it from the previous ones: a limited agenda that included the key issues of the FARC-EP's concern, a working place outside Colombia, and a strategic participation of the international community.

The premise since the beginning of the conversations was that this was going to be a process for Colombians, made by Colombians. Therefore, the government and the FARC-EP implemented a contained internationalisation of the process (Borda and Gómez, 2015). This means that the participation of the international community was closely controlled and limited to particular issues. There were two guarantor countries (Cuba and Norway) that went to all the meetings but were not allowed to comment about the content of the negotiation. They were observers that kept the formality of the conversations and mediated during the crisis. There were also two accompanying countries (Venezuela and Chile), which got involved at the end of each cycle of the negotiation to be informed about the advances (Segura and Mechoulan, 2017, p.11-12). Additionally, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations participated in specific tasks, but their role is not analysed here.

The selection of those participants was quite strategic (Barreto, 2014, pp.235-237) and in a certain way, one could claim that the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy had certain influence there. For instance, the Colombian government understood that Cuba and Venezuela could encourage the FARC-EP to abandon the armed struggle and give them the necessary confidence about the process (International Crisis Group, 2012, p.31). However, Borda and Gómez (2015, 168) argue that Cuba was not selected because it had an influence on the group's behaviour. Actually, there was not such an influence and the Cuban government had been very critical of the guerrilla in the last years. But it is evident that the revolutionary tradition of Cuba gave the FARC-EP more tranquillity. Furthermore, it was the perfect place to keep the confidentiality of the process, it offered strictly access control to the media and it guaranteed that its judicial system was not going to capture the FARC-EP's members that had arrest warrants (Segura and Mechoulan, 2017, p.13).

For its part, Venezuela, as one of the accompanying countries, did not have a highly demanding role during the public phase of the negotiation. Nevertheless, the people interviewed for this dissertation and some scholars agree that its participation was crucial for the process. Borda and Gómez (2015, pp.176-177) explain that the former Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez was one of the first people to know about the intentions of the Colombian government to start the peace talks, and his involvement was essential during the initial approaches with the FARC-EP. For instance, he met three times with Timochenko to talk about specific issues of the process (El Espectador, 2015). Then, when the negotiation started, the participation of Venezuela was more controlled by the Colombian government, but this country was present until the end of the process, even when Chávez died in 2013 and was replaced by Nicolás Maduro (Borda and Gómez, 2015, pp.178-179). Nestor Osorio explained that without the support of Venezuela the peace process with the guerrilla group would have been too complicated; hence, Santos' decision of restoring the relation with that country was determinant (Interview with Osorio, 2017). Likewise, Luis Eduardo

Celis claimed that "Chávez played a prominent role in opening the way to the negotiation", he always wanted the peace in Colombia, in part because the armed conflict was a threat to him (Interview with Celis, 2017). Luis Fernando Trejos also touched upon this last issue, asserting that the relationship with the FARC-EP was becoming untenable for Venezuela since it was experiencing the diplomatic and commercial consequences of supporting a group that was considered terrorist by several countries. Therefore, it ended up pressuring the FARC-EP to accept a negotiated solution (Interview with Trejos, 2017).

In the case of Norway, the reasons for its selection as guarantor relied mainly on its expertise in conflict resolution, but also in the Colombian government's desire of involving the European community in the process (Borda and Gómez, 2015, p.182). Similarly, it was regarded as a neutral country by both parties in negotiation and it could finance the FARC-EP delegation because it is not part of the EU and therefore, it does not consider the group as a terrorist organisation (Segura and Mechoulan, 2017, p.11; Haspeslagh, 2013, p.11). Finally, Chile was chosen as an accompanying country when Sebastián Piñera, a centre-right politician ideologically close to Santos, was the president. It was regarded as a counterbalance to the other three countries (Segura and Mechoulan, 2017, p.12), but its participation in the process was not quite salient (Borda and Gómez, 2015, p.168,179).

5.3.   Rebel diplomacy during the peace process

According to Nestor Osorio, "…the international linkage of the Colombian government as well as the contacts that the guerrilla group had with foreign governments were crucial for the evolution and development of the peace talks" (Interview with Osorio, 2017). Additionally, Sandra Borda suggested that it was a very pragmatic process in terms of internationalisation, the government and the FARC-EP looked for a political and ideological balance when choosing the international actors, avoiding possible bias for one side or the other

(Interview with Borda, 2017). Among the four countries that participated in the negotiation, three of them had had some previous relations with the group. In the case of Cuba, it was mainly during the first phase of the group's rebel diplomacy when its links with the communist world were stronger and it relied on the PCC to establish international relations. Norway, as other Scandinavian countries, received Colombian refugees, victims of political persecution that were close to the FARC-EP and advocated for their cause (Semana, 2008). Finally, Venezuela is considered as the country with which the group established the closest bond and its participation in the process has been regarded as crucial.

Another factor, mentioned by Luis Fernando Trejos, is that some of the Cominter members, such as Iván Márquez, Marcos Calarcá and Rodrigo Granda, participated actively in the negotiation, which suggests that the international component was taken into account (Interview with Trejos, 2017). However, the international isolation that the FARC-EP faced in the last years and the fact that they did not depend on any foreign country put the group at a disadvantage position during the peace process. While the government came to the negotiation table with a group of lawyers and advisors, the FARC-EP had little knowledge about certain topics, like transitional justice. Therefore, they had to hire a left-wing Spanish lawyer to discuss the international norms regarding those issues (Interview with Borda, 2017).

Considering all these elements, one could claim, on the one hand, that the failures of the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy, that is the international isolation and strong criticism they were facing, contributed to their involvement in the peace process. On the other hand, the successes of their diplomacy, meaning their long-lasting strategies, their contacts with governments and several organisations in Europe and Latin America, and their close relationship with Venezuela, influenced the negotiation in different ways. Firstly, they were taking into account when selecting the participant countries; secondly, they gave the FARC-EP the necessary confidence and security by having in the process some of their

international allies, and finally, they influenced the behaviour of the group leading it to comply with international norms in a new effort to gain legitimacy, mostly in a period of transition when it stops being a guerrilla organisation and practicing rebel diplomacy to become a political actor in Colombia.

6. Conclusions

After the Second World War, there has been an increase of intrastate conflicts where two or more factions fight for power causing millions of deaths, forced displacement and human rights violations. Several scholars have devoted themselves to study civil wars from different perspectives and taking into account a whole gamut of factors such as causes, consequences, peace processes, ethnicity and third parties involvement. However, most of those studies are conducted from a state-centric perspective, disregarding the role of the non-state actors involved in the conflicts. Likewise, it is more common to find research about the violent tactics used during the war than about the nonviolent ones.

Considering this gap in the literature, some authors are studying the use of nonviolent tactics by insurgents groups, like rebel governance and rebel compliance with international norms. Within this context, there is a relatively new term that describes the strategic relationships between insurgents and international actors: rebel diplomacy. Although this practice is not new and in fact, it is common to several rebel organisations, its study is still scarce. Coggins (2015), Huang (2016), Jones and Mattiacci (2017), and Kaplan (2017) are the main scholars conducting research about different aspects of rebel diplomacy such as types of diplomatic activities, purposes, incentives, barriers and the use of social media.

In this sense, the current dissertation intended to make a contribution to the study of rebel diplomacy focusing on the role that this conduct played in the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP. After more than 50 years of armed struggle, Colombia signed a peace accord in 2016 with one of the oldest guerrilla groups in the world. The negotiation lasted four years, and although it represents a significant contribution to the peace, it is not the definitive solution for this internal war. The Colombian conflict is highly complex because, apart from guerrilla groups, there are also paramilitary factions, drug

cartels and criminal gangs involved in different types of violence that exacerbate the internal problems of social inequity, corruption, limitation to political participation and uneven access to land, among others.

Despite being an intrastate war, the Colombian conflict has attracted the attention of the international community, mainly since the 1990s when the drug trafficking and the levels of violence increased and started affecting other countries. All the factions involved in the conflict have maintained contacts with foreign actors, such as governments, ONGs and multinational companies. The FARC-EP established in that decade a whole structure to conduct diplomatic relations, creating a political body in charge of those activities, opening offices abroad and sending delegates to different parts of the world. Their rebel diplomacy went through different phases depending on internal factors like the peace negotiation during Pastrana's presidency or the military offensive in Uribe's administration. Likewise, certain international situations such as the war on terror affected the relations of the group, isolating it from previous foreign allies.

Taking that context as a baseline, this dissertation used primary (elite interviews and rebels' public statements) and secondary sources (academic texts, news articles and reports) to analyse the development, successes and failures of the FARC-EP's rebel diplomacy, and the role that this conduct played in the recent peace process. Some of the interviewees argued that the diplomatic relations of the FARC-EP were significant, while some others considered their rebel diplomacy as limited, thin or just focused on military and criminal goals. Still, most of them agreed that the strong link that the insurgents created with Venezuela was crucial during the negotiations.

One of the main failures of the FARC-EP's diplomacy was never achieving the belligerency status, as well as being listed as terrorists by several countries, including European states that had shown certain empathy with the group in the past. Thus, the insurgents engaged in the

peace process in a state of national and international isolation and strong criticism because of their continuous human rights violations. Nonetheless, the FARC-EP also obtained certain political and military benefits due to their diplomatic tasks, they were consistent with their international policy over the years, gaining the support of governments, NGOs and individuals in Latin America and Europe. These elements were taken into account when selecting the participant countries in the peace negotiations, giving the guerrilla group enough confidence to participate and sufficient security to remain until the end.

The relevance of this topic relies on the very nature of intrastate conflicts that involve two or more actors in an armed fight. Therefore, it is essential to analyse this phenomenon not only from the states' perspective but also from the insurgents' point of view. In this way, it would be possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of internal wars and to find effective and long-lasting solutions for them. Similarly, by studying the relation between rebel groups and international actors, it is possible to learn about the influence that the latter can have on the former, both during the conflict and in a peace process. This can help to develop foreign policies that deal with intrastate conflicts more efficiently.

Regarding the limitations and further research about this subject, it is important to mention some issues. Firstly, time constraints and access challenges only allowed conducting five interviews. Secondly, although one of the primary sources was the group's public statement, no relevant information about rebel diplomacy was found in those documents. Furthermore, during the negotiation, all the communiqués were made jointly with the government. Finally, now that the FARC-EP are part of the civil society it will be interesting to have their direct opinion about rebel diplomacy for a further study.

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8. Appendices

8.1. Table of interviewees

Name	Position
Arno Ambrosius	Former Dutch diplomat in Colombia.
Luis Eduardo Celis	Post conflict advisor for the Colombian organisation *Fundación Paz & Reconciliación*.
Luis Fernando Trejos	Professor in the Department of Political Sciences and International Relations at *Universidad del Norte*.
Nestor Osorio	Colombia's Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
Sandra Borda	Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the *Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano*.

* All the interviews were conducted between May and July 2017.

8.2.   Application form for ethical approval

1   Applicant Details

Student I.D.   2272981G
Name of Applicant: Laura García Restrepo
School/Subject: School of Social and Political Sciences/International Relations
Project Title: The role of rebel diplomacy in the current peace agreement between the guerrilla group FARC and the Colombian Government.
Postgraduate Taught   ☒
Undergraduate   ☐
(Programme Convenors Only) Full Course Project within a PGT or UG Programme   ☐

1.1 Degree/Programme Title: *All student applicants*

MSc International Relations

2   Ethical Risks:
   Risk Assessment: Is this application considered to be a low risk or a high risk application?
   HIGH RISK   ☐   LOW RISK   ☒

2.1 Explain specifically why the low or high risk distinction has been made.

Although this research deals with a potentially sensitive subject – rebel diplomacy – and a potentially sensitive case, the FARC, questions will centre around peace strategies adopted by the organisation and not on any illicit activities. Participants will be public figures who have made public pronouncements on FARC's role in the peace process or who have worked in organisations that are publically identifiable as having worked with the peace process.

2.2 Risk Assessment Comments from Supervisor

This key ethical risks of this project lie in the subject matter. The Colombian peace process is ongoing and the role of 'rebel' groups in peace building is still largely unknown. This also makes the research timely since Laura will be specifically interested in diplomatic strategies and not the use of violence. She will only interview professionals who are already on the public record and who are willing for their name to be used in her dissertation. Given their 'elite'

status, I judge them to be competent to assess the risks of speaking to a student about this issue. Nonetheless, Laura will be mindful of the need to engage with ethical concerns at every stage of the research. Issues of confidentiality, informed consent and how they will appear in the dissertation will be clearly explained to potential research participants.

Consent and confidentiality: Written copies of PLS and Consent forms will be supplied to all participants in initial email request for interview. Consent will be recorded through email response to interview requests. Interviews will take place over skype.

Sensitivity of research and anonymity: Questions for interviews will be carefully phrased to allow individuals to talk about general conditions and their professional opinion. Given the participants will be public figures who are already on record speaking about this issue, they will not be anonymous in the dissertation. It is hoped that this will also mean that they do not reveal any potentially sensitive data.

Access and Recruitment: Laura will access participants because their details are publicly available.

Declaration: I have checked this application and approve it for submission for review to the Ethics Committee.

Supervisor's Name: Mo Hume

Date: 30 March 2017

3 All Researcher(s) including research assistants and transcribers (*where appropriate*)

Title and Surname	First Name	Phone	Email *(This should normally be a University of Glasgow email address)*
Ms García	Laura	075945 04403	2272981G@student.gla.ac.uk

All Supervisor(s) Principal First *(where applicable)*

Title and Surname	First Name	Phone	Email *(This should normally be a University of Glasgow email address)*
Dr Hume	Mo	0141 3304683	Mo.Hume@glasgow.ac.uk

4   External funding details

N/A

5   Project Details

Start Date for Data Collection: 15/05/2017
(NB: This refers to data collection for the research covered in this application. This must be at least 4 weeks from the date of application submission.)

Proposed End Date of Research Project: 31/12/2017
(NB: This date should be when you expect to have completed the full project and published the results e.g. date of award, allow time for possible retrieval if required.)

6   Justification for the Research
Why is this research significant to the wider community? What might be the impact on your practice or the practice of others?

Several rebel groups in the world have engaged in diplomatic labours in order to obtain the support of the international community. Some scholars are using the term rebel diplomacy to study and analyse this phenomenon. However, most of them agree that there is lack of political attention and academic investigation about this issue. The Colombian case is particularly relevant because this Latin-American country faced in the last 50 years one of the longest civil wars in the world. The main guerrilla group, FARC, created in the nineties an International Commission in charge of establishing and strengthening its relationship with other countries. This research project aims to analyse the role of FARC's rebel diplomacy in the peace agreement that this rebel group recently signed with Colombian government.

7   Research Methodology and Data Collection
7.1   Method of data collection

Face to face or telephone interview (*provide a copy of the interview themes. This does not need to be an exact list of questions but does need to provide sufficient detail to enable reviewers to form a clear view of the project and its ethical implications.*)	☒
Focus group (*provide details of themes or questions. This does not need to be an exact list of questions but does need to provide sufficient detail to enable reviewers to form a*	☐

clear view of the project and its ethical implications. Also information on recording format)	
Audio or video-recording interviewees or events. Details should be provided, either in theme/question information or separately. *(Ensure that permission is evidenced on the consent form)*	☒
Questionnaire *(provide a copy of at least indicative questions, final questions must be submitted as an amendment if not provided in initial application)*	☐
Online questionnaire *(provide the address/ or electronic copy if not yet available online)* http://	☐
Participant observation *(provide an observation proforma)*	☐
Other methodology *(please provide details here – maximum 50 words)*	☐

7.2 Research Methods
Please explain the reason for the particular chosen method, the estimated time commitment required of participants and how the data will be analysed.

The purpose of doing interviews is to obtain, from civil society actors (NGOs, governmental institutions, international organizations and embassies), more accurate information about the activities of rebel diplomacy conducted by the FARC. Each interview can last between forty five minutes and an hour and a half. The data will be coded manually and analysed in the light of the research question. The coding method will be suitable for doing this: assigning categories and codes to each segment of the interviews, and then correlating the information obtained.

8   Confidentiality & Data Handling
8.1   Will the research involve:

Degree of anonymity	(insert method) Face to face or telephone interview	(insert method)	(insert method)
De-identified samples or data (i.e. a reversible	☐	☐	☐

process whereby identifiers are replaced by a code, to which the researcher retains the key, in a secure location?			
Anonymised samples or data (i.e. an irreversible process whereby identifiers are removed from data and replaced by a code, with no record retained of how the code relates to the identifiers. It is then impossible to identify the individual to whom the sample of information relates)?	☐	☐	☐
Complete anonymity of participants (i.e. researchers will not meet, or know the identity of participants, as participants are part of a random sample and are required to return responses with no form of personal identification)?	☐	☐	☐
Use of Names			
Subject being referred to by pseudonym in any publication arising from the research?	☐	☐	☐

Participants consent to being named?	⊠	☐	☐
Any other methods of protecting the privacy of participants? (e.g. use of direct quotes with specific, written permission only; use of real name with specific, written permission only): *provide details here:* Before conducting the interviews, each interviewee must sign a consent form agreeing to participate in the research project and to be named directly.	⊠	☐	☐
Participants being made aware that confidentiality may be impossible to guarantee; for example in the event of disclosure of harm or danger to participants or others; or due to size of sample, particular locations etc.?	☐	☐	☐

8.2   Which of the following methods of assuring confidentiality of data will be implemented?

Location of Storage Storage at University of Glasgow	⊠
Stored at another site *(provide details here, including address)*	☐

Paper Data to be kept secure in locked room/facility/cabinet	☐
Data and identifiers to be kept secure in locked room/facility/cabinet	☐
Electronic Access to computer files to be available by password only	☒
Other Any other method of securing confidentiality of data in storage: *provide details here:*	☐

9   Access to Data

9.1 Access by named researcher(s) and, where applicable, supervisor(s), examiner(s), research assistants,   ☒
     transcribers.

9.2 Access by people OTHER than named researcher(s)/Supervisor(s), examiner(s), research assistants,   ☐
     transcribers.

Please explain by whom and for what purpose:

10   Retention and Disposal of Personal Data *
Please explain and as appropriate justify your proposals for retention and/or disposal of any personal data to be collected.

It is normally appropriate to destroy the personal data at the end of the research project, if you do not intend to do so, you must provide substantial reasons in the box below.

Do you intend to destroy the personal data collected?

YES   ☒   NO   ☐

If no, provide your reasons here:

11   Retention and Disposal of Research Data
Please explain and as appropriate justify your proposals for retention and/or disposal of research data to be collected.

It is normally appropriate to destroy the research data at the end of the research project, if you do not intend to do so, you must provide substantial reasons in the box below.

Do you intend to destroy the research data collected?

YES ☒   NO ☐

If no, provide your reasons here:

12 Dissemination of Results.

12.1 Results will be made available to PARTICIPANTS as: *(Tick all that apply)*

Written summary of results to all if requested ☒	Presentation to representative participants *(e.g. CEO, ☐ school principal)*
Verbal presentation to all (information session, ☐ debriefing etc)	Other or None of the Above ☐ *Please explain here:*

12.2 Results will be made available to PEERS AND/OR COLLEAGUES as:

Dissertation ☒	Journal articles ☐
Thesis *(e.g. PhD),* ☐	Book ☐
Submission ☐	Conference Papers ☐
Other or None of the Above ☐	

Please explain here:	

13 Participants

13.1 Explain how you intend to recruit participants. Provide as much detail as you can about each different age/type of group as mentioned in 3.7b

First I will identify several organizations that have openly worked closely with the different actors in Colombian peace process (in Colombia and other countries). These will be organisations that are publically identifiable and whose contact details are readily available in the public domain. Then I will contact them through e-mail in order to explain them the purpose of my research and ask them permission to conduct interviews with relevant professionals in the field. The will be asked questions on the diplomatic strategies of the guerrilla organisation, FARC. These questions will not attempt to elicit sensitive or confidential data and will only ask questions on the nature of nonviolet strategies. These interviews will be conducted using Skype or other video call system.

13.2 Target Participant Group (Please indicate the targeted participant group by ticking all boxes that apply)

Students or Staff of the University ☐	Adults *(over 18 years old and competent to give* ☒ *consent)*
Children/legal minors *(under 18 years old)* ☐	Adults *(over 18 years who may not be competent* ☐ *to give consent)*
Young people aged 16-17 years ☐	

14 Incentives

If payment or any other incentive (such as a gift or free services) will be made to any participants please specify the source and the amount of payment to be made and/or the source, nature and where applicable the approximate monetary value of the gift or free service to be used.

Please explain the justification for offering payment or other incentive.

N/A

15   Number of Participants (give details of different age and types of groups involved)

Between 8 and 12 participants. All of them will be adults (over 18 years) with specific professional positions inside their organization and publically identifiable through this role. Questions will centre on their professional understanding of FARC diplomacy.

16   Dependent Relationship

Are any of the participants in a dependent relationship with any of the investigators, particularly those involved in recruiting for or conducting the project?

YES   ☐   NO   ☒

If YES, explain the relationship and the steps to be taken by the investigators to ensure that the subject's participation is purely voluntary and not influenced by the relationship in any way.

17   Location of Research

University of Glasgow	☒
Outside Location *Provide details of outside locations, including as much information as possible.*	☐

18   Permission to Access Participants

18.1   Permissions/Access

Permission is normally required to gain access to research participants within an organisation (e.g. Private Company; school; Local Authority; Voluntary Organisation; Overseas institution, Academic institution, including GU.)

Is this type of permission applicable to this application?
YES   ☐   NO   ☒

If Yes:
Is evidence of this permission provided with this application?

YES ☐   NO ☐

OR is it to follow?

YES ☐   NO ☐

If No:
Please explain any reason why you do not require permission to gain access to research participants.

Because the contact will be made directly with each interviewee through publically available information.

18.2 Does this application involve contacting University of Glasgow students <u>directly (specifically either via email or within classes)</u> for the purposes of your research?

YES ☐   NO ☒

If YES, separate permission to survey students needs to be obtained prior to any such survey being undertaken. Normally this permission should be sought from the appropriate authority after ethical approval has been granted.

Please list the student participants that you intend to contact (e.g. 12 students from TESOL course)

19 Is this application being submitted to another Ethics Committee, or has it been previously submitted to another Ethics Committee?

YES ☐   NO ☒

If YES, please provide name and location of the ethics committee and the result of the application.

20   Informed Consent

20.1a Have you attached your Plain Language Statement (PLS) (also known as Participant Information Sheet) for participants?

The Plain Language Statement is written information in plain language that you will provide to participants to explain the project and invite their participation. <u>Contact details for Supervisor and School Ethics Officer MUST be included</u>.

YES   ☒   NO   ☐

If No, please explain here.

20.1b   Please note that a copy of this information sheet should be offered to the participant to keep unless there are specific reasons for not doing so. These must be clearly explained below

20.1c   What arrangements have been made for participants who might not adequately understand verbal explanations or written information or who have special communication needs in the preparation of the Participant Information Sheet/Plain Language Statement?

Provide details here.

21   How will informed consent by individual participants or guardians be evidenced?

In normal circumstances it will be expected that written evidence of informed consent will be obtained and retained, and that a formal consent form will be used: a copy of which should be should be provided.

If written evidence of informed consent is not to be obtained a substantial justification of why not should be provided.

Signed consent form ☒	Recorded verbal consent ☐

Implied by return of survey ☐	Other ☐ *Provide details here:*

Justification if written evidence of informed consent is <u>not</u> to be obtained and retained:

22 Monitoring

Describe how the project will be monitored to ensure that the research is being carried out as approved (e.g. give details of regular meetings/email contact).

I will hold regular meetings with my supervisor throughout the process.

23 Health and Safety

What are the potential issues of personal safety for you, other researchers or participants involved in the project and how will you manage them? (Other than lone field work – refer to question 24.1 for this)

There are not any health and safety issue to be concerned. All interviews will be conducted via skype and will be with named professionals.

24 Risk

24.1 Does the activity involve lone field work, lone working or travel to unfamiliar places?

NB: This does not apply to working within an institution such as a school.

YES ☐   NO ☒

Give details here of arrangements to minimise risks pertaining to this.

24.2 How will you ensure that you minimise any possible distress caused to participants by the research process?

> The peace process in Colombia is nascent and FARC has recently only come out of clandestinity, which could make some individuals wary about speaking openly about them. However, I am specifically seeking out organisations that are on the public record for having engaged with the different actors in the Colombian peace process and I will be asking questions around peace strategies specifically. Participants will be given time to read the PLS from initial email contact and can follow up at any point from initial email contact if they have concerns. Questions are specifically general in nature and concern only their professional experience. Participants will be clearly informed that they are free to withdraw at any point without giving a reason.

24.3 How would you respond if you think that the participant has become distressed by any of the issues raised by the research?
(Examples of distress: emotional, psychological, economic, health)

Contact Supervisor ⊠

Contact details of support organisations provided on PLS/Information Sheet ☐

Provide details of support organisations at interview ☐

Any other responses you propose to provide:

24.4 Does this research involve any sensitive topics or vulnerable groups?

YES ☐ NO ⊠

Give details here of arrangements to minimise risks pertaining to this.

25 Protection of Vulnerable Groups
Does this project require Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) clearance?

YES ☐ NO ⊠

If Yes, evidence that this has been obtained MUST be provided with this application.

If PVG registration is held or an application is currently in progress, please provide details here:

26   Insurance
        Does this research come under the exclusions to the University insurance cover for research?

        YES   ☐   NO   ☒

If Yes: Please explain and detail how you intend to cover the insurance needs for this research?

27   UK and Scottish Government Legislation
Have you made yourself familiar with the requirements of the
Data Protection Act (1998) https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/ and the
Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002?
http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Law/FOISA.aspx

        YES   ☒   NO   ☐
If NO please explain

28   Declarations by Researcher(s) and Supervisor(s)

- The information contained herein is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate.
- I have read the University's current human ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application in accordance with the guidelines, the University's Code of Conduct for Research and any other condition laid down by the University of Glasgow Ethics Committee and the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee.
- I and my co-researcher(s) or supporting staff have the appropriate qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in the attached application and to deal effectively with any emergencies and contingencies related to the research that may arise.

- I understand that no research work involving human participants or data collection can commence until I have been granted full ethical approval by the School Ethics Forum (UG & PGT students only).

	Signature	Date
Researcher *(All applicants)*	*Laura García R.*	13/03/2017
Principal Supervisor	Mo Hume	

8.3.   Plain language statement

Study title and Researcher Details
The role of rebel diplomacy in the current peace agreement between the guerrilla group FARC and the Colombian Government.
University of Glasgow
School of Social and Political Sciences
Principal investigator: Laura Garcia
Supervisor: Dr Mo Hume
MSc International Relations

Invitation paragraph
'You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.
Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?
The aim of this dissertation is to explore the role of rebel diplomacy during the peace process between the Colombian Government and the FARC. As part of its large administrative structure, the FARC created in the nineties an International Commission in charge of establishing and strengthening its relationship with other countries. Several rebel groups in the world have engaged in diplomatic labours in order to obtain the support of the international community. Some scholars are using the term rebel diplomacy to study and analyse this phenomenon. However, most of them agree that there is lack of political attention and academic investigation about this issue. The duration of the study will be 4 months.

Why have I been chosen?
You have been chosen because of the knowledge that you have about the international behaviour of the FARC. This knowledge can be the result of your own academic research or your work in a specific organization.

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Similarly, if deciding to take part you do not have to answer any questions you are not comfortable with, and would not have to provide a reason for doing so.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will participate in an interview (through Skype or other video calling system) that will last between one and two hours.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All the participants will be identified by their names and/or their position in a specific organisation. However, this information can be kept confidential if you request it. In that case, you will be identified by an ID number and any information about you will have your name and address removed so that you cannot be recognised from it.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The data and results of the research will be used in a written dissertation paper. The data will be destroyed after the final submission of the dissertation, the 4th of September 2017. The University of Glasgow will publish the dissertation in an online platform, probably this year. You may obtain a copy through the University.

Who has reviewed the study?

The project has been reviewed by the School of Social and Political Sciences Ethics Forum.

Contact for further information

Laura García Restrepo

2272981G@student.gla.ac.uk

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the School of Social and Political Sciences Ethics Officer Professor Keith Kintrea email: Keith.Kintrea@glasgow.ac.uk

8.4.   Consent form

Title of Project: The role of rebel diplomacy in the current peace agreement between the guerrilla group FARC and the Colombian Government.

Name of Researcher: Laura Garcia Restrepo
Name of supervisor: Dr. Mo Hume

I confirm that I have read and understood the Plain Language Statement/Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I consent to interviews being audio-recorded.
(I acknowledge that copies of transcripts will be returned to participants for verification.)

I acknowledge that participants will be identified by name in any publications arising from the research.

I agree to take part in the above study.

I agree to take part in this research study   ☐

I do not agree to take part in this research study   ☐

Signature Section

Name of Participant ……………………………………………
Signature ………………………………………………………….
Date …………………………………………………………………..

Name of Parent/carer (if participant is under 16)……………..
Signature …………………………………………………………..
Date …………………………………………………………………..

Name of Researcher: ……………………………………………
Signature: ………………………………………………………….
Date …………………………………………………………………..

8.5.   Interview themes

- Why the FARC looked for international support?
- Which was the main purpose of developing a diplomatic strategy?
- What kind of diplomatic activities they developed?
- Variations of FARC's rebel diplomacy over time
- Effects of the international support of FARC in Colombia
- Effects of the labels guerrilla group/terrorist group in the international support
- Did the international community influenced the behaviour of FARC and led them to the peace agreement?