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NARCOTERRORISM

Crossroads between drug trade and political violence

Master's Thesis

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DECLARATION

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague, 30th July 2018

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References

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Abstract

The main objective of thesis "Narcoterrorism: Crossroads between drug trade and political violence" is to describe and analyze the phenomenon of narcoterrorism, a concept that combines in its core the politically-motivated violence, the illicit drug trade, and the use of terrorist methods. The goal will be to establish a comprehensive theoretical framework for the various types of narcoterrorism and the different supportive types that may occur between the politically-motivated or ideological groups, and the drug-trafficking criminal groups. This framework will be later primarily tested on the case of Colombia, where various warring ideological and criminal groups will be observed and analyzed. Other cases that will be secondarily used to further prove the established assumptions, will be focusing on other countries which seen in recent history a surge of political or criminal violence, and are either manufacturing or trafficking illegal drugs. These will include Peru, Mexico, and Afghanistan. In the final section of the thesis, the theoretical framework will be assigned to real historical cases, and a question of the prerequisites of narcoterrorist emergence will be discussed.

Abstrakt

Hlavním cílem práce „Narkoterorismus: mezi obchodem s drogami a politickým násilím“ je popsat a analyzovat fenomén narkoterorismu, tedy termín, který v sobě spojuje politicky motivované násilí, ilegální obchod s drogami a využívání teroristických metod. Cílem bude vytvoření komplexního teoretického rámce pro různé typy narkoterorismu a podpůrné typy, které se mohou vyskytnout mezi politicky motivovanými nebo ideologickými skupinami a zločineckými skupinami obchodujícími s drogami. Tento rámec bude později primárně testován na případu Kolumbie, kde budou pozorovány a analyzovány různé ideologické a zločinecké skupiny. Ostatní případy, které budou sekundárně použity k dalšímu prokázání uvedených předpokladů, se zaměří na další země, které v nedávné historii zaznamenaly nárůst politického nebo kriminálního násilí a vyskytuje se v nich výroba či obchod s drogami. Patří mezi ně Peru, Mexiko a Afghánistán. V závěrečné části práce bude teoretický rámec

přiřazen k reálným historickým případům a bude diskutována otázka předpokladů vzniku narkoterorismu.

Keywords

Narcoterrorism, drug trade, terrorism, political violence, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Afghanistan, FARC, Cartel, cocaine, heroin

Klíčová slova

Narkoterorismus, drogy, terorismus, politické násilí, Kolumbie, Peru, Mexiko, Afghánistán, FARC, Kartel, kokain, heroin

Název práce

Narkoterorismus: mezi obchodem s drogami a politickým násilím

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since the early history of human civilization, psychoactive substances played a significant role in many of the world's cultures and societies. Only with the progressing technology of the agriculture and the emergence of international trade, drugs with the potency to change human perception, experience, or behavior started to be more than just a tool used for medicinal and religious purposes. They became a lucrative resource, with a fascinating ability – only its growing addictive supply could balance an ever-growing, desperate demand. The onset of 20th century did not only see the booming global trade – which enabled the illicit drugs to disseminate – but also the emergence of new political ideologies, which their proponents could enforce with often brutal and indiscriminate acts of violence. It was only a matter of time before the world of politically-motivated violence and a globalized drug trade intersected. The search for the exact form and specifics of the “crossroads” between these impactful phenomena - which is contemporarily known under the term of narcoterrorism - will be the main topic of this thesis.

The reason for the selection of this topic mainly lies in the rather suspicious vagueness of the term of narcoterrorism. Many definitions and descriptions exist, although many questions still stay unanswered. What is the relationship between the actors, and who is the main actor of narcoterrorism by definition? How does narcoterrorist activity look like? If multiple actors exist – active and passive – what relations can they have to still be called narcoterrorist? Most importantly, can we observe these concepts in reality, and if so, where? What are the conditions under which narcoterrorism can emerge? These questions and more are very difficult to answer, as authors often tell complicated and contradictory answers. The goal of this thesis is to draw some order from the chaos, and to produce a framework that could ideally be used for analysis of all cases of narcoterrorism, wherever they have emerged or will in the future.

In the following chapter, the methodological and theoretical basis of this thesis will be introduced, along with establishing the research questions and the hypotheses. In the third chapter, key concepts relevant to the concept of narcoterrorism – as well as narcoterrorism itself – will be examined and described, providing the reader with the context of the topic. In the following part, the hypothetical typology of narcoterrorism will be introduced, with defining key mechanics and relationships. In the fifth chapter, the main case of this topic will be introduced and analyzed – the historical story of Colombia and its many warring factions provide a compelling case of the complicated relationship between the drug trade and the political violence within one state. In the part following, other cases will be examined for the presence of the narcoterrorist activity. Among the countries with historically difficult internal situations - only exacerbated by the presence of drug manufacturing and trafficking – will be Peru, Mexico, and Afghanistan. In the final and concluding chapter, the findings from the historical cases will be used to prove or disprove the existence of different kinds of narcoterrorism, introduced previously in the fourth chapter.

2. METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The thesis and the research upon which it is based, utilizes almost exclusively qualitative methods, and relies on analysis of primary and secondary written sources. The first step of the research is to collect a wide array of relevant literature, which will be afterwards reviewed and critically assessed for accuracy and possible bias, carefully placing recovered information against each other with the objective to observe possible collision or – when possible – a concurrence. The highest priority is to be placed on primary quantitative and qualitative research of relevant established organizations (such as international institutions, research centers and think tanks, governmental institutions) and secondary sources in the form of academic journals, articles, and books – with the priority given to the peer-reviewed sources. After a thorough analysis of available sources, a deductive, rationalist and positivist reasoning will be utilized to establish a viable hypothesis and theoretical framework. After establishing the main hypothetical construct, various historical cases – again based on carefully reviewed and analyzed sources – will be used for testing the fundamental research assumptions by observing reoccurring indicators and values between the cases and the hypothesis. If needed, the cases can be also placed against each other, using the method of comparative analysis to further strengthen or disprove the constructed premises.

The research will generally avoid direct use of quantitative methods, even though it will utilize the data which are the outcome of quantitative research in form of statistics and estimates. The main motivation behind this is the fact that quantitative methods require a greater-scale of analysis, elaborate and thorough research model, sufficient experience and

knowledge of specialized tools and software, and most importantly a high amount of collected data, which is demanding in both time and resources.

One of the main pitfalls which is crucial to address regarding the thesis research, is the geographic distance from the target area and the consecutive difficulty of data collection. Most of the historical or currently-occurring research cases – whether in Latin America or Central Asia – are practically out of reach for the scale of a master’s program thesis formulated in the geographical environment of Central Europe. First, it is necessary to mention that the main issue concerned – narcoterrorism – is not currently present in the close vicinity. There are also obvious obstacles for utilization of more direct, primary research. In the speculative situation that the resources would be sufficient for conducting a “hands-on” research in a relevant region, general volatility, elusiveness, and inherent precariousness of researching the realities of drug trade or terrorist groups would be an obstacle to proper data collection. The research – unless executed with superior knowledge, range and resources – would be hampered by the intrinsic illegal and deeply-covert nature of both terrorism and high-profile drug trade. This is the main reason why this thesis will utilize predominantly historical cases, sufficiently covered in existing sources and literature. When possible however, relevant and reliable contemporary data will be introduced as well.

Secondly, the other difficulty emerging from the geographic distance is the fact that a majority of the historical cases did occur in the hispanophone world of Latin America¹. While the author has a certain knowledge of Spanish language, the thesis will - by an overwhelming majority - utilize sources written in English language. At times, sources in Spanish may occur in situations where it is convenient or warranted.

¹ Latin America is widely-used amalgamation of South and Central Americas and the Caribbean. This region is by majority Spanish speaking, however may possibly incorporate also certain Portuguese, French and English-speaking countries, which are however included based on cultural similarity, as well as geographic, political, and economic proximity.

2.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main objective of the thesis is to observe, analyze, define, and conceptualize the typology of narcoterrorism². This is necessary, as narcoterrorism – while widely used – is a rather vague term, a compound concept incorporating various phenomena of potentially very complicated relationships. The primary question therefore is the following:

- 1) *How can we define narcoterrorism, and what are its possible types and variations?*

Hypothesis: It is possible to define narcoterrorism as nexus of ideologically or politically based actors and drug-related criminal activities, or drug-related criminal groups with politically-motivated activities. In cases where both types of actors exist, multiple types of mutual relations can occur.

This question may warrant a much broader answer than expected. As this thesis will expose, narcoterrorism may not be a definition of a singular type of violent act, but rather being a broader mechanic of relation between drug-trade and political violence. In the first part of the thesis, existing concepts and definitions of narcoterrorism will be evaluated, while the answer to the question will be provided in the final chapter.

- 2) *Is it possible to observe actual examples of some, or all of the defined types of narcoterrorism?*

² In literature the term is often written as a composite word narco-terrorism, however for the purposes of this thesis, the version “narcoterrorism” will be utilized.

Hypothesis: It is possible to observe examples for all of the defined types, however some are more rare than the others.

The answer to this question will be based on the second part of the thesis, where real historical cases and examples will be discussed and investigated. While the first question will attempt to define the concept and establish a typology, the historical cases will be providing a proof of the existence – or non-existence – of possible variations.

The third, and the most complicated question will be covered in the final part of the thesis, at its very conclusion.

3) *What are the possible prerequisites of the emergence of narcoterrorism?*

Hypothesis: Some prerequisites will be shared by the countries where narcoterrorism emerged, such as institutional weakness or history of civil conflict.

Utilizing a comparative approach toward established concepts and relevant historical cases, the main effort will be to pinpoint some of the prerequisites, that need to be present for the narcoterrorist threat to emerge. In broader sense, to answer which indicators increase the probability of the occurrence of a narcoterrorist threat. It is possible that after extensive observation focused on this question, it might be uncovered that the issue of narcoterrorism is for example connected exclusively to certain geographical, economic, or political environment. Additionally, while the main purpose of this thesis is to describe, analyze, and conceptualize a problem, verifying some of the enablers may provide indicators for anticipating, preventing, mitigating, or countering this very serious issue.

3. FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

The objective of this chapter will be to establish several key concepts, before moving to constructing the typology and to the historical cases. As the issue of narcoterrorism is a combination of terrorism and drug trade, the main two key concepts will be briefly inspected in the next few articles. Subsequently an important concept of the narco-state will be presented, and in the final part of the chapter, the overview of existing definitions and concepts of narcoterrorism will be provided.

3.1 ABOUT TERRORISM

Before the wider scale of typologies and possible models of narcoterrorism are introduced, we must first focus on questions that virtually every work focusing on terrorism has to address. How to define terrorism? Who is a terrorist and who is an irregular combatant? Is there a line to differentiate between a terrorist and a “freedom fighter” with a justified cause? Does terrorism have to be bound with ideology? What goals need to be pursued so we can consider a violent act as being terrorist? In the case of narcoterrorism, we need to focus on these questions especially because the concept itself is about blurring lines between terrorist and criminal, between political and profit-oriented. The actors of narcoterrorism themselves might be politically motivated, but in different situations – or at the same time – can be also without any clearly declared political agenda or affiliation.

In general, the discussion about setting the boundaries for the concept of terrorism is revolving about three major issues. First question is, who can be the perpetrator of terrorism – whether the group needs to be politically motivated, whether the group must be a non-

state actor, or if the acts can be perpetrated by a state entity. Secondly, who should be the target of terrorism? Is the terrorist act limited only to civilians and non-combatants, or can the concept be extended to the use of force against combatants and military personnel? Third, and perhaps most difficult question is whether terrorism must instill fear, anxiety, and terror in the minds of the audience as its main goal.

Jeff Goodwin in his work *Theory of Categorical Terrorism* establishes his definition based on a comparison between various definitions made by academic scholars, state institutions, as well as linguists. His definition is that *“terrorism is the strategic use of violence and threats of violence by an oppositional political group / revolutionary movement against civilians or non-combatants and is usually intended to influence several audiences.”* This definition is excluding direct state terrorism (although not necessarily state-sponsored terrorism), and even though the negative influence of terrorist acts on the psyche of the audience is implied, it doesn’t necessarily have to be the objective of the violence. The definition excludes military and combatant targets, however the non-combatant targets may – besides randomly targeted civilians – also include politicians, state administrators, leaders of opposing parties, activists, journalists, presumed collaborators, and more. Goodwin further differentiates between the type of selective or individualized terrorism (which includes targeted assassinations) and another type of terrorism, which is categorical or indiscriminate – including anonymous members of ethnicity, religion, nationality, social class, and other criteria. The attacks against defense and security forces and paramilitaries or armed civilians are considered as irregular or “guerilla”³ warfare. (Goodwin 2006)

Additionally, open acts of violence against combatants from the side of non-combatant militants are a very difficult area from the view of international law. According to the Geneva convention, a fighter (even if engaged in irregular battle with state’s official

³ It is worth noting that throughout this thesis, the term “guerilla” will be used for activities, e.g. “guerilla warfare”, but more frequently as a term for the non-state rebel fighters or groups engaging in irregular warfare.

repressive forces) is considered legally as a combatant when being commanded by a person responsible for his subordinates, when marked by a fixed distinctive sign recognizable at a distance, when carries weapons openly, and when conducts operations in accordance with the customs and laws of war. (ICRC 2018) This may cover many activities of various armed rebel factions. Despite that, it may occur that – with political motivations – governments or state officials use the word terrorist while describing the opposing rebel groups, although they only engage in irregular warfare. That subsequently further complicates the definition and accurate use of the term “terrorism”.

Another question lies in the logic how the available literature approaches the perpetrators of the violence, and how it classifies and differentiates the actors. Many works aiming to establish order in various types of terrorist goals, rationales, and motivations, are directly excluding forms of non-political terrorism. In one of the variations, used in the book *Waves of Modern Terrorism: Examining the Past and Predicting the Future*, Erin Walls introduces the concept of four generational waves of terrorism, starting at the 1870's. Original, grassroots version of the Anarchist movements of the old monarchies and republics was exchanged by a more modern iteration, the Nationalist movements starting in the 1920's and slowly being sidelined in the late 1960's. This form, oriented towards establishing new nations on the ethnic or culturally-defined lines, as well as trying to emancipate worldwide colonies of the dying European empires, was subsequently overshadowed by the Leftist wave, which has seen prominence from the 1960's to 1980's, quite often financed and supported by the communist power of Soviet Union and its various satellites. The slow dissipation of the leftist violence only saw a greater wave of Religious terrorism arise in the late 70's / early 80's, and as the major driving force of terrorism, this wave is plaguing various nations up until current times. (Walls 2017, p. 20-30) Although many groups described in the thesis did truly originate in the second, most commonly third, but also fourth wave, there are some which don't fit the description, as they have mostly a criminal, not ideological background. Alternatively, in their renowned article *The Four Horsemen of Terrorism: It's Not Waves, It's Strains* Tom Parker and Nick Sitter differentiated types of terrorism into four different strains – in contrast to the “waves” concept that was oriented

more at historical development rather than content. They depict the four strains as running parallel to each other – the nationalist, socialist⁴, religious, and social exclusivist⁵. (Parker & Sitter 2016, p. 205-211) It, however, does not include alternative types of terrorism, with a non-political or single-issue motive. In some publications however, such as *Conceptualizing Terrorism* by Anthony Richards, such occurrences are admitted. Richards however also states that some acts, such as criminal, or psychopathological ones, can obtain consequential political narrative, even though they were not inherently politically motivated or driven by declared political agenda. On the borderlines between criminal violence and potential acts of terrorism, he draws a line between violence, which is being “opportunistic”, and “strategically indiscriminate”. Therefore, a random mugging or assault in dark alley is a criminal act, while public bombings or assassinations aiming to receive a strong public reaction might be classified as terrorist in nature. (Richards 2015, p. 131)

Finally, this thesis will not dive into one particular dimension of analysis, and that is the psychopathology of terrorism. While psychopathological terrorism can be described as a separate branch (quite often materializing in the form of lone shooters or single attackers using vehicle as a weapon), it is quite often difficult to differentiate between rational motivation and psychologically perceived reality. In some occurrences, attacks happen only as a form of personal protest, while others - such as Anders Breivik’s 2011 mass killings in Norwegian capital Oslo and Utoya Island - had a declared political objective and narrative, but were perpetrated by an isolated, psychologically compromised individual. The further that we go, we realize that psychological issues that may drive the violent acts of the perpetrators may reach very high into the leadership even in established terrorist or criminal groups. (Borum 2004, p. 9) While that may be relevant in some of the further analyzed groups in this thesis, it is very difficult to evaluate and uncover. Since none of the acts are

⁴ It might be also said leftist, as it incorporates even the previously mentioned anarchist terrorism.

⁵ Alternatively described as “racist” terrorism, focusing on establishing or maintaining racial, ethnic, or religious segregation in the society.

perpetrated by individuals only, rather than focusing on personal drivers of each group's high leadership, we will focus on structure, motivations, and activities of the groups.

3.2 THE DRUG TRADE

3.2.1 THE HISTORY OF DRUG TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL REGULATION

The consumption and cultivation of illicit drugs – or in other words “psychoactive substances” is without any doubt an activity as old as the mankind itself. Ancient humans did engage in drug use since the dawn of agricultural, settled life – perhaps even before – and the use of these substances can be tracked all the way back to 10th millennium BC. The substances were mainly used for ritual, religious, or medical reasons, however we cannot eliminate the possibility of leisure use as well. The use of hallucinogenic – or psychedelic – drugs can be traced with certainty from 5th millennium BC, and since then played a significant role in various civilizations in nearly all parts of the planet. (Merlin 2003, p. 295) In Europe, evidence of opium cultivation from the poppy plants found in Italy dated to be from mid-sixth millennium BC. (Live Science 2015)

If we skip to more recent history, the drug cultivation and use moved from a religious or ritual tool towards an influential, lucrative, and mass-produced trade article, that in many cases influences politics and whole societies. One of the most significant historical cases of drugs having an influence on geopolitical processes were the Opium Wars of mid-19th century – wars between the British Empire and the dwindling Chinese Qing Empire. By the beginning of 19th century, the massive Imperial China's market of 450 million inhabitants was open to the international imports of opium. They were predominantly facilitated by British Empire and China was flooded by the opium produced in British-dominated India. While the opium was originally intended to be for medical use, it soon revealed its outstanding addictive abilities, which steadily began to plague Chinese population. The

Chinese reaction of banning the opium imports into the country was met with overwhelming response from the side of much more advanced British naval forces. Armed conflict followed, main objective of which was later re-focused to dividing the spheres of influence between European powers. Despite this, the original motivation of strongest colonial power to employ violence to re-open a drug trade route at the first phase of the conflict underlines the value and profit of contemporary opium trade. (Wallbank 1960)

Although the state-driven narcotics trade has diminished with the looming decline of European imperialism, the break of the 19th and 20th centuries continued to be somewhat liberal to both narcotics trade and public use. However, innovation in agricultural technology, chemical production, stimulated by emerging global trade, has brought attention to the lack of comprehensive approach towards narcotics. The beginning of the new century saw heightened discussion on the dangers of previously mostly unchecked drug consumption, with still prominent opiates, continuously more popular cocaine, or later – in the 1930's - a more modern class of amphetamines. (Taylor 1969)

The pressing situation in the first decade of 20th century, primarily caused by legalized trade with opium of predominantly Chinese origin resulted in the need for reform. The discussions on the narcotics control were pioneered by the United States, which initiated a Shanghai Opium Commission of 1909, where states shared the experience in the reforms and achievements in the drug-control sector, identified the trade flows of opium between the consumer states and producers, and produced recommendations. (UNODC 2018a) On the basis of this initiative, the 1912 Hague International Opium Convention was signed⁶. It marked a groundbreaking milestone as being the first international convention on drug-control and managed to transfer the recommendation of the Shanghai Opium Commission three years earlier into an international legal regime. It also concerned two new

⁶ The Convention was signed by China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, Persia, Portugal, Russia, Siam, United Kingdom and its overseas territories. The Convention gained biggest traction after being embedded in the signatures of post-World War I peace treaties, such as Treaty of Versailles. (UNODC 2018b)

substances, cocaine and heroin. It also provided the basis for Harrison Narcotics Tax Act, a first comprehensive federal law in the United States, regulating the production and distribution of narcotics. (UNODC 2018b)

Expectedly, this harmonization of legal approach in the signatory countries regarding the narcotics production and trade didn't stop the trafficking or growing consumption. The dominance of opium was replaced by a more diverse market, where the new substances gained popularity, whether cocaine, opiate-based heroin, or newer drugs such as methamphetamines. New wave of international regulation commenced after the Second World War, where 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs was among the new conventions establishing the new post-war order. It was focused on coordinating legal reforms, promoting cooperation in anti-narcotics policing and law enforcement, on treatment of drug users, prevention of drug addiction, countering drug trafficking, and on establishing control institutions of the Convention. It mostly concerned opium, cocaine, morphine, heroin, synthetic opioids, and newly also cannabis. (UN 1961) It was further expanded by the Convention on Psychotropic Substances ten years later, which expanded the scope to newer type of drugs not included in the original convention, such as substances derived from amphetamine, barbiturates, wide range of psychedelics (such as the famous LSD), and more. (UN 1971) The last and most prominent treaty on narcotics control is the 1988 Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which is up to date signed by 185 out of 193 United Nation member states. This treaty later expanded its scope significantly. It regulates trafficking and trade with narcotics manufacturing precursors, focuses on larger issues of drug trade, such as money laundering and drug-related crime, and deepens the legal, judiciary, and law-enforcement cooperation. (UN 1988)

3.2.2 THE CONTEMPORARY SITUATION OF DRUG TRADE

Despite the international effort and the U.S. declared “War on Drugs” raging since its declaration in early 70’s⁷, the global illicit drug trade continues to flourish. One of the root causes is the demand - it is estimated that approximately quarter of a billion people (5% of Earth’s adult population aged between 15 and 64) used drugs at least once in the year 2015, about 11% percent of that (around 29,5 million people) suffer from addiction or drug-related disease. The impact on the population and healthcare system is significant, in total 17 million “healthy” years of life was lost due to drug-related health issues or death. The drug use, especially the opioids such as heroin, are also responsible for the spreading of HIV and Hepatitis C, serious and potentially lethal diseases. (UNODC 2017a)

The organized crime flourishes as well – drugs account between 20% and 33% of revenues of all organized crime groups⁸. The total revenue gained by the criminal groups is difficult to estimate. In Western Europe the drug revenues were estimated to be around 0,5% of GDP – the newest estimates for example indicate 0,7% of Italy’s GDP in 2009, or 0,4% of GDP in Germany in 2007. In European Union, the drug-related revenues are estimated to be around 27,7 billion euros per year. The latest estimate for United States from year 2010 is indicating a revenue of 109 billion dollars from domestic sales, dwarfing the Europe in comparison with estimate from the same year, accounting for 25,5 billion

⁷ The declaration of “War on Drugs” is usually dated to the speech of U.S. president Richard Nixon on 17th of June 1971, called “Special Message to the Congress on Drug Abuse Prevention and Control”. (American Presidency 2018)

⁸ Only in European Union there is about 5,000 organized crime groups, third of them is active in drug trafficking.

dollars⁹ from 21 European countries – hardly a fifth of the revenue. (UNODC 2017b, p. 21-25)

All put together, the global drug trade is an extremely difficult and serious problem to tackle. Failing to do so affects significantly public health, social stability, criminality rates, and in many situations the trade in narcotics and the affiliated criminal groups may also promote corruption. That may in extreme cases be eroding state institutions and the rule of law. Last but not least, the narcotics trade is also a significant source of income for various armed organizations, terrorist or not. (UNODC 2017b, p. 30-40)

The relation between the drug trade and the political violence will be the further the main focus of this work. However, this thesis will not focus on all illicit substances, but only on few commodities. The reason for this is that not all illegal substances are having clear geographic distinctions of their trade routes and manufacturing patterns. Secondly the price of some substances may be too low (or the manufacturing sources too decentralized), that the profits earned do not empower the criminal groups enough to rival the state's institutions in a grander scale. The research on drugs use, manufacturing and trade usually focuses on four main groups – cocaine, opiates including heroin, amphetamines and other synthetic drugs, and cannabis. It seems however that even though all illegal drugs have various negative effects, the threat is enhanced by the price¹⁰ of the commodity, and

⁹ Calculated from the original data, estimating 19,2 billion Euros – adjusted according to the 2010 USD-EUR rate

¹⁰ Calculating the retail value of illicit drugs remain to be a significant issue, as the prices vary state from state based on large variety of factors. For instance, price of gram of cocaine – based on 2014 UN and White House data - can vary from \$1.84 in Saint Vincent and Grenadines to \$483.98 in New Zealand, most of the time reflecting the proximity to the source and the length of the transit route. On average however, the most expensive are amphetamines (108.78\$ per gram), followed by heroin (91.16\$) and cocaine (80\$). On the other side, some drugs are significantly cheaper, such as ecstasy (19.12\$) and marijuana (9.18\$). (CADG 2014) The production costs differ, as well as number of users (183 million users of marijuana compared to 17 million users of cocaine in 2015 for example), or the amount of doses per one gram. (UNODC 2017c)

geography – how many of the producers exist, where are they located and on what area, what are the transit routes between the producer and the major consumer.

Cocaine trade is somehow specific in this sense, as it has geographically only one main area of production. The coca leaves - from which the cocaine is produced using chemical refinement – only grow in jungles of Andean mountains¹¹, and three major producing countries are all located in the region. The three major producers are Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia, accounting to more than 90% of the production. (Dion 2008, p. 399) From these countries, there are two transit routes leading to major consumers – the cocaine heading to United States market goes through Central America or Caribbean Sea, supply for European consumers is shipped via Atlantic, with the major direct entry points being Iberian Peninsula or Dutch and Belgian ports. Alternative routes however exist, such as the continuously more important supply lines using the countries on the African West Coast. In this region many countries are considered as transit ones, however biggest cocaine seizures in the period from 2010 to 2015 were reported in Cabo Verde, Gambia, Nigeria, Chad and Ghana. The cocaine is then by majority sent to Europe via the North African routes (80% of the amount) or shipped back for the U.S. market (15%) and Asia (4%). It is reported that the values seized in Asian transit routes are steadily growing, signifying potentially the growth of the demand in the Asian markets – the routes towards them go either through West Asia (United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, etc.) or directly to South East Asia via Pacific. It should not be also forgotten that since Andean countries are located on the North-west of the continent, the major routes go through other Latin American countries (such as Brazil, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, etc.), causing significant damage on the way. (UNODC 2017c, p. 25-36)

¹¹ In fact, cocaine was historically produced in other places with similar climate and environment, such as in Indonesia or Japan, mostly on the beginning of 20th century. The production was however discontinued long time ago, and since then remains non-existent or marginal. (Gootenberg 2009)

The only similar scenario to the cocaine manufacturing and trade system is the heroin. Cultivated from the poppy plants, it is more easily cultivated than coca leaves, however still requiring vast plantations to manufacture high yield – an activity that is generally very difficult to hide in stable countries with functional law enforcement and surveillance. It is therefore not a surprise that more than two thirds of world’s production have its origin in Afghanistan, which supplies markets in all directions. The main trafficking routes are the Balkan route (supplying Europe through Iran, Turkey and the Balkans), Southern route (towards South Asia, Middle East and Africa) and Northern route (through Central Asia to Russian Federation). Other significant producers (even though much smaller by yield) are Myanmar and Laos, which mostly supply the South-East Asia and Oceania, and Mexico from which trade routes stem north towards United States and south to Latin America. (UNODC 2017c, p. 13-23)

Other illicit drugs such as methamphetamines or cannabis - although quite often widely used and trafficked – do not possess the same structure of centralized manufacturing, major markets, and established supply routes between. Although some exceptions exist such as cannabis resin, also known as *hashish* - which is by majority produced in Morocco and Afghanistan and trafficked interregionally - they usually don’t have generally a profound impact. Therefore, this thesis will focus mostly on cocaine and heroin market.

3.3 THE NARCO-STATE

The next key concept that needs to be defined – as it will be mentioned in the following pages – is the “narco-state”. Although an unofficial and disputed term, it generally indicates a situation, where rampant drug-related organized crime achieves enough power and resources to erode the state institutions, overtake or assume full or partial control over its services, or assumes control over the state governance. (Jordan 1999)

In general, drug trade usually creates corrupt behavior, and at the same time, corruption is a drug trade's prerequisite. In order to successfully manufacture, transport, or distribute larger amounts of drugs, corruption is required in some form to maintain operations of the illegal system. From individuals such as customs officers or policemen, the corruption may escalate to the level of judges, special investigators, or local politicians, up to the point of corrupting criminal justice institutions, courts, or major political players. The demand of drug-trafficking criminal organizations for establishing protection from defensive state-functions is persistent at all levels, which may create a vicious cycle – higher corruption enables higher amounts of trade, higher amounts of trade create higher profit, which at the same point creates more funds to corrupt public servants or state organizations and creates a higher demand for hiding and protecting growing illegal operations. (UNODC 2017b, p. 30)

The narco-state has its roots in the cycle of corruption, the breaking point however occurs with certainty when the corruption and criminal interventions into the functioning of state institutions reaches the very top – in the situations where the highest state's officials actively work in the interests of the organized crime, relying on the drug trade and protecting it at the same time. This creates no escape scenario, when no higher instance is able to protect the political system. Although the general assumption might be that the narco-state is more likely to emerge in autocratic system, it can also occur in weak or dysfunctional democracies. David Jordan, in his book *Drug Politics: Dirty Money and Democracies* defines the probable prerequisite regime as being an "anocracy" - a system where the state maintains the formal attributes (such as general elections or independent courts) of a democracy, however the ruling elite is stripped of accountability and responsibility, enabling it to abuse power. It is a regime where the elites are continuously holding on to power, despite the nominally democratic institutions. Akin to the previously mentioned cycle of corruption, the anocracy may also become a self-fulfilling cycle. The anocratic state is more prone to be corrupted because it is based on abusing power without proper accountability – however the more the anocracy is being corrupted, the more is the expansion of anocracy enabled. Drug trade corrupting the institutions makes them

exceedingly hollow and dysfunctional. That may end up in the total takeover of control over the state's government, whether indirectly or directly – in case the government itself becomes infiltrated by the members of the criminal organization. (Jordan 1999)

Despite what was said before, not every time the infiltration of strong organized criminal group causes state to be completely corrupted. One of the examples is the criminal empire of 'Ndrangheta, an infamous organized criminal network originating from the Italian region of Calabria. Even though 'Ndrangheta maintains its activity in trading various illicit goods, the drug trade – especially strong in cocaine import and distribution – is one of its main sources of income. In year 2008 it was estimated that 'Ndrangheta gained 44 billion Euros in illicit income, from which 62% was generated by drug trade, mostly cocaine – more than 27 billion Euros. The whole revenue from illegal sources of 'Ndrangheta accounted for 2.9% of Italy's GDP.¹² It is also apparent that the income from the drug trade has a growing tendency – one of the factors is that the number of cocaine users grew from 14 million in year 1998 to 18.3 million in 2016, further strengthening the demand. (Calandra 2017, p. 80) Currently 'Ndrangheta is close to be a monopoly, some estimates designating it to be responsible for strong majority of all cocaine import to Europe. The share is estimated to be around 80% of imports, with revenue approximately around 51 billion Euros. 'Ndrangheta operates currently on intercontinental scale, assumed to be one of the strongest global players in the cocaine trade. While having currently strong ties to the Latin American criminal groups, its power and trade interests reach all the way from West Africa to Balkans. (Calandra 2017, p. 81) 'Ndrangheta is an immense economic and criminal power, which controls even major infrastructure such as ports, and has significant ties to the political sphere on low and high levels. The Calabrian group uses the corruption and influencing of the state elements not only to keep their operations running without too much of unwanted limelight, but also to launder their profits and turn them into legal economic assets. (Paoli 2004, p.27) What is considered 'Ndrangheta's share in immense illegal economy of Italy –

¹² Remaining 38% of illicit income of Ndrangheta is estimated to be sourced in infiltration of public works, racketeering, extortion, usury, illegal weapons trafficking, and prostitution. (Calandra 2017)

which is estimated to be about 10% of GDP in total – is not only laundered via banks and sophisticated transfers between on-shore and off-shore banks, but also legalized through investments in construction, hotels, restaurants, import-export companies, food companies, real estate, or services related to tourism. This is enabled by a hardly-quantifiable, yet present corruption of many levels of Italian politics and society. (Calandra 2017, p. 86) Despite this, it would be a very far-fetched to call Italy a narco-state. Although corruption is present, and the drug trafficking organizations hold significant degree of power in the country already plagued by a historically strong illegal economy, the criminal groups active in drug trade don't rival major state institutions. While small cities can be directly or indirectly controlled, to a speculative degree even regions, Italy is able to function as an independent state with institutions that are not under immediate threat of being overrun by criminal influence and capital.

Let's however focus on a case of a very different country in a different part of the world, which can be – unlike the previous case – considered to be a compelling case of a narco-state. The state in question is Guinea-Bissau, a former Portuguese colony located on the coast of West Africa, bordered by Senegal and Guinea. This country of population about 1,8 million inhabitants (CIA 2018) is one of the main gateways for Latin American cocaine to the European Market. Guinea-Bissau is a deeply dysfunctional state, being one of 20 worlds most impoverished countries by GDP per capita¹³. It suffered astounding amounts of coup d'états – last happening in 2012 – and in just three years since the beginning of this decade suffered 2 other attempts. Six major political assassinations also occurred in the same period, including the president and army's chief of staff in 2009. (NY Times 2012) The military has an excessive and disruptive power in the country – as the legacy of the independence war against Portugal – often intervening in the democratic process. The judicial system is inept and either lacks the powers to persecute drug trafficking, or

¹³ By other indicators, the situation is not better – in 2017 Guinea-Bissau was estimated to have seconds lowest life expectancy, third highest infant mortality rate, and 40 % of the population over the age of 15 is illiterate. (CIA 2018)

deliberately doesn't prosecute on the basis of complicity. Elections in the country are suspected to be influenced too, using the money gained by collaborating with the drug traders. (Bybee 2011, p. 174 - 183) Even though some sources – such as sizeable and detailed dissertation by Ashley N. Bybee – discuss whether Guinea-Bissau is a full fledged narco-state or just a very serious example of a failed state, it is reasonable to reckon that the drug trade in Guinea-Bissau significantly erodes that state legitimacy and the institutions. This case illustrates how the country's weakness can be exploited by the drug trafficking and that this may cause a cycle of further instability, as reform and resolution of the country's internal issues and strengthening of institutions would collide with the interests of the traffickers. In his previously mentioned book, David Jordan introduces a definition of a process of "narcostatization" - *"The corruption of the political regime as a result of narcotics trafficking; the criminalization of the state. Narcostatization undermines the democratic check on the abuses of power by insulating elected officials from accountability and transforms the authoritarian state into a criminal one."* In the following text, this definition will be used as a being explanatory of the concept of narco-state, which is a result of the defined process.

3.4 NARCOTERRORISM

There are multiple sources for defining what narcoterrorism is, however a full exact definition is difficult to be found. One reason for it is that the term is balancing between two concepts. First one was often used describing the violent campaigns against governmental military and police, as well as the public servants, politicians, journalists, judges, etc. by drug-trafficking criminal organizations. These campaigns used methods commonly used by terrorist groups, such as bombings, assassinations, or kidnappings. In this case, the narcoterrorism was defined as *"the attempts of narcotics traffickers to influence the policies of government by the systematic use of violence"*. (Bjornehed 2004, p. 306) At the same time however, other sources define narcoterrorism differently. The U. S. agency Drug

Enforcement Administration (DEA) defines narcoterrorism as *"a subset of terrorism, in which terrorist groups, or associated individuals, participate directly or indirectly in the cultivation, manufacture, transportation, or distribution of controlled substances and the monies derived from these activities. Further, narcoterrorism may be characterized by the participation of groups or associated individuals in taxing, providing security for, or otherwise aiding or abetting drug trafficking endeavors in an effort to further, or fund, terrorist activities."* (U.S. Senate 2002, p. 10) While this definition includes many different aspects, relations, and actors, it also creates a duality when compared to the previous definition – seemingly two different concepts are tied together by the same name.

In the paper *"Links between Terrorism and Drug Trafficking"* Alex Schmid introduces 12 different definitions of narcoterrorism by various authors. Out of those, five do lean towards the first type of definition, portraying the criminal groups as active actors. Other four do consider terrorist groups using the drug trade as source of income as the main actors of narcoterrorism, therefore being more similar to the DEA definition. Two of the definitions do include both types of active authors, however they are not attempting to synthesize the concepts. (Schmid 2004, p. 12-14) The final definition does not lean towards neither, it is instead very critical towards the concept of narcoterrorism. *"'Narcoterrorism' is a catchword of some contemporary currency. It is a word pregnant with implication. In the contexts in which it is used, it often implies a conspiracy with strategic as well as tactical goals. It implies a new kind of threat, different in both type and degree from that posed by either drug trafficking or political terrorism alone. Increasingly, it is viewed as a global phenomenon, which can be conceptualized in the same terms wherever it occurs. 'Narcoterrorism' has emerged as a potent weapon in the propaganda war waged by governments against terrorists, insurgents, organized crime, drug traffickers, and even other sovereign states."* (Wardlaw, 1987: 29) This approach criticizes the duality of the term, and sees it as a propaganda tool to be used in many different situations and meanings with the aim to demonize the opponent – the opposing political belligerent groups are "accused" of participating in drug-trafficking, while the criminal groups are tied to being complicit in the acts of terrorism which they directly or indirectly support.

Schmid's paper also includes an interesting comparison of differences and similarities of politically-motivated and criminal groups. For instance, both operate secretly and usually from underground network, both use ruthless coercion against primarily civilian victims, both are characteristic for its intimidation, they usually use similar methods such as assassinations, kidnappings, or extortion, both use front organizations such as businesses or charities to conceal their operations, and both exert significant control over the individual inside the group. The differences are listed as well – terrorists are usually ideologically or politically motivated, while groups are profit oriented. The ideological groups contend with government for legitimacy, unlike criminal groups. Terrorists usually seek attention while criminal groups do not. Finally, the terrorist victimization is usually less discriminate. (Schmid 2004, p. 5-6) While these differences are valid in most of the cases, they are not always fully true, as the following historical cases will show. Additionally, observing the moments where the lines between the groups are blurred or inverted might be important for describing the issue of narcoterrorism.

Wardlaw did criticize the duality and vagueness and suggested that the term should be scrapped altogether for its inaccuracy (Schmid 2004, p. 3-4). This thesis will despite this attempt to synthesize these two approaches to defining narcoterrorism, and construct and verify a framework that would build on the many similarities between terrorist and criminal groups.

4. CONSTRUCTING THE TYPOLOGY

As explained in the previous sub-chapter, the issue of narcoterrorism is in general very ill-defined, as it covers only limited scope of actors and their activities. To compensate this, it is necessary to construct a general framework, upon which it will be later possible to demonstrate a so-called “narcoterrorist nexus” – a situation, where the groups start engaging in other kind of activity then would be their defining one. Secondly, the possible supportive relations between both types of actors will be established in the second part of the chapter. After establishing the basic framework and introducing the possible interactions, real-life historical cases will be introduced in the next chapter. In the final part of this text, findings from the historical cases will be assigned to the types, proving the existence of the defined concepts.

4.1 BASELINE FRAMEWORK OF NARCOTERRORISM

First, let’s introduce a basic template in the Table 1. The two axes are delimiting 2 basic types in 2 categories. On the top-side, there is the category of the actor. The left side is dedicated to purely political / ideological actors, often defining themselves as aligned to major recognized ideologies. Those may be for example communist, nationalist, or religious by nature. These groups are often defined as terrorist by governmental bodies, media, or other political actors. The right half of the top side is associated with the actors who are defined as criminal, in this case engaging in the illegal drug trafficking. Their inherent nature is to generate illegally gained profit.

In the lower half, the table demonstrates not the actor, but the main activity in which the actor engages. The lower part is further divided to two halves – the left one, which is also defined by “political” by the vertical axis, demonstrates the activity of the actor which engages in the pursuit of political or ideological goals. That may mean various things. For the leftist or communist actors, that can mean the establishment of economical and / or political regime defined as socialism or communism, or the change of geopolitical orientation away from the major liberal capitalist powers. For the nationalist groups, the main goal is for example to establish a new independent sovereign state based upon ethnic borders, or it may be an effort to gain an autonomy within an existing country, or it may be the goal of irredentism – an attempt to secede a territory of a sovereign state to move it under control of a different, often bordering state. For the religious groups, the main goal is usually establishment of theocracy – a state ruled by the clergy – or introducing institutions, for example legal frameworks, governmental or non-governmental politically active organizations, or public morals based upon the extreme interpretation of the religious code. In general, these activities can be described as politically motivated. On the right side of the bottom half, the activity is defined as “criminal”. The goal of the activity is to generate profit from illegal activity, in this case the source will be limited to the trafficking, manufacturing, or distribution of illegal drugs.

For the purposes of this thesis, we will define the “activity” in the lower part of the graph mainly as violent one. Although the activity can be also focused non-violently by bribery, coercion, subterfuge, infiltration, and more, the historical cases will have the objective of finding a violent activity. That said, the violence in the criminal activities (right-bottom part) is usually the symptom of the standard way of business in the drug trade, however in the political activity section (left-bottom) the violence has the goal to influence politics, especially during the acts which may be defined as terrorist. In general, however, the activity in which the actor engages, follows the general objective of the actor. In this thesis, we will focus primarily on cases of violence, especially the one utilizing the terrorist methods. An exception will be the “support” relationship between actors – which will be explained later - that doesn’t necessarily have to be of a violent nature, although quite often

the use of power – or the threat / possibility of use – may be included in the rationale of the support activity.

The right section “criminal” is also defined as an effort to produce profit from criminal sources – the drug trade – and it does not refer to the general criminal nature of violence or other criminal acts that happen during the violent conflict. The defining measure is the final objective.

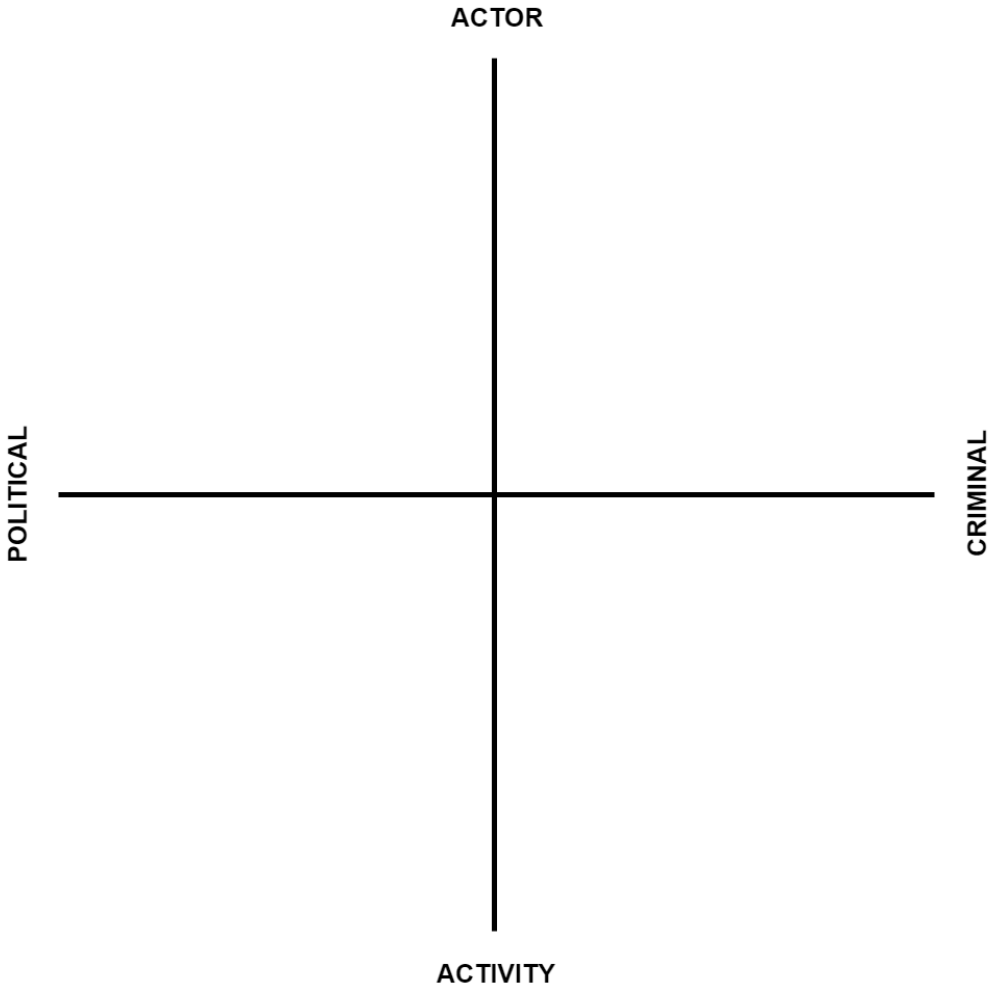


Table 1

In the following example illustrated on Table 2, we can see the normal state of activity for the respective actors. An actor from the left “political” part engages in the

political activity based upon the ideology of choice. In this example, the actor is called “political actor A”, and we will use it for illustration of the hypothetical situation.

Actor A is for example a leftist group in an unspecified country, whose major objective is establishing a socialist economic regime and re-define the governing institutions in the country. Their activity mainly lies in a conventional yet irregular struggle against the governmental troops, the coercion of civilians in the area of operations, and occasional bombing of the governmental installations by unmarked personnel, such as police stations or checkpoints. The general government defines the Actor A as “a terrorist organization”.

Actor A therefore has a politically ideological nature, its activities and objectives are politically motivated, and violence is utilized. The situation is therefore illustrated by an arrow, which connects the political actor to political violent activity.

Actor B – also portrayed in the Table 2 – is on the other hand a purely criminal organization.

In the hypothetical situation, the criminal organization in an unspecified country controls the production facilities of an illegal drug. After manufacturing the product, it organizes a shipment to an external distributor in a downstream country. The generated profit is invested, laundered, or spent. Extreme, exemplary violence is used against the members of a rival criminal organizations, debtors, and the personnel suspected of cooperation with the governmental law enforcement.

The Actor B therefore is of criminal nature, and its objectives – as well as violent activities are of a criminal nature, aimed purely at generating maximum profit from the sales of illegal drug.

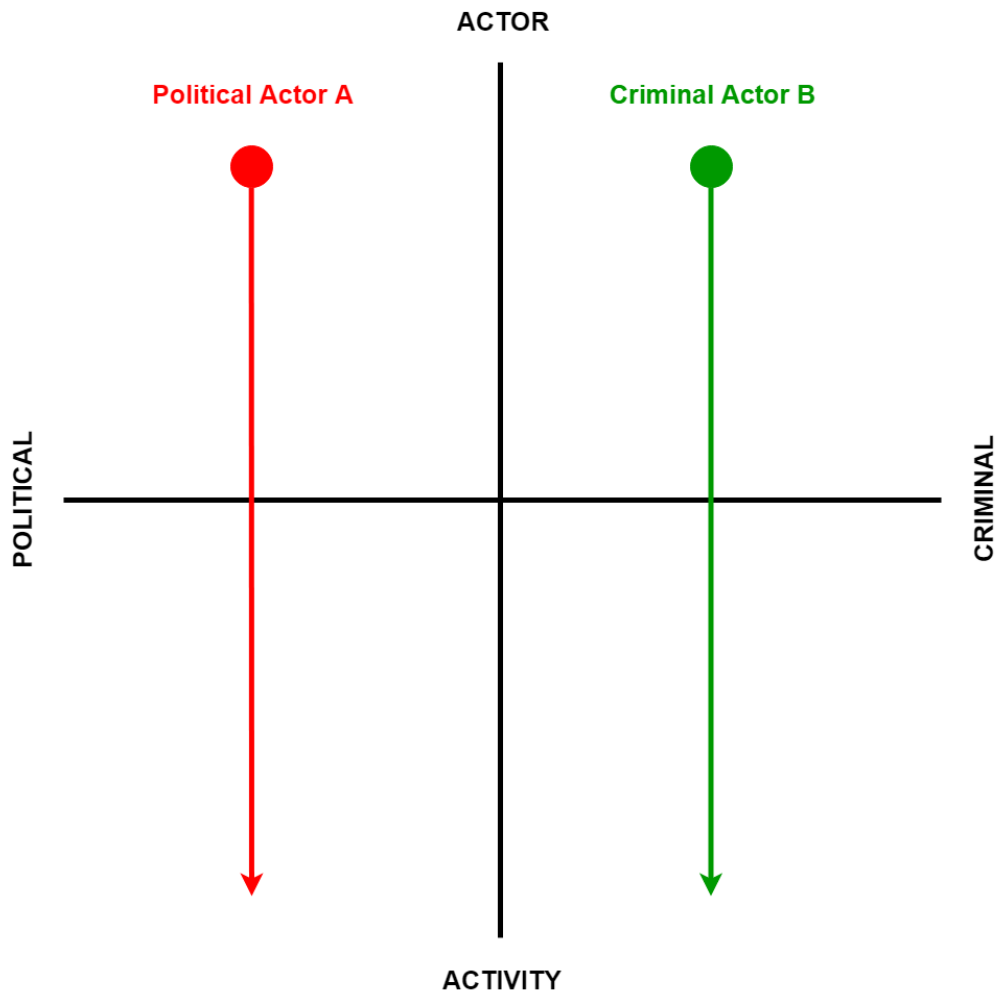


Table 2

It is worth noting that the framework doesn't include two criteria, which are generally important, but had to be isolated regarding the thesis' objectives. First, the table will not illustrate a conflict or negative relations between the groups. That is mainly because the main objective of the thesis is to observe the possible coactivity of criminal and ideological groups, not to analyze their conflicts. Despite this the struggle and violence between the two kinds of actors occur – as will be described in the historical cases – because of ideological incompatibility, of proximity within one area of operations, or by competing for resources, or other reasons. It will not be however described as a specific type, and the thesis will be focused on positive relations or mutual support.

The second, even more important criterion, is the scale. It is possible to observe on the tables, that the actors are placed in the middle of the respective sectors, not in a certain point on purpose. That is because analyzing the exact point of the placement of actor and activity vector on a scale of multiple points would require additional methodology and deep research. To define the wide scale and assign the exact point, the thesis would have to accurately establish an interval scale upon which the variables would be placed upon ranking of unified set of indicators. That is beyond the scope of this thesis, although it would be an interesting direction of further research. The variables will be therefore dichotomic - the action is either political, or criminal by nature, nothing between. The actor is as well political or criminal, however the middle ground might be established if such case appears in the historical cases. In general, this thesis will attempt to categorize the general nature and objective of the actor based on their goals, definitions, and origin.

4.2 NARCOTERRORIST NEXUS

In this subchapter, we will define two types of narcoterrorist nexus, a situation where an actor of one type is casually linked to an activity of an opposite type.

4.2.1 NEXUS TYPE 1 – “POLITICAL NARCOTERRORISM”

First case, called “Nexus Type 1” for the purposes of this thesis, is a situation illustrated on the Table 3 below. This situation defines a situation where a political / ideological group starts engaging directly in the criminal activity by manufacturing, trafficking, or distributing illegal drugs. It may handle it directly or using and intermediary, however it should be fully in control over the criminal operations. It may also happen that the political group was not engaging in the criminal activities since its inception, it began to do so later during the lifespan of the organization. Table 3 shows a situation where a group continues to employ violence for political reasons, however at the same time is active in the

process of obtaining resources through direct control over the illegal drug sales. If the actor would hypothetically stop engaging in politically motivated activity and started to fully focus on the criminal activities, it would no longer be a politically motivated actor, therefore the concurrence of activities is necessary.

In the hypothetical situation established previously, the political Actor A had trouble to generate funds to finance its continuous guerilla war against the governmental troops. To fill its coffers, it had overtaken the local drug production, and started forwarding drugs to the distribution chain for profit.

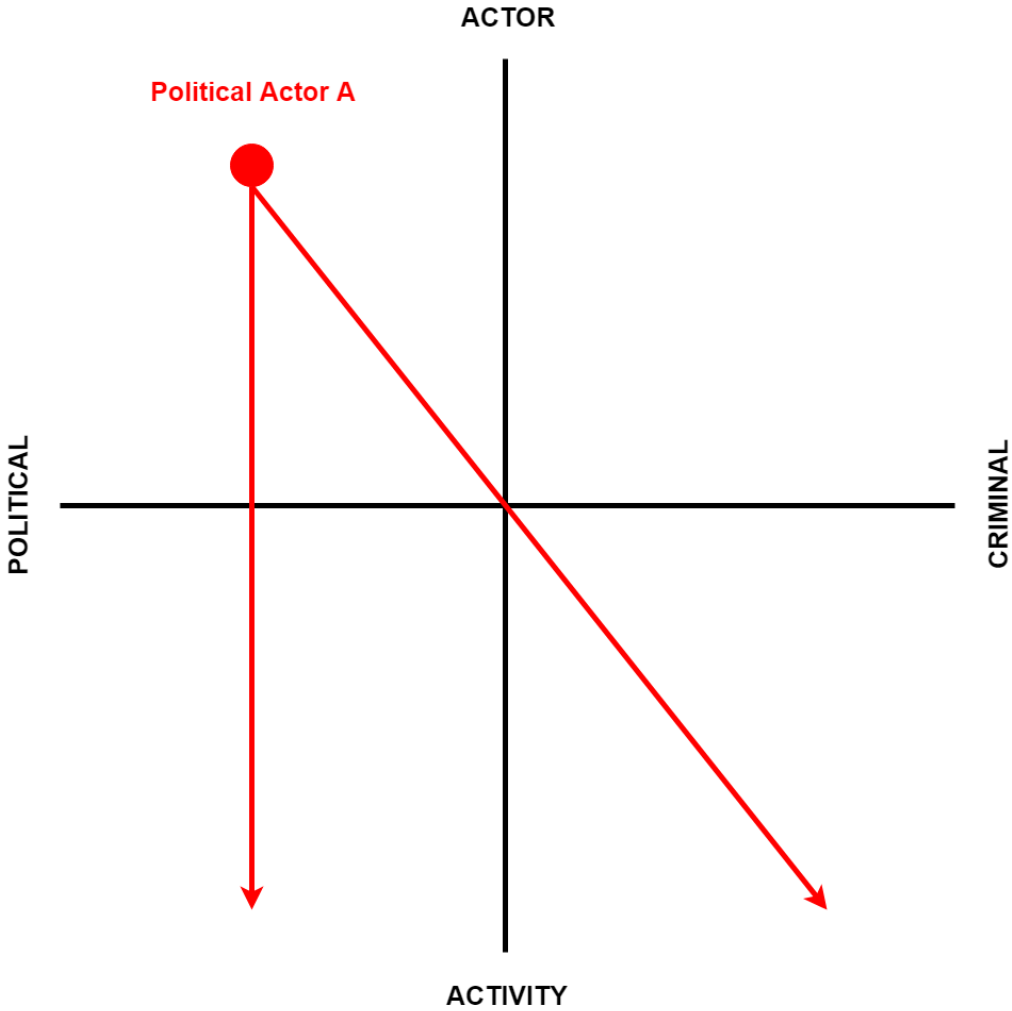


Table 3

4.2.2 NEXUS TYPE 2 - “CRIMINAL NARCOTERRORISM”

Second type, called “Nexus Type 2” is a mirrored situation compared to the Type 1. In this situation a primarily criminally active group – for example a drug trafficking criminal organization – begins to employ politically motivated violence. This violence may be limited in nature, however should be carried out with an objective similar to the ideological groups, and that is a significant alteration, corruption, or destruction of state institutions. This violence can be aimed towards establishing a narco-state (that was described and defined in the previous chapter) or to coerce the state into enforcing the will and interest of the criminal groups. That may apply the whole country, raising the threat of establishing a oligarchic anocracy, or “narcocracy”, and therefore making the country defenseless against the activities of the criminal organization. In this situation, the institutions of the state such as courts, media, high-level politicians, or law enforcement units serve the interests of the criminal groups instead of the general population. In certain situations, the power of the criminal actor may not be so strong to affect the whole country, or their interest may be local – that may produce a hypothetical situation where the narcostatization will be in effect only in certain regions (in a similar manner as the ideological terrorist groups may not be effective country-wide, but only regionally or locally).

In any case, the vector of the activity is the same as previously. It is not aimed directly at the generation of profits from the illegal trade, it is aimed towards political objectives against the state’s institutions or assets. The situation is therefore fully mirrored – the ideological groups commence criminal activity to enable their continuous pursuit of political goals, whereas the criminal groups partake in the politically-aimed activity to enable their undisturbed profiteering from the drug trade, or their survival. The situation is illustrated below in the Table 4.

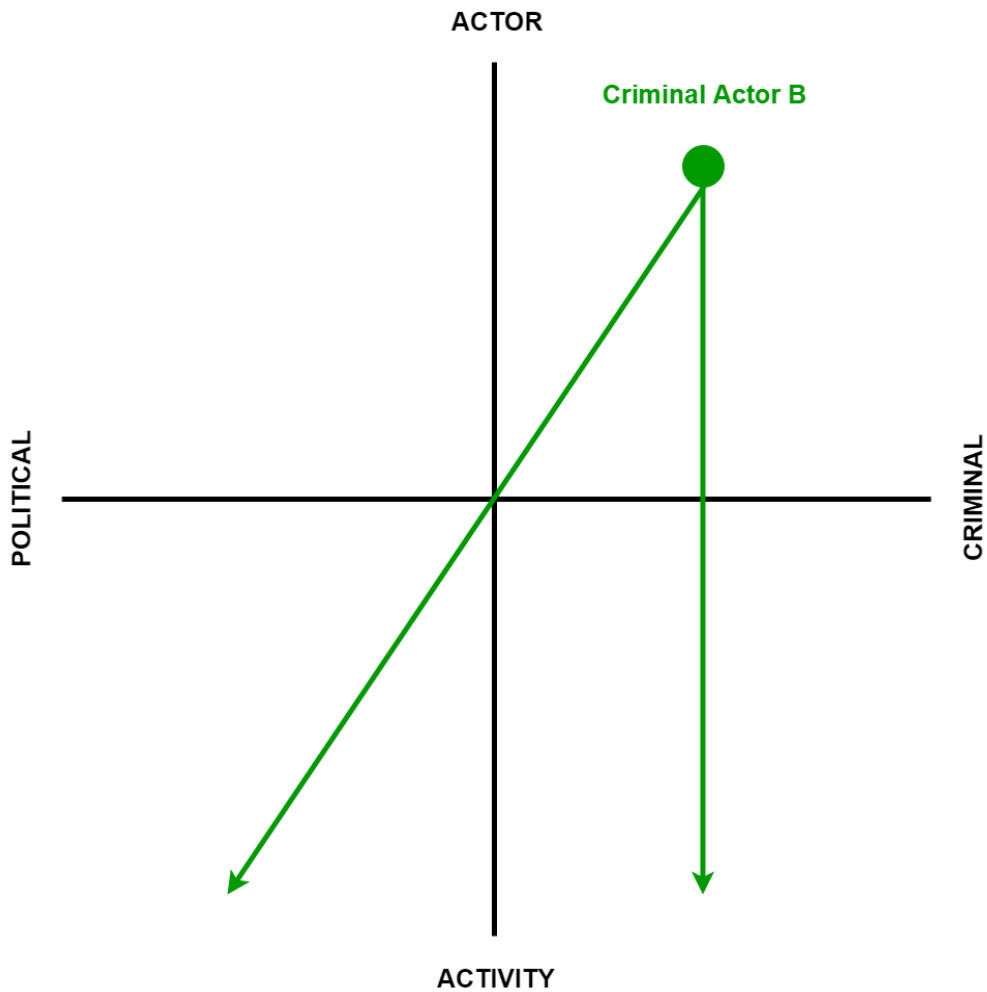


Table 4

4.3 SUPPORTIVE RELATIONS

In this sub-chapter we will establish various types of support between the political and criminal actor. These relations occur in the situations where both types of organizations are present in one country or broader region. It is also not excluded that the supportive action can occur on international or global scale. The support relation is always directed from one actor to the other and related to one specific activity. It is however not established that only one supportive relation may occur at the time, the situations may occur

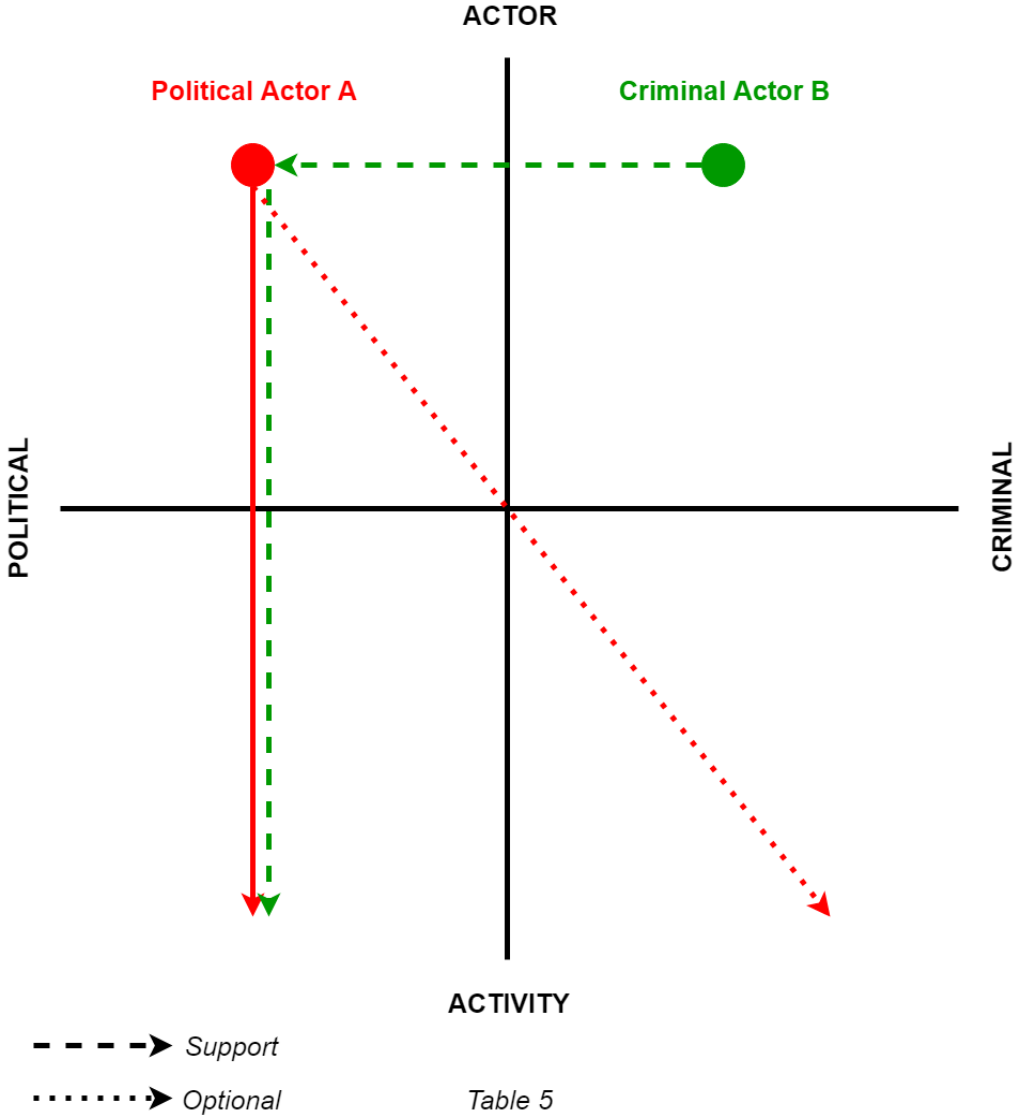
simultaneously. For the purposes of establishing a typology, it is necessary to isolate the specific types. In two out of the four cases, the supportive relationship occurs in situation where one actor must be also in the narcoterrorist “nexus” situation, whether it is Type 1 or Type 2. In the other two cases, the “nexus” may be or not be present. To be specific, we can introduce an example where the criminal actor supports the political actor’s politically aimed activity. In this situation the Type 1 nexus may not occur – that means that the political actor may not be at the same time engaged in criminal activity. All of the types also imply some sort of alliance between the actors, or at least limited cooperation, or tolerance. Without this criterion, it is unthinkable that the actors would not be either competing between themselves or in the state of mutual inertia.

Finally, there are two criteria that are not included in this typology. The first one is the scale of cooperation, ranging from a full alliance and the active coordination and support, towards an agreement of non-aggression that is however of strategic importance to the actors engaged in their respective activities. The second is the role of state – that means what is the relation between the government and the Actor A or Actor B. The variations are many – for example due to focus on one of the actors the other one can be ignored or tolerated by the government. That is however not shown in the graphs as it is not fully relevant to the basic stripped-down typology. It will however be mentioned in the context of the historical cases.

4.3.1 SUPPORT TYPE 1

This situation would occur in the case when the politically motivated Actor A – the active actor – would be supported in the pursuit of political objectives by the criminal / passive Actor B. The most straightforward kind of support for example would be the provision of resources by the Actor B, however it might also be manifested in the allowed use of drug organization’s logistics, facilities, or territory. The cooperation could even manifest itself in a direct alliance, in the form of joint violent activities against the rivals or

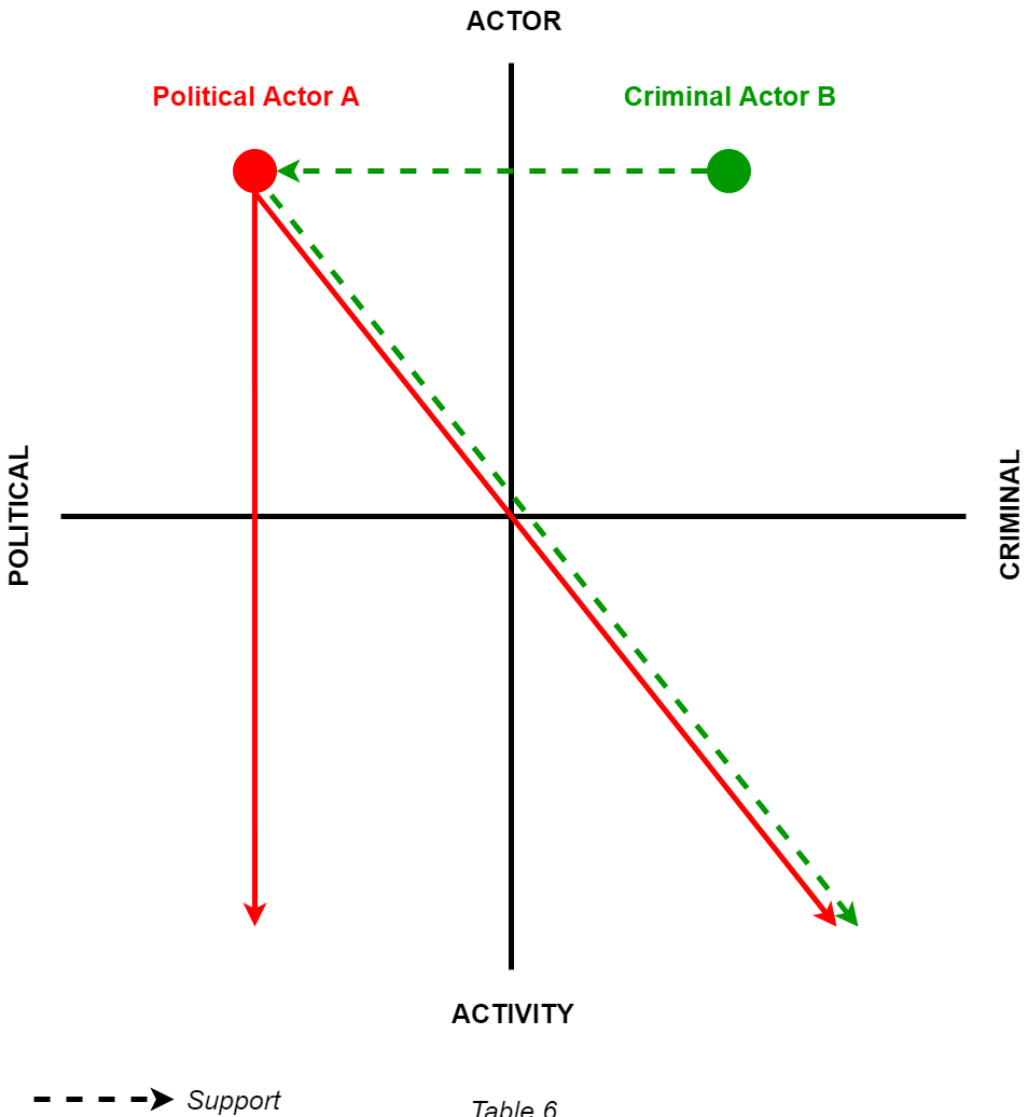
governmental assets or personnel. This situation does not necessarily imply the concurrent activities of Actor A in the generation of profits in illegal – drug related – activities, therefore the Type 1 nexus may or may not occur. This situation is illustrated in the Table 5.



4.3.2 SUPPORT TYPE 2

In this case, the Type 1 nexus is required to occur, and the passive Actor B would have to support the Actor A in the manufacturing, refining, or trafficking of illicit drugs.

Interestingly, in the Type 2 nexus, the criminal Actor B’s political objectives do not necessarily have to collide with the political goals of Actor A. In this case however, the activity is focused on the illicit drug trade from both sides, which might imply competition. This situation may signify that the Actor B has incorporated the Actor A’s drug-related activities into their supply network in a specific sector – manufacturing, trafficking, or distribution – or on some specific trade route. That would establish the groups as sort of business partners, enabling the ideological actor to obtain funds from the drug trade without competing in the criminal actor’s standard activity. This situation is illustrated in the Table 6.



4.3.3 SUPPORT TYPE 3

In this situation the passive actor – political Actor A – supports an active criminal Actor B in its criminal activity. That means that the Type 2 nexus situation – criminal group having political objectives – may or may not occur. The support from the ideologically-motivated group towards the criminal activity may manifest itself in multiple ways. For example, the political actor may provide security for the criminal group operations, it may conduct violent actions against criminal competitors, it can provide assistance with logistics and smuggling operations, or on purpose prevent any interference with the drug trade activities. The situation is illustrated in the Table 7.

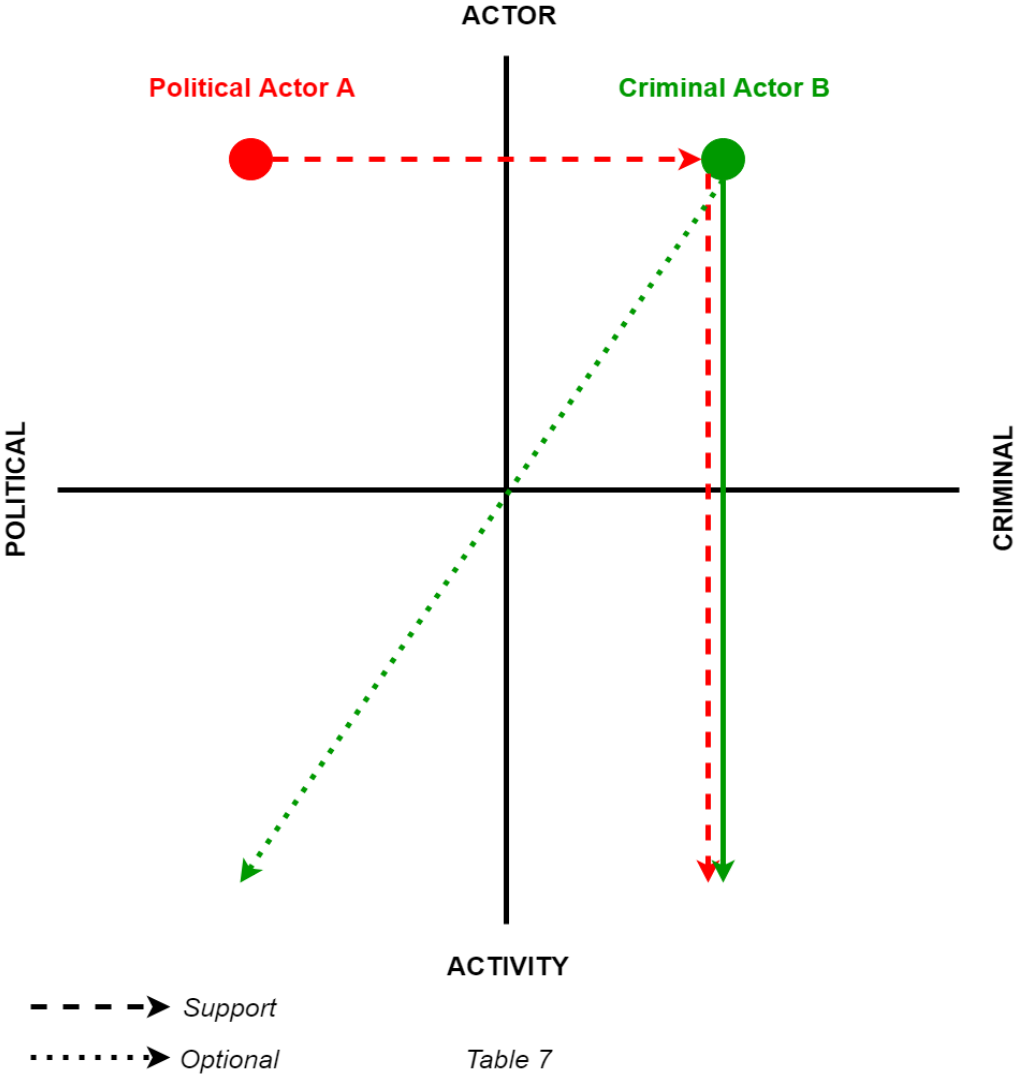


Table 7

4.3.4 SUPPORT TYPE 4

In this case the active actor is the criminal group (Actor B), which is being supported by the political Actor A. This time however, Actor A is supporting Actor B’s political interests, therefore the Type 2 Nexus is a prerequisite for this situation’s occurrence. The support can be for example in the form of provided combatants for the criminal organization’s struggle against government, provision of weapons or explosives, or perpetrating of attacks, kidnappings, or assassinations against governmental assets or personnel on behalf of the criminal Actor B. This can be provided on the basis of mutually aligned interests, alliance, or hiring of the Actor A’s cooperation for money or other resources. This situation is shown in Table 8.

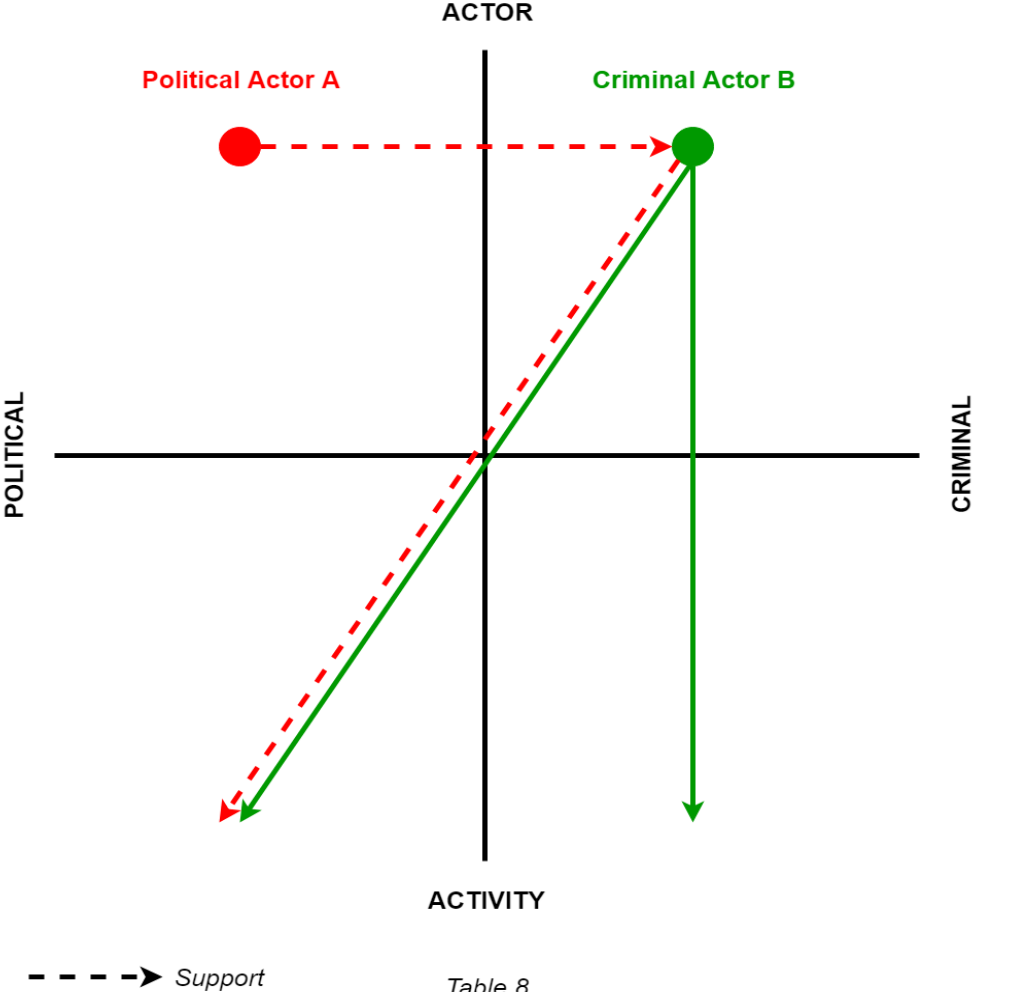


Table 8

5. PRIMARY CASE - COLOMBIA

For the purposes of this thesis, the selection of the primary case was by far not difficult. First, the country analyzed had to be one of the largest traffickers or manufacturers of illicit drugs. Secondly, it needed to have significant criminal groups active on its soil, ideally in very strained relationship with the government. Thirdly, it was required to have an ideological group active, ideally one in direct violent struggle with the state, and also in close proximity to the major manufacturing locations or trafficking routes of illicit drugs. The reason of significance of Colombia as a primary case of this thesis is not only its prominence in the global cocaine supply chain. It is also because of the clash between criminal groups, ideological armed groups, and the state. Colombia contained all of the previously stated required elements on its territory, which is not a common occurrence. Concurrent activity of both observed types of actors represents an ideal case for further study of all possible types of narcoterrorism nexus, as well as various types of supportive relations.

5.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Colombia has its deep historical roots in the European conquest of the New World. It was at first discovered by the Spanish during the early 1500s, which was followed by the period of expansion inland. During the following decades of 16th century, the clashes against the remnants of resisting natives followed, as well as foundations of new settlements, and setting up the basis for the colonial economic exploitation. (Safford 2001, p. 26-28) Following centuries witnessed various changes of colonial administrations, state entities, royal dynasties, and territorial expansions. Growth of colonial economy mainly focused on plantation crops and exotic goods such as coffee, tobacco, cane liquor, or cocoa. However,

the growth of colonial economy and the exploitation of it by the side of the Spanish overlords, as well as exclusion in dividing the power over local governance, would later cause disputes with the *creoles* – the settlers of the colonies. The Spanish retreat from the colonies during the European Peninsular war against Napoleon would result in the first steps of emancipation, which would (despite later Spanish efforts to reconquer the colony of New Grenada) result in the war of independence. The success was enabled also by the prowess of one of the rebel leaders Simon Bolivar, who would later assume nearly legendary status in Latin American history. (Van Wegen 2014, p. 41-47) The independence from the Spanish crown would mark the beginning of the Colombian history. The independence was declared in 1821 as a part of a large state called Gran Colombia, which was as well including Ecuador and Venezuela. The state was however short lived and two other constituent entities quickly seceded. Colombia therefore became state within its own borders by 1830. (Harvey 2002, p. 250-251)

The next hundred years were however not defined by peaceful development of newly established state – it was a time of divide and conflict. The initial clash between the federalists and the centralists was transformed into a divide between the liberals and conservatives. This conflict, which originated mainly in the disputes over the structure of the government and the level of centralization - but also major societal issues such as the role of the Catholic Church in the society and the state – escalated several times into a full-scale military clash. War of the Supremes started between 1839 and 1841, continued by Colombian Civil War of 1860 that lasted two years. The war has won the victory for the liberal faction, however a new conflict emerged because of the division between the radical and moderate liberals. This did not conclude the chain of conflict, as the conservative party arose yet again for a short conflict in 1876, and the radical liberals rebelled in 1884 in response to a government trying to compromise with the conservatives. This period of conflict – which doesn't exclusively entail only the previously named wars - concluded in the Thousand Days War of 1899, that established the contemporary Republic of Colombia led by the victorious conservative government. The war however caused previously unimaginable number of casualties. (Van Wegen 2014, p. 60-66) The long-lasting divide ultimately

escalated into another round of conflict in the half of 20th century. The 1948 assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaián – a popular leader of the Liberal party – sparked a conflict between the supporters of the Liberal and Conservative parties known as *La Violencia*¹⁴. One of the important actors in the conflict was the radical-left Colombian Communist Party that aligned with the Liberal faction, although on occasion clashing with it as well. This ten years long civil war, that left hundreds of thousands dead and widely employed paramilitary groups and mobs (that plundered and killed civilians and representatives of the opposing faction), eventually ended in 1958 with the establishment of the National Front. Moderates from both Conservative and Liberal factions united to confront the military regime of dictator Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who seized power during the Civil War. They deposed him of power and ensured that under the regime of National Front, both parties will rotate in the government each four years. This new compromise however didn't manage to secure lasting peace. (Turel 2013)

The bi-partisan system of governmental rotation of National Front unfortunately didn't secure full inclusion of various political discourses, as well as demobilization of the armed bandit groups and ideological guerillas that emerged during *La Violencia*. Out of the estimated 129 armed groups that emerged on the beginning of the Civil War, a third of them – about 47 – were still active in 1963 which signaled the decline of the National Front period and the re-emergence of conflict. Out of the 47 groups, 22 were considered to be active in violent and illegal activities. (Maullin 1973, p. 9-11) Most of these groups were associated with the Colombian Communist Party, which was marginalized and not embedded into the political system of National Front, which further bolstered its status of an alternative to the perceivably elitist and corrupt system. Some of the groups also did try to establish local independence, which was met with violent response from the side of the government. Military was used to crack down on the communist insurgencies, which responded by uniting into a single bloc. In 1964 military raided and pacified the self-proclaimed communist republic in Marquetalia. One of the members – a former Liberal guerilla fighter of name

¹⁴ Translated as „The Violence“

Manuel Marulanda Vélez - managed to escape. Veléz would later participate in uniting the communist guerillas in Colombia and become the leader of the most prominent newly established faction – one that would in 1966 assume the name of *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo*¹⁵, widely known by the abbreviation FARC. This started a new chapter for Colombia. (Rabasa 2001, p. 23 – 24) In the following chapters, we will describe the major actors of the still ongoing Colombian conflict.

5.2 FARC – THE GUERILLA ARMY

5.2.1 HISTORY OF FARC AND ITS ACTIVITIES

The newly unified communist guerilla FARC had been in a difficult position since it declared its existence with a manifesto in May 1966. It has been limited to only the traditional regions of the leftist guerilla activity, and the ranks of the organization grew slowly. FARC in the first years focused mainly on survival, capturing military equipment and gathering resources and food. Despite this, offensive actions were performed – such as ambushes of government military units and facilities, raiding non-supportive farms, taking hostages and assassinating opponents and collaborators. FARC was however still far from the vital centers of the Colombian state. FARC was from its beginning organized into fronts¹⁶, which are semi-autonomous regional guerilla commands, responsible for combat activities, and expanding the support infrastructure. New fronts on the north and north-west from the original area of operations were established in 1969 and 1971. In 1974 the general staff -

¹⁵ Translated as Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army

¹⁶ Although the front is not a combat unit of its own – rather an administrative or command unit – the core of it is made of combatants, which are further divided into blocs, columns, companies, platoons, and squads. (Rabasa 2011, p.25)

responsible for the coordination of combat operations - and the political secretariat were established. (Rabasa 2011, p. 23-25)

Since its inception, one of the primary goals of FARC was to secure sufficient funds for the survival and expansion of the organization. The conflict between armed communist guerillas on the American continent could not escape the context of the Cold War, and therefore world's powers were expectedly to some degree invested in the outcome. Soviet Union was supporting FARC by military and political advisory and financial support. Soviets however did not expect FARC to emerge victorious in foreseeable future, as the movement was yet too weak to take over major territories and engage head-to-head with governmental military. The primary objective was therefore to ensure that FARC stays operational and steadily grows in power and influence. It is also probable that in the time of the greatest supply of foreign investment between 1963 and 1968, FARC was not ready to absorb more significant amounts of foreign help. Other communist players have also invested in their proxies. Cuba had to some degree sponsored another communist guerrilla ELN¹⁷ and Chinese had their interest in a minor group ELP. Success of Cuban socialist revolution led by Fidel Castro in 1959 also functioned as a catalyst for the influence of communist ideas in Colombia, and also helped to attract interest of world's powers towards Latin America. One of them were the United States that had since the beginning of the conflict supported in various forms the legitimate government in Bogota, and covertly attempted to curb the communist insurgency. (Maullin 1973, p. 15-16)

The external support was however not enough to expand adequately to fulfill the grand strategy of FARC. The strategy consisted of establishing the resources necessary for sustaining larger operations, to expand to the whole area of Colombia and to force the governmental troops to become overstretched, to encircle and isolate Bogota and other major cities, and finally launch major military offensives towards the final victory and a general uprising. (Rabasa 2011, p. 39-42) To expand, new sources of income needed to be

¹⁷ More about this group in the next sub-chapter.

found. FARC originally relied on resources such as agricultural products (e.g. cattle or coffee) which were abundant in the remote rural regions and settlements. It also profited from illegal trade with gold and oil. Cocaine was however the source that truly accelerated the group's rapid growth in the 1980s. (Rabasa 2011, p. 25-26)

In May of year 1982, FARC assembled for the Seventh Guerilla Conference, to rethink and redefine its strategy. The leaders agreed that instead of defensive strategy and maintaining remote rural territories, a more offensive strategy should be adopted. Military escalation and change of strategy was needed even more after preceding failed peace-building attempt. FARC previously in an attempt to stand down and engage in politics legally established official left-wing opposition party called Patriotic Union, only to see its members being targeted and killed in large numbers by the right-wing paramilitaries and other opposing groups. (NY Times 1997) To bolster the ranks and expand the recruitment and support infrastructure, the urban areas were newly targeted – which was enabled by rapid urbanization and therefore the emergence of a highly disillusioned and impoverished class in the large agglomerations. FARC not only used this new infrastructure for recruitment and support, but also to establish syndicates that would influence public opinion towards friendly or complicit politicians. (Saskiewicz 1999, p. 17-19) The control of the urban centers – although secondary ones – was needed to pave the way towards the eventual siege of Bogota and other major cities.

The new strategy meant the need to build a proper military force that would allow more sophisticated operations than ambushes and hit-and-run tactics. Until the beginning of the 80's however, the ranks grew slowly. In 1966 when FARC was founded, the group could muster 360 fighters in total. After 16 years – in 1982 – the number was only about 1,000 fighters, organized in 17 rural and underequipped fronts. (Saskiewicz 1999, p. 16) Four years later however, the number grew to 3,600 in 32 fronts. In the next 9 years, the number nearly doubled to 7,000 combatants in 60 fronts in 1995, and even more to a number between 15 and 20 thousand fighters in 70 fronts by year 2000. (Rabasa 2011, p. 27) FARC however never reached its objective of creating 28,000 strong army, that was estimated to be

necessary to topple the government's military. (Marks 2002) The growth of FARC's ranks that was observed since early 80's was nonetheless outstanding. One of the enablers of that success was a new important source of income.

5.2.2 FARC AND ITS ENGAGEMENT WITH NARCOTICS

The expansion plan set up in the beginning of 80's resulted in the need to obtain more sources of income. Coincidentally, another attempt to establish peace in Colombia came temporarily to fruition in the form of ceasefire of 1984. While arms were not surrendered, the violence on the governmental front against FARC has silenced. The new President Belisario Betancure managed to convince FARC to cease hostilities and "give the president chance to improve conditions for the poor". (NY Times 1984) FARC used this opportunity to expand its operations in the southern and eastern regions of Colombia, at the foot of the Andean mountains. This region was one of the major coca sources and was convenient for smuggling operations due to the presence of borders with Venezuela, Brazil and Peru. The areas of coca production were not vacant, the production of cocaine or its precursors was already actively ongoing. What changed was the approach of FARC – while previously the production of coca and marijuana was considered to be against the core values of the revolutionary group, the FARC's Seventh Conference did declare the taxation and profiteering from drug trade - as well as recruitment of fighters from the lower ranks of drug business - an officially compliant possibility. That resulted in a growth of the coca-cultivating economy which became the major source in the relevant regions. It also helped to provide opportunities to the rural social base, that would otherwise have migrated to other regions or cities due to economic reasons. The success of this strategy was visible on the growing ranks of the organization in the producer regions. Only the region of Meta where the first front was founded in the first half of the 80's, had at least nine fronts active in 90's. Regions closer to major populations centers - such as the capital of Bogotá - were also witnessing a significant growth of revolutionary fronts. (Rabasa 2011, p. 26-27)

The decision to further increase the coca cultivation was made during the Eighth Guerilla Conference in 1993. Following this, the coca production grew significantly in the FARC controlled areas – from 5,000 hectares to 30,000 between 1994 and 1998. This more than six-fold increase was also accompanied by massive labor immigration. For example, the region of Putumayo – bordering Ecuador – has doubled its population by receiving 161,000 new settlers between 1993 and 2000. That helped Putumayo to become the biggest producer of coca in the country, equaling about 40% of the overall production in 2000¹⁸. That would center sizable portions of the productions under FARC’s control or its taxation, not to mention many other coca-producing areas in the country that were also controlled by FARC. (Saskiewicz 1999, p. 63-64)

The degree of FARC’s involvement in the drug manufacturing and trafficking process is however an important aspect to focus on. The growth of the coca production in remote areas under FARC’s control began already around 1978, from the initiative of the infamous Medellin Cartel commanded by Pablo Escobar. FARC soon realized that its determination to destroy the coca crops – or prevent them from expanding – will be to no avail, and it will alienate the farmer population that seen coca as only valuable crop and whose support FARC desperately needed to gain. The strategy was therefore changed to providing security to the coca producers and to taxing each kilogram of the not-yet-refined coca paste, that the cartels were subsequently buying for further processing. The tax was set between 10 and 15 per cent of each kilogram sold. To prevent violent incidents caused by hired gunmen, the FARC troops soon assumed direct control over the production and taxation security. This era was also interesting because of the active business cooperation between FARC and Medellín Cartel, which were cooperating on the basis of mutual agreements¹⁹. Cartel’s operations –

¹⁸ Interestingly, this period of rapid growth in the regions of FARC influence is coincidental with the period of transition during the era of Cali Cartel’s demise and war with Norte del Valle Cartel, that was trying to retake the power vacuum between the drug-trafficking organizations. (Economist 1998)

¹⁹ These agreements were internally allowed based on the previously mentioned FARC’s Seventh Congress in 1982.

such as refining facilities – were often hidden deep in FARC controlled territory.²⁰ This cooperation has collapsed in the mid-80's, after which FARC turned towards measures to strengthen its position in the coca-producing segment of the production chain. FARC started to tax not only the coca paste sold to the drug traffickers, but also the coca cultivators and harvesters. It would also tax the airfields used for supplying the refineries and plantations and for shipping away the product. In certain regions (such as the aforementioned Putumayo) FARC would assume total control over the coca-producing chain, collecting the coca paste to FARC storages and further re-selling them to the selected criminal groups for refining and trafficking. (ICG 2005, p. 8)

The first half of the 80's was also the time when the production of heroin started to grow rapidly, most importantly because of its – at that time – much higher retail value. (LA Times 1991) Nowadays, Colombia remains one of major heroin producers in the world (although dwarfed by the values of the production in Afghanistan), and it's still the most significant source of heroin sold on the U.S. market. 79 per cent of heroin on U.S. market is bought from Mexico, however the origin of the substance is by majority in Colombia. (UNODC 2017c, p. 21) In 2004 it was estimated that FARC was present in 90% of poppy growing area, which were serviced by personnel from approximately 6 fronts. (ICG 2005, p. 9)

From the available data, it is clear that the level how much FARC is embedded in the drug-producing sector is extensive. Out of 189 municipalities where coca is produced, guerilla groups can be found in 162 – although this number may include also other smaller groups such as ELN. In 2005, 65 out of 110 FARC's operational units were involved in coca or poppy cultivation. Not whole fronts are engaged however, only its parts specialized for the drug-related duties. FARC also seems to be very flexible in securing new potential, rapidly

²⁰ This fact became clear in year 1984, after which the U.S. Ambassador Lewis Tambs allegedly coined the term “narcoterrorism“. (ICG 2005, p. 8) Other sources however state that the word was already introduced one year before by a Peruvian President Belaunde Terry. (Schmid 2004, p. 3)

expanding into new coca-producing areas, as was discovered in 2003 with the use of satellite surveillance. In many regions FARC controls the whole coca-producing chain, collecting and selling the coca paste to selected criminal partners. It has also provided loans and other financial support to the coca farmers with the aim of expanding production. In some cases, FARC also attempted – or maintained on a lower scale – the capability to refine the coca paste into the final product – cocaine. (ICG 2005, p. 9-11)

The role of FARC in international trafficking and supply to the consumer markets however remains marginal. Although certain evidence exists of isolated trafficking efforts – such as the cooperation between one of the fronts and Brazilian traffickers, suggesting organization of supply routes over the Brazilian border - no major organized efforts of expansion down-stream exist. Similarly to the limited attempts to secure the refining sector, all additional tasks in production and trafficking are diverting precious manpower away from the FARC armed corps as well as other operations and sources of income. FARC is therefore reliant on cooperating with the drug-trafficking criminal organizations. It is however probable that FARC was capable to build stronger down-stream infrastructure if it had been necessary. (ICG 2005, p. 9-12)

The new source of income enabled FARC to adopt a more direct approach in its fight against the governmental troops. By 1996, it could launch artillery-assisted raids against governmental military installations, and on several occasions managed to rout or destroy even whole elite counter-insurgency units. FARC also managed to clear some of its territories of military presence and use them as a staging area for further attacks. In 1999 and 2000, FARC was able to stage attacks as close as 60 kilometers away from the capital of Bogotá. (Rabasa 2001, p. 40-45) The successful buildup has however come with a price. Although FARC had surely dealt harshly with opposition, informants, or traitors, the level of infighting and internal killings usually associated with the drug cartels was not the common occurrence with the FARC. The corruption and embezzlement of the drug revenues for personal profit was also limited, as the organization had sophisticated measures to control its funds and assets. The drug trade however did turn FARC more violent, which lowered significantly

public support in the controlled areas. FARC was for example not able anymore to mobilize the farmers and locals to protest en masse against the spraying of coca fields with herbicides by military airplanes, and other similar causes. The new strategy of warfare combined with engagement in drug-trade caused FARC to become more ruthless, and incidents such as civilian-killings, indiscriminate bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, and massacres have started to occur more frequently. That eventually not only lowered the support at home, but – combined with the end of the Cold War – also internationally. FARC is currently listed as a terrorist organization by both United States and European Union. (ICG 2005, p. 12-13)

5.3 ELN & M-19 – THE OTHER LEFTIST GROUPS

As was mentioned previously, FARC was by far the strongest communist insurgency group, not the only one. Other significant leftist groups were called *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*²¹ or ELN, the MS-19 standing for *Movimiento 19 de Abril*²², and also a minor group of *Ejército Popular de Liberación*²³ or EPL. In the following few articles, we will focus on the activities of the former two – the ELN and M-19.

²¹ Translated as National Liberation Army.

²² The April 19 Movement.

²³ Translated as Popular Liberation Army.

5.3.1 ELN

ELN has in general very similar origins as FARC. It has its roots in the liberal faction of *La Violencia*, and it is as well primarily rural organization, operating in the remote regions of Colombia. While FARC was founded by militant communists and peasant self-defense groups, the ELN was founded in 1964 by students, left-wing intellectuals, and Catholic radicals. ELN was during the Cold War supported by the Castro's regime of Cuba – whose success it was trying to replicate - rather than the Soviet Union. It however did not have the same impact on the battlefield as FARC. (Felter 2017) In 2016, the armed forces of the group were estimated to have only around 2,000 fighters. (Al Jazeera 2016) During its history it had sometimes cooperated with FARC, but many times they clashed and targeted themselves as an opposition group. The ELN had for a long time relied on non-drug sources – such as kidnappings for ransom or extortion – however between 2005 and 2007 the group has moved to drug-related activities as a primary source of income. That is much later than FARC, the adoption of drug-income has nevertheless resulted in a heightened activity of ELN, mainly on the Venezuelan border and Pacific coast. (Otis 2014, p. 4-5) Its presence is both in coca and poppy cultivating regions is however much weaker compared to FARC or other groups. Although ELN did put significant effort into establishing a foothold, it gets under pressure from FARC or right-wing paramilitaries regularly. ELN has more distanced approach towards drug business than FARC, still condemning it officially and denying any link between the group and illicit drug manufacturing. Between 18 and 20 out of its 60 fronts are present in the coca or poppy cultivating regions, however some of them are allegedly not taxing the farmers or traffickers. It seems however that ELN – as it got under heavy pressure from its enemies in recent years – changed towards a more active role in the drug manufacturing sector. (ICG 2005, p. 17-19) Because of the fact that ELN was not able or not willing to embrace new sources of income so massively as FARC, its presence on the battlefield was by far not so visible as in case of its rival. Rather than engaging directly with the government's troops, ELN did keep the strategy of attacking state economy and infrastructure, conducting

propaganda, and conducting covert actions such as kidnappings. (Rabasa 2011, p. 45) There are sources who suggest that ELN was hired by the Medellin Cartel in 1993 to place bombs in cars during the terror campaign of the Cartel against the Colombian government (more on this in following chapters). (Schmid 2004, p. 4)

5.3.2 M-19

Another minor group called M-19 - in other words The April 19 Movement - emerged during the second wave of leftist rebellions. It has selected its name after the elections that took place on 19th April 1970 – elections that were considered by many to be manipulated and unjust. (Stanford 2018a) The sources of its emergence were similar to the other armed groups – the ongoing social and economic problems in the remote agrarian regions of Colombia, the tradition of violence as a political tool that had its roots in the times of *La Violencia* and the civil wars, the political exclusion of communists and radical socialists by the National Front, the success of Castro's Cuban revolution, and the rapid urbanization of the country. The latter was particularly important as M-19 - unlike FARC or ELN - was not a rural, agrarian-region based group. It emerged in 1973 as primarily urban-based group, supported mainly by young, middle-class university students. It was a leftist protest movement that did not rely on the examples and the support from the foreign communist countries – whether Soviet Union, Cuba, or China. On the contrary, it employed a rather nationalist narrative, that could be illustrated on action with which the M-19 for the first time attracted public attention in January 1974 – the theft of the sword of Simon Bolivar, the liberator of Colombia. The M-19 fought for anti-imperialist, Bolivarian, anti-oligarchic model of society, which would build socialism in independent, Colombian style. Compared to other leftist groups, M-19 attempted to employ less brutal and violent tactics, and embrace more liberal standpoint, as well as feminist and cross-cultural approach. It searched for its new recruits mainly in universities and schools, trade unions, and among middle-class as well as lower-income urban population. (Durán 2008, p. 6-13)

Although M-19 financing was rather lacking - most of the time relying on donations and frequent kidnappings for ransom - it started expanding to become a rural military force from 1978 onwards. M-19 did cooperate at times with ELN, ELP and other minor groups on sharing the military knowledge and trainings, which resulted in isolated successes in protracted armed clashes against the governmental military troops. The M-19 however invested often to highly-visible and medialized stunts such as the siege of Dominican Republic's embassy in the middle of Bogotá in 1980, which was in strong contrast to the covert activities of other groups in the faraway rural areas. In general, the M-19 could not match by far the fighting capability of FARC, however the visibility and impact of the group was substantial. (Durán 2008, p. 13-14)

It cannot be said that M-19 did stay clear out of the drug-trafficking world. On the beginning of the 80's it cooperated with minor traffickers and traded marijuana and its support in Colombian-based trafficking operations for the exchange of shipments of weapons, mostly supplied by Cuban officials. In 1981 one of many M-19's kidnappings²⁴ proved to be fateful. The target of the kidnapping was Martha Ochoa Vásquez, the sister of Jorge Luis Ochoa Vásquez, one of the founding members of the infamous Medellín Cartel²⁵. The Cartel founded a paramilitary death squad *Muerte a Secuestradores* – or “Death to Kidnappers” – that had brutally hunted down the M-19 members and supporters, until it managed to coerce the M-19 into releasing Martha Ochoa in early 1982. The negotiations between the Medellín Cartel and M-19 – that were brokered by a ruler of Panama Manuel Noriega – did succeed in improving the relations between the groups. Although Pablo Escobar – the leader of Medellín Cartel – generally opposed the leftist guerillas, he found the nationalist narrative of M-19 appealing. Escobar did occasionally provide the group with money, resources, and haven. Other members of the Cartel – such as Carlos Lehder – did

²⁴ It is estimated that M-19 did kidnap around 400 victims just between 1976 and 1978. (Stanford 2018)

²⁵ More detailed in the following chapters.

also reportedly cooperate with M-19. (Steinitz 2002, p. 2-3) It is difficult to prove what was the favor in return for the Cartel's support, however they did have many common tactical goals in the middle and late 80's. It is reported that M-19 did perform dozens of assassinations ordered by the Cartel in exchange for the support – one of the suspected victims being the Attorney General Carlos Mauro Hoyos. (Felbab-Brown 2010, p. 232) The biggest mystery of the suspected cooperation between M-19 and the Medellín Cartel is the siege of Palace of Justice in downtown Bogotá in 1985. The M-19 has occupied the building of the Colombian Supreme Court for 28 hours, before being assaulted by the government's troops in effort to liberate the building and the judges. The assault turned into a massacre, leaving more than 100 people dead, including 9 judges of the Supreme Court. (NY Times 1985) The circumstantial alignment with the Cartel's goals is however raising suspicion. On the same day, the judges were planning to rule on the extradition law, under which Colombia was able to extradite drug traffickers to United States. This law was strongly and violently opposed by the drug traffickers and the Medellín Cartel. Although the M-19 personnel were not wanted in United States, revocation of the extradition law was for some reason one of their main demands. (Steinitz 2002, p. 3) The M-19 fighters have also set on fire some of the court files, including about 100 United States requests for the extradition of the Colombians charged with drug trafficking. The involvement of the Medellín Cartel was suspected already from the aftermath of the incident, with the consideration of the previous association of M-19 with the Cartel. (LA Times 1985) It is however important to mention that although the involvement of the Cartel is presumed, the lack of hard evidence is preventing confirmation with certainty.

5.3 AUC – THE “SELF-DEFENSE” PARAMILITARY

If the creation and activity of the leftist guerilla groups described in the previous chapter would be one side of the coin, the emergence of right-wing paramilitary “self-defense” groups would be the other. The first wave of paramilitaries between the end of 60's and the beginning of 70's coincided with the creation of communist groups. They were

an answer of the Colombian government to the threat and many of them were trained under the guidance of United States as part of the Cold War effort to tackle the communist insurgencies. The paramilitaries did at the beginning coordinate most of their activity with the military. Their main function was to strengthen the governmental fighting capability, but also to build up intelligence networks throughout the state and gather information about the communist guerillas and their supporters. They were also capable of fighting the irregular war using the same methods as the guerillas did. Last but not least, the paramilitary groups could do things that were forbidden or discouraged by the state's military – that is for example to employ extreme violence and brutality against the guerillas, their supporters, or the local population maintaining the communist fighting capability. From the brink of 1980's, the second wave of paramilitaries has started. Autonomous paramilitary groups have been established by those in power, whom the Colombian state was not able to protect – the country's economic elite. The paramilitary groups have been set up by the large-scale landowners, cattle-ranchers, miners, and other major business players – including the drug-lords, one example being the "Death to Kidnappers" paramilitary group established by Escobar's Medellín Cartel. The legislation created in the 1960's that allowed and encouraged paramilitarism was revoked in 1989, making affiliation with paramilitary groups illegal and punishable by prison sentence. That was however already too late, as the paramilitaries were alive, strong and capable, and the covert support from the capitalist elite and their contact with military and police still existed. (Hristov 2009, p. 58 – 64)

In the mid-80's, one of the prominent paramilitary leaders Fidel Castaño founded a paramilitary group called ACCU - or "Peasant Self-Defense of Córdoba and Urabá" – which was meant to mobilize armed resistance against the incursions of communist militants and their economic and political activities in the aforementioned regions. As expected, paramilitaries did employ brutal violence against sympathizers and supporters of FARC and other communist groups. Fidel Castaño was also responsible for the systematic extermination of the members and supporters of Patriotic Union – FARC's attempt at official

and legal political party²⁶. Although at the beginning the military and police – originally the allies of paramilitaries – didn't take significant action to curb the newly-illegal armed groups, nevertheless the move into illegality as well as growing communist capabilities have pushed the paramilitaries towards unification. That was achieved by Carlos Castaño (Fidel Castaño's brother) at the end of 1994, where the First National Conference of Self-Defense Groups was created. It was then decided to use ACCU as a foundation for the newly unified illegal paramilitary conglomerate, the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*²⁷ - or AUC in short. The loose confederation of paramilitaries has absorbed fighters from the ranks of low-income rural and urban population, criminal groups, thieves, guns-for-hire, former soldiers, policemen, officers, and even former guerillas. The official goal of AUC was an indiscriminate war against the communist guerillas until they are defeated or coerced into surrender. (Hristov 2009, p. 68 – 71)

Although the primary declared goal of the AUC is politically motivated, the group was connected to the drug trade from its very beginning. Unlike FARC, which started as a purely ideological group and overtime turned into a significant player in the narcotics trade, the AUC has been from the beginning an umbrella organization that absorbed many paramilitary groups that were working for the cartels. The paramilitary groups that were aligned with powerful cartels of Medellín and Cali had primarily one goal, and that is to protect the areas of coca-cultivation and important cocaine trade-related infrastructure, or to wrestle it out of the hands of the communist guerillas. While not all of the constituents of AUC were of the same character, the group had since its start targeted regions and areas with highly developed coca-cultivation. Besides using violence, AUC also used its superior financing (narcotics, covert sponsors, other criminal activities, such as oil theft and illegal gasoline sales) to buy coca paste from the farmers for higher prices than FARC. In contrast to FARC,

²⁶ During the ten years since its inception in 1985, more than 3,000 members were murdered by the paramilitaries. (Hristov 2009, p. 69)

²⁷ Translated as United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia.

the paramilitaries were also present largely in the down-stream cocaine trade, participating in refining and international trafficking. It is estimated that AUC controlled about 40 per cent of the cocaine trafficking from Colombia, and five top AUC commanders were on the United States' extradition list for illegal drug-trafficking. While not officially confirmed, it is suspected that AUC was or still is functioning as an important partner for Italian *'Ndrangheta*, the biggest supplier to the European market. (ICG 2005, p. 13-16) By 2002, the AUC has grown from several-thousand-strong ranks to nearly 15,000 soldiers, with a budget exceeding \$100 million. It is estimated that about 80 per cent of AUC's income was gained from the cocaine-trade and drug-related activities. (Peceny 2006, p. 111)

5.4 THE CARTELS AND THE DRUG-TRAFFICKERS

The most important and lucrative cocaine route between the Andean region of Latin America and the United States has a surprisingly long history. At the beginning of 20th century, around year 1900, the supply of – back then still legal – cocaine was about ten metric tons. By year 1950, when cocaine started to be criminalized in Latin America, the supply dropped as low as half a ton. The supply reached amount of one metric ton per year again by 1970 – the year when Richard Nixon declared “the War on Drugs”, which was mainly aimed against marijuana smoked by young liberal anti-war protesters, and heroin – the drug with which the soldiers returning from the Vietnam War were very well acquainted with. Three years after, the DEA – or the Drug Enforcement Administration – was founded, becoming the main tool of the recently declared War on Drugs. Another war – the Cold War – was however also in full swing, and Nixon with the help of his Secretary of State Henry Kissinger decided to topple the rule of socialist president Allende in Chile and install the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in 1973. The new dictator – with the help of DEA – did initiate indiscriminate crackdown on the rather non-violent and minor cocaine industry in Chile. That only led it to move northwards, to the conflict-ridden and unstable Colombia. It was there where Pablo Escobar - along with his partners José Rodríguez Gacha, the Ochoa brothers and Carlos Lehder – did seize the business opportunity, which would lead to the

emergence of the criminal empire of Medellín Cartel. It would control more than 80 per cent of the global cocaine trade by the end of the 1980's – in time when the amount of cocaine trafficked the United States would grow to more than 1,000 tons per year. (Gootenberg 2012, p. 160 – 165)

The astronomical wealth that the Medellín Cartel managed to amass during the cocaine boom on the beginning of the 80's however didn't go unnoticed, as well as the rapid arming and growth of the fighting force of the Cartel. The superior funds did allow Medellín Cartel to equip its internal security forces with advanced weaponry (including machine guns and mortars) and to provide them with high-end training from Israeli and British mercenaries. (Williams 1997, p. 323) In the same time, the sales moved towards massive shipments to United States and therefore to higher profits. Between 1978 and 1981 – the Cartel has also established and armed its own paramilitaries, such as the MAS – *Muerte a Secuestradores* – or “Death to Kidnappers” after the kidnapping of Martha Ochoa. (Hartlyn 1993, p. 10-12) In the early 80's there was also a short period of Cartel's engagement in Colombian politics. Pablo Escobar invested significant resources to public infrastructure, especially in the lower-income districts of Medellín, building football stadiums and whole neighborhoods. He also often attended community events, organized neighborhood committees, and projected his populist political visions through Cartel-controlled newspapers. Escobar was in the lower-income population perceived as a kind of local “Robin Hood” – providing to the poor while being of a poor origin himself. He was elected through proxy to Colombian Congress under the Liberal Party. The leadership of the party led by charismatic leaders Luis Carlos Galán and Rodrigo Lara Bonilla had however adopted an anti-corruption campaign targeted against illicit donations to the Liberal Party's funds – which the Medellín Cartel previously submitted. By end of 1983, Escobar was expelled from the Congress. Lara Bonilla – a newly appointed Minister of Justice – has however didn't stop at that point and continued with the planned campaign against drug trafficking. Major cocaine manufacturing infrastructure of the Cartel was seized or raided, and Lara Bonilla secured warrants for major traffickers, such as Carlos Lehder. What was however even more important, the warrants have included the extradition orders to United States. That

suddenly meant that the Cartel was not untouchable - United States' police, judiciary, and prison system was one which Cartel's funds couldn't bribe or coerce. Escobar decided to respond drastically – on 30th April of 1984, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla was assassinated in his car on the street of Bogotá. At that point, another front of civil war has started in Colombia – a war not against the communist guerilla, but against powerful and well-armed Medellín Cartel. (Lessing 2012, p. 88-89)

The main objective of Pablo Escobar and his Medellín Cartel was to coerce the government into revoking the extradition laws and its anti-drug and anti-corruption policies. Escobar and other Cartel leaders – who were at certain times sheltered by Panama's ruler Manuel Noriega – have employed extreme violence against any opponents. Luis Carlos Galán as a pro-extradition presidential candidate, was shot dead during his pre-election speech in 1989. The successor of Galán and a new presidential candidate César Gaviria nearly escaped assassination on the Avianca Flight 203, which exploded mid-air due to explosive smuggled on board, killing 110 people. (Lessing 2012, p. 89-90) The Cartel has also sent a bus with 500 kilograms of explosives to detonate at the building of Administrative Department of Security later in 1989, killing 63 and injuring 600²⁸. Cartel was also attempting to bomb the U.S. Embassy in 1984 wounding six people after the extradition was adopted officially. The ties to the M-19 siege of Palace of Justice remain unproven, although probable. Besides the major attacks, Colombia suffered through a lengthy period of violence, where facilities of rival criminal groups, governmental buildings, as well as random civilian targets were bombed, assassinations were frequent, as well as attacks against governmental law enforcement and military personnel. (Phillips 2018, p. 53) Kidnappings of high value targets were also rampant – one of them was Diana Turbay, daughter of a former president. Although officially the government refused to grant amnesty or to negotiate terms, Escobar was allowed to surrender in 1991 under inconsequential charges and was guaranteed not to be extradited. (Lessing 2012, p. 91) He was also allowed to build his own – comfortable and luxurious –

²⁸ It was reported that this attack was most probably conducted by a Spanish terrorist with ties to Basque nationalist group ETA. (Schmid 2004, p. 4)

prison, from where he covertly ran his business. That however ended in 1992 when Escobar had to escape the Colombian law enforcement's attempt of overtaking of the prison. (NY Times 1992) On the run and isolated – most of the Cartel's accomplices were either dead or in jail and under the threat of extradition – Escobar was shot dead in December 1993 by government forces, which meant the end of the era of Medellín Cartel. (Williams 1997, p. 324) Interestingly, while Medellín Cartel has created its own paramilitaries – such as the MAS – other paramilitaries were also created to exterminate the Medellín Cartel associates and hunt down Pablo Escobar, most notably the “Los Pepes”²⁹ vigilante group. It was commanded by Castaño brothers³⁰ and sponsored and supplied by the emerging criminal group number one – the Cali Cartel. (Rozema 2008, p. 439)

The successor Cali Cartel has been of a different nature than Escobar's Medellín Cartel. Although it did fund the paramilitaries during the war against Escobar, it did behave more peacefully in its relation to the Colombian state. While being ruthless to its enemies, it did rely heavily on corruption, co-option, infiltration of local and regional political and economical establishment, and disguising its illegal activities under the cover of legal businesses. (Williams 1997, p. 324) Despite high-level corruption and sophisticated intelligence network, Cali Cartel was not invulnerable by the government, which immediately after the defeat of Medellín Cartel – which Cali Cartel facilitated – turned its focus heavily on the new criminal superpower. (Paul 2014, p. 7)

The Cali Cartel finally collapsed not so long after the death of its arch-rival. In 1995 the leaders of Cali Cartel, brothers Gilberto and Miguel Rodríguez Oruela were arrested and extradited into the U.S. to face lengthy prison sentences. The era of large cartels servicing the whole manufacturing and trafficking chain was over. The large cartels fractured into small *cartelitos* or “baby cartels” with local influence. They were sometimes associated in

²⁹ Acronym for *Perseguidos por Pablo Escobar* – Persecuted by Pablo Escobar.

³⁰ Paramilitary leaders and founders of AUC.

loose groups or organizations – similar to the decentralized structure of AUC. (McDermott 2014, p. 3) The number of baby cartels was estimated between 160 and 380³¹ and they usually only serviced part of the chain on a local level. Depending on the specific group, they cooperated either with FARC, AUC, or both. Some of the major “federations” such as one of the major players – Norte del Valle Cartel – cooperated tightly with the AUC paramilitaries. (ICG 2005, p. 16-17) The cooperation existed for a long time – the Norte de Valle Cartel had for example purchased AUC franchise to operate their paramilitaries under the same flag. That means that while some of the AUC’s right-wing elements perceived defeating the communist guerillas as their primary goal, some of their organization’s blocs were already owned and ran by the Cartel as their own paramilitaries, tasked with defending their operations and expanding to new areas of production. (Hristov 2009, p. 71)

5.5 COUNTER-OPERATIONS & THE PEACE PROCESS

After decades of conflict, many attempts at peace talks, and immense effort and resources from the side of Colombia, some of the factions were demobilized and disbanded. United States, who were an important actor in the Colombian conflict from the very beginning – targeting both communists and the drug cartels - launched its Plan Colombia in 1999 and invested heavily into stabilizing the country, curbing the drug trade, and strengthening the Colombian armed forces in their fight against the guerillas, paramilitaries, and traffickers. (Mejía 2016, p. 3-7) The insurgency of communist guerillas and paramilitaries was in the recent decades accelerated by the fall of dominant drug-trafficking organizations, and the growing narcotics trade income provided the warring groups with possibility to expand and re-arm. Based on rather conservative estimation of drug-related income of \$100 million per year, it would mean that FARC and the AUC did earn about between \$1 and \$1.5

³¹ Some estimates go as high as 600 “baby cartels”. (Gootenberg 2012, p. 168)

billion during the period approximately between the first half of the 90's and year 2005. (ICG 2005, p. 19)

The first group to start the negotiation and pass through successful demobilization was the M-19, which subsequently turned into an official democratic party called Democratic Alliance M-19. Although the party members and supporters were continuously threatened by the paramilitaries, the group successfully demobilized between 1988 and 1990. (Durán 2008, p. 31-32) The AUC officially disbanded between 2006 and 2008 after several years of brutal infighting – the leaders were arrested or went into hiding, while the government established reconciliatory transitional justice mechanisms. (Stanford 2018b) The FARC did enter a demobilization regime in the beginning of the 2017, laying down its arms in exchange for legalization of their status as an official democratic party, amnesties and reintegration programs. This was only partially successful, there is still about 1,200 fighters known as the “FARC dissidents” who refused to surrender. Many fighters also instead of integrating in to society decided to enter the drug-trafficking gangs or one of the last remaining major leftist groups, the ELN. (Reuters 2018a) The ELN refused to surrender and resumed its attacks on military installations and state infrastructure immediately after the expiration of the two-months ceasefire in January 2018. (Reuters 2018b) The sudden power vacuum and power-shifts in Colombia also caused other, new groups to emerge, such as the BACRIM – *Bandas Criminales* – a criminal paramilitary group based on the demobilized AUC and closely cooperating with the FARC in the drug-trade. (Otis 2014, p. 6-7) The group's objectives are purely criminal, and they are expected to attract retired combatants as well as expand to suddenly vacant coca-producing areas. (Stanford 2018c) At the same time, Colombia is still the largest manufacturer of cocaine in the world, producing more of the illicit product than ever before. (Guardian 2017) The Peace in Colombia therefore remains elusive.

6. SECONDARY CASES

Although Colombia has been selected as the primary case, purpose of further analysis, it is warranted to briefly mention other cases where the drug trade and political violence convene.

6.1 PERU

The case of Peru is not dissimilar to the story of Colombia. Being an Andean nation, Peru is one of the world's major producers of coca. In fact, Peru was the leading producer between 2010 and 2014, right until the discontinuation of the aerial spraying campaign in Colombia, during which coca crops were eradicated with herbicides³². (Felter 2017) Peru is also a country that suffered through armed communist uprisings. The Peruvian Communist Party divided into two factions in 1967 following the Sino-Soviet split. While the traditional, major faction did maintain its ties to Moscow and abandoned revolutionary violence, the other part – that was now declaring itself Maoist and aligned to China – adopted a name *Bandera Roja*, “the Red Flag” and mobilized for armed revolt. The *Bandera Roja* had further split in 1970 when it expelled from its ranks Abimael Guzman and his followers, on the basis of “ideological heresy”. The newly formed group adopted name *Sendero Luminoso* – the Shining Path. Until 1977, it has kept a low profile and it conducted mostly propaganda and educational activities and was focusing on recruitment - primarily in universities. The ideology of the group, which combined Maoist model of armed peasant revolt and the pre-colonial, traditionally Peruvian notions of society, gave the basis for the buildup in the remote, peasant, predominantly native-populated areas. This would culminate in armed

³² The aerial spraying campaign was discontinued due to growing health and environmental concerns.

uprising and the opening of hostilities by the year 1980, with a brutal and protracted guerilla war following. The movement followed Guzman's five-step program, inspired by the theories of Mao Zedong. Its five goals were to agitate and conduct armed propaganda, to sabotage Peru's socioeconomic system, to generalize the guerilla struggle, conquer territory for the guerilla and expand its support base and the revolutionary army, and finally initiate a full-scale civil war ending in the siege of major cities and the collapse of state power. (McCormick 1990, p. 3-15)

The conflict - that had cost more than 30,000 lives between 1980 and 1994 - raged in both the countryside and the cities. Shining Path had ventured into the cocaine-producing regions in 1987 and waged war with the military over the control. In the regions where as much as 80 per cent of population was working as coca growers, Shining Path didn't have to worry about refining and international trafficking. Virtually all of the produced coca paste was sold to Colombian cartels for further processing and export. Shining Path levied a 5 per cent "revolutionary tax" on the coca paste sold. This had supplied approximately \$30 million per year, which was later reinforced by \$10 – 15 thousand fees for each use of the airstrips by the cargo planes transporting coca-paste³³. (Clutterbuck 1995, p. 79-81) In 1992 Shining Path's leader Guzmán was captured and the movement was pushed into the corner. While the major operations supposedly ended around year 2000, the group has followed the model similar to FARC and moved its operations more deeply into drug-trafficking. That resulted in the re-ignition of the hostilities - although in lower intensity - around year 2009 and nowadays the growing production of coca is further funneling income to the insurgents. The group however seems to have abandoned – or postponed - its ideologically motivated objectives and its urban warfare, and tends to stay in the remote rural areas and protect their criminal operations. (NY Times 2009) The shift towards criminal nature of the group has

³³ Interestingly, Shining Path has profited strongly also from other agricultural products such as coffee – the guerillas have ran a "protection" racket on coffee farmers, with the quota as high as \$80,000. In 1989 it earned \$155 million from this source. Since the revenues have significantly dropped since 1990, Shining Path has at times insisted that the farmers grow more lucrative coca rather than coffee. (Tammen 1991, p. 9)

been officially acknowledged by the United States – although the Shining Path was on the terrorist groups list since year 1997, in 2015 it was officially declared a significant foreign narcotics trafficker. (BBC News 2015)

6.2 MEXICO

The story of drug-related violence in Mexico started accelerating in 1990's, about the time when the big Colombian cartels of Medellín and Cali were dismantled. This pushed the profit from drug trafficking further down-stream, towards Central America and Mexico in particular. Besides the sea routes towards the American market, the largest trafficking activity was seen in the Mexican borderlands, where the smuggling activities are rampant historically since the annexation of northern territories of Mexico by United States in 1848. Before the World War II, first cocaine started to flow to the U. S., along with the marijuana and opiates between the 40's and the 70's. During the 80's the supply of trafficked cocaine skyrocketed, which resulted in groups – often centered around the border cities such as Juárez, Tijuana, or Nogales – becoming significantly stronger. Other regions further inland – but not so far away from the border – also grew significant criminal drug trafficking groups, such as the region of Sinaloa. By 1989, about a third of cocaine to the U. S. market passed through Mexico - by 1992 it was already about 50 per cent. At the end of 90's, the share has reached between 75 and 85 per cent, and the number has – according to estimates - later grown towards 90 per cent. The Mexican drug traffickers and cartels did use the new massive profit to not only strengthen their smuggling infrastructure, but also to expand towards other commodities, such as heroin and methamphetamines³⁴. It is paradoxical that determined efforts of U. S. to crush the Cartels in Colombia caused the problem to move directly towards their border. (Gootenberg 2012, p. 171 - 173)

³⁴ This is strengthened by the fact that the more lucrative and extremely addictive heroin (and other opiates) demand is growing steadily during the last years in the United States. (Cortés 2015, p. 4-7)

The layout of Mexican cartels and criminal groups is very complicated, and it got even more complex over time. In 2007, there were five major drug cartels in Mexico – the Sinaloa Cartel, Juárez Cartel, Gulf Cartel, *La Familia Michoacana*, and Milenio Cartel. The fight against the cartels and the removal of their leadership caused the cartels to fracture. The biggest wave of cartel breakdowns came in 2011 where – by that time – already 10 or 11 cartels fractured into 16 separate entities. Many of them were short lived - by 2012 several of the cartels went extinct, returning the number back to 10. Many larger cartels were however weakened, and the infighting has escalated, along with continuous militarized campaign conducted from the side of the government. (Cortés 2015, p. 15-11) The violence that plagued some of the Mexican regions have escalated especially after 2006, when newly elected Mexican president Felipe Calderón decided to crackdown on the Cartels, using the Mexican military. Up to 45,000 troops would be internally deployed to fight the cartels using indiscriminate tactics and violence. The United-States did escalate their financial support for Mexican military and the development of effective counter-narcotics capabilities. After initial one-time package of \$1.4 billion provided by George W. Bush administration in 2007, the yearly support would continue at \$34.2 million in 2009, climbing up to approximately \$100 million by 2010. The Mexican descend to an all-out drug war in some of its regions would not prevent the trafficking rates to go down however – on the contrary about 95 per cent of cocaine was transferred through Mexico and its territorial waters by 2010. By 2012, six years after the inception of the military campaign, nearly 60,000 people were dead, and the drug-related killings would grow by 11 per cent by year 2010. (Sanchez 2013, p. 471-474)

The issue of presence of any type of narcoterrorism in Mexico from the side of the cartels is difficult to answer. Certainly, the criminal groups employ extreme violence, on a scale that might be considered terrorist – which it is, by observers both in Mexico and United States. For example, in 2011 in total 52 Mexicans were killed during an incident, where troops of Zetas cartel deliberately set a casino on fire in the city of Monterrey. (Sanchez 2013, p. 467-468) Cartels do use various explosive devices, such as car bombs – either they are used against the competitors, or the law enforcement personnel and military. In one case 2010 in Ciudad Juarez, the cartel has prepared a false report of killed police officer – the

rapid response elements of police and paramedics had rushed to a site, only to fall victim to an explosion of a car bomb. In 2008, during Independence Day celebration in the city of Morelia, drug cartel members were throwing hand grenades into a crowded main square, killing 8 and injuring more than 100 civilians. The problem is that while the violent drug war – that combined with other drug-related violent deaths by now has claimed about 100,000 lives – is certainly despicable, it is rare to see a clear politically targeted agenda from the side of the cartels. Attacks are often unclaimed, most of the time are part of a violent campaign against criminal competitors. Often are the attacks perpetrated with the intent to instill fear or targeted against governmental troops that aim to dismantle trafficking operations. (Phillips 2018, p. 53) While the methods are similar to ones used by political terrorist groups, they don't fall under the definition established in the chapter 3.1, which requires political agenda.

It cannot however be said that the cartels may not have political agenda – unlike Colombia, the cartels are fractured, and they are not challenging the power of the state on national level or trying to enforce narcostatization by force. On local level however, cartels do at times claim territorial control, they employ violent communications and scare tactics (ranging from decapitations and public display of mutilated bodies, to bombings and civilian killings). Finally, the cartels are frequently targeting local politicians who dare to challenge them - often as a warning for others - besides also targeting state and public representatives such as judges or journalists. (Phillips 2018, p. 50-52) The political agenda of establishing a narco-state – a regime where criminal elite lives unbothered by law, persecution, possibly even controlling territory, and maintaining the possibility to corrupt anyone, or else – can be observed on local level in Mexico. The Mexican state is however too large and too resilient – and the cartels too fractured and disorganized – that a national effort is fortunately out of scope.

6.3 AFGHANISTAN

One of the secondary cases is also a geographically more distant Afghanistan. Although it seems out of scope of the thesis, it is necessary to mention it, as it is a proof that the cooperation between the ideological militant groups and the drug-traffickers is not only limited to Latin America but occurs elsewhere, and that the issue is not only tied to cocaine, but to other drugs as well. Afghanistan, a war-torn country and a world's largest manufacturer of opium – which is a highly-addictive drug made from poppy plants, and is a precursor to the manufacturing of heroin – is suffering from severe internal instability, and therefore the efforts to reduce the poppy crops are failing. Between 2016 and 2017, the amount of opium produced grew by astounding 87 per cent. (UNODC 2017d, p. 5) More than two thirds of the world's area under poppy cultivation is in Afghanistan, about 85 per cent of the area is under control of Taliban. (UNODC 2018c, p. 4-13) Poppy as a main cash crop was present in Afghanistan historically, but especially after the Soviet-Afghan War between 1979 and 1989 the production soared as an alternative to the not-so-lucrative and collapsing traditional agriculture. Taliban, an Islamist group which emerged from the war and widespread insurgency, has managed to solidify its control over Afghanistan, and by 2001 held about 95 per cent of the country. The regime which had its basis in the fundamentalist interpretation of Islam and attempting its implementation in all levels of society and the state, viewed opium as something immoral and despicable. Despite this, international negotiators spent substantial amount of time to convince Mullah Omar - the leader of Taliban – to reduce the poppy cultivation. That was successful in 2000 when Omar declared a ban on poppy cultivation under the threat of severe punishments. This was surprisingly very effective – in the Taliban controlled areas, not contested by the rival Northern Alliance, the poppy cultivation dropped significantly. While the effects on Afghanistan's impoverished and oppressed population was significant – causing poverty and displacement – the production of opium dropped by 94 per cent between 2000 and 2001. That resulted that the heroin production in 2001 dropped by 65 per cent worldwide. (Farrell 2004, p. 82-89)

The invasion of United States – and its allies – to Afghanistan in 2001 following the September 11th attacks has however reverted this. In year 2000 the potential production of opium was 3,276 metric tons, which dropped significantly in 2001 after the Taliban ban to only 185 tons. Following the invasion, the production was back at 3,400 tons in 2002. In year 2004 the production was nearly back at the maximum from year 1999 – about 4,200 tons – and it skyrocketed in 2006 and 2007, reaching 6,100 tons and 8,200 tons respectively. This reflected general deterioration of security environment in Afghanistan, along with ISAF's³⁵ inability to root out the poppy cultivation and to defeat the Taliban completely. Taliban rapidly adapted to the situation, and while it declared opium manufacturing as against Islam years before, it adopted the drug revenues to provide itself with the fighting capability and resources to resist the invaders. (Corti 2009, p. 1-2)

The drug-related revenue was critical for the broken Taliban to regroup and resurge. While the Taliban between 2002 and 2003 was short of fighters, weapons, and funds, the drug traffickers sympathetic with Taliban did help to provide the basic funds to kickstart the movement. During the short era of opium ban, large quantities of the product were stowed away and later sold for extra resources by Taliban commanders. In March 2003, United States made a strategic mistake of invading Iraq. Not only did this reinvigorate the anti-U.S. sentiments, but it also diverted the resources away from the final defeat of resurging Taliban, getting rid of poppy cultivation, and stabilizing Afghanistan. The Taliban has on the contrary started to raise resources by diversifying and engaging in the opium trade – the earned funds would then be divided to regional sections, as well as to central leadership. Taliban gains money out of taxing the poppy cultivation and opium trade, usually in a form of 10 per cent tax, which is then rerouted to Taliban leadership, or divided by the local commanders and radical clerics. In the Taliban controlled areas, the control system of taxation zones and responsible commanders is established, as well as a system of local informants who get paid a reward for any information about improper taxation or

³⁵ ISAF or "International Security Assistance Force" is a multinational mission in Afghanistan, led by NATO and the United States.

embezzlement. In the contested production areas, fights between Taliban, drug traffickers, or local government officials occur as the factions struggle for control of resources. (Peters 2009, p. 17-21)

In the remote rural areas of Afghanistan, the official currency is nearly of no use. Barter system is used, or opium is used as a substitute currency. Taliban in some regions runs “opium banks” where commanders can deposit and withdraw their share of opium. The funds – cash or in form of opium or other goods – are distributed with margin subtracted from village-commanders to the district commanders, who then pay off the district-level governor. After subtracting a margin, a percentage of the funds further continues to provincial commanders and then further to Taliban’s central committee. While some infighting between commanders over shares occur, as well as punishments for those who don’t pay their “opium tax”, this system seems to work well and keeps all of the sections well equipped and supplied. The Taliban also not only taxes the laboratories that are producing crystal heroin out of opium, but they frequently run the labs themselves – usually close to Pakistan and Iran borders. Just in 2008 the number of such facilities increased from 30 to 50. The Taliban also receives protection payments or shares from the revenue, for providing security for opium growing fields, heroin labs, and the drug-trafficking convoys. Taliban also protects its investments by raiding the military checkpoints to enable the convoys to pass, or to launch diversion attacks to divert governmental and alliance forces away from the area through which a drug shipment is passing. Taliban also seems to territorially expand to areas which are either cultivating poppy or are lying along important trafficking routes. (Peters 2009, p. 17-21)

Heroin trade and manufacturing in Afghanistan is a complicated topic which would warrant much more space and research. For example, it is difficult to assess how much did eventually the Taliban transformed to a non-political, criminal group – in other words how much of its interest is really dedicated to establishing islamic state, or towards its more lucrative opium business and its expansion. It is interesting however that Taliban some personnel have ended up on the list of drug-traffickers, rather than the terrorist wanted

lists. (Reuters 2012) Other questions remain unanswered regarding the relations of Taliban to the drug-traffickers, whether in Iran, Central Asia, or Pakistan. While some sources mentioned drug-trafficking rings working along the Taliban³⁶, not much can be found about their specific activities and – most importantly – their potential political interests.

6.4 OTHER CASES

Although it would be interesting to mention other cases where some form of narcoterrorist activity may possibly occur, the thesis is limited in its scope. For illustration, while about a hundred countries participate in international drug trade, about thirty countries have been assessed to have a nearly-certain link between drug trade and armed conflict. These include – in alphabetical order – Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Colombia, Comoros, Congo-Brazzaville, Chad, Dem. Republic of Congo, Egypt, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, India, Ireland, Kosovo, Lebanon, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Turkey, Uganda, Uzbekistan. This list is however certainly not final or complete. During the research for this thesis, sources were encountered discussing the possible connections between drug trade and political violence in many Latin and Central American, South-East Asian, African, Middle-Eastern and Central Asian countries. (Schmid 2004, p. 2)

³⁶ Such as the Quetta Alliance, a drug-trafficking cartel operating in Afghanistan and abroad. (Peters 2009, p. 11)

7. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Before we will proceed to the final conclusion, we first need to answer the second research question. Is it possible to prove that the theoretical concepts described in Chapter 4 occurred in reality? To answer this, let's again go through the defined types and summarize the findings in the historical examples.

7.1 NARCOTERRORIST NEXUS

First kind of nexus, the "political narcoterrorism" is a concept that can be proven easily. While not generally common, it occurred in most of our cases and it is very probable it would occur also in other cases that were not mentioned in this thesis. From those which were, the major case is of course the FARC, which during its long existence transformed from a communist guerilla into one of the most significant players in the Colombian coca manufacturing and cocaine illicit trade. Its need to finance its expansion and continuous warfare against the state forces and the paramilitaries caused its engagement in the illicit drug manufacturing to surge. The group has engaged in activities that will be described in the following sub-chapter concerning the support types between political and criminal groups, however it needs to be said that the FARC has throughout the years overtaken large part of manufacturing process of coca in Colombia, parts of the refining industry, and secured deals to sell the product to other parties for processing and trafficking the drugs down-stream. Despite this, FARC is still considered a politically-focused group, as its fight against the government only ceased after the recent ceasefire. The ceasing of hostilities combined with deeper engagement in the drug manufacturing – as well as ranks of

unemployed, demobilized soldiers – could nevertheless possibly push FARC or its remnants closer to what would be the definition of drug-trafficking, criminal organization.

The similar story is reoccurring also in many other cases, whether the leftist ELN and Peruvian Sendero Luminoso, or a right-wing paramilitary AUC, or the religious-based Taliban. It is also worth mentioning that while this type of nexus occurred, there was often some type of support relation in effect (more in the next sub-chapter), and large parts of the criminal activity was done by proxy. Interesting factor is also the fact that many of the groups have originally denounced the drug trade, only to engage in it later. The groups which used the drug profits to bolster their capabilities quite often met with the growing costs of their enhanced activity, which resulted in pushing them towards generating more profit from the drug trade. It may be possible that at some point this spiral could leave to the abandonment of ideological / political goals and transformation into a full-fledged criminal organization. While it is difficult to judge at what stage the groups were (or are) towards this occurrence, it is worth mentioning that for example the AUC was very close to this goal, and it seems that it rapidly provided a basis for new criminal organization after its demobilization.

The second type of nexus, the “criminal narcoterrorism” is on the contrary very rare occurrence. From all of the selected cases, the Medellín cartel was the only one to accomplish this definition. The other Colombian cartels either preferred to “stay low”, also perhaps because of the epic failure of Medellín Cartel to win the war against the government. In many cases the Cartels were however too weak and fractured to challenge the government in way that Escobar’s Medellín Cartel did. Medellín Cartel is a compelling case of this concept’s existence, as the sole purpose of the nation-wide campaign of terror and violence as well as open insurgency by Cartel’s paramilitary, was to enforce its political intentions and goals. The purpose of the violence was primarily not to generate higher profit from the drug trade (as the Medellín Cartel in its prime had nearly a total monopoly over the trafficking of cocaine), but to prevent the state to fight corruption, to enforce law, and to preserve accountability. When the state – in its effort to fight the Cartel – did open doors to

foreign power's intervention, the Colombian narco-oligarchy had suddenly an opponent that was out of reach of their corruption, and that would endanger its supreme and untouchable position within the state. The answer was therefore to coerce the state into submission.

It however takes a very strong criminal organization to challenge state institutions and power on a national level in a similar fashion. In comparison to this, the Mexican cartels are mostly only protecting their drug-trafficking operations by using violence, and the Mexican national institutions are out of their scope to coerce or threaten. On regional level however, similar dynamics to a Type 2 narcoterrorist nexus might be present.

7.2 SUPPORT TYPES

The support type 1 relies on the ideological group's politically-motivated activity being supported by a criminal organization. After going through the historical cases in previous two chapters, these are the examples:

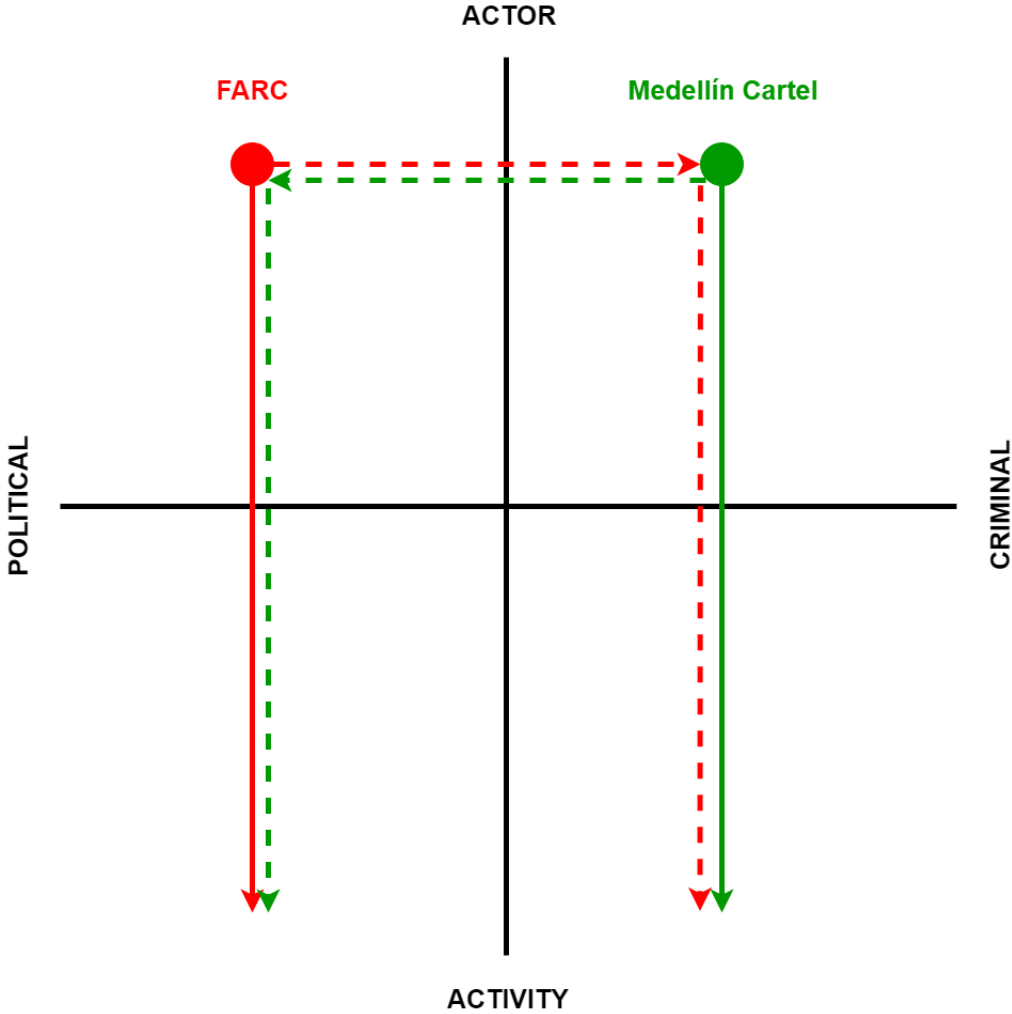
- The Medellín Cartel did cooperate with FARC between the mid-70's and mid-80's, providing them with resources and finance for protecting their operations inside their controlled territory. The similar relation was later established with other traffickers and cocaine manufacturers, who were providing FARC with money for enabling and securing their operations.
- The AUC did receive investments from the Cartels for providing security and fighting capabilities, and for wresting out the coca-production regions out of the hands of communist paramilitaries
- M-19 has received weapons shipments supplied by the drug-traffickers and smugglers

- Taliban seems to be providing security for the heroin manufacturing operations and trafficking convoys, while very probably receiving payments or shares of the profit from the traffickers, which therefore strengthens their politically-motivated activities.

The Support type 2 focuses on the criminal organization helping the ideological organization to engage in criminal, drug-related activity. For this to occur, the Narcoterrorist Nexus Type 1 needs to be present as well. This basically occurs anytime when the drug-trafficking groups overtake parts of the drug manufacturing or trafficking chain. It occurred on multiple occasions in multiple previous cases. Most commonly the ideological group oversees the growing of the precursor (coca leaves or poppy) and then passes it downstream, either to the manufacturers who produce cocaine / heroin, or further to traffickers. FARC for example in most of its history didn't directly participate in trafficking, and rarely refined cocaine from the produced coca paste. The criminal "partners" had to provide the remaining part of the chain.

The Support type 3 is generally a mirrored situation compared to the type 1. The ideological group helps the criminal group in its drug-related criminal activities. The list of the examples is actually nearly identical to the Support type 1. As it seems, Type 1 and Type 3 are often closely connected. For illustration, let's focus on the case of previously-mentioned cooperation between FARC and Medellín Cartel. The FARC did provide the Cartel (criminal group) with security and cover for their drug-manufacturing and trafficking operations (criminal activity). At the same time the Cartel did provide FARC (ideological group) with resources and finances that helped them to continue their fight for establishing communism in Colombia (political activity). Whether the groups were also a part of narcoterrorist nexus is actually not important in this case, also Nexus Type 1 and Type 2 regarding the FARC and Medellín Cartel were not yet fully developed in that time. This situation is illustrated at Table 9 below. It seems that the combination of Type 1 and 3 might be a significant occurrence in times where both ideological and criminal groups exist in the same area, because the cooperation brings benefits for both sides and their main interests

(ideological and criminal respectively) are not threatened or interfered with by the other party.



- - - -> Support

Table 9

The last type is the Support Type 4 which focuses on ideological groups helping the criminal organizations in their political activity. This is a very rare occurrence, as the Narcoterrorist Nexus Type 2 – which is a prerequisite for this situation – is rare as well, but in this case an ideological group aligned to same interests is also required. From all of the cases only the cooperation between the Medellín Cartel and M-19 and ELN stands out. M-19 did allegedly conduct assassinations and attacks for the Medellín Cartel against government and

political opponents, and ELN was used to conduct car bombings, which would fit the description. The main case which would with certainty confirm the existence of the concept is however the Justice Palace siege. Although this would be an ideal example of Support Type 4, we should not include it, because the influence of Medellín Cartel in the attack is remaining an unconfirmed – yet plausible – speculation. -

7.3 PREREQUISITES

To answer the final research question about what prerequisites are necessary for the emergence of narcoterrorism, let's first include those which are available in the literature. For example, the countries are more prone to be susceptible to transnational organized crime and terrorism if they are affected by the following criteria, defined by extensive research of Library of U.S. Congress (Schmid 2004, p. 10-11).

- 1. official corruption*
- 2. incomplete or weak legislation*
- 3. poor enforcement of existing laws*
- 4. non-transparent financial institutions*
- 5. unfavorable economic conditions*
- 6. lack of respect for the rule of law in society*
- 7. poorly guarded national borders*
- 8. lack of political will to establish rule of law*
- 9. geographic location (e.g. along arms or narcotics trafficking route)*
- 10. regional geopolitical issues (e.g. long-standing territorial dispute).*

The criteria listed might truly serve as enablers to the emergence of threat of narcoterrorism. It is also necessary to say that many of these individual criteria are

observable in many other states, however only the combination of most of these may facilitate the narcoterrorist threat to emerge. If we however summarize and compare these criteria with the research done for the purpose of this thesis, they can be reduced to three groups.

- 1) The weakness of state institutions and internal security (points 1-8 in the list above)
- 2) The presence of significant illicit drug resource or trafficking route
- 3) History or presence of armed conflict

First, while the internal weakness of state is hard to define, it is critical to the emergence of the threat. In case of the emergence of the ideological or politically-motivated terrorist group, the weakness of the state is key for the group's sustainability, survival, and continuous activity. In the case of the Narcoterrorist Nexus Type 1, the presence of drugs is essential for the prolongation of the conflict and the survival and expansion of the rebel groups. With the help of illicit resources, the ideological belligerent group can compensate the growing capabilities of the governments, up to the point where the state can become too weak or unable to deal with the situation. That is the main reason why the Colombian Conflict lasts already for 54 years. In general, the conflicts where rebels rely on the contraband for financing are on average lasting 48.2 years, while conflicts where the rebel groups are not funded through illicit contraband last on average 8.8 years. While the narcotics are not likely to play a role in the initiation of the conflict – which may also be facilitated by the state weakness – they play significant role in prolonging it. (Cornell 2005, p. 753)

Secondly, the drug source is essential. While some states where some kind of narcoterrorism has appeared are transit routes, the main and strongest cases are in the main producing countries – as are the largest world producers are Colombia, Peru, and Afghanistan. It is also again worth mentioning that cocaine and heroin are drugs with high value and centralized locations of source. From this source there are clearly defined trade routes towards largest markets and the highest amount of paying consumers. It is unlikely that many other illicit drugs would create same effect, as they are either decentralized in

terms of production, or lower in value. The profitability of the illicit drugs and centralized control over the profits is most probably the key to the emergence of Narcoterrorist Nexus Type 2. Medellín Cartel was unique in its nearly-monopolistic control over the world's cocaine trade and its main source, and its immense wealth and power allowed him to challenge the relatively weak Colombian state. In other cases, the drug-trafficking organizations are not able to replicate this model – such as in the case of Mexico – as the organizations are too fractured, are not generating enough profit, or their strength compared to the state is too low to significantly threaten or coerce it on national level.

Thirdly, the states experiencing the narcoterrorist threat are usually countries with the history of violent conflict – sometimes interstate but mostly internal or civil. This is the case with all of the analyzed countries, as well as those listed in the chapter 6.4. The illicit sources of income are in general influencing conflict greatly. The resources which are affecting the armed conflict the most and allow the rebel groups to resupply and increase their survivability, are defined by the lootability, obstructability, and legality. Illicit drugs are lootable, it is not necessary to have complicated infrastructure or technology compared to other sources (such as oil, gas, timber, diamonds, or minerals), and can be appropriated by relatively low amount of people. They are hard to obstruct due to the lack of sophisticated infrastructure and are relatively easy to transport and conceal. Finally, they are illegal, therefore they are benefitting primarily the insurgents, while the state cannot directly exploit the resource in a similar manner, unless it is willing to suffer international sanctions. (Cornell 2007, p. 209-210) In many aspects, the countries where narcoterrorism emerged are cursed by the abundance of the illicit resource. It is not surprising that their situation is in many cases similar to the countries which are affected by the “resource curse” – countries where resource abundance (such as for example the “conflict” diamonds) is both fueling and prolonging the conflict, as well as bolstering corruption and eroding the institutions, subsequently causing the weakening of the state. (Ross 2003, p. 17-36)

7.4 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this thesis was successfully able to answer the previously established research questions. In regard to the first question, the concept of narcoterrorism was introduced as a complex system of relations between the ideological and criminal groups, and their respective activities. The system which was described in chapter 4 was subsequently confirmed by the historical cases chapters 5 and 6. To provide the comprehensive definition, the concept of narcoterrorism established in this thesis can be defined as such:

Narcoterrorism is a system of relations between politically-motivated ideological actors and drug-trafficking criminal actors, and their respective activities. The narcoterrorist nexus occurs when a group of a certain kind (ideological or criminal) engages in the activity of an opposite kind. When both types of actors operate simultaneously, one of four different types of supportive or cooperative relations may occur.

The first hypothesis is therefore confirmed, and the first research question answered. Secondly, the following research question was answered in the previous sub-chapter, in which the different theoretical types were assigned to the real-life occurrences described in Chapters 5 and 6. All of the types were observed, however some of them – as the hypothesis suggests – are truly much rarer than the others, and therefore possibly difficult to replicate.

Finally, the third research question was answered in the previous sub-chapter, describing the prerequisites of the emergence of narcoterrorism. Answer was based on available literature and observation of similarities between the included historical cases. That concludes the final research questions and confirms the last hypothesis.

Although it may seem that the days of narcoterrorism have passed – as the introduced historical cases may be suggesting – it is far from being true. In the modern world, a globalized trade with narcotics still remains an extremely profitable activity, and the civil conflicts in weak or failing states are as well by far not yet a matter of history. While one chapter of the decades-long conflict in Colombia was closed by the surrender of majority of FARC, many groups are fighting on, new armed groups are emerging, and the long history of failed peace negotiations tells us that the re-ignition of the conflict is a constant possibility. In the second half of the next year, the freshly rotated allied troops sent to a mission in Afghanistan will – for the first time – be including soldiers who didn't live to see the beginning of the war, thus marking the 18th year of conflict. While the situation is by far not firmly in the hands of the ISAF and the Afghan central government, it is very likely that the war will continue on for the years to come. At the same time the poppy fields will again – as always - turn red under the slopes of Hindu Kush, only to be later processed into one of the most addictive and destructive substances known to mankind. Thousands of miles away, the consumption of illicit drugs in United States, European Union, and other developed countries grows steadily. Between the manufacturer and the consumer, the shipments have to cross many countries along the transit route. All of these countries are in danger, as the drug trade combined with internal instability is a particularly explosive combination. Many countries in the world – whether in Latin America, Africa, Middle East, Central or South-East Asia - are potentially threatened by this fact. Although we may not predict which new conflicts, state collapses, or technological and societal changes will occur in the future, it is highly probable that radical political ideologies and international drug trade will still retain their profoundly destructive and dangerous nature.

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