



UNIVERSITY OF BRASÍLIA
INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
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MILA CAMPBELL

**CRIME, CONFLICT, AND PEACE: VIOLENT NON-STATE GROUPS AND CROP
SUBSTITUTION IN THE COLOMBIA-ECUADOR BORDERLAND (2017-2021)**

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Master's Thesis

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Master's Thesis submitted to the Graduate Program in International Relations at the University of Brasília, as a requisite for obtaining the title of Master in International Relations.

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Supervisor: Prof. Antonio Jorge Ramalho da Rocha

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“To be honest, the government can say what it likes, but what brings money is coca. [. . .] It’s also the government’s fault because [. . .] they gave us some poor seeds of corn and some fish [. . .]. They thought we would live on this and that’s it. But the seeds didn’t even grow [. . .]. If they gave us something that works, even if it is cacao, if they gave us a credit at low interest rates, then people would perhaps stop growing coca. However, if they don’t give us anything, there is nothing we can do. [. . .] Imagine, this is not a town, this is all countryside. You don’t have money, you don’t have anything. They come and give you some poor corn seeds which won’t grow. This is going to help us? It will never help anyone, it doesn’t help!” (Interview with a Colombian farmer, Sucumbíos, Ecuador, 2012 *apud* Idler 2019, 225)

“The guerrillas’ demobilization reduced the possibility of people’s exposure to large-scale violence, but it has also concealed security dynamics in the region even further. From the perspective of the state centers, the absence of such large-scale violence means there is no need to bother about these border areas. Illicit cross-border authority is ignored, and so is the loss of the state’s perceived legitimacy in these regions. The demobilization also diminished the availability of rules of behavior that existed during combat, or during the preponderance of one single powerful actor, the FARC. Maybe this is why one farmer I met in Putumayo remarked, “we are worried that this peace will become another battlefield.” (Idler 2019, 302)

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It is impossible to detach my individual experience during the Masters from the collective challenge we all faced when dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact was so significant that my friends and I became known as “the pandemic class”. When applying to the Masters in 2019 we could not imagine the level of transformation our idea of entering a graduation program would suffer. After a first moment of indecisions and prorogations, we finally started our academic journey on August 2020. The new scenario that unfolded during the next years did not alleviate the challenge: we had to engage in classes, develop our research, and write our thesis amidst the chaos, basically.

Apart from the pandemic, another individual challenge was to find the work-studies-life balance. Changing jobs while writing my thesis was not one of the things I had on my to-do list, but the reality imposed itself, and I lost the focus for a while. After a shorter-than-expected period (thank God), I put myself back on track. It was not easy, but in the end, things worked out the way they should. I thank my bosses for allowing and stimulating my academic persona alongside my professional one. Colonel Bueno and Mariana Plum, I will always be grateful for the talks and the example you gave and give me.

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The virtual classes and the physical isolation made me feel this whole experience, most of times, as a solitary one. Because of it, I started valuing even more the few moments in which I could share the burden, exchange ideas, and restore my energies. I thank every single person that crossed my path and gave me inspiration to keep calm and carry on. And, trying to be as calm as possible, I carried on. I wrote my Masters' thesis. Not in the way I wanted to, but in the best way I could, considering the circumstances. I have put my ideas and interests into a project that does not end here, and that connects my past, present and future paths. I canalized my potential to contribute somehow to shedding light on people's suffering on a faraway neglected land. And that is the reason behind everything.

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CRIME, CONFLICT, AND PEACE: VIOLENT NON-STATE GROUPS AND CROP SUBSTITUTION IN THE COLOMBIA-ECUADOR BORDERLAND (2017-2021)

ABSTRACT

Colombia faces a historical struggle related to crime and conflict. The country has endured a long history of internal power disputes, in which the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC-EP) and other violent non-state groups (VNSGs) have controlled significant parts of the territory and were wise enough to withstand, over time, government efforts to crush them. In addition to - and often because of - such threats, Colombia stands as the top cocaine production country, the most produced and consumed drug in the world. In 2016, the comprehensive Peace Deal signed between the Colombian government and FARC-EP aimed primarily to end the cycle of violence and numerous violations of human rights the *guerrilla* and state security forces perpetrated. The document, a result of four years of intense negotiations, is divided into six parts: (i) Comprehensive rural reform; (ii) Political participation; (iii) End of conflict; (iv) Solution to the Illicit Drugs Problem; (v) Victims; and (vi) Implementation and verification mechanisms. Inserted in Point 4's overall goal of undermining criminal and violent dynamics derived from the drug problem, the *Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos Ilícitos* (PNIS) promotes voluntary substitution of crops for illicit use through programs and projects dedicated to overcoming conditions of violence, poverty, inequality, and marginalization of families. The Program is an immediate response to national and transnational problems, such as the chronic weak institutional presence and the financing of drug-related VNSGs. Nonetheless, the clear purpose and the coordination tools available were not enough to boost PNIS early implementation in Colombia: part of this insufficiency derives from top-down governance challenges, but local security dynamics have proven themselves a considerable obstacle as well. Since the armed conflict is known to have affected differently the regions, leading to major security concerns for rural and border areas in comparison to urban centers, my focus rests on the Colombia-Ecuador borderland in order to address the magnifying effect on security dynamics the transnational character of borderlands adds to the case study. Therefore, this research investigates how local security dynamics derived from VNSGs action can spoil the implementation of PNIS in Nariño and Putumayo, Colombian departments located in the Colombia-Ecuador borderland. I argue that VNSGs undermine the PNIS implementation by fueling high-profiting illegal economies, fomenting state-crime collusion and keeping

communities under a rule of fear, insecurity, and uncertainty. As a consequence of these actions, VNSGs affect the core aspects of PNIS of territorial ownership and socioeconomic empowerment of communities, hence undermining the Program's implementation. VNSGs illegal actions challenge the state monopoly of violence and, in contrast with state governance based on the rule of law, creates a parallel standard of governance, based on violence. To understand such complex phenomena within their context, my "how" research question is best answered with an in-depth qualitative case study. The case study analysis focuses on building the causal paths of PNIS in Nariño and Putumayo in the first five years of peacebuilding in Colombia (2017-2021), identifying occurrences in which VNSGs' action spoiled the Program's implementation in both departments. To achieve the intended results, I rely on a bottom-up epistemological perspective which considers the agency of VNSGs in marginalized regions. Through the critical approach, I remain attentive to invisible power dynamics that affect borderland communities and, therefore, adequate methodological choices and methods of data collection and analysis to shed light on security dynamics that transcend the traditional conflict-peace binary.

KEYWORDS

Colombia; Violent non-state groups; Peace implementation; Crop substitution; Borderland; Peace Spoilers

CRIME, CONFLITO E PAZ: GRUPOS VIOLENTOS NÃO-ESTATAIS E SUBSTITUIÇÃO DE CULTIVOS NA REGIÃO DE FRONTEIRA COLÔMBIA- EQUADOR (2017-2021)

RESUMO

A Colômbia enfrenta uma luta histórica relacionada ao crime e ao conflito. O país tem uma longa trajetória de disputas internas de poder, nas quais as Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) e outros grupos violentos não-estatais (VNSGs) controlaram partes significativas do território e foram estratégicos o suficiente para resistir, ao longo do tempo, aos esforços do governo para esmagá-los. Além - e muitas vezes por causa - dessas ameaças, a Colômbia se destaca como o principal país produtor de cocaína, a droga mais produzida e consumida no mundo. Em 2016, o Acordo de Paz assinado entre o governo colombiano e as FARC-EP visava principalmente encerrar o ciclo de violência e as inúmeras violações de direitos humanos perpetradas pela guerrilha e pelas forças de segurança do Estado. O documento, resultado de quatro anos de intensas negociações, está dividido em seis partes: (i) Reforma rural integral; (ii) Participação política; (iii) Fim do conflito; (iv) Solução do problema das drogas ilícitas; (v) Vítimas; e (vi) Mecanismos de implementação e verificação. Inserido no objetivo geral do Ponto 4 de suplantar as dinâmicas criminosas e violentas derivadas do problema das drogas, o Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos Ilícitos (PNIS) promove a substituição voluntária de cultivos de uso ilícito por meio de programas e projetos dedicados à superação das condições de violência, pobreza, desigualdade e marginalização das famílias. O Programa é uma resposta imediata a problemas nacionais e transnacionais, como a crônica presença institucional fraca e o financiamento de VNSGs por meio do mercado de drogas. No entanto, o propósito claro e as ferramentas de coordenação disponíveis não foram suficientes para impulsionar a primeira fase de implementação do PNIS na Colômbia: parte dessa insuficiência deriva de desafios de governança de cima para baixo, mas dinâmicas locais de segurança também se mostram como um obstáculo considerável. Considerando que o conflito armado afetou de forma diferente as regiões, levando a maiores preocupações de segurança para as áreas rurais e fronteiriças em comparação com os centros urbanos, meu foco recai sobre a região de fronteira Colômbia-Ecuador: a fim de abordar o efeito de ampliação de insegurança que o caráter transnacional das fronteiras adiciona ao estudo de caso. Portanto, esta pesquisa investiga como as dinâmicas locais de segurança derivadas da ação dos VNSGs podem prejudicar a implementação do

PNIS em Nariño e Putumayo, departamentos colombianos localizados na fronteira com o Equador. Eu argumento que os VNSGs prejudicam a implementação do PNIS ao alimentar economias ilegais de alto lucro, ao fomentar o conluio do crime com o Estado e ao manter as comunidades sob o domínio do medo, da insegurança e da incerteza. Como consequência dessas ações, os VNSGs afetam os aspectos centrais do PNIS de apropriação territorial e empoderamento socioeconômico das comunidades, o que prejudica a implementação do Programa. As ações ilegais do VNSGs desafiam o monopólio estatal da violência e, em contraste com a governança estatal baseada no estado de direito, criam um padrão paralelo de governança, baseado na violência. Para entender tais fenômenos complexos dentro de seu contexto, minha pergunta de pesquisa é melhor respondida com um estudo de caso qualitativo. A análise do estudo de caso se concentra na construção dos caminhos causais do PNIS em Nariño e Putumayo nos primeiros cinco anos de consolidação da paz na Colômbia (2017-2021), identificando ocorrências em que as ações dos VNSGs prejudicaram a implementação do Programa em ambos os departamentos. Para alcançar os resultados pretendidos, me apoio em uma perspectiva epistemológica “de baixo pra cima” que considera a atuação dos VNSGs em regiões marginalizadas. Por meio da abordagem crítica, me mantenho atenta às dinâmicas invisíveis de poder que afetam as comunidades fronteiriças e, portanto, adequo minhas escolhas metodológicas e de métodos de coleta e análise de dados para lançar luz sobre dinâmicas de segurança que transcendem o binarismo conflito-paz.

PALAVRAS CHAVE:

Colômbia; Grupos violentos não-estatais; Implementação da paz; Substituição de cultivos; Fronteira; Spoilers da paz

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAI - Asistencia Alimentaria Inmediata

ADR - Agencia de Desarrollo Rural

AICMA - Acción Integral Contra Minas Antipersonal

ANT - Agencia Nacional de Tierras

ARN - Agencia para la Reincorporación y la Normalización

ART - Agencia de Renovación del Territorio

AUC - Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia

AVC - Alfarero Vive Carajo

BACRIM - Bandas Criminales

CEBAF - Centros Binacionales de Atención de Frontera

CEVICE - Comisión de Vecindad e Integración Colombiana–Ecuatoriana

COMBIFRON - Comisión Binacional Fronteriza

CPOs - Causal-Process Observations

CSIVI - Comisión de Seguimiento, Impulso y Verificación del Acuerdo Final

CSS - Critical Security Studies

DDR - Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

DSOs - Data-Set Observations

ELN - Ejército de Liberación Nacional

FARC-EP - Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo

FCP - Fondo Colombia en Paz

IEANPE - Instancia Especial de Alto Nivel con Pueblos Étnicos

ICHR - Interamerican Court of Human Rights

ICJ - International Court of Justice

INDEPAZ - Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz

JEP - Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz

OACP - Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz

OAS - Organization of American States

PAI - Plan de Atención Inmediata

PDET - Programa de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial

PISDA - Planes Integrales Comunitarios y Municipales de Sustitución y Desarrollo Alternativo

PMI - Plan Marco de Implementación del Acuerdo de Paz

PNIS - Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos de Uso Ilícito

SSAIT - Strategic and Structural Areas for Illicit Transit

SIMCI - Sistema Integrado de Monitoreo de Cultivos Ilícitos

UBPD - Unidad de Búsqueda para Personas dadas por Desaparecidas

UN - United Nations

UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

VNSGs - Violent Non-State Groups

ZIF - Zona de Integración Fronteriza

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Crime, Conflict, and Peace: violent non-state groups and crop substitution in the Colombia-Ecuador borderland (2017-2021)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Problem statement: is Colombia in peace?

Colombia faces a historical struggle related to crime and conflict. The country has endured a long history of internal power disputes, in which the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC-EP) and other violent non-state groups (VNSGs) have controlled significant parts of the territory and were strong enough to withstand, over time, government efforts to crush them. In addition to - and often because of - such threats, Colombia stands year after year as the top cocaine production country, the most produced and consumed drug in the world (UNODC 2022b).

In 2016, a noteworthy Peace Deal was signed between the Colombian government and FARC-EP, aiming primarily to end the cycle of violence and numerous violations of human rights the *guerrilla* and state security forces perpetrated. With a comprehensive approach, the Peace Deal goes beyond Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and transitional justice efforts, also dealing with rural reform, drug trafficking, and political opening. The document, a result of four years of intense negotiations, is divided into six parts: (i) Comprehensive rural reform; (ii) Political participation; (iii) End of conflict; (iv) Solution to the Illicit Drugs Problem; (v) Victims; and (vi) Implementation and verification mechanisms (Acuerdo Final 2016).

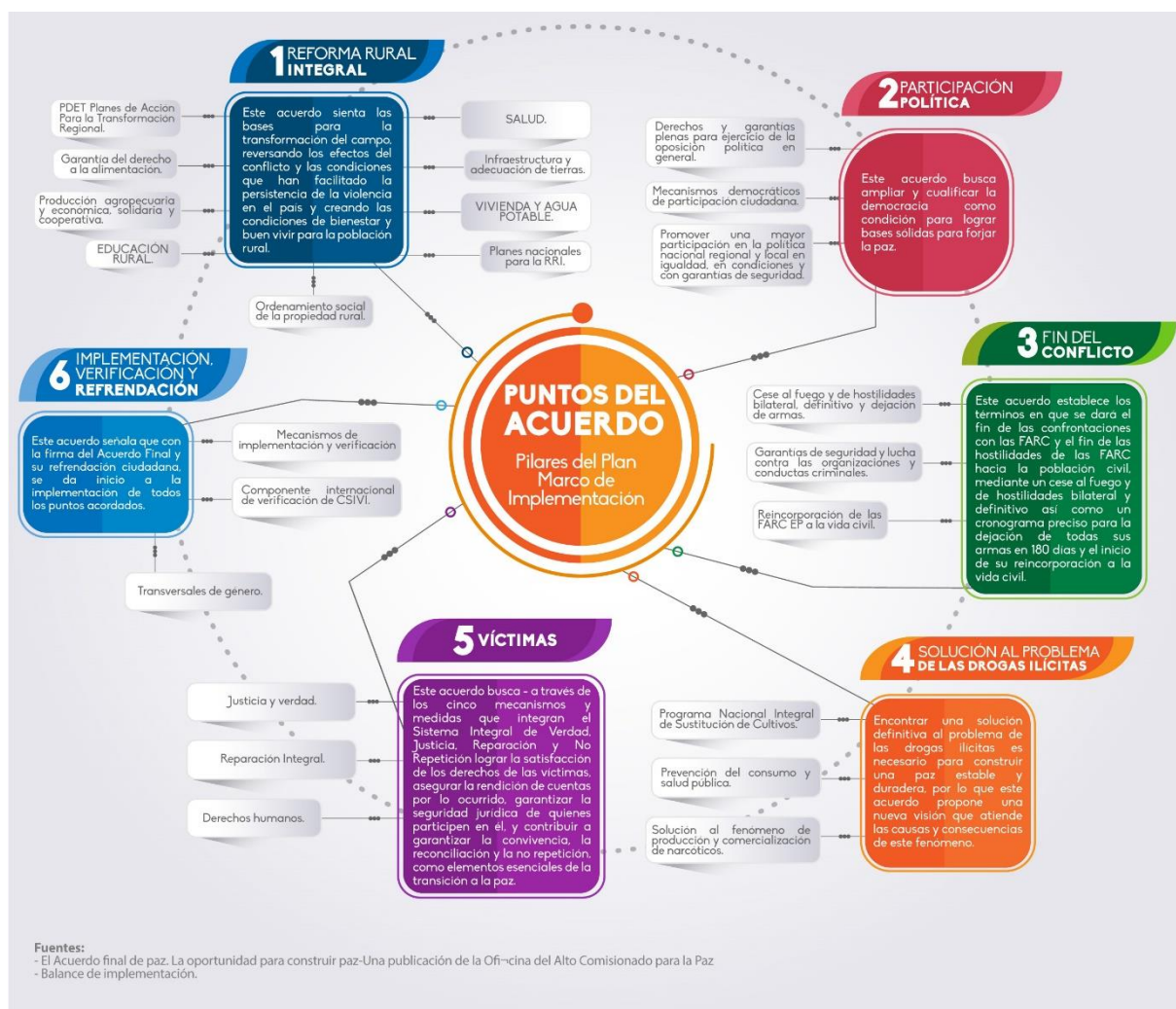
The Peace Deal is sustained and complemented by the so-called *Plan Marco de Implementación del Acuerdo de Paz* (PMI), approved in December 2017 by the Colombian government. The PMI is stipulated in point 6 of the Peace Deal and lies under the responsibility of the *Comisión de Seguimiento, Impulso y Verificación del Acuerdo Final*¹ (CSIVI). With a 15-year span, the Plan aims to orient decision-making, budgetary aspects and public policy formulation related to the Peace Deal. The PMI is a reference document for the inclusion of components of all six points and also the transversal approaches (ethnic and

¹ According to the PMI (2017, 11): “*La Comisión de Seguimiento, Impulso y Verificación para la Implementación del Acuerdo Final se creó el 7 de diciembre de 2016, a través del Decreto 1995 del mismo año. Según este Decreto, la CSIVI estará integrada por tres representantes del Gobierno nacional y tres representantes de las FARC – EP en proceso de reincorporación a la vida legal, o del partido político que surja de su tránsito a la vida legal*”.

gender) of the Peace Deal into Colombian National Development Plans. Also, the Plan is a requirement for the monitoring and the verification of peace implementation in the country (PMI 2017).

After seven months of technical sessions among the components of the CSIVI and the Gender and Ethnic Special Instances, the final text of the PMI reflects the participative and articulated process required for its creation. The Plan contains pillars, strategies, products, goals and indicators, all of them associated with one of the points of the Peace Deal and committed to the transversal approaches (PMI 2017). Figure 1 illustrates the association of PMI pillars with each one of the points of the Peace Deal.

Figure 1 – The six points of the Peace Deal and their respective PMI pillars



Source: (Consejería Presidencial para la Estabilización y la Consolidación 2017)

In conjunction with the Peace Deal and the PMI, since the beginning of peace negotiations, the Colombian government has made progress on reforming or creating new institutions dedicated to peace implementation. The *Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras* of 2011 was a first movement to acknowledge the internal armed conflict, forged alongside Santos' government decision to engage in peace talks with FARC-EP. The institutional framework created by the law is dedicated to provide truth, justice, protection, assistance and reparation for victims (Ministerio de Justicia y del Derecho 2011). The *Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas*, the *Unidad de Restitución de Tierras* and the *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica* were milestones for the creation of a more robust institutional ground to sustain future peace efforts.

During peace negotiations, despite the uncertainty of which - or if a - deal would be reached, three institutions were created in 2015 to coordinate territorial and rural development issues: *Agencia Nacional de Tierras* (ANT), *Agencia de Desarrollo Rural* (ADR), and *Agencia de Renovación del Territorio* (ART). These agencies² were envisioned as key elements to solve structural socioeconomic disparities, especially in rural areas of Colombia, and had enough of a goal to justify their existence even in a scenario of an inexistent Peace Deal (Caballero 2018). Nowadays, for example, the agencies have a crucial role on coordinating two of the most important programs outlined in the Peace Deal: the *Programa de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial* (PDET) and the *Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos de Uso Ilícito* (PNIS). We will explore more the PNIS in this research.

With the signature and approval of the Peace Deal in 2016, there was a much stronger will for institutional efficiency as a means to increase governmental capacities towards peace implementation. Under the administrative sector of the *Presidencia de la República*, the former *Agencia Colombiana para la Reintegración*³, responsible for the design and conduction of the reintegration process of former members of the *Autodefensas Unidas de*

² Created by Decree 2366/2015, the ART was first subscribed to the *Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural*. In December 2016, however, the agency became part of the *Departamento Administrativo de la Presidencia de República*. Both the ANT and the ADR continue under the rule of the *Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural*.

³ The ACR is also the result of various institutional reforms. Under the scope of the *Ley de Justicia y Paz* (975/2005), former President Uribe created in 2006 the *Alta Consejería Presidencial para la Reintegración*, a landmark for DDR in Colombia, in which demobilized AUC members started benefitting from a long-term Reintegration process instead of short-term Reincorporation. The *Alta Consejería* guaranteed the institutional capacities necessary for placing Reintegration as a more permanent state policy. In 2011, under the Santos administration, the institution was granted the status of *Unidad Administrativa Especial*, with more administrative and budgetary autonomy, and changed its name to *Agencia Colombiana para Reintegración* (ACR 2016).

Colombia (AUC) and individual demobilized guerrilla members, became in 2017 the *Agencia para la Reincorporación y la Normalización* (ARN), accumulating the responsibility for the reincorporation of demobilized members of FARC-EP (ARN 2018; Caballero 2018).

Also in the Presidency, lies the symbiotic work between the *Consejería Presidencial para la Estabilización y la Consolidación* and the *Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz*. The *Consejería* was created in 2017 under the name *Alta Consejería Presidencial para el Posconflicto* as an evolution of the former structure of the *Despacho Ministro Consejero para el Posconflicto, Derechos Humanos y Seguridad*. In 2019 though, President Duque changed its name to *Consejería Presidencial para la Estabilización y la Consolidación* to mark his desire for austerity of Colombian institutions (Colprensa 2019) and for legality of the peace process (Birke-Daniels and Kurtenbach 2021). The main objectives of the *Consejería* are chiefly advising the Presidency in terms of formulation and development of public policies oriented to peace implementation⁴ and articulating the many authorities – international, national, regional or local – interested in stabilization and peace consolidation. The institution also overviews the normative proposals and the budgetary aspects⁵ required for the implementation of the Peace Deal (Presidencia de la República 2019).

In its turn, the *Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz* (OACP), created in 2012 in the brink of peace negotiations as a development of the former *Alta Consejería Presidencial para la Paz*, has as its main goal the creation of a culture of peace and reconciliation in the country (OACP 2019). For that, the *Alto Comisionado*, who during peace negotiations had a more restricted role, after the signature of the Peace Deal kept accumulating responsibilities as the spokesperson of the President on issues related to peace implementation. According to Decree 1784 of 2019 (Presidencia de la República 2019), the OACP has as primary functions: raising awareness about what was negotiated in Havana and the content of the Peace Deal; fomenting intersectoral and multilevel social dialogues throughout the country; orienting and supporting ongoing peace negotiations; and coordinating all activities related to the *Acción Integral Contra Minas Antipersonal* (AICMA).

Complementing the institutional framework of the Presidency, the Ministries also perform a key role for peace implementation inside the Executive Branch: they are

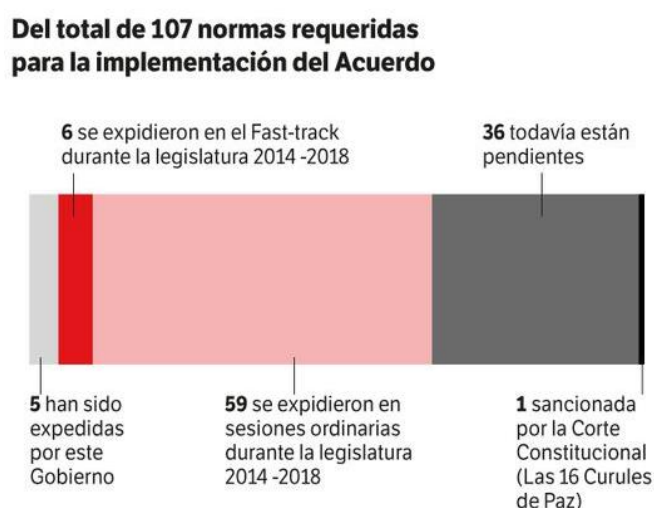
⁴ Public policies such as the PDET, the PNIS and the programs conducted by the *Agencia para la Reincorporación y la Normalización* (ARN).

⁵ The *Consejería* manages the *Fondo Colombia en Paz* (FCP), an instrument created inside the institutional framework derived from the Peace Deal that is dedicated to budget administration and execution (FCP 2019).

responsible for conducting and executing national-level public policies derived from the Peace Deal, and promoting their implementation among regional and local authorities. All Ministries are one way or another involved in peace efforts, but the most demanded are: *Ministerio del Interior*, *Ministerio de Defensa Nacional*, *Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural*, *Ministerio de Justicia y del Derecho*, and *Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores*.

In parallel to the Executive, the other branches of the government are also involved in peace efforts. In December 2016, the Legislative became responsible for modifying or creating a set of 107 norms required for the Peace Deal implementation (Reyes Mesa 2022). During the 2014-2018 legislature, the representatives approved 65 of these norms, while the 2018-2022 legislature only dealt with 5 of them (see Figure 2 below). Such disparity demands a twofold explanation. First, in political terms, the composition of the Congress during 2018-2022 was marked by the prominence of parties like *Centro Democrático* and *Cambio Radical*, which were openly against the Peace Deal. Second, the pandemic and the civil unrests of 2020 and 2021 facilitated twisting the focus away from the approval of peace-related legislation (Reyes Mesa 2022).

Figure 2 – Approval of norms required for peace implementation (March 2022)



Source: (Reyes Mesa 2022)

The Judiciary, in its turn, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the norms that hold a constitutional status, and checking their conformity to the Colombian

Constitution and the Peace Deal. Considering the political polarization around peace initiatives in the country, the *Corte Constitucional* had a crucial role in preserving in the core of peace implementation a transitional justice system based on fundamental rights and reconciliation (Birke-Daniels and Kurtenbach 2021). Since 2016, the Court has produced a series of sentences that give solid judiciary and constitutional basis for the attainment of norms directed to peace efforts. The sentences all reiterate the need for fully implementing the Peace Deal and for observing the principles of administrative decentralization and harmonious collaboration between branches and organs of the State (Brand and Cárdenas 2019).

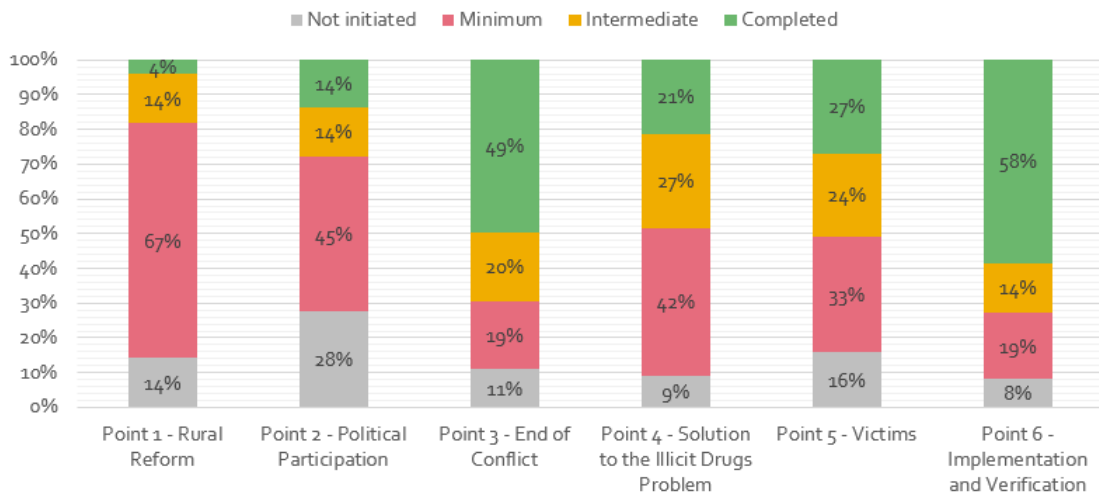
The most robust of these constitutional norms is the *Acto Legislativo 01* of 2017, that created a special set of institutions that lies outside and on the same level as the Colombian government branches: the *Sistema Integral de Verdad, Justicia, Reparación y no Repetición* (now *Sistema Integral para la Paz*). The System is outlined on point 5 of the Peace Deal and encompasses the following institutions: *Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición*; *Unidad de Búsqueda para Personas dadas por Desaparecidas* (UBPD); and *Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz* (JEP). These transitory institutions must work in coordination and guide their work by territorial, ethnic and gender approaches in order to provide truth, justice, reparation and no repetition to victims and citizens in general (JEP 2018). The *Comisión de la Verdad* was responsible for producing a narrative of the Colombian conflict through the lenses of their victims. The UBPD has the humanitarian purpose of identifying and searching for missing persons. Lastly, the JEP is the guardian of transitional justice efforts in the country: it is an ad-hoc judiciary mechanism to try FARC and state security forces accused of grave violations of human rights during the armed conflict. The mechanism focuses on the most responsible actors on each side and takes a restorative justice approach through the recognition of facts, the fulfillment of victims right of justice, and the provision of juridical security for those engaged in armed conflict (Caballero 2018).

After this initial assessment of the institutions dedicated to peace implementation, it is clear that the structure created in Colombia is truly astounding, due to its complexity and comprehensiveness. However, when it comes to the execution of public policies, having a great institutional framework for peace does not guarantee a smooth implementation process. Challenges regarding political and multilevel coordination are continuous. Also, evaluating specific contexts and understanding local dynamics are key elements for adapting policy

implementation to improve execution and sustainability (Birke-Daniels and Kurtenbach 2021).

The Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies has developed a Colombia Barometer Initiative focused on evaluating the level of implementation of the 2016 Peace Deal in the country. The Initiative releases yearly reports with quantitative and qualitative assessments of the level of implementation of 578 stipulations derived from the final text of the Colombian 2016 Peace Deal. The implementation of the stipulations is classified as not initiated, minimum, intermediate or completed (see Graph 1). According to their sixth report, as of November 2021, Point 1 of the Deal, regarding Comprehensive Rural Reform, had only 4% of completed stipulations; Point 2, Political Participation, 14%; Point 3, End of Conflict, stayed in 49%; Point 4, Solution to the Illicit Drugs Problem, figured in 21%; Point 5, Victims, in 27%; and Point 6, Implementation and Verification, reached 58% (Echavarría Álvarez et al 2022).

Graph 1 – Peace Implementation in Colombia as of November 2021 (% of stipulations)



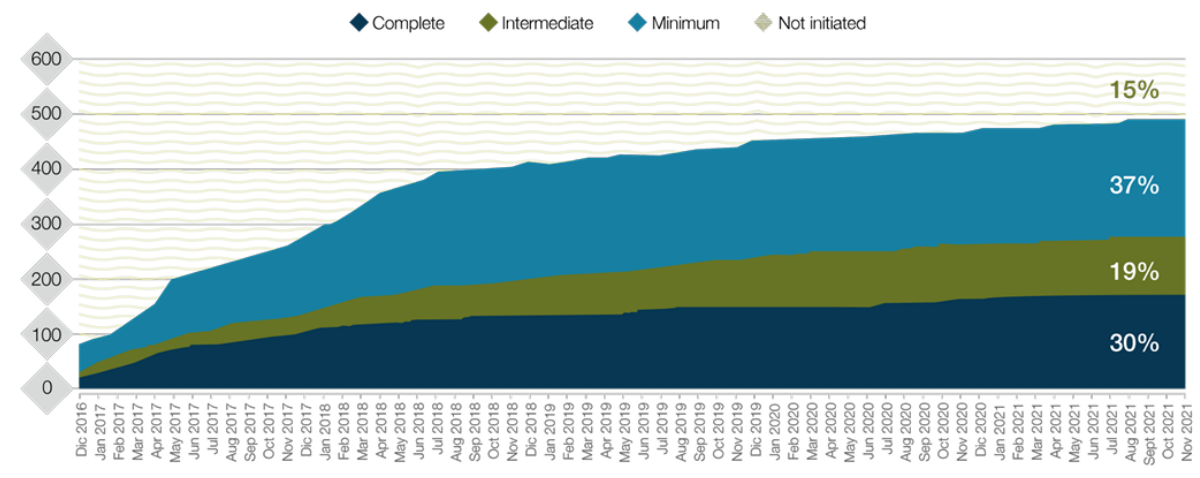
Source: Made by the author, based on Echavarría Álvarez et al (2022)

The sixth report highlighted the importance of the five-year milestone for peace implementation in Colombia. According to them, the first five years of implementation of a Peace Deal are crucial to create the foundation for further actions agreed between the signatories. With this foundation granted, the transformations then ought to be sustainable and

permanent as the country strives for peace and non-repetition of the causes of armed conflict (Echavarría Álvarez et al 2022).

Even after changes in the Colombian political landscape with Duque’s election in 2018 and an initial apprehension regarding what that new scenario could represent to peace implementation, the report evaluates that “accord implementation in Colombia has not stopped during these first five years” (Echavarría Álvarez et al 2022, 4). As the historical series shows (see Graph 2), there was uninterrupted implementation, despite the higher number of provisions still at minimal status and the level of completed stipulations having not changed much in the previous couple years. In their qualitative analysis, the continuous implementation is a result of an overall desire for peace demonstrated in all levels: from signatory parties to civil society, from local authorities to the international community (Echavarría Álvarez et al 2022).

Graph 2 - Monthly Implementation Levels of the 578 Stipulations of the Final Agreement (December 2016 – November 2021)



Source: Echavarría Álvarez et al (2022)

Uninterrupted implementation, however, does not mean that all stipulations will be completed before the 15-year deadline laid out in the PMI. As seen in Graph 2, there’s still a high number of provisions still at minimal status and the level of completed stipulations have not changed much in the last couple years. The report states that “a failure to take decisive actions, especially to move most stipulations from an initial phase to an intermediate phase,

will reduce the likelihood of completing the 578 stipulations' implementation in a timely and effective manner" (Echavarría Álvarez et al 2022, 6). For example, regarding early implementation (2017-2021), the report shows that, as of November 2021, 26% of indicators of the PMI had less than 50% of progress in their targets, which indicates the need for postponement of their completion into the medium-term implementation phase (2022-2026).

The reason for such delays can be explained by multifactorial internal and external obstacles the implementation process faces. In my analysis, these obstacles can be divided basically into four categories: (i) governmental difficulties to coordinate peace initiatives; (ii) budgetary challenges; (iii) chronic socioeconomic and regional inequalities; and also from (iv) local security dynamics (Procuraduría General de la Nación 2020; Pérez and Galvis 2020; Isacson 2021; Birke-Daniels and Kurtenbach 2021; Echavarría Álvarez et al 2022). Apart from the challenges the very robust top-down peace governance can face (categories one and two), the government must consider how regional or local dynamics impact peace implementation (categories three and four), specially to identify priorities and opportunities for the creation of complementary bottom-up peace governance structures. Since the focus of this thesis is on the local security dynamics, this category will be further analyzed throughout the text, especially regarding the PNIS.

With the security aspect in mind, transformations in VNSGs' structures and activities have taken place in Colombia since the end of the Great Cartels in the 1990s, with major turns after the demobilization of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) in 2005, and altered again by the 2017 FARC-EP demobilization process (Porch and Rasmussen 2008, Prieto 2013, Otis 2014, McDermott 2014; Cadena 2022). The crime-conflict dynamics in Colombia have then reinforced the following scenario: numerous VNSGs with fragmented and decentralized structures, relying on distrust-reducing mechanisms to maintain control over illegal economies and reducing the costs of the use of direct violence through the creation of non-state orders based on uncertainty and fear (Idler, 2019). The scenario becomes even more intricate in the borderlands. In terms of an adapted order that combines state and non-state governances and permeability for illegal markets and criminal actions, borderlands face constant power disputes that, in turn, engender violence towards communities (Idler 2019). In this matter, Colombian criminals profit from borderlands' marginal status to advance their businesses.

After a quick overview of these dynamics, one can wonder how Colombia can improve conflict resolution and citizen security after the Peace Deal. Considering the slower than expected progress of peacebuilding and the fast adaptation of criminal dynamics, particularly the drug market, this research perceives that peace will be achieved, particularly to border communities, when Colombia disrupts the crime-conflict nexus. In the next section, I will present the research outline and its justification.

1.2. Research outline and justification

As delineated in the previous section, the number of challenges to peace implementation in Colombia only complexifies the scenario. For analysts, putting together and making sense of all the pieces seems a herculean task. That is why I have decided to focus on only one peace initiative in this research: the *Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos de Uso Ilícito* (PNIS), point 4.1 of the Peace Deal. The reason for this choice is explained by the crucial role and the very nature of the Program, created to deal with structural socioeconomic dynamics that, among other causes, allow the maintenance of the Colombian cocaine market that, in turn, generate citizen insecurity.

Inserted in Point 4's overall goal of undermining criminal and violent dynamics derived from the drug problem⁶, PNIS is a result of participative planning processes led by the Colombia Presidency in coordination with territorial and communitarian authorities. The idea is to give special treatment to the weakest links in the drug trafficking chain, namely the people that cultivate and use illicit drugs (Acuerdo Final 2016). In order to foster the wellbeing of people historically affected by the cultivation, production and commercialization of illicit drugs, PNIS promotes voluntary substitution of crops for illicit use through programs and projects dedicated to overcoming conditions of violence, poverty, inequality, and marginalization of families. The Program is also an immediate response to national and transnational problems, such as the chronic weak institutional presence and the financing of drug-related VNSGs (Presidencia de la República 2017).

Nonetheless, the clear purpose and the coordination tools available were not enough to boost Point 4's implementation in Colombia. In the first 5 years, point 4 still carries

⁶ According to the *Acuerdo Final* (2016), in Point 4 a new approach is promoted to address the phenomenon of the use of drugs, the problem of crops made for illicit use and organized crime associated with drug trafficking, in a distinct and differentiated manner, ensuring a general human rights and public health, equity based and gender-based approach.

insufficient levels to allow the country to surpass the historical crime-conflict nexus, with only 21% of its stipulations completed, underfunded, and behind schedule on the PMI (Pérez and Galvis 2020; Birke-Daniels and Kurtenbach 2021; Echavarría Álvarez et al 2022). As outlined in the last section, part of this insufficiency derives from top-down governance challenges, but local security dynamics have proven themselves a major (and sometimes underrated) obstacle as well.

In this thesis, I will follow a bottom-up approach that focuses on VNSGs action in the border area while remaining attentive to other multi-level political and socioeconomic factors that also alter local conditions for peace implementation. However, the choice for a focus on on-the-ground security dynamics derives from a perception that the majority of the literature dedicated to evaluating peace implementation in Colombia dedicates more attention to state internal challenges while formulating and executing public policies than to local security factors that impose adjustments to peace initiatives and that could impact negatively the very execution of the public policies derived from the Peace Deal. On a further perception, local *security* dynamics are often under-analyzed in comparison with, for example, participatory strategies to comply with the ethnic and territorial approaches, duly treated transversally in the Peace Deal. I contend that community emancipation cannot be achieved without disentangling and thoroughly analyzing the plethora of disruptive ways local security dynamics impact peace implementation; yet, without understanding the action of VNSGs on marginalized territories and their impact on people's everyday lives.

The reason for that can be explained by Colombian historical regional disparities in terms of security. The armed conflict is known to have affected the country's regions differently, leading to major security concerns for rural and border areas in comparison to urban centers. Considering regional security disparities, the center often endorsed a "neglect by design" while formulating and executing public policies, and reinforced a militarized approach to contain threats in the margins. That is why my focus will rest on the borderland: in order to address the magnifying effect on security dynamics the transnational character of borderlands adds to the case study (Idler 2019).

The choice to investigate specifically the Colombia-Ecuador borderland is justified by the fact that critical routes of cocaine trafficking and a significant concentration of coca cultivation in Colombia are in the departments of Nariño and Putumayo, in the border area with Ecuador (UNODC-SIMCI 2022). Nonetheless, this choice was made not only because of

the distinctive security dynamics of the area. In terms of the volume of publications and ethnographic material available, the Colombia-Ecuador border area is understudied compared to the one between Colombia and Venezuela. The Colombia-Panama, Colombia-Peru, and Colombia-Brazil borders, as well as the three triple borders, are also perceived as understudied borderlands, but they cannot be addressed in the dissertation due to limitations of time and ethnographic material⁷.

Therefore, aiming to address the discussion described above, **this research investigates how local security dynamics derived from VNSGs action can undermine the implementation of the *Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos de Uso Ilícito* (PNIS) in the Colombia-Ecuador borderland.** As stated before, I recognize VNSGs' action as one of the several factors that negatively impact peace implementation in the country. **I argue that VNSGs undermine the PNIS implementation by fueling high-profitting illegal economies, fomenting state-crime collusion and keeping communities under a rule of fear, insecurity, and uncertainty.** VNSGs illegal actions challenge the state monopoly of violence and, in contrast with state governance based on the rule of law, creates a parallel standard of governance, based on violence. Altogether, VNSGs undermine peace implementation by challenging the rule of law through the continued performance of illicit activities, the establishment of “crimilegal” orders that blur the lines between legal and illegal behaviors, and the creation of local structures of governance based on violence (McDermott 2014; Prieto 2017; Schultze-Kraft 2019; Idler 2019; ICG 2020).

To achieve the intended results, I will rely on a bottom-up epistemological perspective which considers the agency of VNSGs in marginalized regions. Through the critical approach, I will remain attentive to invisible power dynamics that affect borderland communities and, therefore, adequate methodological choices and methods of data collection and analysis to shed light on security dynamics that transcend the traditional conflict-peace binary.

To understand such complex phenomena within their context, my “how” research question is best answered with an **in-depth qualitative case study** centered on the implementation of one of the Programs outlined in the Peace Deal signed in 2016 by the Colombian government and the FARC-EP, the *Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos de Uso Ilícito* (PNIS). A holistic case study (George and Bennett 2004; Baxter and

⁷ The case study of the Colombia, Brazil, and Peru triple border figures as an option for a Ph.D. research project, considering the necessary time and resources for fieldwork are met.

Jack 2008) will assemble data from VNSGs activities to build a comprehensive analysis of the groups' impact on PNIS implementation in the Colombia-Ecuador borderland.

The case study analysis will focus on building the causal path of PNIS in Nariño and Putumayo in the first five years of peacebuilding in Colombia (2017-2021), identifying occurrences in which VNSGs' action impacted the Program's implementation in both departments. For that, my choice for the within-case method of causal interpretation will be **process-tracing**. I will apply an “explaining outcome” type of process-tracing in which the purpose of the analysis is to “explain particularly puzzling historical outcomes by building minimally sufficient explanation in case study” (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 32).

Going beyond King, Keohane and Verba's (1994) critiques of process-tracing descriptive characteristics and its unlikelihood to generate strong causal inferences, Mahoney (2010, 131) argues that “process-tracing can provide insight about the existence of causes, mechanisms, or auxiliary traces”. Relying on these perspectives of a new methodology of qualitative research, I will profit from efforts of rethinking King, Keohane and Verba (1994) by introducing in my research a within-case analysis to “draw inferences that are useful for theory-building or policymaking” (George and Bennett 2004, 279).

Regarding policymaking, in my perspective, peacebuilding should focus on providing security and emancipation to local communities while reducing VNSGs influence, particularly in borderlands, areas historically neglected access to essential services and state-led development initiatives. Together with the Colombian government's own slowness on peace implementation, the affronts VNSGs impose to the rule of law are one of the dynamics that keep communities alienated from fully benefiting from peace initiatives advanced by the Colombian government, such as the PNIS. My research then aims to draw inferences and provide insights for scholars and practitioners about the security obstacles VNSGs impose to the implementation of PNIS and how these security obstacles are even bigger in border departments such as Nariño and Putumayo.

Regarding **variables**, I consider the level of peace implementation as my dependent variable, while my *main* independent variable is the action of VNSGs in the Colombia-Ecuador borderland. With the profusion of governance, spatial and socioeconomic conditions that affect security dynamics in the borderland, I reckon that my outcome - the slow implementation of PNIS - is a result of the *convergence* of several conditions, independent

variables, or causal chains, and possibly the *interaction* of causal variables that are not independent of each other (George and Bennett 2004). In an effort to “take equifinality into account” (George and Bennett 2004, 281) and avoid confirmation bias, I will remain attentive to potential alternative causal chains other than the ones generated by VNSGs action in the area, such as government inefficiency, budgetary restrictions, political pressure, geographic limitations, etc. That is why I have highlighted VNSGs’ presence as my *main*, but not *sole* independent variable in the case study. As George and Bennett (2004, 279) discuss, a difficult task for the researcher dedicated to process-tracing is to assess “whether alternative explanations are complementary in the case, or whether one is causal and the other spurious”.

After delineating my methodology, it is important to discuss the **methods of data collection and analysis** that will subsidize the process-tracing within my case study. In this matter, I will surpass the use of traditional statistical Data-Set Observations (DSOs) by using instead Causal-Process Observations (CPOs) as my main type of data. A CPO is “an insight or piece of data that provides information about context, process, or mechanism, and that contributes distinctive leverage in causal inference” (Collier, Brady, and Seawright 2004, 277). CPOs have application in the development and specification of my argument since they provide in-depth knowledge of a causal-process instead of only collecting data that will take part on a systematized array of quantitative variables. In this research, the CPOs were collected through literature review and analyzed through content analysis⁸.

Because of their involvement in illegal activities and the constant shift of alliances and fragmentation, information about VNSGs is frequently scarce or outdated. Data on criminal activities, socioeconomic indicators and peace initiatives in the Colombia-Ecuador borderland were collected in analyses, reports, and databases from think tanks, universities, and governmental institutions dedicated to crime, conflict, and peace studies. In addition, to identify the occurrences in the border area, I will also resort to news and analyses from major Colombian networks. See Annex 1 for a list of data sources.

The first step of data analysis is building a chronological narrative to facilitate immersion in the case study, a process that George and Bennett (2004) call “soaking and poking”. After that, I will identify the main CPOs related to the independent and dependent variables of the research, and then I will draw multiple inferences that can explain the case

⁸ On a previous research project, interviews with Colombian local and national actors were in the center of data collection. However, considering the Covid-19 pandemic and the impossibility of funding, the ethnographic method was disregarded, albeit being admittedly crucial to the research.

study outcome. The analysis of CPOs derived from official, expert, and journalist data will help identify forms of non-state governance performed by VNSGs towards borderland communities. This triangulation effort will help us understand the socioeconomic, political, and cultural meanings and practices with which VNSGs' local power becomes legitimated over time, leading ultimately to violence through a rule of fear, uncertainty, and insecurity that undermines peace implementation.

In sum, through the next chapters, I will: (i) outline the main concepts that sustain my analysis of the crime-conflict nexus in Colombia and my understanding of actors (VNSGs) and space (borderlands) in the case study; (ii) explore the conditions of the Colombia-Ecuador borderland and investigate VNSGs action in the area; and (iii) assess the impact of VNSGs in the implementation of PNIS in Nariño and Putumayo from 2017 to 2021. A brief conclusion follows.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“Too often, conflict scholars do not relate to peace studies, nor do either of these groups engage in dialogue with criminology.”

- Angelika Rettberg

(Universidad de los Andes, Colombia)⁹

Throughout the last decades, researchers dedicated to crime, conflict, and peace studies have increasingly intertwined their fields, attempting to create different approaches that could explain on the ground developments that state-centric perspectives of international security could not entirely address. War is now gradually also perceived as a consequence of threats posed, for example, by non-state actors, criminal groups, and terrorism. Unlike the traditional approach, advocates of the changing character of war understand that such threats are marked by undefined boundaries and diffuse purposes. Besides, transformations in warfare such as asymmetric and cyberwar also represent obstacles for states to maintain their *status quo* and lead to a greater permeability of war among the civilian population (Kaldor

⁹ Quote from Professor Angelika Rettberg's interview with Pedro Diniz Rocha in 2019, available at <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/08/13/interview-angelika-rettberg/>

1999; Duffield 2001; Kalyvas 2001; Moura 2004; Cheeseman 2005; Munich Security Conference 2019). Consequently, conflict resolution and peacebuilding become a question of local development and community emancipation rather than just the cessation of hostilities and DDR.

Accounting for these transformations in war and peace, the long years of conflict in Colombia have generated profound changes in the doctrine and training of the government military forces, in the organization of non-state actors, in the socioeconomic development of communities, and in people's perception of security (Gutiérrez Sanín et al. 2006; Viana 2016; Birke-Daniels and Kurtenbach 2021). My research asserts the need for an approximation of crime, conflict, and peace studies as a means to understand the transformation of current security dynamics in (still) one of South America's hotspots of violence. The Colombian peace process figures as a perfect example of how the intertwining of crime, conflict, and peace reveals a gray zone in Security Studies. Hence, the effort of understanding the Colombian context demands the interdisciplinary research and the theoretical pluralism to which the field of International Relations is substantially suited for and can only benefit from (Dunne, Hansen, and Wight 2013; Lake 2013).

This research is broadly abstracted from Critical Theory and post-positivist perspectives in International Relations. In this chapter, I will first discuss my major Critical Security Studies theoretical influences, and then delineate the main debates in the crime-conflict nexus literature. In addition, I will present some conceptual and analytical frameworks that shed light on security dynamics in Colombia's borderlands, such as Idler's (2019) clusters of VNSGs interactions and Pimenta's (2016) concept of Strategic and Structural Areas for Illicit Transit (SSAIT). In the end, I will discuss current challenges for peace implementation in Colombia through the peace spoilers perspective.

Captivated by scientific and philosophical inquiries derived from other fields of study, IR theorists often contend about "what is out there to know". Trying to overcome the mainstream positivist ontology and epistemology, post-positivists proposed an expansion of the notion of reality by also considering discourses and intersubjectivity as observable - even if only through their effects in reality - and intelligible phenomena. As post-positivists, critical theorists question what is assumed by positivist scholars as an objective reality (Krause and Williams 1997; Booth 2005).

Critical Theory contends that the idea of “truth” is politically disputed, a premise that motivates their scientific interest in genealogy and the inevitable transformations of what is perceived as real. Taking “security” as an example: my research aims to rethink security dynamics beyond the neorealist focus on state and military security. For that, a critical approach is necessary to inquire about structures, processes, theories, and positionalities that shape highly contested derivative concepts such as conflict, peace, power, violence, and, more broadly, *security* (Booth 2005).

Even if security has a universal biological substrate associated with human survival (to have food, water, shelter, safety, and so on), the concept ultimately varies according to the level of perception of security of groups and individuals derived from the political, economic, social, and epistemic structures they are embedded in. Beyond fundamentally biological threats, critical theorists envision that the concept of security varies according to people's perception and the collective intersubjective construction of reality.

Thus, the field of Critical Security Studies (CSS) engages in an effort to understand the origins and developments of security dynamics in terms of political and intersubjective disputes, bearing in mind that “every security agenda should be interrogated to discover the interests and assumptions that shaped it” (Booth 2005, 15). The CSS project proposes rethinking the concept of security through two different theoretical exercises: *deepening* and *broadening*.

Through *deepening*, CSS propose new approaches to the ontology, the epistemology, and the practice of security. Surpassing mainstream IR theory, the CSS ontology embraces referents that go beyond the sovereign state, such as non-state actors and individuals. In terms of epistemology, CSS go beyond positivist and naturalist problem-solving theories focused on objectively explaining replicated *status quo* dynamics. Instead, with an interpretivist epistemology, CSS aim to understand what lies outside and what sustains such given frameworks of analysis. And with an emancipatory praxis, the critical approach on security “explores the immanent potentialities in order to provide ideas that might promote the emancipation of people(s) from oppressive situations and structures” (Booth 2005, 11).

As a second step, the CSS *broadening* exercise reveals the agenda that derives from *deepening*. By expanding the security agenda beyond the traditional military and national security approach, CSS aim to translate the security issues from all referents into political issues, allowing them to be analyzed through political theory lenses. From this critical

perspective, war has been gradually perceived as not only the continuation of state politics by other means (Clausewitz 1989), but also as a consequence of non-state power disputes among themselves and with the state (Kaldor 1999; Duffield 2001; Kalyvas 2001; Moura 2004). This focus shift to include a broader range of actors beyond the state has compelled academia to improve its analytical and theoretical tools to interpret these new dynamics, forcing the integration of different study fields. From this critical perspective emerges the crime-conflict nexus literature.

The **crime-conflict nexus** literature argues that criminality affects conflict duration and intensity by generating revenues for actors to sustain the fight while also creating illegal war economies that provide survival and opportunities for vulnerable contexts. Consequently, criminal networks that exist during conflict and remain after conflict resolution pose significant challenges to peace implementation (Williams 2001; Ballentine and Sherman 2003; Rubin and Guáqueta 2007; Miraglia, Ochoa, and Briscoe 2012; de Boer and Bosetti 2015).

Crime and conflict are both historically associated with state fragility. In their much-cited paper "Understanding Civil War: A New Agenda", Paul Collier and Nicholas Sambanis present the "conflict trap" concept. The authors question why civil wars tend to repeat themselves in some contexts and find the substrate of such vicious circle in state fragility¹⁰ (Collier and Sambanis 2002). Cockayne (2013) argues that, similarly to the conflict trap, fragile settings with a disintegrating social fabric, institutional fragmentation, and low self-governance create opportunities for crime to thrive. And when crime thrives, non-state actors tend to develop alternatives to state governance, aiming to maintain control of routes and sales and hearts and minds (Idler 2019; Schultze-Kraft 2019). The "crime trap" is then related to fragility through a feedback loop. Nevertheless, considering that crime and conflict are correlated to state fragility, how do they connect to each other?

To answer this question, the crime-conflict nexus literature brings insights from conflict, criminology, and peace studies, trying to evaluate the characteristics of such nexus and the role of criminal dynamics in generating or fueling conflict. In this case, it is essential

¹⁰ According to them: "Once violence is initiated, it may follow a path-dependent process. It is an empirical regularity that the risk of war recurrence in postwar societies is higher than the risk of the onset of a new war in countries with no prior war history. The causal links are not clear in this case: it may be that the same underlying conditions that caused the first war also cause subsequent wars, or the heightened risk may be due to the effects of previous wars on a country's society and its political economy. We do observe, however, that civil wars generate a conflict trap" (Collier and Sambanis 2002, 5).

then to shed light on the first dynamic researchers have tried to explain: how is the crime-conflict nexus generated? Paul Collier (2000) defended the perspective that non-state actors usually engage in wars based on greed and not grievance. In his approach, a crime-conflict nexus is formed because the primary cause of conflict is considered to be the dispute over "lootable" resources. He acknowledges the crime-conflict nexus as an opportunistic and convenient relation in which rebels, characterized as *quasi*-criminals, use criminality to provide the necessary means to wage war and self-enrichment (Collier 2000; Williams and Picarelli 2005; Mccarthy 2011).

However, as de Boer and Bosetti (2015, 7) put, "even when conflict resources feature prominently, these are now understood to be less a motive for rebellion and more of a factor fueling and prolonging violent campaigns that were initiated for other reasons". Many authors have harshly criticized Collier's work, for its methodology (Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug 2013) and argument (Ballentine and Sherman 2003), forcing him and his team to reformulate it by considering that the crime-conflict nexus is established in terms of economic opportunities, rather than intrinsic economic interests (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). The critics show, on the basis of various case studies, that illicit economies often emerge in the course of armed conflict and not at the beginning, and that, while they contribute to the continuation of war, they do not contribute to its onset. In this renewed perspective, crime does not cause conflict but rather affects conflict duration and intensity (Ballentine and Sherman 2003). Non-state actors sustain both the conflict and the crime traps by blurring the lines between legal and illegal activities, fueling the permanence of high-profiting illegal economies, and keeping communities under a rule of fear, insecurity, and uncertainty (Cockayne 2013; McDermott 2014; Prieto 2017; Idler 2019; Schultze-Kraft 2019; ICG 2020).

One particular challenge of this literature is understanding what **organized crime** is. While some authors define organized crime in terms of actors or activities (Williams 2001; Miraglia, Ochoa, and Briscoe 2012; Lyman 2019), in this research I consider organized crime a strategy, what allows analysts to surpass the legal-illegal binary and to perceive the reality of rapid transformations in criminal dynamics. The strategic approach sustains that actors, whether state or non-state, adapt their actions depending on their objectives. That is, actors are not criminal or political *per se*, but they engage in criminal or political strategies according to context and resource availability (Williams and Felbab-Brown 2012). In Colombia, for example, the type of criminal action of a group often changes according to revenue

expectancy and political circumstances. As to adapt to such varying conditions, the actors create “resource portfolios” that combine different criminal strategies interchangeably (Rettberg and Ortiz-Riomalo 2016). With this in mind, it is important to note that in my research I choose to focus on drug-related criminal activities, although never ignoring complementary criminal activities that may be included in VNSGs resource portfolios.

If we understand that the “strategic approach” surpasses the characterization of actors as criminal or political *per se*, a general categorization of actors involved in crime and conflict is necessary to organize the profusion of actors. According to Idler (2019), actors involved in crime and conflict can be categorized under the name **violent non-state groups (VNSGs)** since they share the following general characteristics: (i) use violence to reach their goals; (ii) challenge the state; and (iii) have an organizational structure. The author contends that VNSGs have “fluid group identities rather than clear-cut distinctions” (Idler 2019, 40), depending on their spatial distribution, the interactions they perform, and the activities they conduct.

After ten years of fieldwork in Colombia borderlands and drawing on the English School and Constructivism, Idler argues that VNSGs base their group-to-group interactions on distrust. As rational actors operating in an anarchic environment, cooperation is unlikely but possible through distrust-reducing mechanisms. It is essential to understand the interaction of VNSGs as a dynamic scenario of shifting alliances and fragmentation, in which interests, although rationally oriented, are diffuse. Their decentralized organizational structure is a crucial factor that enables the spread of risks and generates a highly adaptable, resilient, and expandable network (Idler 2019).

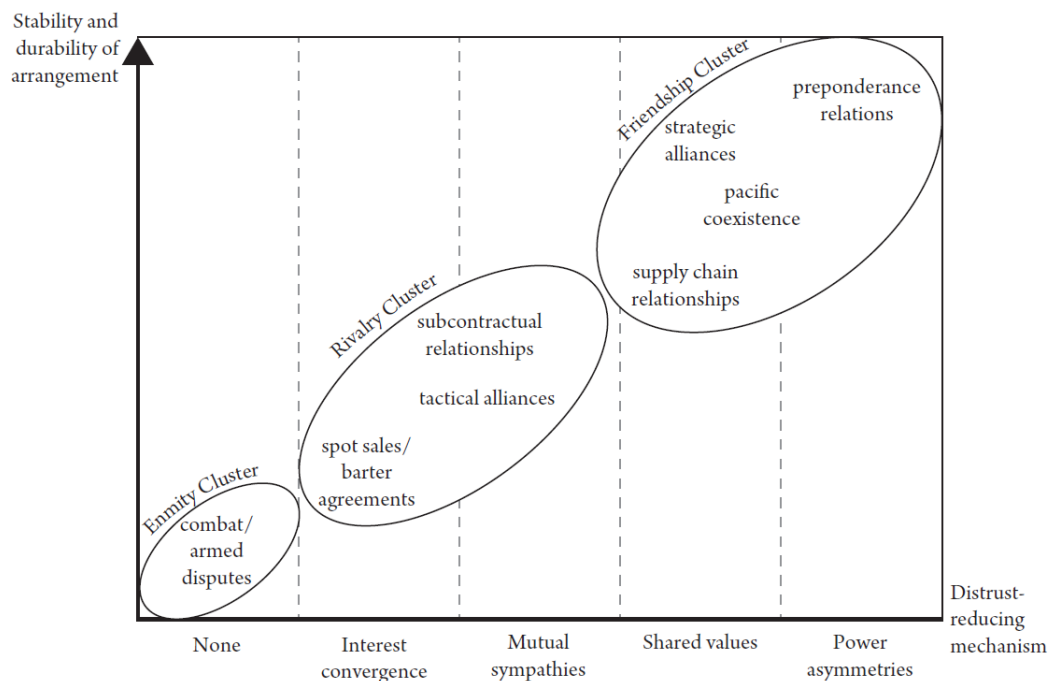
The author envisioned a fuzzy and multidirectional continuum of fluid interactions divided into three clusters of VNSGs interactions - enmity, rivalry, and friendship¹¹ – that vary according to the stability and the type of distrust-reducing mechanism they enact (see Figure 3). Each cluster relates to (i) a level of parallel governance exerted by VNSGs; and (ii) a level of borderland communities’ exposure to violence: general, selective, or inconspicuous

¹¹ Similar to Wendt (1999), Idler characterizes the clusters in terms of agent roles in violence and power relationships - enmity, rivalry, or friendship - and treats them as mutually exclusive ideal types created to make sense of a profusion of interactions and agents observed during her fieldwork in Colombia. With said framework, she also tries to understand the problem of violence and its regulation by corporate agents, although focusing on the creation of non-state order. According to her: “just as frameworks of international order offer explanations for war and other security outcomes internationally, the concept of non-state order sheds light on violence and other security outcomes in places where state governance is absent or insufficient” (Idler 2019, 32).

(see Table 1). According to her framework, each cluster of group-to-group interaction generates different levels of governance that affect the level of communities' exposure to violence, ranging from general violence to fear-based non-state order translated into *shadow* citizen security (Idler 2019).

VNSGs do not rely only on direct violence to pursue their objectives. Depending on the contexts in which they operate, the risk posed by direct violence on the stability of their alternative governance leads selective or inconspicuous violence to prevail as a key element of their strategy (de Boer and Bosetti 2015). Adding to Idler's interpretation, I perceive that the *shadow* citizen security provided by VNSGs is also inherently violent, even if the level of exposure of communities to direct or indirect violence remains low. The rule of fear and silence remains inconspicuous through a process of *pacification* (Baron et al. 2019). As Idler shows in her empirical findings in Colombia, there are multiple forms of violence that VNSGs can use to coerce the local population to conform to their rules. From limiting the hectares in which farmers can cut green wood to threatening someone's family, violence in these contexts means much more than killings or physical aggression (Idler 2019).

Figure 3 – The continuum of clusters of violent non-state group interactions



Source: (Idler 2019, 40)

Table 1 – Idler’s framework of non-state order and citizen security

	<i>“Enmity” Cluster</i>	<i>“Rivalry” Cluster</i>	<i>“Friendship” Cluster</i>
Context			
Motive for co-operation	none	interests, personal bonds	values, power
Distrust-reducing mechanism	none	interest convergence, mutual sympathies	shared values, power asymmetries
Inter-group distrust	general distrust	distrust reduced on a particular occasion	generally reduced distrust
Violent Non-state Group Interactions			
Quality and durability of arrangement	none	unstable, short-term	stable, long-term
Inter-group violence	unlimited violence	selective	none
Types	combat/armed disputes	spot sales/harter agreements subcontractual relationships tactical alliances	supply chain relationships strategic alliances pacific coexistence preponderance relations
Citizen Security			
Absence of violence and fear	exposure to general violence	exposure to selective violence	relatively little exposure to violence
Dense social fabric	varying	erosion of social fabric	dense intra-community social fabric
Governance agent-citizenry relationship	dysfunctional	dysfunctional	shadow citizenship
Appropriate behavior	rules emerging from erenity	uncertainty	rules emerging from shadow citizenship
Security-enhancing practices	just-world thinking	avoidance	rule of silence towards outsiders

Source: (Idler 2019, 56)

In this fashion, I consider that all VNSGs' social orders have in common the use of violence as an organizing principle, what Machado da Silva calls *violent sociabilities* (Machado da Silva 2004). In his article about urban violence as a social representation in Brazil, the author contends that common urban violence does not destroy or substitute conventional sociability patterns. To avoid constant tension, social orders derived from violent sociabilities tend to fragment social routines and consequently adapt themselves to coexist with legitimate orders such as the state order.

Similarly, in Colombia, the processes of the dismantlement of the Great Cartels, the demobilization of the AUC and now the FARC-EP, and the consequent pulverization of VNSGs, are representative of this shift on how violence - urban or rural¹² - is exerted: from the prevalence of constant episodes of tension between VNSGs and the state, with direct violence being indiscriminately perpetrated by both sides; we have now a "smarter" use of violence by VNSGs through *violent sociabilities* and *pacification*, that does not substitute, but coexist with the direct use of force, employed for pinpoint interests.

With that in mind, the crime-conflict nexus seems entrenched so deep in Colombia's social fabric that violence is not contingent anymore; it is a chronic problem. Since before the 2016 Peace Deal, Colombia has institutionalized the counter-narcotic discourse to gather national efforts to combat cocaine production and trafficking, supported mainly by U.S. incentives to tackle illegal drug supply and fight insurgencies (Viana 2016). The Santos administration (2010-2018) profited from the successful implementation of the *Plan Colombia* and the *Política de Seguridad Democrática* by former president Uribe (2002-2010), marketed as powerful strategies with which the government would finally defeat the *guerrilla* and provide security to all Colombians. This militaristic approach, however, revealed itself as a reductionist interpretation of conflict dynamics in the country. By observing some of the results of the securitized counter-narcotic policies, the current scenario demonstrates that not all the ties between FARC-EP and the drug market generated during conflict have been reduced or dismantled.

¹² I was keen on discussing with Professor Machado da Silva a possible expansion of his concept of violent sociabilities, applied to Brazilian cities, to Colombian urban and rural contexts, considering the proximity of his and Idler's descriptions of the use of violence by VNSGs. Unfortunately, Professor Machado da Silva died of COVID-19 in September 2020, a difficult loss for the Brazilian scientific community, especially in a moment marked by the very denial of scientific knowledge and practices by those responsible for managing the pandemic in my country. May he rest in peace.

Even after a four-year peace negotiation and five years of peace implementation, the FARC-EP faced difficulties related to ex-combatants being co-opted for criminal activities, particularly drug production and trafficking. The lack of FARC-EP's internal cohesion, the government's slow progress on implementing peace initiatives, and a highly dynamic adaptation of VNSGs have contributed to the continuity of the drug economy and, as a consequence, insecurity (ICG 2020). The Colombian context shows that fragilities that fuel conflict tend to perpetuate in post-conflict scenarios and that, during transitions to peace, a reconfiguration of violent groups and criminal activities is expected (Kurtenbach and Rettberg 2018). For instance, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that “the area under coca bush cultivation in Colombia more than tripled during peace negotiations with FARC-EP, then decreased after the peace agreement was concluded in November 2016” (UNODC 2022b, 16). Nonetheless, right in the beginning of peace implementation, in 2017, coca bush cultivation and manufacture of cocaine reached record highs and, even with a subsequent decrease, the record was surpassed in 2021: the 171.000 hectares of 2017 rose to 204.000 hectares in 2021 (UNODC-SIMCI 2022). In addition, in 2020 there were 91 massacres identified in Colombia, in which 381 persons were killed, the majority of them social leaders from rural and marginalized areas formerly affected by the conflict and still facing the rule of drug-related VNSGs (Turkewitz 2020; ICG 2020; INDEPAZ 2021).

As discussed above, even after the FARC-EP decided on engaging in peace negotiations with the Colombian government, there is a whole set of dynamics that cannot simply vanish with the demobilization of the *guerrilla*. VNSGs have adapted to continue their rule through violent sociabilities (Machado da Silva 2004) and pacification (Baron et al. 2019), also demanding an adaptation from the government to develop broader political strategies that can address these new dynamics. What Colombia faces since Plan Colombia is a migration of the previous counterinsurgent struggle to the most marginalized areas of the country and not necessarily a reduction in violence. Non-reintegrated ex-combatants saw in their displacement to isolated rural areas and border areas the possibility of re-equipping and expanding their activities in illicit businesses (ICG 2012; Idler 2019).

According to Idler (2019), the transnational character of international borders generates spaces marked by uncertainty in which state power vacuums are filled by non-state forms of governance, exerted, for example, by community leaders, landowners, NGOs, or, in this case study, VNSGs. She argues that VNSGs alternative orders use their marginalized

status to engage in illicit activities and, with their profits, reinforce the legitimacy of their rule over transnational communities.

In her work, these spaces of impunity and illegality are referred to as **borderlands**, regions “whose economic and social life is directly and significantly affected by proximity to an international boundary” (Idler 2019, 78). Borderlands are not marked by a standardized geographic distance nor are located specifically in the border limit. By embracing and reverting the importance of the center-margin dichotomy, the author proposes the use of the borderland lens as an epistemological approach in security studies as a means to overcome the traditional state-centric focus on territorial sovereignty. For her, there is a state-centric indifference - a “neglect by design” - in analyses of the impact of VNSGs’ orders on borderland security dynamics. In this approach, the “borderland perspective from the margins” demands a bottom-up analysis of the socioeconomic, cultural, and illicit flows that occur in these areas (Idler 2019). After this characterization of borderlands I can, in turn, investigate how VNSGs’ perform order in the margins.

The focus on borderland perspectives and the search for marginal conceptualizations of security dynamics in border areas is also present in the work of Pimenta (2016). In her thesis regarding the obstacles for the consolidation of a Zone of Peace in South America, the Brazilian author proposes the concept of Strategic and Structural Areas for Illicit Transit¹³ (SSAIT) to characterize the Colombia-Venezuela borderland. After an extensive literature review, the author argues that mainstream concepts on security studies that refer to regions of impunity often blame the lack of state presence instead of other spatial and structural conditions that allow illicit activities, state-crime collusion, and alternative governance (see Table 2).

Table 2 – Low state presence conceptual overview

Black Spots: areas located within a state in which the formal government does not exercise governance. The type of order in these territories is unknown to both government officials and the international community.

Brown Zones: regions where states have a low presence, both functional and territorial.
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¹³ In Portuguese: *Zonas Estratégicas e Estruturais para os Trânsitos Ilícitos* (ZEETI)

They are democratic states but with spaces of dysfunctionality with low or almost no presence of the central state. The political forces that operate in such regions are guided by patrimonialism and clientelism and do not care to bring effective development to the area.

Dangerous Spaces: Contiguous spaces of divergent governance (borderlands/borders); spaces of partially regulated, unregulated or illegal flows, and spaces that are sharply juxtaposed - whether in cities, states, or regions - between zones of opportunity and zones of exclusion.

Ungoverned Area: A place where the state or central government is unable or unwilling to extend control, effectively govern or influence local population, and where a provincial, local, tribal, or autonomous government does not govern completely or effectively due to its incapacity of adequate governance, insufficient political will, gaps in legitimacy, conflict dynamics or restrictive norms of behavior.

Safe Haven: a place or situation that allows illicit actors to operate with impunity or avoid discovery or capture. Safe havens include ungoverned, under-governed, poorly governed, or contested areas (remote, urban, maritime) or non-physical (virtual) “lootable” areas where illicit actors can organize, plan, fundraise, communicate, recruit, train and operate in relative safety.

Broken Windows/Broken Bridges: The Broken Windows Theory uses the metaphor of broken windows to investigate the relationship between disorder and crime. According to the Theory, the feeling of decline or decay left by a broken window, suggesting low policing and low state presence, would encourage criminal practices. For this reason, windows need quick repairs, and disorder must be frequently curbed to prevent the area from being perceived as a *locus* of crime and impunity.

Source: Pimenta (2016, 122)¹⁴

As a theoretical proposal to overcome the use of the imported - and not quite adequate - concepts above mentioned, Pimenta (2016) conceptualized the SSAIT as regions with (i) low effective presence of the state; (ii) strategic geographic position; (iii) high levels of corruption by local agents; (iv) presence of an informal economy; (v) economic

¹⁴ Table created by Pimenta (2016), based respectively on Guillermo O’Donnell (1992), Bartoz Stanilawski (2008), Robert Lamb (2008), Phil Williams (2010), and Kelling and Coles (1996). My translation.

underdevelopment; and (vi) presence of alternative governance insecurity. In her view, the SSAIT are (a) mutable and flexible, because of the constant shift of VNSGs and illicit flows in the area; (b) pragmatic and operational, considering the high-risk and informal limits of criminal activity; and (c) export insecurity, since the very transnational character of their illegal markets fosters the spillover of violence regionally and globally.

As a complement, Idler (2019) argues that the borderlands can present themselves as (i) facilitator; (ii) deterrent; (iii) magnet; or (iv) disguise for security dynamics. For her, the transnationality and the distance to the state center are both boosters and constraints for VNSGs to exercise illegal activities. Hence, VNSGs employ these mechanisms according to their interests and suffer their consequences according to their actions. In her words:

The border's effect as a *facilitator* derives from the borderline itself, which, despite being a social construct, creates a chasm between two differing security and justice systems. Its effect as a *deterrent* is the result of regions being cross-border spaces where two different state territories with different national features shaped by culture, history, and state policies meet. Its effect as a *magnet* originates in the border zones' proximity to the borderline, which attracts multiple groups due to the high opportunities on offer there, while risks are relatively low. Finally, the border's effect as a *disguise* emerges from the distance to state centers, which turns border zones into stigmatized spaces (Idler 2019, 253).

By bringing closer Pimenta's and Idler's frameworks, it is clear that both scholars put together in their concepts the lack of a functional state presence, geographic marginalization, use of violence, and illegal economies as factors that impact the region's security dynamics and allow VNSGs to generate order. I will employ their frameworks to explore the magnifying insecurity effect borders add to the case study. Therefore, in my research, I propose three categories of conditions to analyze VNSGs action in the Colombia-Ecuador borderland: (i) governance; (ii) spatial; (iii) socioeconomic. This assessment will be developed in the next chapter.

As previously stated, I argue that VNSGs undermine peace implementation by blurring the lines between legal and illegal activities, fueling high-profiting illegal economies, and keeping communities under a rule of fear and uncertainty (ICG 2012; McDermott 2014; Prieto 2017; Idler 2019). While communities remain subject to disputes of power and order between the state and VNSGs, or among VNSGs, constraints such as poverty, poor education,

and political oppression will continuously undermine security and, therefore, peace in the country.

To orient external actors who oversee peace processes and reduce the risks of failure or renewed war, Stedman proposed in 1997 a typology of **peace spoilers**, a concept that he defines as “leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it” (Stedman 1997, 5). He argues that spoilers differ in terms of position (inside or outside of an agreement), number, power goals (limited, greedy, or total), and locus (leader and/or followers). Each of these dimensions altogether determine the spoiler’s goals and commitments. Stedman explains it further:

“Peace processes create spoilers [...] Spoilers exist only when there is a peace process to undermine, that is, after at least two warring parties have committed themselves publicly to a pact or have signed a comprehensive peace agreement. Peace creates spoilers because it is rare in civil wars for all leaders and factions to see peace as beneficial” (Stedman 1997, 7).

In 2006, Newman and Richmond take a step beyond Stedman by proposing a broader definition of spoiling as to adjust the concept to violent conflicts’ complex scenarios. They understand that “civil or domestic conflicts are, in reality, often influenced or characterized by international processes, causes and consequences” (Newman and Richmond 2006, 102). With this nod to the transnationalization of conflicts, the authors expand the range of security dynamics to be analyzed and of the actors that can be considered peace spoilers. From localized to widespread disputes, from insurgencies to governments: all of these factors can be encompassed by the concept. Yet, they identify some fundamental characteristics of the phenomenon: it is symptomatic of the so-called New Wars and depend on the exercise of asymmetrical power relations. That is why they argue that, as a means to reduce power asymmetries, apart from the need of third parties to oversee the process, there must be willingness of peace signatories and public opinion to engage in peacebuilding as a whole, not only during conflict settlement (Newman and Richmond 2006).

With this in mind, the authors claim that the seeds of spoiling sown by imposed or ill-conceived peace processes, or the level of violence spoilers perpetrate are not sufficient to doom the peace process to total failure. In their words: “spoiling behaviour is often designed to shape a peace process, rather than to end it, because disputants recognize the potential

assets a process may offer” (Newman and Richmond 2006, 109). Hence, like Stedman (1997), the authors perceive the inevitability of spoiling behavior in peace scenarios. Although, differently from him, they do not put violence as an intrinsic characteristic of peace spoilers. For them, peacebuilding is a process, and as such, will suffer setbacks on implementation imposed by peace spoilers in a myriad of ways: from the use or threat of violence, to doubting the process, or advocating for the inclusion of marginalized actors in the discussions¹⁵. Noteworthy for this thesis, the authors exemplify that one of the ways spoilers undermine peace is through the maintenance of transnational illicit flows and the exploitation of local resources:

“Spoilers that exploit war economies usually rely upon some form of trans-border exchange. It is therefore essential that in regions of violent conflict, illicit cross-border commercial exchanges are scrutinized and targeted for interdiction, and that certain commodities—such as diamonds or oil—are promptly subject to international legal sanctions to prevent their exploitation by spoilers” (Newman and Richmond 2006, 108)

Trying to make sense of the conceptual development of peace spoilers, Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs (2011) present a thorough assessment of the debate’s state of the art. The authors understand that the concept has been stretched beyond the original definition proposed by Stedman (1997), leading to ambiguities in its academic and policy-making applications. The lack of clarity is felt on the usefulness of the concept and on the disagreement in the literature regarding basically three points: (i) which actors can be considered peace spoilers; (ii) if they use of violence or not; and (iii) if the focus should be in spoilers’ actions or in the outcomes of their actions in peace processes (Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2011).

The authors criticize Newman and Richmond’s stretching of the concept to cover a profusion of actors: “if almost any actor may be viewed as a potential spoiler it becomes difficult to see the added value of using the concept” (Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2011, 9). They also observe that Stedman’s conceptual inconsistencies regarding the possibility of the use of violence by peace spoilers led to many scholars refraining from the conceptual

¹⁵ The critiques of Newman and Richmond (2006) to Stedman (1997) pose that what differentiates actors with fair demands to those viewed as spoilers is the normative paradigm associated to liberal peacebuilding. Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs (2011, 10) also shed light on the negative impact of this interpretation to policy-making and adds to the debate by arguing that “the normative aspect of the concept only serves to further emphasize the need for greater conceptual clarity and the development of more unambiguous theoretical scope conditions”.

discussion about peace spoilers and instead dedicating to examine how violence influences peace processes more generally. Also, in both works, the delimitation of the causal linkage of the phenomenon analyzed has not always been clear. Is the spoiling contained in the actors' behavior or is it a result of their actions?

Considering the discussion abovementioned, in this research I will hop on Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs findings to guide my theoretical take on peace spoilers. I sympathize with their effort to clarify the concept, to identify its limitations and to prove it analytically useful for academia and policy-making. I also agree with their characterization of peace spoilers:

“we suggest that spoilers are key individuals and parties to the armed conflict who use violence or other means to shape or destroy the peace process and in doing so jeopardize the peace efforts. Such groups can be found on the inside or the outside of the peace process, and be either non-state actors or state-related actors. In line with Stedman, we believe that it is critical to view spoilers and spoiling behavior in relation to a specific peace agreement or a publicly committed pact” (Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2011, 34)

First, considering the actors, I agree with the authors' proposal to categorize spoilers by the “potential” or “manifest” performance of their spoiling. It is very similar to the characterization of organized crime as a strategy presented before, that depends on the VNSGs interest in engaging in the activity and does not define the actor *per se*. Additionally, it allows to analytically separate the profusion of actors involved in peace processes and understand their level of impact on peace initiatives. Second, it is crucial to understand that both violent and non-violent methods can negatively affect the outcome of a peace process. In this thesis, however, considering the intrinsic violent behavior of VNSGs, I contend that their spoiling will always be permeated by violence, being it direct, structural, or inconspicuous. Third, in this research I will focus on the spoiling outcomes of actors, i.e., I will explain the effects of VNSGs action on the implementation of one peace initiative in Colombia: the PNIS.

Considering that citizen security is the foundation for a successful peace implementation, my perception is that only a perspective of security as emancipation will improve peace in Colombia (Booth 2005). A proper implementation of the Peace Deal might reduce spoilers' impact by engaging in a comprehensive approach that deals with non-violent challenges but also focuses on tackling violence in its multiple forms: direct, structural, or

inconspicuous. Peacebuilding should focus on providing security and emancipation to local communities while reducing VNSGs' influence, particularly in areas historically denied access to essential services and state-led development initiatives.

The 2016 Peace Deal represents a moment of transition from a strictly militarized and reductionist approach to the Colombian conflict, to a mixed approach, still securitized, but also dedicated to solving structural challenges derived from the low level of socioeconomic development of rural and urban areas historically affected by the conflict. For example, regarding drug trafficking, the agreement considers as a factor that fuels the existence of illicit crops not only the demand for drugs, but to a greater extent the internal social and economic challenges of Colombia: conditions of poverty, marginality, weak institutional presence, and the existence of criminal organizations dedicated to drug trafficking (Acuerdo Final 2016). In this scenario, the government has a difficult task trying to reach the desired outcomes delineated in the Peace Deal to overcome the chronic crime-conflict nexus in Colombia. Therefore, in the next chapter I will explore how the crime-conflict nexus has unfolded in the Colombia-Ecuador borderland, identifying local aspects and dynamics that impact somehow on VNSG action in the area.

3. VNSGs, COMMUNITIES, AND THE COLOMBIA-ECUADOR BORDERLAND

Considering the historical regional disparities in the country, Colombian borderlands need to be analyzed through the lens of their marginalized status. Adding to that, the transnational feature of borderlands is also an important factor to be taken into account. As stated in the previous chapter, the combination of these factors on a broader scenario of crime-conflict nexus characterizes the Colombia-Ecuador borderland as a SSAIT, and also an area in which VNSGs use the border effect as a mechanism to advance their interests. In this chapter, I will first provide a general assessment of the Colombia-Ecuador borderland, and then analyze the security dynamics in the area through the years. The idea is to identify the types of VNSG action in the area and use this information to discuss, in the subsequent chapter, if these actions can lead to PNIS spoiling.

3.1. General Assessment

Colombia and Ecuador share 586km of a dynamic border, with intense influx of people and goods, despite the geographic limitations imposed by the Amazon rainforest and the low level of road infrastructure. Historically, the borderland has suffered many of the adversities in the complex relationship between both countries. In the security dimension, focus of this thesis, both countries face challenges related to drug-trafficking, organized crime and other illegal activities, mainly derived from Colombian internal security dynamics, and a result of a combination of conditions. As Idler describes,

features such as the existence of informal border bridges through which to funnel weapons in exchange for drugs, climatic conditions that favor coca cultivation, and cultural traits such as the binational character of some indigenous people whose constant border-crossing facilitates smuggling practices also inform the logics of violent non-state group interactions and hence security on the ground (Idler 2019, 67).

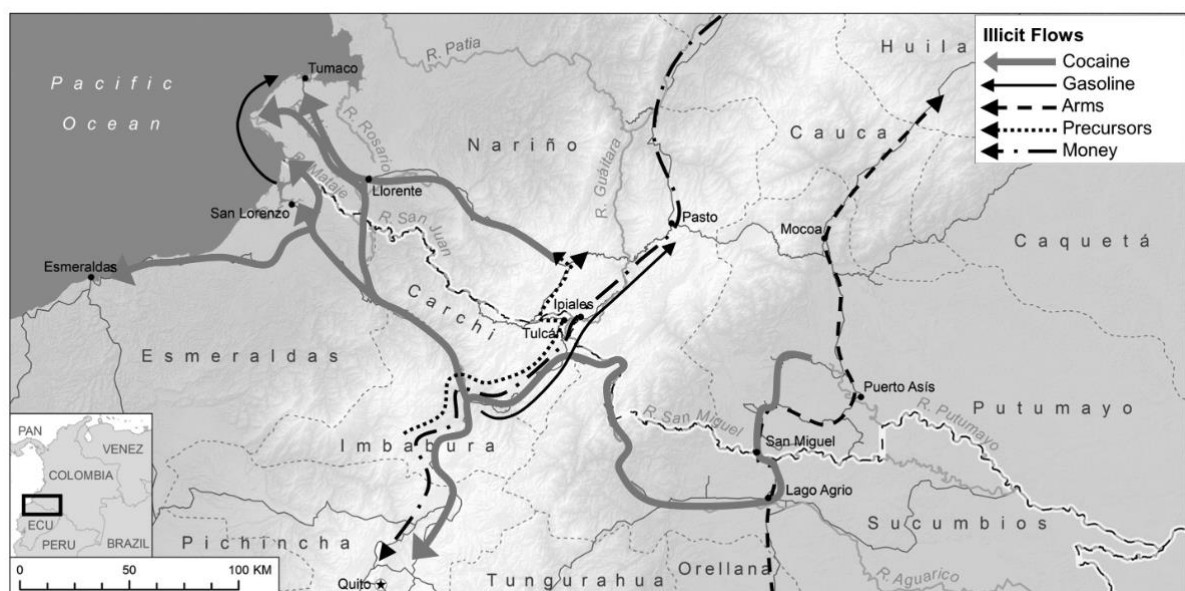
As stated before, I propose three categories of conditions to analyze VNSGs performance in the Colombia-Ecuador borderland: (i) governance; (ii) spatial; (iii) socioeconomic. Regarding **governance**, the Colombia-Ecuador borderland suffers the consequences of a troubled bilateral relation, translated, for example, on a discrepancy in border security policies. While Colombia has historically employed a confrontational approach to VNSGs in the area, Ecuador has gradually changed from inaction to a combined approach of militarization and development. These differences and the lack of a widespread functional state presence favor the use of borderlands as safe havens by Colombian VNSGs, leading to impunity, state-crime collusion, and the creation of violent forms of governance (Idler 2019).

Since the 1980s, the Ecuador borderland figures as a safe haven for Colombian coca to be processed and for violent non-state groups to hide, such as FARC-EP, *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) and, more recently, *Bandas Criminales* and FARC-EP dissidences (Mouly, Idler, and Garrido 2015; Idler 2019; Cadena 2022). In the Colombian area of the borderland, there has been a strong urban presence of the ELN since the 1980s and, after the demobilization of the AUC in 2006, of some *Bandas Criminales* (BACRIM) such as the Rastrojos and the Águilas Negras (Idler 2019). In terms of rural presence, FARC-EP had control of the majority of the rural areas until its demobilization in 2017 (Mouly,

Idler, and Garrido 2015; Idler 2019). Nevertheless, after the Peace Deal, illicit economies still remained as main financing sources of VNSGs such as ELN and FARC-EP dissidences (Cadena 2022). In contrast, the main guerrilla group of Ecuador, called *Alfaro Vive Carajo* (AVC), was composed of university students and had their presence in major Ecuadorian cities in the 1980s. Because of their urban presence and their focus on youth political advocacy, AVC had no interest in associating themselves with the cocaine market (Gorena and Vélez 2011). The fact that Ecuador has not bred autochthonous VNSGs dedicated to drug trafficking may have even benefited Colombian illegal actors to foster their control in the borderland area.

Spatial factors are also relevant while analyzing borderlands. Topographic and geographic features of borderlands determine how illicit flows circulate and how and where VNSGs exert their influence. As previously outlined, critical routes of cocaine trafficking and two of the largest coca cultivation areas in Colombia are located in Nariño and Putumayo, departments in the border area with Ecuador (UNODC 2021). In addition, Ecuador is a supplier for the cocaine drug market, providing to illegal laboratories their main inputs, such as: acetone, gasoline, cement, caustic soda, sulfuric acid and hydrochloric acid (Gorena and Vélez 2011).

Map 1 – Trafficking flows along the Colombia-Ecuador border



Source: (Idler 2019, 99)

The Colombian departments of Putumayo and Nariño and the Ecuadorian provinces of Esmeraldas, Sucumbíos and Carchi are all spaces where these illegal transits happen, being it by water or by land (see Map 1). Since the infrastructure is better on the Ecuadorian side of the border, the coca paste from Putumayo has to cross Ecuador by river or road to be processed and refined in illegal laboratories located mainly in Esmeraldas, and then cross the border back to Colombia to reach the Tumaco port in the Pacific coast of Nariño (Gorena and Vélez 2011; Trujillo Currea et al 2012; Idler 2019). Ecuadorian maritime ports of El Oro, Guayas and Manabí and the airports of Quito and Guayaquil are also common routes of Colombian cocaine trafficking (Gorena and Vélez 2011). These flows reveal the interconnectedness of the border area between both countries. As Gorena and Vélez (2011, 6) sum up:

“Dentro de la producción y circulación de drogas ilegales, Ecuador cumple cuatro funciones fundamentales: 1) es una vía de paso de la hoja de coca cultivada en Perú y Bolivia hacia Colombia donde es procesada; 2) es el origen de varias rutas de tráfico hacia mercados internacionales de países consumidores; 3) es un mercado de contrabando de precursores químicos necesarios para el procesamiento de cocaína y heroína; y 4) es una economía funcional al lavado de dinero”

As a consequence of state neglect and VNSG action, the **socioeconomic conditions** of the Colombia-Ecuador borderland are appalling. Colombian criminals profit from Ecuador’s dollarized economy, from borderlands’ underdeveloped status and from the binational character of borderland communities to advance money laundering activities and to promote illicit transits of drug and inputs. Alongside drug trafficking, other illicit activities such as prostitution and illegal mining also figure in VNSGs portfolios in the area (Idler 2019). Apart from the violence generated by the hybrid – state and non-state - governance, borderlanders and indigenous people such as the Awá have been suffering all kinds of violence derived from structural inequalities, such as spatial and socioeconomic marginalization, cultural stigmatization, and scarce access to adequate living conditions and basic needs (Cadena 2022).

All things considered, combining the governance, spatial and socioeconomic conditions of the Colombia-Ecuador borderland, I consider that the recent reconfiguration of VNSGs in the area poses security challenges to the Colombian government, especially when

it comes to peace implementation. With this in mind, I will conduct a thorough assessment of Colombia-Ecuador borderland security dynamics through the years as a means to subsidize the following chapter's analysis of PNIS implementation in the area. The assessment is oriented by Idler's (2019) argument that borderlands operate as magnifying glasses that intensify citizen insecurity, especially in turbulent contexts such as the ones in Colombia and Ecuador, and by Pimenta's (2016) concept of SSAIT. I will look back at past events, but my focus will be the current scenario, trying to identify possible transformations triggered by the 2016 Peace Deal between the Colombian government and FARC-EP.

3.2. Colombia-Ecuador borderland security dynamics through the years

Historically, Colombia-Ecuador bilateral relations remained positive until the 1990s, when internal dynamics of both countries started to disturb their external politics¹⁶. In Colombia, the growing challenges related to the armed conflict, the intensification of people displacements, the high number of violent non-state groups, and the increase on the cocaine market were dealt by the government basically in a twofold manner: (i) the militarization of the fight against the *guerrilla* and other VNSGs, and (ii) the securitization of the country's external agenda (Trujillo Currea et al 2012).

The consequences of these policy choices are remarkable. The confrontation between state and VNSGs, while releasing the main urban centers from high risk scenarios, pushed the tensions towards marginalized areas, such as rural spaces and the Colombian borders (Idler 2019). The two major guerrillas present in the region at the time, FARC-EP and ELN, exerted largely their non-state order through rules and conditions imposed to local communities, the so-called shadow citizenship. The guerrillas established distrust-reducing mechanisms to allow the maintenance of illicit economies in the region, a clear shared interest. Considering the military prevalence of FARC-EP, in most regions of the borderland the group remained as the main provider of justice, security, and basic needs. Nonetheless, all of it with the cost of controlled social and economic relations, and constant fear of violence felt by the local population (Cadena 2022).

¹⁶ According to Trujillo Currea et al (2012, 7): "*la relación entre Colombia y Ecuador seguramente es una de las más difíciles entre los Estados de América Latina, con fases de cooperación fructífera, pero también con fases de alta conflictividad*".

Externally, since the 1980s, Colombia changed their focus from South American partnerships to a dependency on the United States diplomatic and national security perspectives towards the region (Trindade 2012). As an example of the consequences of the intertwining of both policy choices, the “war on drugs” narrative perpetrated by Plan Colombia motivated the securitization of the borderland and, as a consequence, the securitization of Colombia’s dialogue with Ecuador. Ecuador was affected not only by the sudden change in the tone of their dialogue with Colombia, but also by the militarization of the border area and by the increase on transnational problems such as drug-trafficking, the presence of VNSGs in the borderlands and the high level of Colombian refugee influxes (Trujillo Currea et al 2012).

In Ecuador, an internal political crisis engendered a process of enduring disbelief from the public opinion in parties and state institutions. As an example of this dynamic, from 1996 to 2005, amongst a sea of popular riots and social complaints, Ecuador had eight different presidents, taken down by means so innovative that one can question the very quality of the democratic regime withheld back then¹⁷. In 2006, however, with the election of Rafael Correa, the scenario changes and Ecuador bets on an outsider technical option to solve the chronic political imbroglio. Correa revealed himself during his presidency as a very populist and charismatic leftist leader, with a political and economic project that differed from the one Colombia was carrying during the Uribe presidency (2002-2010) (Pastrana and Vera 2012).

Because of the political differences and the personalism of both Uribe and Correa, in terms of bilateral relations, oscillating decisions were common, what indicates a strong presidential influence on the formulation of the external politics in both countries, rather than a bottom-up, technical and participative public policy input (Jaramillo-Jassir and Tibocho 2008). The Andean Crisis in 2008, for example, figures as an example of this populist, instrumental use of Colombia-Ecuador bilateral relations. In the words of Trujillo Currea et al (2012, 10):

“Se volvieron frecuentes las exigencias de Ecuador para que Colombia cesara la fumigación de los cultivos de uso ilegal en frontera con el argumento de que estaban afectando los cultivos

¹⁷ As Pastrana and Vera (2012, 18) describe: “Cabe recordar que de 1996 a 2005 los ecuatorianos tuvieron ocho mandatarios, haciéndose especialmente notorias las destituciones de Abdalá Bucaram (en 1997), Jamil Mahuad (en 2000) y Lucio Gutiérrez (en 2005), eventos de quiebre que comprometieron patrones recurrentes como movilizaciones populares disruptivas y masivas, maniobras de legalidad dudosa por parte de los legisladores en oposición y el involucramiento directo de las Fuerzas Militares para decidir el cambio de Presidente”.

legales, las fuentes hídricas y la salud de la población ecuatoriana; y en contrapartida, fueron recurrentes las acusaciones de Colombia sobre vínculos de funcionarios públicos del vecino país con grupos armados ilegales colombianos. La tensión fue aumentando, y finalmente en 2008, con el bombardeo de la fuerza pública colombiana al campamento de las FARC en territorio ecuatoriano, las relaciones alcanzan uno de los momentos más críticos de la historia binacional.”

The Andean Crisis of March 2008, one of the most stressing points in the countries' bilateral relations, culminated with the death of 22 people, among them Luis Edgar Devia Silva, alias Raúl Reyes, number 2 in command of the FARC-EP. Operation Fenix had the presence of the Colombian Army, National Police and Air Force and was held near Angostura, in a jungle area close to the Colombian border near Santa Rosa de Yanamaru, in the Ecuadorian province of Sucumbíos. The Colombian Armed Forces entered approximately 1.800m in Ecuadorian territory, leading to an unprecedented diplomatic crisis between both countries (Sarmiento 2008).

Following the attack, Rafael Correa reacted with strong indignation, breaking diplomatic relations and expelling the Colombian ambassador Carlos Holguín from Quito, claiming violation of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ecuador. In addition to the internal reinforcement of Correa's handling of the crisis, with an approval rate of 80% by the public opinion, Ecuador's posture was quickly backed by key regional actors such as Brazil, Argentina, and Peru. The Colombian government, against the accusations, claimed self-defense, with the justification that they were fighting a “terrorist” organization that aimed to overthrow a democratic state. Uribe tried to unsuccessfully shed light on the presumption that FARC-EP kept obscure ties with Correa and on the fact that the guerrilla held a permanent camp in Ecuadorian territory, used as a safe haven to one of their leaders (Sarmiento 2008).

After a heated debate inside the Organization of American States (OAS) and the mediation of other South American governments such as Venezuela and Brazil, the Colombian government recognized they have violated Ecuador's territorial integrity and set bilateral initiatives to foster cooperation on security and border issues (Sarmiento 2008). The changes, however, were not immediate. After the 2008 incident, both Colombia and Ecuador relied on a trend of border militarization and increase on defense spending. Ecuador, for

example, reached a historical peak on military expenditure of 3,1% of its GDP in 2009 (SIPRI 2021). Episodes of airspace intrusions of both countries were also common (France 24 2008; Voa News 2009).

The bilateral disputes derived from border security dynamics were also held in the international law arena. In the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Ecuador opened a legal complaint against Colombia in 2008 condemning the negative effects of glyphosate fumigation on populations, crops and water sources located at the border area between the two countries (ICJ 2008). In the following year, in the Interamerican Court of Human Rights (ICHR), Ecuador accused Colombia of the extrajudicial execution of Franklin Aisalla Molina, which occurred during Operation Fenix (Salazar 2009; ICHR 2013).

It was only in 2010, when Santos entered the Colombian presidency, that there was a change of tone in the external posture of the country in relation to their neighbors, especially Ecuador. As Pastrana and Vera (2012, 9) describe:

“El viraje más significativo en la esfera de la seguridad es un cambio de visibilidad internacional, pues la diplomacia de la seguridad y de la defensa ha tratado de manejarse a partir del trabajo exterior propio de la cartera de Defensa y no como eje de las giras presidenciales o de la Cancillería. Este giro en política exterior, sumado a la consecución de otros intereses temáticos como la Energía, Educación, Telecomunicaciones (TIC), Innovación, Ciencia y Tecnología, Biodiversidad y Cambio Climático, Desarrollo Agrícola, Infraestructura y Comercio e inversión, ha favorecido tanto el “regreso” colombiano a la política sudamericana como la “normalización” de las relaciones con vecinos.”

Colombian-Ecuadorian cooperation in terms of security demanded the resolution of aspects uncovered after the 2008's Andean Crisis. Meanwhile Ecuador asked for the disclosure of Colombian intelligence and military information regarding Operation Fenix, Quito compromised with the containment of drug-related VNSGs and the destruction of FARC-EP camps inside Ecuadorian territory. Between 2007 and 2010, Ecuador detected and destroyed 377 FARC-EP safe haven camps in the border area with Colombia, and extradited alias Danilo, commander of FARC-EP's 48th Front, that operated mostly in Putumayo. In addition, since the portfolio of VNSG action is always diverse, intelligence and defense cooperation identified a rise on gold illegal mining in the region, associated to prior coca

cultivation areas. Ecuadorian authorities found out the responsible in Carchi, close to the Awá Indigenous preservation area: the FARC-EP mobile column Daniel Aldana and a section of the BACRIM Los Rastrojos (Pastrana and Vera 2012).

Both countries engaged on a joint mechanism to stimulate border security cooperation through the suppression of common threats, the *Programa de Acción Binacional para fortalecer la Seguridad Fronteriza* (Pastrana and Vera 2012). In 2011, bilateral initiatives dedicated to border security were reactivated, such as the *Comisión de Vecindad e Integración Colombiana–Ecuatoriana* (CEVICE) and the *Zona de Integración Fronteriza* (ZIF). In terms of bilateral initiatives directed to the borderland, Bravo (2013) lists them as follows:

Table 3 – Bilateral institutions dedicated to border issues established between Colombia and Ecuador

Zonas de Integración Fronteriza (ZIF): Se establece con el convenio entre Ecuador y Colombia sobre tránsito de personas, vehículos, embarcaciones fluviales y marítimas y Aeronaves, o más conocido como convenio de Esmeraldas. Las ZIF comprenden un área geográfica en Colombia de 13 municipios de Putumayo y 26 de Nariño. En Ecuador 20 cantones de las provincias de Esmeralda, Carchi y Sucumbíos. Los cancilleres de ambos países se reúnan periódicamente para elaborar el Plan Binacional para el desarrollo de las ZIF, plan en el que se contempla dimensiones en: salud, educación, infraestructura, asuntos ambientales, fortalecimiento institucional, desarrollo productivo y comercial.

Centros Binacionales de Atención de Frontera (CEBAF): Son oficinas en las que las autoridades fronterizas de ambos países prestan sus servicios migratorios y de relaciones comerciales a la ciudadanía y empresarios. Su objetivo es facilitar y coordinar el tráfico de personas y mercancías en la frontera, transmitiendo de manera electrónica la documentación correspondiente al otro país, dando celeridad a los procesos.

Comisión de Vecindad e Integración Colombiana–Ecuatoriana (CEVICE): Fue creada mediante una declaración presidencial conjunta de Colombia y Ecuador el 20 de julio de 1989. Comisión que tiene la tarea de impulsar la cooperación y el desarrollo binacional en las áreas fronterizas y está presidida en cada país por el Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores. La

integran representantes del gobierno y el sector privado en sus seis subcomisiones Binacionales: Infraestructura, Asuntos Ambientales y Cuencas Hidrográficas, Desarrollo Económico, Desarrollo Social, Educación, Ciencia y Cultura, y de Derechos Humanos y Asuntos Judiciales.

La Comisión Binacional Fronteriza (COMBIFRON): *Su tema principal es la articulación de políticas de seguridad nacional. Allí se evalúan, coordinan y supervisan compromisos militares, a fin de evitar incidentes que afecten la seguridad y estabilidad de las naciones. Como instrumento de medida de Confianza, la COMBIFRON creó la Cartilla de Seguridad para Unidades Militares y de Policía Fronterizas de las Repúblicas del Ecuador y Colombia en 2006. En ella se detallan protocolos de comunicación, reconocimiento de naves, tropas y acciones conjuntas.*

Source: (Bravo 2013, 30)

Despite cooperation efforts, border militarization, on the rise since the Andean Crisis, became a trend. On the Ecuadorian side, the Defense Ministry invested on new operative capacities¹⁸ and allocated permanently more than 10.000 personnel on the border area, as a preparation for the possibility of new border incursions. In Colombia, Santos' reinforced an already astounding military presence: even with a total component of approximately 45.000 military allocated in Nariño and Putumayo, the Colombian government announced in 2011 an intensification of military presence on strategic areas, such as the Tumaco port in the Pacific. The justification for the militarization was the combat of VNSGs; the result, the demeaning of border integration and the pulverization of these groups to other areas (Pastrana and Vera 2012).

With Santos' interest in engaging in peace negotiations with the remaining guerrillas, FARC-EP and ELN, Colombia began to gradually reduce its strict militarized tone. The change in the discourse was then disseminated into Colombia-Ecuador bilateral relations. In terms of security, Colombia suggested a comprehensive action plan focused on the return of Colombians that sought refuge in Ecuador, and on providing better socioeconomic conditions for border departments of Nariño and Putumayo (Pastrana and Vera 2012). Ecuador also

¹⁸ Aviones de transporte, lanchas guardacostas, camiones y radares.

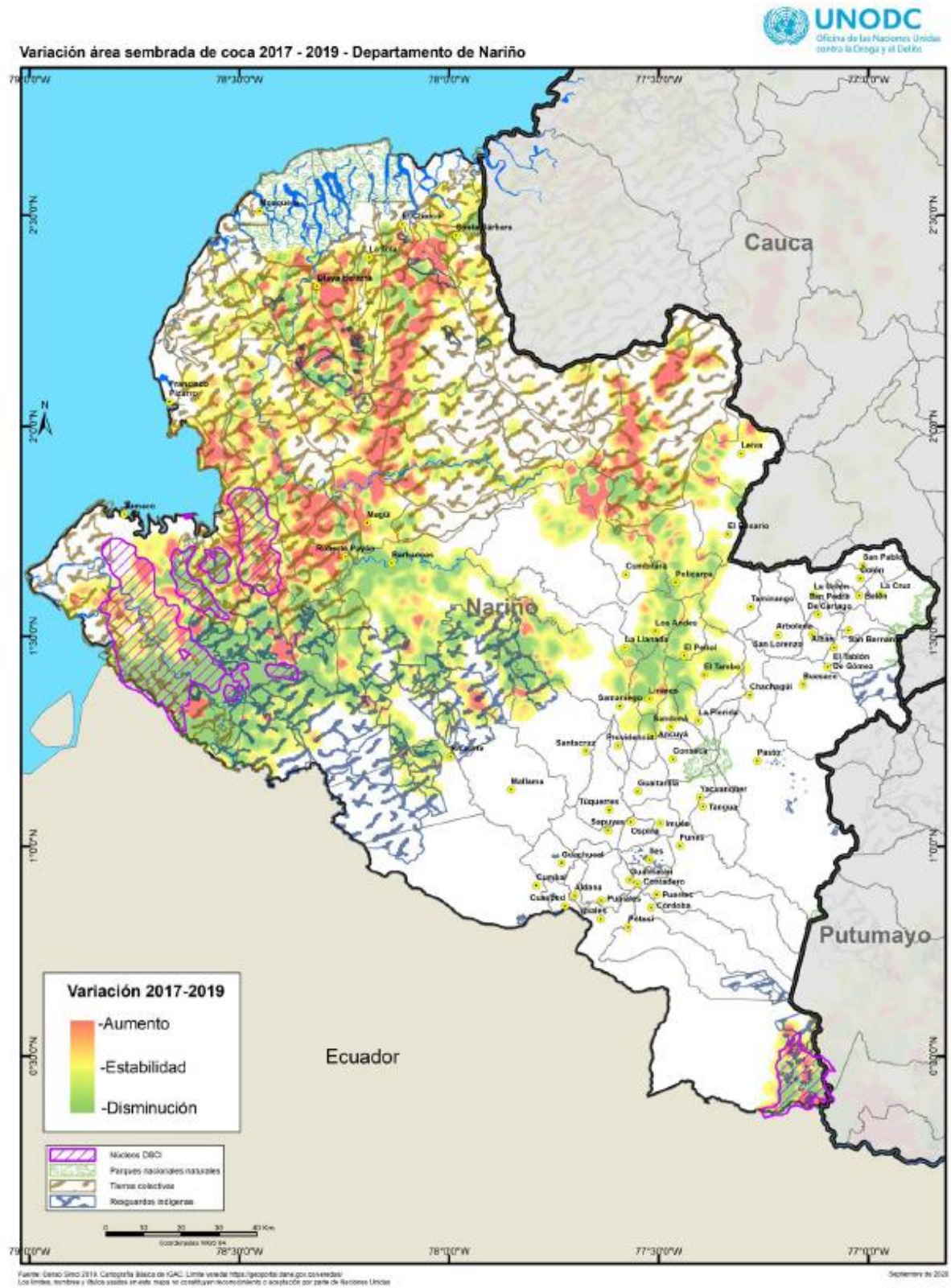
reinforced the need for public policies dedicated to contain illicit economies and VNSGs in the border: while in Colombia the “war on drugs” still echoed, in Ecuador the focus rested on prevention and on the rejection of the “terrorism” discourse. The idea was to build a path for Ecuador’s role as facilitator of Colombian future peace processes (Pastrana and Vera 2012). The mediation role coincides with Quito’s strive for a cautious involvement on Colombian transnationalized issues and with the country’s interest on shedding light into the relevance of a cooperative - less militarized - bilateral relation (Enríquez 2017).

In 2012, the beginning of peace negotiations between the Colombian government and FARC-EP marked the urgency of a comprehensive approach that combined military power and functional state presence. The predisposition for dialogue from both parts gave hope to neighboring countries, among them Ecuador, that the spillover of recurrent security concerns would come to an end (Enríquez 2017). However, even with FARC-EP willingness to reduce violent action during peace talks (Mouly, Hernández, and Garrido 2019), the rule of fear and uncertainty derived from shadow citizenship remained active in the region, and the Ecuadorian side of the borderland stayed as a safe haven for other Colombian VNSGs (Cadena 2022).

After the signature of the Peace Deal in 2016, the vulnerability of the Colombia-Ecuador borderland became more than apparent. There was a significant increase in coca cultivation areas and in drug-related VNSGs in Nariño and Putumayo. As a consequence of the FARC-EP power vacuum and the affluent illicit transits, disputes among VNSGs led to high levels of violence in some areas. In terms of governmental action, Ecuador and Colombia shifted their former tendencies: while Bogotá was guided by a comprehensive and transformative notion of peace, Quito bet once again on border militarization (Cruz 2017). As Idler (2019, xxiii) analyzes:

“Yet while Bogotá heralded the beginning of a new, more peaceful era, in the borderlands there is still no clear line between war and peace. At the Colombia-Ecuador border, the murders of three Ecuadorian journalists by dissident rebels, Quito’s decision to revive militarization of the zone, and the stalling of the ELN talks in Quito (then moved to Havana) also present a sobering critique of the narrative of a ‘peace era’. Across both borders, cocaine production and other illicit businesses are thriving”

Map 2 - Coca cultivation in Nariño (2017-2019)

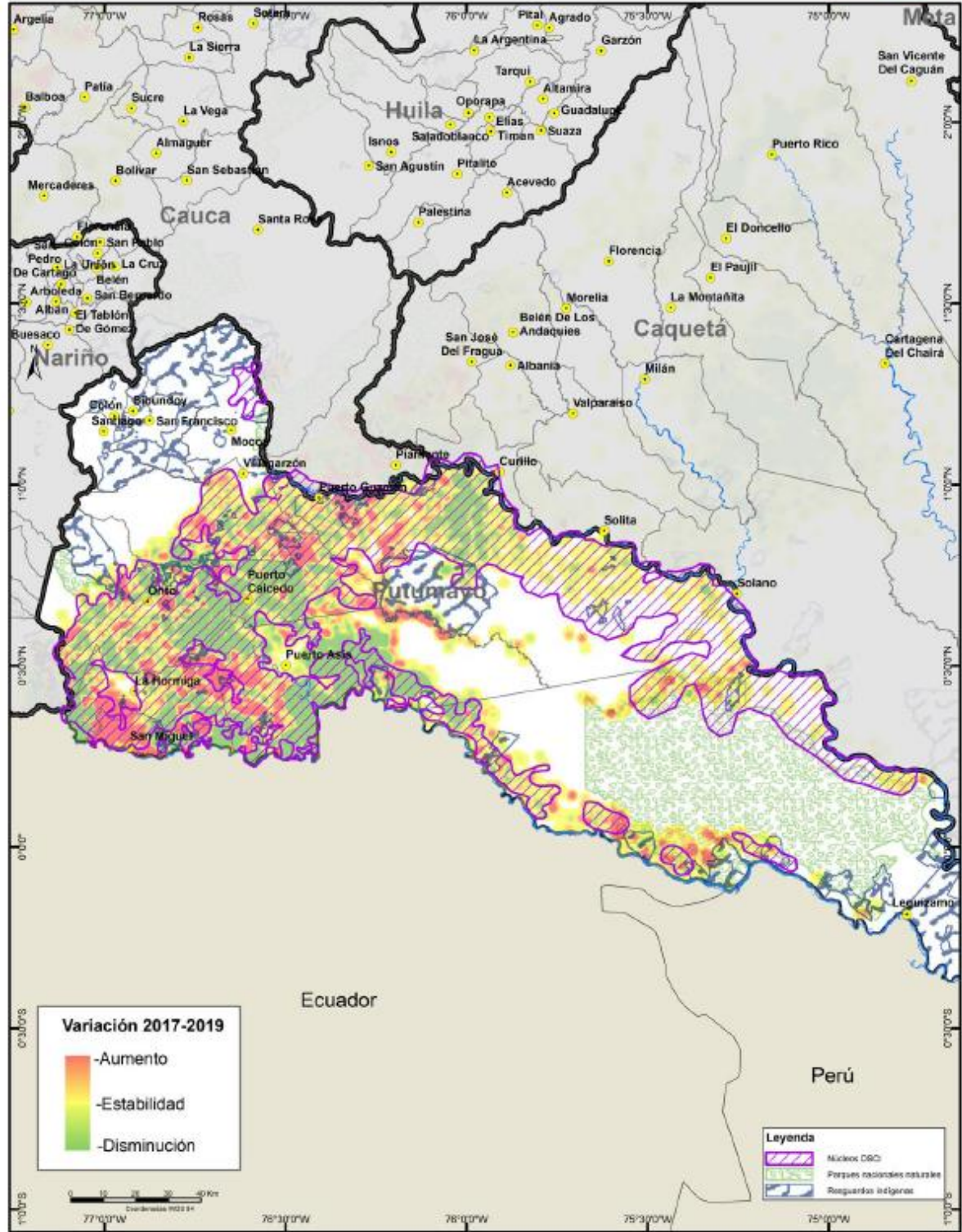


Source: (UNODC 2021)

Map 3 - Coca cultivation in Putumayo (2017-2019)



Variación área sembrada de coca 2017 - 2019 - Departamento de Putumayo



Fuente: Censos 2017. Cartografía: Oficina de UNODC. Límite vegetal: http://geoportal.dane.gov.co/contenido. Los límites, nombres y dibujos usados en este mapa no constituyen reconocimiento o aceptación por parte de Naciones Unidas.

Septiembre de 2020

Source: (UNODC 2021)

The reconfiguration of VNSGs in the Colombia-Ecuador borderland affected the wellbeing of civilians through the expansion of illegal activities in the area. In 2021, the year that Colombia broke its historical records for coca cultivation and cocaine production, Nariño and Putumayo figured alongside Norte de Santander, a border department with Venezuela, as the three Colombian departments that concentrated 62% of coca cultivation areas (UNODC-SIMCI 2022). As a noteworthy phenomenon, the historical records of coca cultivation and cocaine production happened after reduction in the hectares of illicit crops were detected in the departments from 2017 to 2019, probably a result of PNIS (see Maps 2 and 3). UNODC explains this equation by stating that VNSGs are more and more dedicated to increment their productivity by hectare, leading to an increase in the amount and quality of coca leaves and, consequently, in the amount and quality of cocaine hydrochloride extracted (UNODC 2022b; UNODC-SIMCI 2022).

Furthermore, since the Colombia-Ecuador borderland figures as a SSAIT (Pimenta 2016), the control of the area meant the control of the illicit transits. In the places with ELN preponderance, for example, the approximation of its members to the civil society was strategic to legitimate their non-state order, allowing the drug market and other associated illicit activities to thrive at the group's will. In 2020, during the COVID-19 lockdown, the economic isolation of borderland communities disturbed their regular livelihoods, leading to an increase in illegal activities. In Nariño, the ELN also used the moment to announce a unilateral ceasefire and advance their political propaganda to the communities (Cadena 2022).

In conclusion, the demobilization of FARC-EP in 2017 led to an adjustment on Colombia-Ecuador borderland security dynamics. The control FARC-EP had previously over territories and illicit economies in the region was now officially open to disputes. In the immediate post-demobilization, the lack of a robust and concerted military and functional state presence that could fill in the power vacuum led to a rise on the number of VNSGs in the region, such as the ELN, FARC-EP dissidences and BACRIM factions. The territorial reconfiguration of non-state power alongside the weak institutional presence in the region reinforced VNSGs use of the border effect and of mechanisms of control and coercion towards the population, derived from their monopoly of violence in the area (Idler 2019; Cadena 2022).

While in some areas the preponderance of ELN led to a pacification through shadow citizenship, marked by inconspicuous violence and a rule of uncertainty and fear; in other

areas, the disputes among VNSGs led to a rise on direct violence as verified in reported attacks, kidnappings, the murder of journalists, and the alarming numbers of assassinations of social leaders (Gallardo 2018; INDEPAZ 2021; Cadena 2022). As Cadena (2022, 80) argues: *“la violencia, como medio para resolver disputas, se veía reducida por la relación de mutua dependencia entre los civiles y la guerrilla. No obstante, en ciertas ocasiones la violencia se utilizaba como una forma de disuasión y para evitar que se repitieran actos delictivos”*. In the following chapter, I will analyze the impact of these actions on the PNIS implementation in Nariño and Putumayo from 2017 to 2021.

4. CROP SUBSTITUTION IN NARIÑO AND PUTUMAYO (2017-2021): HOW CAN VNSGs SPOIL PEACE?

As stated by the Kroc Institute, the early implementation phase of a peace deal, that usually marks the first five years, determines the amount and the type of challenges the implementation process would need to overcome in the following years (Echavarría Álvarez et al 2022). Considering my account of the peace implementation in Colombia through a bottom-up lens, and the prior assessment about VNSG action in the Colombia-Ecuador borderland, in this chapter, I inquire: what do these local security challenges tell us in terms of spoiling of PNIS implementation in the departments of Nariño and Putumayo in this initial phase?

To answer this question, I will first comprehend PNIS structure and the Program’s role inside the Colombian peace framework. Then, I will analyze the level of its implementation in the country, taking into consideration the four categories of multifactorial internal and external obstacles presented in Chapter 1: (i) governmental difficulties to coordinate peace initiatives; (ii) budgetary challenges; (iii) chronic socioeconomic and regional inequalities; and (iv) local security dynamics. Since the focus of this research is the Colombia-Ecuador borderland, the occurrences of bottom-up obstacles will be constricted to this geographic area. Also, despite considering all four categories, the analysis will be dedicated to the local security dynamics, also focus of this thesis.

4.1. Understanding the *Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos de Uso Ilícito* (PNIS)

Considering Colombia's position, over decades, as the major cocaine production country in the world, it was essential for the drug problem to be taken as a crucial issue during the 2012-2016 peace talks. Hence, the country's strict compromise with the World Drug Problem, already boosted in their bilateral relations with the US and in the United Nations (UN), also figured during the Havana negotiations. A comprehensive Peace Deal that pointed to the definitive solution to the illicit drugs problem meant the possibility of socioeconomic development, violence eradication, and non-repetition. Therefore, the historical association of FARC-EP and the drug market could not be overlooked while formulating ways to overcome the armed conflict. In other words, taking the crime-conflict nexus into consideration was an imperative for peace.

The justification for the creation of PNIS rested on the urgency to counteract the vulnerabilities and human rights violations of populations in territories historically marked by the presence of crops of illicit use and, ergo, VNSGs (Presidencia de la República 2017). More specifically, PNIS has as core objectives to overcome the poverty conditions of these communities; to promote voluntary substitution; to foment productive opportunities; and to limit the agricultural lands in the country (Acuerdo Final 2016). By fomenting state functional and coordinated presence, and providing these populations with basic needs and tools for their economic empowerment, the idea of the Program is to reduce their level of affectation derived from the armed conflict. In a word: reparation. It is a transformative vision, dedicated to generate territorial ownership for marginalized communities towards their wellbeing, dignity and non-revictimization. The Program is under direct responsibility of the *Dirección para la Sustitución de Cultivos Ilícitos*, part of the structure of the *Alta Consejería Presidencial para el Postconflicto* of the Colombian Presidency. In addition, PNIS has three types of territorial instruments for coordination and management: (i) *Consejos asesores territoriales*; (ii) *Comisiones municipales de planeación participativa*; and (iii) *Consejos municipales de evaluación y seguimiento*. The decree that created PNIS states their beneficiaries as follows:

“son beneficiarios del PNIS las familias campesinas en situación de pobreza que derivan su subsistencia de los cultivos de uso ilícito, que voluntariamente se comprometan a las sustituciones de los cultivos de uso ilícito, la no resiembra, ni estar involucradas en labores asociadas a estos, y que no hayan realizado siembras

posteriores al 10 de julio de 2016” (Presidencia de la República 2017)

With a timeframe of implementation of 10 years (2017-2027), PNIS is guided by the following principles: integration to the *Reforma Rural Integral*; concerted and participative collective construction; equity-based approach according to the conditions in each territory; respect and application of the principles and regulations of the rule of law and coexistence of citizens; and voluntary substitution (Acuerdo Final 2016).

Doing justice to the comprehensiveness of the peace process, PNIS is a component of the *Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial* (PDET) of the *Reforma Rural Integral* contained in Point 1. Thereby, the 2016 Peace Deal reinforced the need for a solution to the illicit drugs problem tied to the solution of another major Colombian structural challenge: rural development. In Map 4, it is possible to recognize the intersection of both problems in the territory. It was the first time that a comprehensive approach between rural reform and crop substitution rose to such a level of compromise by the government. The integration of PDET and PNIS rests on their shared plans and strategies for property regulation, land use, provision of socioeconomic infrastructure, cooperative and solidary farming economies, and the right to food and nutrition sovereignty and security (PMI 2017).

In the 2016 diagnosis outlined in the PMI, there is a significant number of areas that suffer an overlap of violences. In 64,5% of the 183 municipalities in which coca crops were detected, high incidence of armed conflict, low institutional presence, and high levels of poverty were also identified (PMI 2017). Eleven of these 183 municipalities concentrated 50% of the coca crops reported that year:

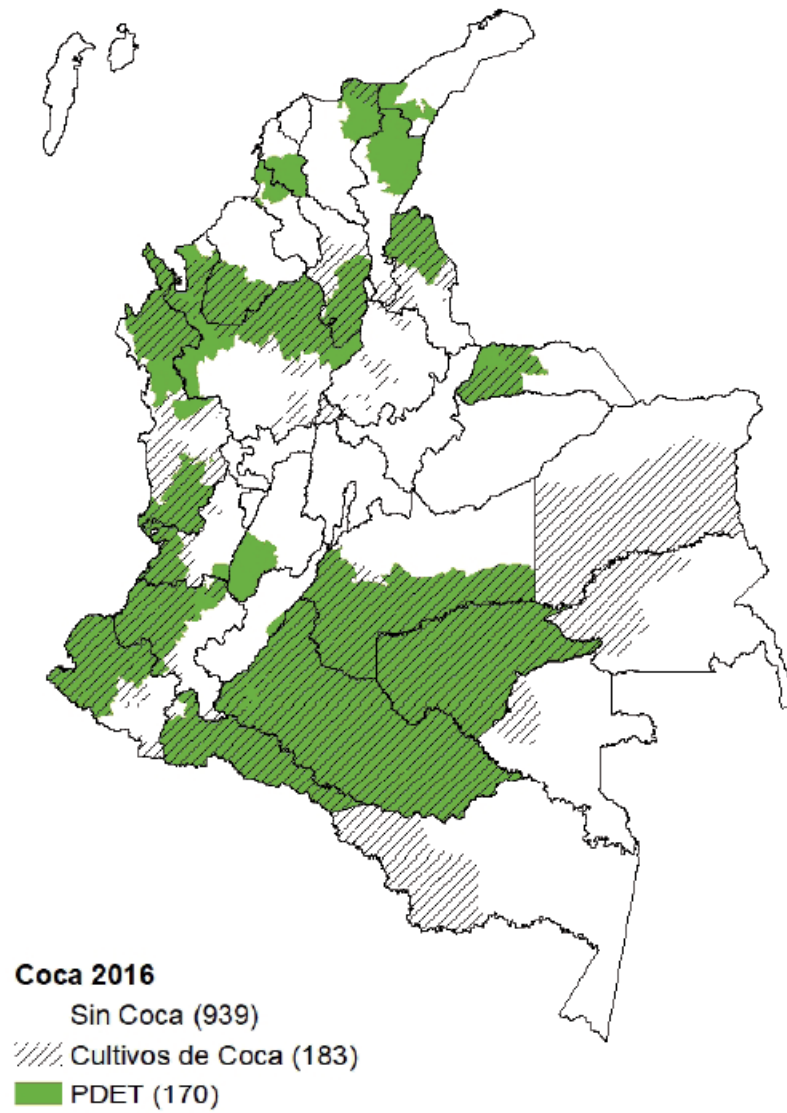
- In Nariño: Tumaco, Barbacoas, and El Charco;
- In Putumayo: Puerto Asís, Valle del Guamuéz, San Miguel, and Orito;
- In Cauca: El Tambo;
- In Norte de Santander: Tibú, Sardinata, and El Tarra.

As a comparative exercise to the next section, eight of these municipalities are inscribed into PNIS (UNODC 2022a):

- In Nariño: Tumaco;
- In Putumayo: Puerto Asís, Valle del Guamuéz, San Miguel, and Orito;

- In Cauca: El Tambo;
- In Norte de Santander: Tibú and Sardinata.

Map 4 - Municipalities with coca crops (2016) and PDET prioritized areas



Source: (PMI 2017)

In order to overcome the associated violences that lay over communities historically affected by the cultivation of crops of illicit use, the Peace Deal outlines the following elements, necessary for PNIS implementation:

Table 4 - Elements for the development of PNIS, as outlined in the Peace Deal

Element	Description
Security conditions for the communities and territories affected by crops used for illicit purposes	<p>The government will strengthen the presence of state institutions and their capabilities to: (i) protect communities, in particular from any kind of coercion or threat, and (ii) interdict and prosecute territorial-based drug trafficking networks in accordance with the security concept laid out in the Peace Deal.</p> <p>The protection of communities, the safeguarding of the right to life and the well-being of the rural population also require a demining program dedicated to clearing the areas of the national territory that have been affected by the laying of anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordinance.</p>
Agreements with communities	<p>Formalization of the commitment of the communities to: voluntary and concerted substitution, not replanting, non-involvement in work associated with crops for illicit use or any participation in the illegal commercialization of raw materials derived from them. In its turn, the Government's commitments are to the immediate execution of PAI and the implementation of the participative construction process of PISDA. Both initiatives will be further explained below.</p>
Prioritization of territories	<p>The Program's implementation will start in prioritized territories according to the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritized areas within the PDET framework;

	<p>2. Density of crops for illicit use and of population;</p> <p>3. National Natural Parks;</p> <p>4. Communities that have received differential criminal treatment.</p>
Special judicial treatment	The Government compromises to the waiver, on a transitional basis, of the exercise of penal action or sanction against small-scale farmers who are or have been linked to the cultivation of crops used for illicit purposes when, within a time limit of one year, starting from the entry into force of the new regulation, they formally declare before the competent authorities their decision to renounce the cultivation or maintenance of crops used for illicit purposes.
Planes Integrales Comunitarios y Municipales de Sustitución y Desarrollo Alternativo (PISDA)	Plans created altogether with the families through communitarian assemblies, integrated to the PDET and therefore dedicated to the integral transformation of the territory. The plans essentially cover the development of productive projects and activities regarding: social infrastructure works, sustainability and environmental recovery, property regularization, social development, public services, security, etc.

Source: Made by the author, based on the *Acuerdo Final* (2016)

Among the products outlined in the PMI for the PNIS, the *Planes Integrales Comunitarios y Municipales de Sustitución y Desarrollo Alternativo* (PISDA) are the ones supposed to generate a more direct and substantial effect for the families that compromise with voluntary substitution. The Plans are the core action of the Program, and are dedicated to overcoming the dependency of communities from illegal economies by generating conditions and providing technical assistance for the fulfillment of their territorial ownership and socioeconomic empowerment. Within the peace framework, PISDA represents a boost on the functional state presence in rural marginalized areas of the country affected by the drug market. UNODC explains the prior steps for PISDA implementation:

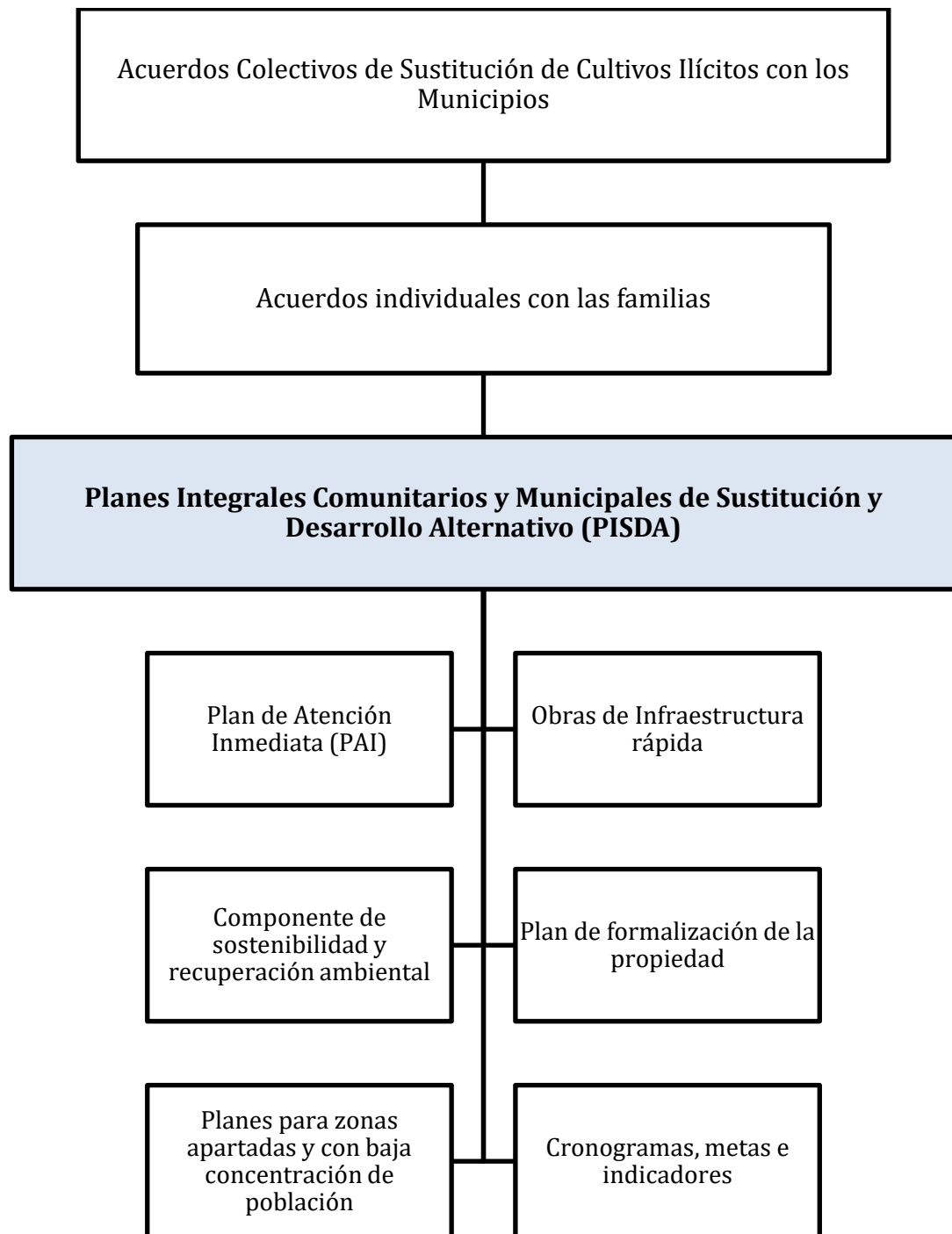
“en sus inicios, para la implementación del PNIS se desarrolló un plan de acción basado en una estrategia de relacionamiento con actores locales que propició la articulación interinstitucional y con organizaciones sociales y campesinas de las regiones. De acuerdo con esta ruta inicial, en el mes 1 se realizaría un análisis de contexto territorial de las zonas focalizadas para emprender el proceso de identificación. A continuación (meses 2 y 3), se suscribirían acuerdos colectivos de sustitución voluntaria y se iniciaría la caracterización socioeconómica de las familias y de la línea base de los cultivos ilícitos.” (UNODC 2022a, 3)

After the signing of the PNIS collective deal between the Colombian national government and interested municipalities, the municipalities and the territorial instances abovementioned start formalizing families’ commitments to voluntary substitution, not replanting and non-involvement, direct or indirect, with illicit activities. After the signing of the individual agreements and the first verification mission, the local authorities, in coordination with the *Dirección para la Sustitución de Cultivos Ilícitos*, begin the PISDA implementation through its six components (see Figure 4).

The core component of PISDA is the *Plan de Atención Inmediata* (PAI), a series of economic incentives given to families to support the substitution activities and the generation of productive projects. The PAI is composed of the payment of the *Asistencia Alimentaria Inmediata* (AAI) of \$1.000.000 per month, that depends on the commitment of families to voluntary eradication. UNODC organizes periodic monitoring and verification missions to attest the substitution process so the disbursements for the families can be approved¹⁹. If crop substitution is attested, the government resumes the AAI monthly payments for the families, up to 12 months. In parallel, PAI also provides a 24-month comprehensive technical assistance that comprises self-sustainability and food security initiatives, as well as the creation of short and long-cycle productive projects (see Figure 5). According to the *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2018-2022*, the beginning of the long-cycle productive projects should coincide with the end of the 12 payments of the AAI (UNODC 2022a).

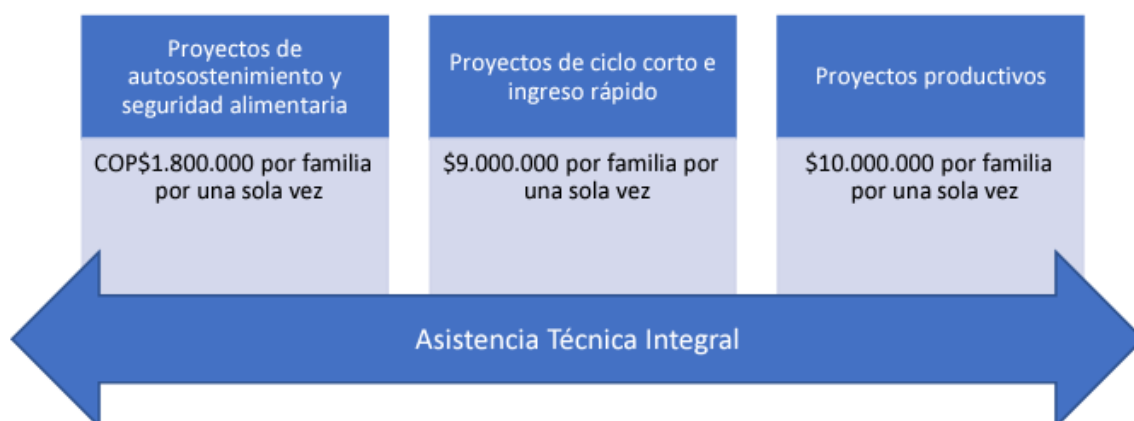
¹⁹ “El proceso de monitoreo y verificación realizado por UNODC se lleva a cabo mediante cuatro misiones que tienen lugar durante toda la implementación del Programa. En la primera misión se realiza la caracterización de los cultivos ilícitos reportados por las personas beneficiarias inscritas como cultivadoras. En la segunda misión se verifica la erradicación voluntaria de los lotes comprometidos. La tercera misión verifica el cumplimiento de los compromisos suscritos en el acuerdo individual y se evidencian los avances en la implementación de los componentes del PAI (Plan de Atención Inmediata) familiar. La cuarta misión de monitoreo tiene como objetivo la recolección de la Línea Final del Programa, de tal forma que se cuente con la información suficiente para evaluar los resultados y la efectividad de la intervención” (UNODC 2022a, 7)

Figure 4 – Key steps and components for PISDA implementation



Source: Made by the author, based on the Acuerdo Final (2016) and the Decree 896/2017 (Presidencia de la República 2017)

Figure 5 – Components of PAI’s technical assistance to the families



Source: (UNODC 2021)

4.2. The impact of VNSG action on PNIS implementation in Nariño and Putumayo

The analysis of the Peace Deal implementation presented in Chapter 1 suits Point 4.1 specifically as well. Slow implementation of PNIS is also observed, with early implementation goals behind schedule. According to the CSIVI, all initial actions of PNIS, such as the collective and individual agreements, were supposed to start still in 2017, in the first 12 months after the signature (Acuerdo Final 2016). However, when analyzing Table 5 for an overview of the situation of PNIS strategic goals, even with their conclusions programmed to 2021 or 2022, only one of the goals has reached 100% of implementation on the expected timeframe.

Table 5 – PNIS strategic goals, as outlined in the PMI

<i>Producto</i>	<i>Meta trazadora</i>	<i>Responsable</i>	<i>Año Inicio</i>	<i>Año Fin</i>	<i>Avance (2022)</i>
<i>Programa de desminado en áreas de cultivos de uso ilícito concertado con</i>	<i>100% de Acciones Integrales Contra Minas Antipersonal implementadas en territorios en los que</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz</i> <i>Presidencia de la República</i> 	2017	2021	100%

<i>los pueblos étnicos y sus organizaciones representativas</i>	<i>se haya suministrado información</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dirección Descontamina Colombia</i> 			
<i>Ajustes normativos para el tratamiento penal diferencial</i>	<i>El tratamiento penal diferencial habrá beneficiado a pequeños agricultores que estén o hayan estado vinculados con cultivos de uso ilícito, de acuerdo con la normatividad vigente</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ministerio de Justicia y del Derecho</i> • <i>Presidencia de la República</i> • <i>Dirección para la sustitución de cultivos ilícitos</i> 	2017	2021	50%
<i>Planes Integrales de Sustitución y Desarrollo Alternativo (PISDA), formulados con acompañamiento técnico en las asambleas comunitarias</i>	<i>En 2022 los territorios PNIS estarán 100% libres de cultivos de uso ilícito</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Presidencia de la República</i> • <i>Dirección para la sustitución de cultivos ilícitos</i> • <i>Ministerio de Defensa</i> 	2017	2022	92%

Sources: Made by the author, based on data available at the PMI (2017) and SIPO (2022)

By the end of Santos' mandate, in 2018, PNIS had registered 83.161 families committed to voluntary substitution. However, despite the progress, there was already a delay of more than 45% on the goal of substituting 50.000 hectares in the first year. Therefore,

when Duque became President, his first impression of PNIS was that the Program was in disarray and underfunded. Duque then chose to enroll only 15.936 new families in the Program, stopped signing individual agreements, and postponed the substitution goal of 50.000 hectares of coca to 2022. As a result of this decision, of the 188.000 families that signed collective agreements in 2017, there are still around 48% waiting to sign their individual agreements to be contemplated in PNIS (Pérez and Galvis 2020, Llach 2021). UNODC, in charge of the monitoring and verification of PNIS, informed that as of July 2022, 99.097 families have been linked to the PNIS through individual agreements. Among them: 67.627 are growers or illicit crops growers, 14.612 live in areas affected by crops of illicit use but do not cultivate them, and 16.858 are coca leaf collectors. The beneficiary families are located in 56 municipalities in 14 departments, where 65% of the crops of illicit use are concentrated (UNODC 2022a).

Table 6 – PNIS beneficiary families by department, as of July 2022

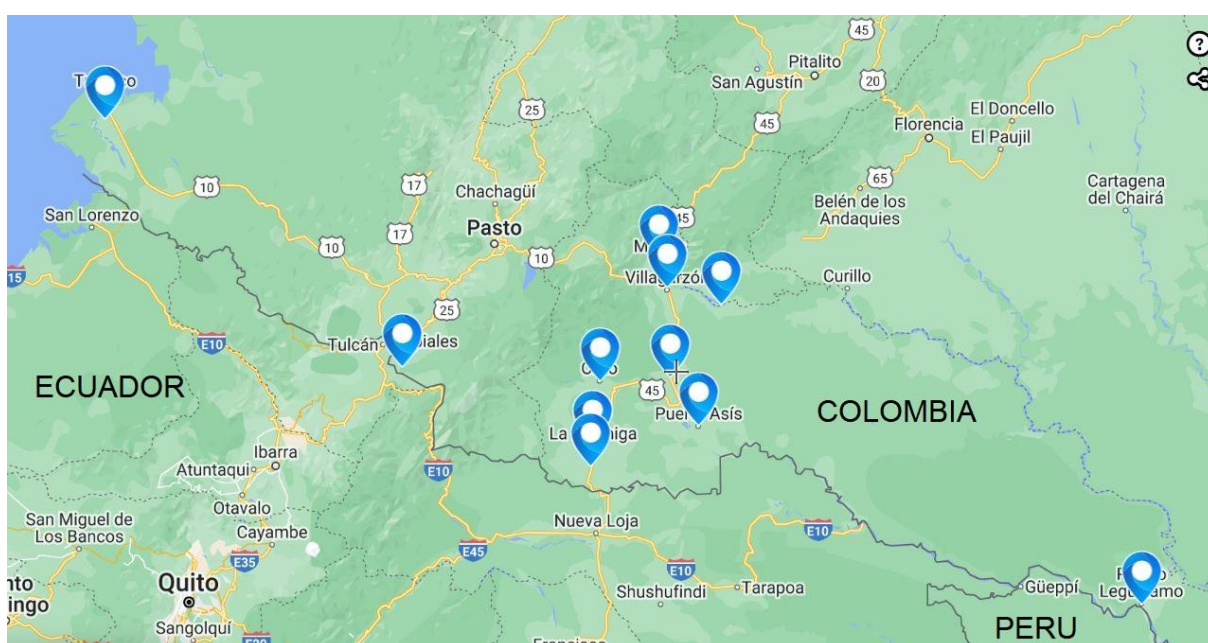
Departamento	Familias	% participación	Mujeres titulares	Hombres titulares
Antioquia	11.555	12%	3,6%	8,1%
Arauca	501	1%	0,1%	0,4%
Bolívar	2.756	3%	0,8%	2,0%
Caquetá	12.959	13%	5,0%	8,1%
Cauca	5.628	6%	2,7%	3,0%
Córdoba	6.397	6%	1,4%	5,1%
Guainía	27	0%	0,0%	0,0%
Guaviare	7.196	7%	1,6%	5,7%
Meta	9.668	10%	2,8%	6,9%
Nariño	17.210	17%	8,7%	8,7%
Norte de Santander	2.998	3%	0,9%	2,1%
Putumayo	20.317	21%	8,3%	12,2%
Valle del Cauca	1.060	1%	0,3%	0,7%
Vichada	825	1%	0,1%	0,7%
Total General	99.097	100%	36,2%	63,8%

Source: (UNODC 2022a)

In Nariño and Putumayo, the number of beneficiary families represent the highest percentages of the total number of families inscribed in the Program, 17% and 21% respectively (see Table 6). These numbers indicate that the Colombian government prioritizes

these areas. This movement can be explained by the departments' high position in the coca cultivation rank in the country and the security challenges derived from the border effect and their SSAIT status, that lead to VNSG presence. There are two PNIS municipalities in Nariño (Ipiales and San Andres De Tumaco) and nine in Putumayo (Mocoa, Orito, Puerto Asís, Puerto Caicedo, Puerto Guzmán, Puerto Leguízamo, San Miguel, Valle Del Guamuez, and Villagarzón). Among them, only Puerto Leguízamo is not part of the Colombia-Ecuador borderland: the city borders Peru and lies under other types of influences in terms of economic and social life (see Map 5).

Map 5 – PNIS municipalities in Nariño and Putumayo



Source: Made by the author, based on UNODC (2022a)

Comparing the number of families inscribed in each PNIS municipality of both departments through the last years, there was a slight reduction in the majority of them (see Table 7). It can be explained by the government's decision to limit the number of new individual agreements, but it also indicates a problem on the level of commitment to the individual agreements by both parties: the families and the government. When local and/or national governmental authorities' compromise is absent or insufficient, implementation is affected and peace is spoiled (Newman and Richmond 2006). In turn, slow implementation

leads to families' not receiving the necessary support from the Program and returning to former profitable illicit activities.

Table 7 - Families inscribed in PNIS in Nariño and Putumayo (2019-2022)

<i>Departamento</i>	<i>Municipio</i>	<i>Total Familias (dec 2019)</i>	<i>Total Familias (dec 2020)</i>	<i>Total Familias (jul 2022)</i>
Nariño	Ipiales	667	667	667
	San Andres De Tumaco	16568	16524	16543
Putumayo	Mocoa	227	226	228
	Orito	4754	4749	4743
	Puerto Asís	4506	4568	4563
	Puerto Caicedo	1427	1407	1405
	Puerto Guzmán	3586	3584	3583
	Puerto Leguízamo	1028	1028	1025
	San Miguel	1445	1443	1435
	Valle Del Guamuez	1851	1844	1838
	Villagarzón	1507	1501	1497

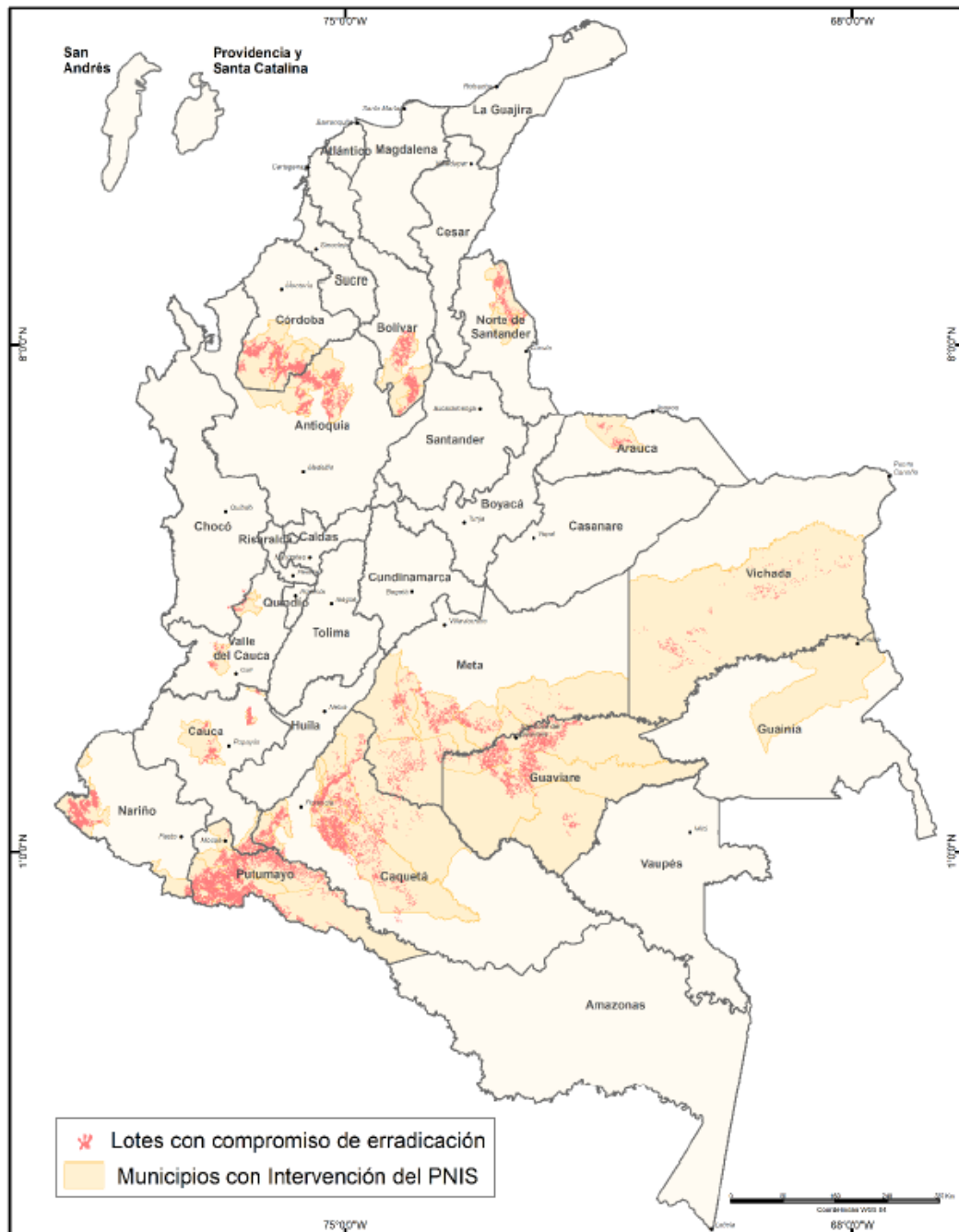
Source: Made by the author, based on UNODC (2022a)

In terms of hectares substituted by the families, Nariño and Putumayo have a high number of areas already engaged in voluntary substitution (see Map 6). They represent, respectively, 10,89% and 26,1% of the hectares verified by UNODC²⁰. It is important to consider, however, that the challenges of crop substitution are not the same for each municipality. Local characteristics and dynamics impact the design and the implementation of

²⁰ In July 2022, UNODC verified 38.615 hectares of 57.978 families (85,7% of the beneficiary families).

the Program. In the municipalities of Nariño and Putumayo engaged in PNIS, some hectares eradicated are located in *Zonas de Manejo Especial, Parques Nacionales Naturales, Resguardos Indígenas* and *Territorios Colectivos de Comunidades Negras* (see Table 8).

Map 6 - Areas committed to voluntary substitution



Fuente: Cartografía Básica de IGAC. Dirección de Sustitución de Cultivos Ilícitos. Corte 31/07/2022
 Los límites, nombres y títulos usados en este mapa no constituyen reconocimiento o aceptación por parte de Naciones Unidas

Elaborado por Corporación TV - Unidad de Información y Análisis - UNODC
 Septiembre 2022

Source: (UNODC 2022a)

Table 8 – Voluntary eradication verified by UNODC (hectares), as of July 2022

<i>Departamento</i>	<i>Municipio</i>	<i>Familias</i>	<i>Zonas de Manejo Especial</i>	<i>Zonas de Parques Nacionales Naturales</i>	<i>Resguardos Indígenas</i>	<i>Territorios Colectivos de Comunidades Negras</i>
Nariño	Ipiales	551	-	-	29	191
	San Andres De Tumaco	3583	209	-	22	1650
Putumayo	Mocoa	62	-	-	0	-
	Orito	1851	229	1	13	7
	Puerto Asís	2904	-	-	15	-
	Puerto Caicedo	726	-	-	34	2
	Puerto Guzmán	1547	3	-	57	1
	Puerto Leguízamo	721	275	104	48	1
	San Miguel	444	-	-	12	-
	Valle Del Guamuez	1012	21	-	20	0
	Villagarzón	637	15	-	40	5

Source: Made by the author, based on UNODC (2022a)

Despite being necessary to orient adequate policies to the specific challenges of these areas, the territorial, environmental, and ethnic components of PNIS are still way behind on implementation. Security conditions and special judicial treatment for communities also need a boost on implementation (see Table 9). As outlined in Chapter 1, the reason for such delays can be explained by multifactorial internal and external obstacles the implementation process

faces. In this thesis, these obstacles are classified into four categories: (i) governmental difficulties to coordinate peace initiatives; (ii) budgetary challenges; (iii) chronic socioeconomic and regional inequalities; and (iv) local security dynamics. Since the impact of VNSG action on PNIS implementation is the focus of this research, in the next sections, I will analyze occurrences of security dynamics in Nariño and Putumayo in an attempt to find correlation between them and the setbacks faced by the Program in these departments. To organize the analytical work, I will divide the local security dynamics into the three aspects of my argument: VNSGs undermine the PNIS implementation by (i) fueling high-profiting illegal economies, (ii) fomenting state-crime collusion and (iii) keeping communities under a rule of fear, insecurity, and uncertainty.

Table 9 – Implementation of PNIS strategies, until June 2022

<i>Estrategia</i>	<i>Responsable</i>	<i>Cantidad de indicadores</i>	<i>Promedio del avance de implementación</i>
<i>4.1.2. Condiciones de seguridad para las comunidades y los territorios afectados por los cultivos de uso ilícito</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz</i> 	7	50,15%
<i>4.1.3. Acuerdos con las comunidades</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Dirección para la sustitución de cultivos ilícitos</i> 	8	87,5%
<i>4.1.4. Tratamiento penal diferencial</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ministerio de Justicia y del Derecho</i> 	5	37,5%
<i>4.1.5 Asambleas comunitarias</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Agencia de Renovación del Territorio</i> <i>Dirección para la sustitución de cultivos ilícitos</i> 	4	98%

4.1.7. Atención inmediata y desarrollo de proyectos productivos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social</i> • <i>Ministerio de Educación Nacional</i> • <i>Dirección para la sustitución de cultivos ilícitos</i> • <i>Unidad Administrativa Especial del Servicio Público de Empleo (UAESPE)</i> 	17	85,69%
4.1.9. Sostenibilidad y recuperación ambiental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dirección para la sustitución de cultivos ilícitos</i> 	2	0%
4.1.10. Plan de formalización de la propiedad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Agencia Nacional de Tierras</i> 	1	100%
4.1.12. Estrategias para zonas de los PNN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parques Nacionales Naturales</i> • <i>Dirección para la sustitución de cultivos ilícitos</i> 	2	1,48%
4.1.13. Estrategia de comunicación	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dirección para la sustitución de cultivos ilícitos</i> 	1	100%
TOTAL PNIS		47	69,21%
		<i>indicadores</i>	

Source: Made by the author, based on data available at SIIPO (2022)

4.2.1. Illegal economies

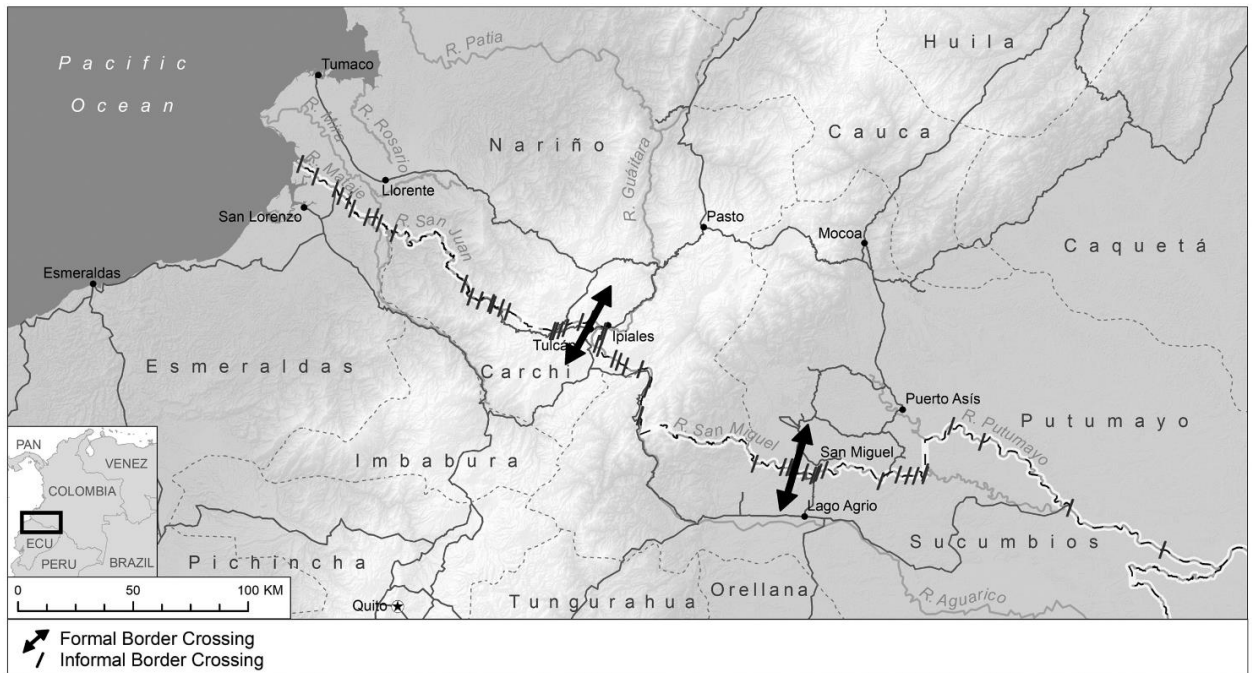
The first indication of VNSG impact in PNIS implementation is the reseeded activity detected by UNODC. According to their 2020 report, the last one that has a more complete assessment on the topic, there was an increase in the percentage of reseeded in the areas verified, reaching 0,8% in 2020. Nariño and Putumayo have the highest percentages among the departments (see Table 10). Among the municipalities, the top three in reseeded are Valle del Guamuez and Puerto Caicedo in Putumayo, and Ipiales in Nariño. Valle del Guamuez and Ipiales are border municipalities, in which the formal border crossings that connect Colombia and Ecuador are located (see Map 7). Moreover, Puerto Guzmán, Puerto Caicedo, and Puerto Asís, all of them PNIS municipalities, are key points that connect the drug trafficking route from northern parts of Colombia to Sucumbíos and then Quito (Idler 2019).

Table 10 – Persistence of illicit crops, as of December 2020

Departamento	Área Comprometida	Área Persistente	Porcentaje de Persistencia
Antioquia	2.842	7	0,3%
Arauca	373	0	0,0%
Bolívar	1.708	3	0,2%
Caquetá	2.508	0	0,0%
Cauca	712	0	0,0%
Córdoba	618	2	0,2%
Guaviare	1.219	3	0,2%
Meta	1.875	1	0,1%
Nariño	1.712	20	1,2%
Norte de Santander	436	5	1,1%
Putumayo	7.920	134	1,7%
Valle del Cauca	303	1	0,4%
Vichada	692	5	0,8%
Total	22.917	181	0,8%

Source: (UNODC 2022a)

Map 7 – Border crossings along the Colombia-Ecuador border



Source: (Idler 2019, 76)

The beneficiary families expressed their concern with the slow progress of the Program’s implementation as the main cause of the persistence of illicit crops (UNODC 2022a). Most of times, going back to illicit crops is the only alternative for these families to avoid deprivation and famine. As they pledged, this restriction of opportunities indicates, on the one hand, the lack of state functional presence. However, on the other hand, they also complained about pressure for selling their lots to provide for the high demand of new illicit crops in the region (UNODC 2021). Hence, reseeded activity also indicates that VNSG action still determines the type of economic activities allowed in the region: the ones that suit their illicit interests, chiefly the ones associated with the cocaine drug market.

Among the activities that sustain illegal economies in the region, apart from coca cultivation, borderlanders are often recruited to participate in other phases of the drug market such as the trafficking of precursors, the processing of coca and cocaine paste in laboratories, and drug commercialization. Additionally, other activities in the VNSGs portfolio such as illegal mining and contraband of weapons and ammunition also represent a source of income for the civilians who engage in illegal activities (Cadena 2022). In Nariño, after FARC-EP demobilization and the rise of coca cultivation, the ELN and FARC-EP dissidences disputed

the control of different phases of the cocaine production chain. With this reconfiguration in local security dynamics, the VNSGs demand of “local workers” affected communities in both sides of the border:

“Algunos campesinos recibieron ingresos cuando eran contratados como raspachines o fumigadores y así se sometieron a algunas reglas impuestas por la guerrilla, como la de no gastar sus ingresos fuera del territorio colombiano (01, entrevista 2021; 04, 13 entrevistas 2022). Asimismo, algunos civiles fueron contratados para transportar clorhidrato de cocaína a distintas ciudades. Esta práctica ha hecho que los civiles sean enviados como señuelos para pasar cargamentos más grandes, por lo cual algunas personas de la parroquia [El Chical en Ecuador] estaban pagando condenas en la cárcel de Ibarra [Ecuador] al momento de la investigación en 2022” (Cadena 2022, 69)

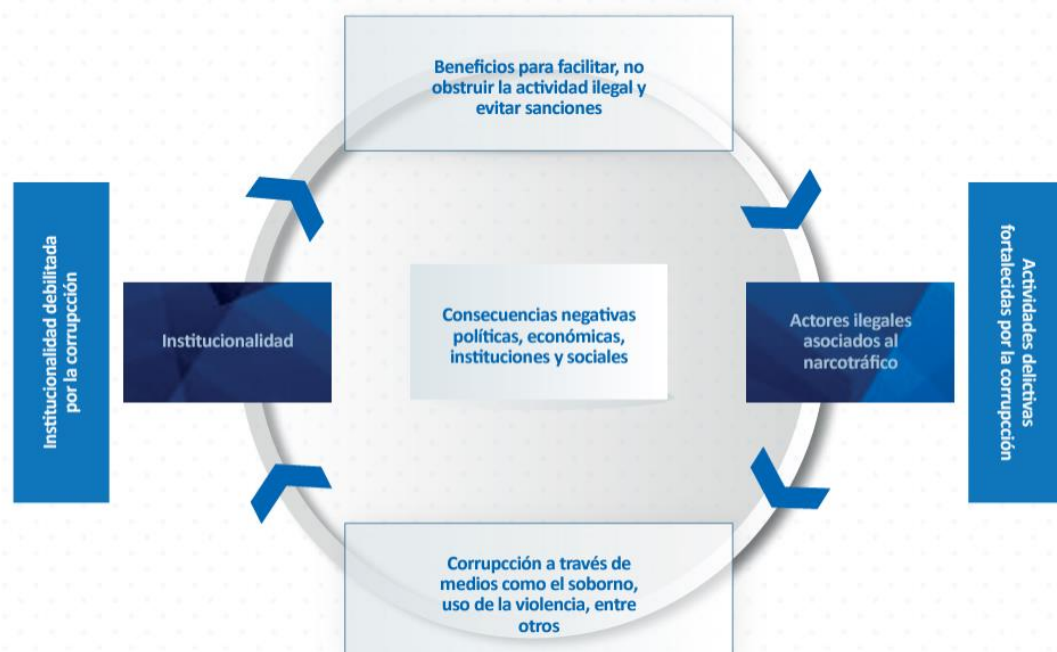
VNSGs are particularly interested for this illicit labor to be executed by locals so they can recompose their drug trafficking businesses with efficiency. The knowledge of borderlanders about local actors, conditions, and dynamics is an asset. In addition, common citizens are not easily recognizable as VNSG members. They have the invisible transit needed to maintain the illicit trafficking, and can gather intelligence to sustain VNSG’s violent governance over the region they control (Idler 2019). In order to attract civilians, particularly young males, to join the illegal economies, VNSGs also invest on a culture of extravagant consumption and luxury. The scarcity of work opportunities in these marginalized areas are no competition to the lure of an extremely profitable business, the power of weapons possession and the possibility of the exercise of control (Cadena 2022). Thus, this VNSG propaganda of the benefits of joining an “illicit culture” also negatively impacts PNIS implementation when it presents itself as a more interesting option for borderlanders than the transition to legal economies such as the long-term farming projects advanced by the Program.

4.2.2. State-crime collusion

The symbiotic relation between criminality and corruption is one of the mechanisms that allow the maintenance of VNSGs illegal action. Through state-crime collusion, they bypass the rule of law and generate a crimilegal cover that hides and sustains their networks

in different levels and activities. Like criminality, corruption is understood as a comprehensive and complex phenomenon, in which civil society, governmental, private and illegal actors interact; and with relevant consequences not only to public resources, but also to the deterioration of institutional development, citizen well-being and the morality of the social groups (Transparencia por Colombia 2021). The symbiotic relation between both phenomena generates a vicious cycle (see Figure 6): *“por un lado, una criminalidad poderosa con alta capacidad corruptora tanto por medios típicos como el soborno, así como por otros medios como el uso de la violencia; por el otro lado, una institucionalidad corruptible que facilita o deja de obstruir la actividad criminal”* (Transparencia por Colombia 2021, 13).

Figure 6 – Symbiotic relationship between drug trafficking and corruption



Source: (Transparencia por Colombia 2021)

Two aspects of the symbiotic relationship between criminality and corruption are worth noting. First, corruption is used to facilitate activities that will fulfill VNSGs own interests with less obstacles as possible. These activities are, for example, drug processing and transit, and avoiding accusations and local judicial responsabilization for their actions. For that, the groups often promote legal or policy modifications to avoid anti-narcotics actions

and ensure the existence of a friendly environment for the VNSG, hence enabling their action in the long term (Transparencia por Colombia 2021).

Second, taking into account the complex network of drug trafficking value chains, or *Sistema de Redes de Valor del Narcotráfico*, corruption adapts itself according to the criminal activity conducted by the VNSG. In Colombia, corruption is usually associated and varies according to the following steps on the criminal network: cultivation, production, distribution and money laundering. Meeting the focus of this study, Transparencia por Colombia (2021) identifies three types of corruption performances related to the cultivation of crops of illicit use: (i) falsification of crop eradication reports to obtain benefits or report achievement of goals; (ii) bribery or coercion of authorities by criminal groups to avoid eradication; and (iii) selective adjustments in the territories to be eradicated, as a result of agreements with criminal actors. Identifying the direct association of VNSGs with cases of corruption in PNIS is a hard task, mainly because of the hidden character of the phenomenon and the confidentiality of investigations. No data was found in the sources that could prove the existence of a causal correlation. Maybe a future ethnographic exercise associated to in-person interviews with locals can help gather information about the topic. The solution for this thesis was to identify national and local corruption occurrences that could impact PNIS implementation and identify specific cases in which VNSGs performed corruption, albeit not directly associated to crop substitution.

Regarding peace implementation, on a national level, corruption was suspected in investment projects approved by OCAD Paz. The *Procuraduría General de la Nación* analyzed 27 projects with an FCP disbursement of more than 437 billion Colombian pesos and identified risks and irregularities in their execution. The investigations concluded that the alleged corruption compromised projects located in PDET prioritized municipalities in the departments of Amazonas, Antioquia, Bolívar, Cauca, Cesar, Córdoba, La Guajira, Nariño, Quindío, Risaralda, Sucre, Tolima, and Valle del Cauca. Since PNIS is integrated into PDET, there was possible impact in PNIS initiatives in Nariño as well (Colprensa 2022a).

On the local level, the *Fiscalía General de la Nación* and the *Policía Nacional* investigated 271 state officials presumed to be involved in corruption cases in Nariño and Putumayo from 2020 to 2022. Among those investigated, there are mayors, former mayors, councilors, former deputies, police officials, contractors and individuals. In Putumayo, the cases are alarming: the governor of the department, Buanerges Florencio Rosero Peña, is

suspected to be involved in irregularities detected in health contracts. According to the *Fiscal General de la Nación*, Francisco Barbosa Delgado, “*en Putumayo hemos vinculado a 164 personas, entre ellas 28 alcaldes y exalcaldes de diferentes municipios como San Francisco, Puerto Asís, Mocoa y Villagarzón. También se ha judicializado 16 secretarios de despacho de alcaldía, 23 policías, 26 contratistas, 30 funcionarios del estado de diferentes identidades como la Secretaría de Educación, Defensoría del Pueblo y hospitales, entre otros*” (Colprensa 2022b; Fiscalía General de la Nación 2022). Puerto Asís, Mocoa and Villagarzón are PNIS municipalities.

The modus operandi of VNSGs is commonly the same, what can provide analysts with some insights. For example, reiterated threats and the subsequent murder of a journalist dedicated to disclosing cases of corruption were reported in Nariño (Vergara 2022). The use of bribe as a tool to dodge Armed Forces inspection on resources that are directed to the illegal arms trade and the continuation of illicit flows that sustain the drug market chain was also identified in Nariño (Ejército Nacional de Colombia 2021). In Putumayo, in its turn, there was involvement of a former governor with illegal gold mining in exchange for protection to the unidentified criminal organization dedicated to the activity (Donadio 2022).

Taking these cases into account, it is evident that corruption exists and puts public resources at risk and affects the correct allocation of basic services and goods for communities in PNIS municipalities. The national irregularities in FCP resource transfers to the departments and the local corruption in Nariño and Putumayo jeopardized projects of territorial development, culture, education, health, and security, what leads to increased distrust in state institutions and deeper levels of social vulnerability in the region.

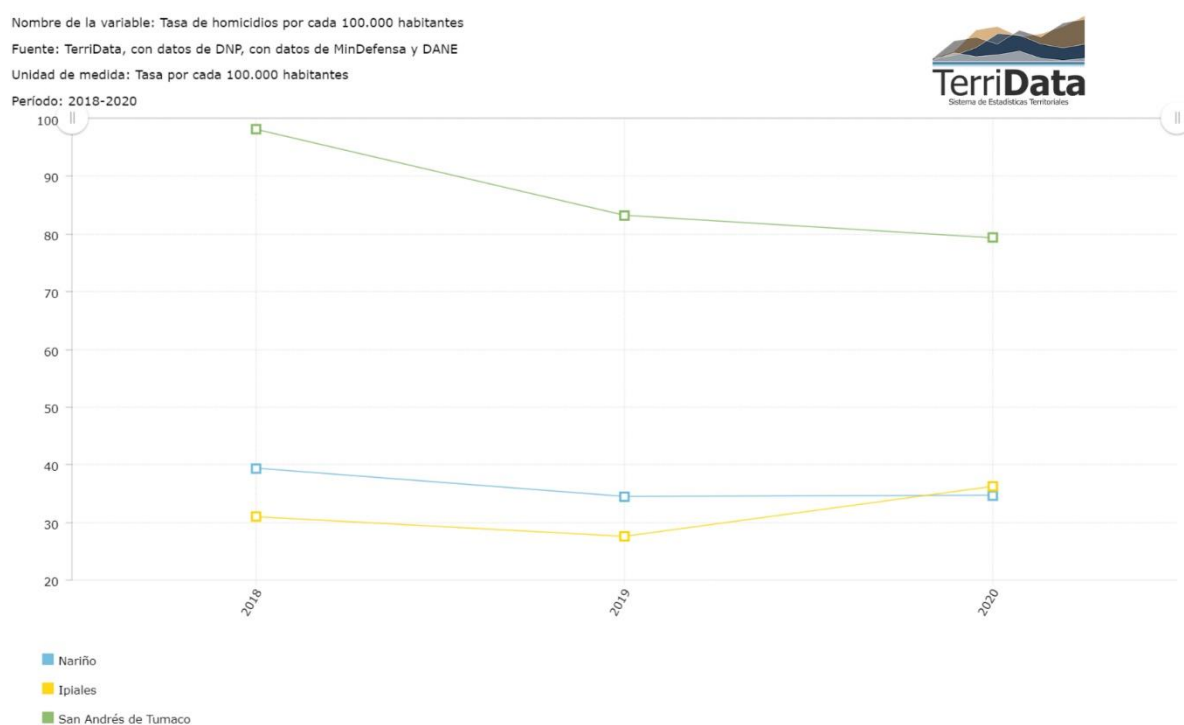
4.2.3. Violent governance

As discussed in Chapter 2, for VNSGs to create and maintain their non-state order they often employ (or exacerbate) one of the following types of violence: direct, structural or inconspicuous. Violent governance is then a major factor that composes and sustains VNSG action. In marginalized borderland territories such as Nariño and Putumayo, the power vacuum left after FARC-EP demobilization triggered changes in local power relations and, with the lack of a robust governmental functional presence, VNSGs started competing to control territories and establish order. In these VNSGs disputes, the type of distrust-reducing

mechanism used impacts on which kind of violence is exerted in the area, among them and towards society. In the case of PNIS implementation, since the Program deals directly with eradication of crops of illicit use, the subsequent adaptations in the drug market cause distress in VNSGs relations and, consequently, impact on the levels of violence in the departments.

Regarding **direct violence**, the majority of PNIS municipalities have a higher rate of homicides in comparison to their department’s average rate (see Graphs 3 and 4). In rural areas specifically, Putumayo faced an upsurge in homicides in 2020 (see Graph 5). All of them are way above the 23,8 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants national average registered in 2020.

Graph 3 – Homicide rates in PNIS municipalities – Nariño (2018-2020)



Source: (TerriData 2022)

Graph 4 – Homicide rates in PNIS municipalities - Putumayo (2018-2020)

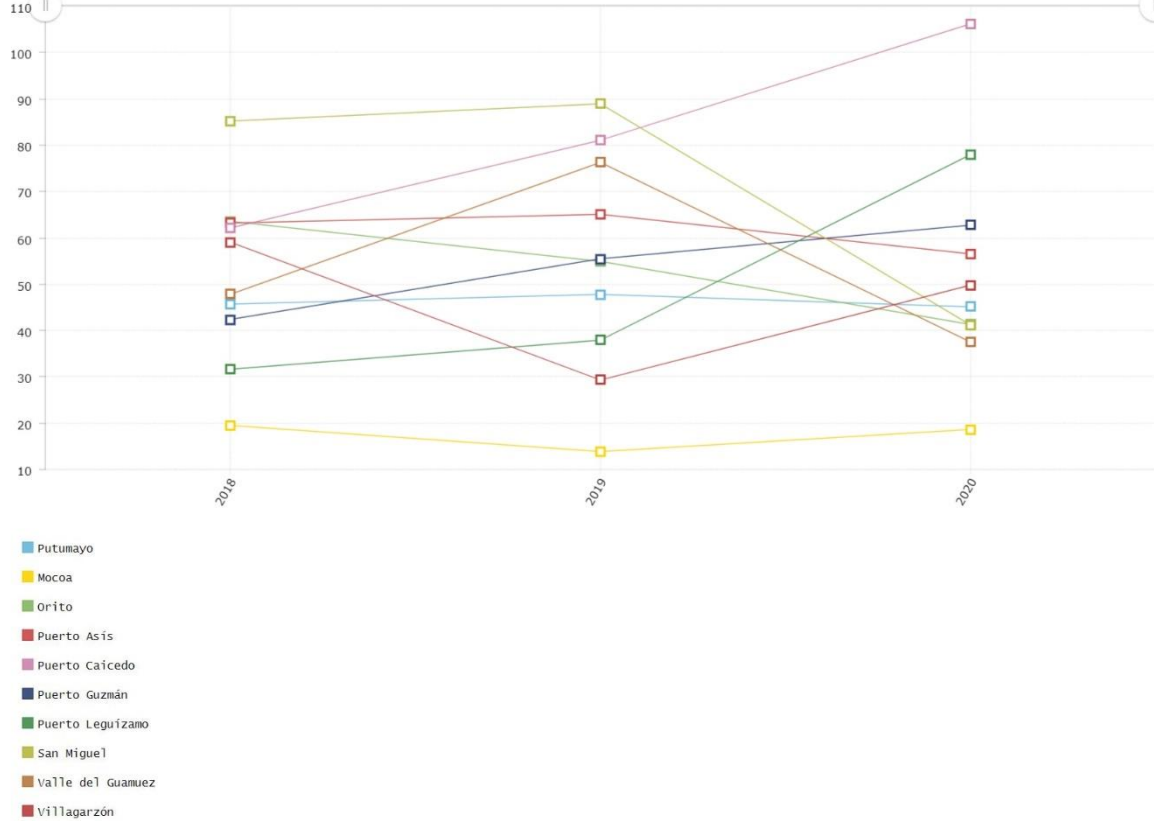
Nombre de la variable: Tasa de homicidios por cada 100.000 habitantes

Fuente: TerriData, con datos de DNP, con datos de MinDefensa y DANE

Unidad de medida: Tasa por cada 100.000 habitantes



Período: 2018-2020

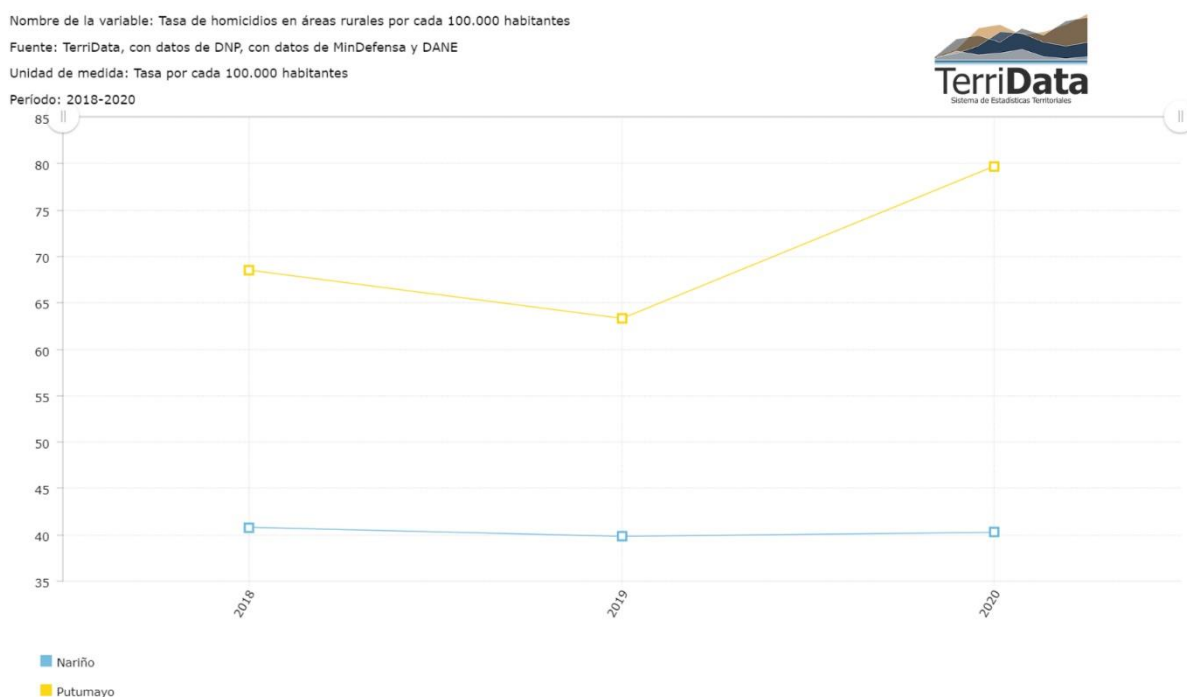


Source: (TerriData 2022)

In a qualitative perspective, it is important to search for any pattern that could indicate that violence was directed to a specific group and what this information can provide in terms of impact in PNIS implementation. Apart from the general worry in terms of public security in Nariño and Putumayo, among the homicides, social leaders and human rights defenders who supported the Peace Deal were common targets. Nariño and Putumayo were the first and third departments with most social leaders assassinated in 2022, a year in which Colombia registered the highest number of assassinations against social leaders since 2016 (Ortega Sarria 2022). Former FARC-EP combatants that signed the Peace Deal and demobilized were also killed in Nariño and Putumayo in 2022. Among the PNIS municipalities, Puerto Asís was the only one that has not registered any assassination of social leaders, human rights defenders

or signatories of the agreement in that year (INDEPAZ 2022). These numbers indicate that, in these areas, direct violence is still a tool used by VNSGs to contain acts of bottom-up communitarian governance that bypass their interests. Since in PNIS a socially induced change is a condition for its success, direct violence exerted by VNSGs represent a threat for the Program’s implementation.

Graph 5 – Homicide rates in rural areas – Nariño and Putumayo (2018-2020)



Source: (TerriData 2022)

In terms of **structural violence**, the Peace Deal has a clear message about the key role that the gender, ethnic and environmental aspects perform in PNIS. The recognition of the economic, cultural and social issues, characteristics and needs of the territories and rural communities, in particular of indigenous communities and communities of African descent, and of women in these communities (Acuerdo Final 2016) is a presupposition to achieve the Program’s goals of territorial ownership and socioeconomic empowerment. Without

overcoming structural vulnerabilities, creating local leaderships becomes a much more difficult task.

Nonetheless, with the reinforcement of patterns and conditions in which structural violence thrive, VNSGs join the list of actors who impact the everyday lives of these groups. The Peace Deal understands that the drug market has a severe influence on specific forms of violence that particularly affect women, victims of human trafficking, sexual exploitation and violence resulting from the use of illicit drugs (Acuerdo Final 2016). As a solution, it proposes educational and professional training to women to monitor, combat, and overcome gender violence. Female headed households represent 36,2% of PNIS beneficiary families. In Putumayo, they are equivalent in number to male headed households (UNODC 2022a).

Regarding the ethnic focus, the Peace Deal states, for example, that crop substitution policies must recognize “the ancestral and traditional uses of the coca leaf, as part of the cultural identity of the indigenous community and the possibility of use of crops used for illicit purposes for medical or scientific purposes” (Acuerdo Final 2016). VNSGs, however, tend to instrumentalize the binational character of indigenous communities as a disguise to illicit transits (Idler 2019).

In a similar fashion, joint incentives between environmental and agricultural sectors for the protection of *Áreas de Especial Interés Ambiental*, the containment of the agricultural frontier, reforestation of areas affected by illicit crops, and communitarian sustainable practices are also present in the PNIS framework (UNODC 2022a). Yet, they need reinforcement and expansion: point 4.1.9 regarding sustainability and environmental recovery has not even started implementation. In Putumayo, 13,020 deforested hectares were reported in 2020, which represents an increase of 21,6% compared to the 10,704 deforested hectares in 2019. The highest levels of deforestation during 2020 were registered in Puerto Guzmán, Puerto Leguízamo and Puerto Asís (TerriData 2021a). In Nariño, 3,638 deforested hectares were reported in 2020, which represents an increase of 47,1% compared to the 2,473 hectares deforested in 2019. The highest levels of deforestation during 2020 were registered in El Charco (1,143 hectares) and San Andrés de Tumaco (845 hectares) (TerriData 2021b). Puerto Guzmán, Puerto Leguízamo, Puerto Asís, and San Andrés de Tumaco are PNIS municipalities.

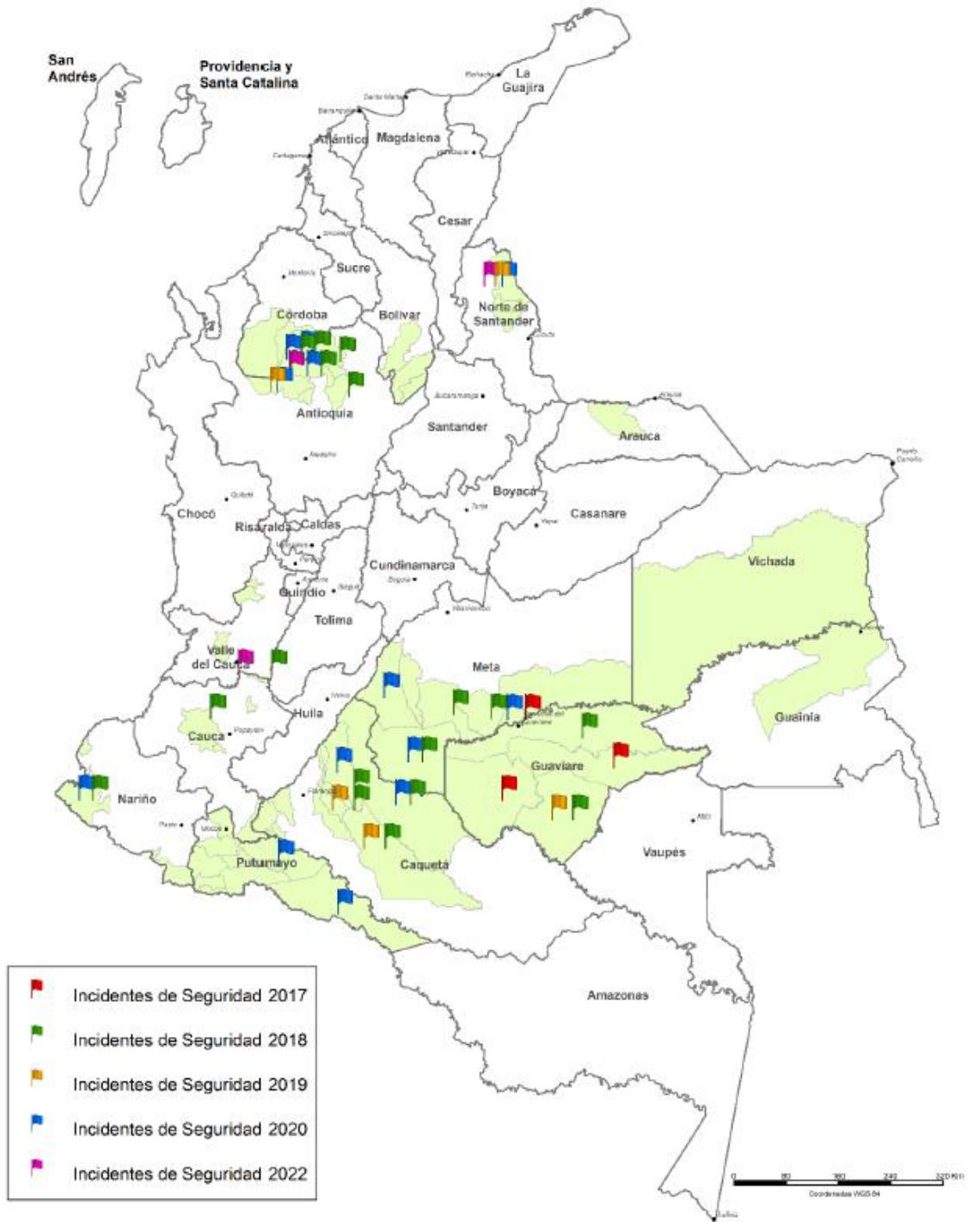
The pacification VNSGs promote when they engage on a Friendship type of interaction does not mean that their action is absent of violence. In these cases, they perform

inconspicuous violence through shadow citizenship and rule of silence mechanisms. In Nariño, after the demobilization of FARC-EP, the Rivalry interactions between VNSGs eroded the former shadow citizenship imposed by the guerrilla, leading to threats and inspection of civilians in transit across the border. When the preponderance of ELN was imposed in some areas such as Tallambí, selective violence was substituted by a new rule of fear and uncertainty. To achieve it, the new non-state order had to rebuild the intra-community social fabric according to their interests. ELN did it through, for example, investment on political propaganda and privileges such as educational scholarships to family members of those with closer ties to the guerrilla (Cadena 2022).

The implicit rule of silence imposed by the VNSG meant that, taking into account the constant vigilance, civilians had limited freedom to comment on their conditions with non-local actors. NGOs part of peace and development initiatives have approval to carry on their activities, but with a cost: *“las dinámicas de seguridad incidían en el trabajo de las entidades externas en el ámbito local, que a su vez se sujetaban a los dictámenes y aprobaciones hechas por el “comandante”, en ese caso del ELN”* (Cadena 2022, 73). In the case of PNIS, the impact of VNSG inconspicuous violence on the Program’s implementation can be seen in the security incidents reported by UNODC during their monitoring and verification missions. These incidents include threats to officials, assassinations of social leaders, armed strikes by VNSGs, and other occurrences that have affected the monitoring process. Since December 2017, security incidents have been reported by UNODC in 25 municipalities (see Map 8).

In Nariño, one of the incidents occurred in December 2018 and reported that the areas in the *veredas* Agua Clara and Brasilia Km 80 in Tumaco were outside the geographic security limit authorized by UNDSS (UNODC 2019; UNODC 2020a). The other incident, also in Tumaco, in March 2020, was triggered by the COVID-19 lockdown, not by a security matter. UNODC explains: *“si bien no constituye un incidente de seguridad, la contingencia ha obligado a la suspensión de todas las misiones de monitoreo”* (UNODC 2020b, 38).

Map 8 - Security incidents during UNODC monitoring and verification missions



Fuente: Cartografía Básica de IGAC, Dirección de Sustitución de Cultivos Ilícitos, UNODC Componente Monitoreo a DA Core 30/06/2020. Los límites, nombres y títulos usados en este mapa no constituyen reconocimiento o aprobación por parte de Naciones Unidas.

Elaborado por Unidad de Información y Análisis, Junio 2022

Source: (UNODC 2022a)

In Putumayo, the two incidents occurred in a close timeframe: October and November 2020. In Puerto Leguizamo, UNODC reports that, given the security conditions in *vereda* Yurilla, it was not authorized to spend the night in the Mecaya sector, the place from where the verification visits would depart (UNODC 2021). About this incident, the then senator Gustavo Petro tweeted on October 24th, 2020 at 11:54 PM: “*Atención en la vereda Yurilla, de Puerto Leguizamo, Putumayo, ha entrado un grupo armado denominado: La Mafia, ha asesinado varias personas y ha quitado toda forma de comunicación a los campesinos. Es urgente una intervención inmediata. Aún están allí*”. On November 14th, 2020 in Puerto Guzmán, UNODC reported that their team, during the fluvial displacement from Solita (Caquetá) towards the port of Mayoyoque, were approached by a heavily armed group claiming to be members of the Guerrilla. After a conversation with their commander, the team had to turn back and were unable to enter the territory. The commander also warned them that if they insisted, next time they would take away their equipment and personal belongings (UNODC 2021).

The observations regarding violent governance reveal the recurrence of VNSG action - in both departments in general and in PNIS municipalities in particular - through different levels of violence: direct, structural, or inconspicuous. Adding the findings of VNSG action engaged in the maintenance of illicit economies and the establishment of state-crime collusion to this diagnosis, it is possible to affirm that VNSG action in the Colombia-Ecuador borderland spoils, to a certain extent, the implementation of PNIS. After the data analysis undertaken in this Chapter, I consider that the maintenance of illicit economies and the violent governance exerted by these groups can be included as part of the causal chain that explains the Program’s slow implementation. A causal correlation of state-crime collusion with the dependent variable cannot be confirmed yet due to the lack of specific data, that I hope to gather when conducting interviews in the future. Nonetheless, I decided to maintain state-crime collusion as one manifestation of the independent variable because, as previously described, analogous data collected indicate the probability of a causal correlation that just could not be found yet. In the next Chapter, I will discuss what these results say about peace implementation in Colombia, and discuss some recommendations of peace initiatives that could reduce the negative influence of VNSGs action and provide emancipation to borderland communities.

5. FINAL REMARKS

The research findings of the thesis indicate that, by acting in these three dimensions: (i) fueling high-profitting illegal economies, (ii) fomenting state-crime collusion and (iii) keeping communities under a rule of fear, insecurity, and uncertainty, VNSG action has generated a limited spoiling effect to PNIS municipalities in Nariño and Putumayo during the early implementation phase of the Peace Deal in Colombia. Alongside other top-down and bottom-up dynamics, their action has shaped the design and the execution of the Program, but has not doomed it. PNIS is still a robust and exemplar crop substitution program and a result of years of failings and successes of previous initiatives undertaken in the country.

On a crucial note, I must contend that, albeit dividing the analysis into these three dimensions, in the end, I realized that the overall spoiling effect of VNSG action converge to one core aspect of PNIS: the incentive for the creation of community-led bottom-up governance in these areas, an alternative type of governance that can substitute - or compete with - non-state order and complement the power gaps caused by state insufficiencies in these marginalized areas. This understanding validates why the CSS focus on emancipation is a key component of my argument. Only through strong incentives for the emancipation of borderland communities, it is possible to envision their ownership of peace initiatives and their overcoming of decades of violent rule.

Since total peace is an impossible dream, and the 2016 Peace Deal already includes community emancipation as a core issue, as an analyst I can only provide insights for scholars and practitioners on how to improve the existing initiatives or where to look to create complementary ones, considering the limitations imposed by the harsh reality of conflict-torn societies. First, it is important to honor the local turn on Peace Studies by motivating and engaging on empirical research and theoretical development of bottom-up perspectives of peace. Birke-Daniels and Kurtenbach's (2021) take on a *glocal* concept of peace for Colombia is a great example. With the *glocal* perspective, they reaffirm the need to disentangle the multi-level and multi-themed interactions that occur in peacebuilding in order to build bridges between different conceptualizations of peace. For them, "peacebuilding depends on building interpersonal trust between people and between them and the formal and informal institutions responsible for the constructive and non-violent transformation of conflicts" (Birke-Daniels and Kurtenbach 2021, 26)

Second, regarding policy-making, UNODC recommends to PNIS the adoption of complementary crop substitution strategies, guided by the territorial approach, but in which eradication commitments are generated collectively at the village level (*veredas*), rather than through the signature of individual agreements with families. In their perception, this new arrangement could improve territorial transformation and create synergies to overcome common challenges:

“De acuerdo con los principios del Programa, el fomento de la asociatividad y el fortalecimiento de las capacidades organizativas de las comunidades que habitan en territorios afectados por la presencia de cultivos ilícitos puede generar impactos positivos en la gobernanza comunitaria, el desarrollo de líneas productivas competitivas y el fortalecimiento de lazos sociales. De este modo, diseñar acciones complementarias al Programa que apunten a robustecer las capacidades de las comunidades para gestionar su territorio y tramitar sus necesidades políticas y económicas, puede contribuir a controlar la expansión de los cultivos ilícitos, amplificar los impactos positivos del PNIS y propiciar transformaciones territoriales sostenibles.” (UNODC 2022a, 30)

A remarkable example of alternative local arrangements dedicated to peacebuilding in Colombian borderlands are the *peace territories* or *zones of peace*, characterized as “territories in which local communities have attempted to persuade armed actors to abide by certain rules to mitigate the effects of the armed conflict locally” (Mouly, Idler, and Garrido 2015, 51). It is an interesting governance arrangement, in which communitarian governance coexists with shadow citizenship, but is capable to limit the effects of VNSG violent rule towards local population. Peace zones are guided by the principles of impartiality and non-violence²¹ and are understood as strategies of resistance from which civil society reclaim their right to land (Mouly, Idler, and Garrido 2015).

Since the creation of the first peace zones in the 2000s as a result of the intensification of the armed conflict in the Colombia-Ecuador and Colombia-Venezuela borderlands, communities have committed to the idea even in the worst scenarios and even after positive and negative impacts of these initiatives in peacebuilding. The creation of peace zones depends on specific circumstances in which there is a combination of both structural factors

²¹ “Weapons are commonly prohibited in the territory and no collaboration with armed actors is permitted, including recruitment and the facilitation of services” (Mouly, Idler, and Garrido 2015, 53)

and local agency. Agency is a decisive matter: peace zones only happen where locals do not normalize the violence perpetrated by VNSGs, but rather choose to resist it. The choice of these communities to distance themselves from violence is a reaffirmation of their right to live in peace and to self-conduct their own processes of conflict resolution and reconciliation. In a sense, it is a transformational experience that can grant communities autonomy, emancipation, and ownership; but also risks (Mouly, Idler, and Garrido 2015).

The risks come from VNSG response to the creation of peace zones. Mouly, Hernandez, and Garrido (2019, 133) argue that “armed actors weighed political, security, economic and normative considerations when faced with civilian demands and that the armed actors’ relative dependence on civilians regarding these four aspects influenced these actors’ responses”. As made clear in this thesis, coercion and direct violence are not enough to establish non-state order. VNSGs need legitimacy and obedience to exert control of an area, especially when the area is as strategic as the borderland. Thus, when VNSGs core interests are harmed, zones of peace are often disrespected and subjected to direct violence, translated chiefly into the assassination of social leaders (Mouly, Idler, and Garrido 2015). The killings of key individuals that conduct local peace initiatives symbolize VNSGs’ interest to nip the evil in the bud: annihilate projects of community-led governance that could compete with their own non-state order and reduce their influence.

“In the eyes of the violent non-state actors, a zone of peace can simply constitute a hindrance to increasing their economic profits because it impedes the use of the territory for coca cultivation and processing or for transporting important drug shipments. It might be for that reason that they often respond with violence rather than with respect towards such initiatives, making void any contributions to peacebuilding.” (Mouly, Idler, and Garrido 2015, 59).

These challenges limit the kind of peacebuilding the zones of peace can provide, that is, the level of structural change these initiatives can achieve (Mouly, Idler, and Garrido 2015). However, when any advancement is made, there is still hope for local peacebuilding initiatives such as the zones of peace to figure as a complementary alternative. As one interviewee of Mouly, Hernandez, and Garrido’s (2019, 133) study has said: “the community does not have weapons, but has arguments and organizational capacity.” The peace zones are positive examples of the power communities have when remembering their past, dealing with their present, and planning their future. Collective participation of locals, from inside or

outside these zones, is key to building sustainable peace. It is only through political emancipation, socioeconomic empowerment and territorial ownership that marginalized areas such as the borderlands will see citizens enjoying their well-being as free as possible from violence. Reproducing the words of Mouly, Idler, and Garrido (2015, 60): “the belonging to a cross-border community means that there is potential for more. [...] Residents on the other side of the border have a stake too, and, should they wish to, they could help foster peace transnationally”.

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Annex 1 - Sources of Data Collection

Type	Name	Link
International	UNODC World Drug Report	https://www.unodc.org/unodc/data-and-analysis/world-drug-report-2022.html
International	UNODC Colombia	https://www.unodc.org/colombia/es/index.html
International	Transparencia por Colombia	https://transparenciacolombia.org.co/
International	Insight Crime	https://insightcrime.org/
International	International Crisis Group	https://www.crisisgroup.org/
International	FES Seguridad	https://colombia.fes.de/fes-seguridad
International	University of Notre Dame - Kroc Institute Colombia Barometer Initiative	https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/barometer
National	Instituto de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Paz (INDEPAZ)	http://www.indepaz.org.co/
National	La Silla Vacía	https://lasillavacia.com/
National	Sistema Integrado de Información para el Posconflicto (SIIPO)	https://siipo.dnp.gov.co/
National	TerriData	https://terridata.dnp.gov.co/
National	Función Pública	https://www.funcionpublica.gov.co/
National	Fiscalía General de la Nación	https://www.fiscalia.gov.co/
National	El Espectador	https://www.elespectador.com/
National	Semana	https://www.semana.com/
National	Caracol	https://caracol.com.co/