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Colombian military doctrine in officers' practices during the internal armed conflict (1995-1998)

La doctrina militar colombiana en las prácticas de los oficiales durante el conflicto armado interno (1995-1998)

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ABSTRACT. This article addresses the Colombian Army's military doctrine and its relationship with practices during the internal armed conflict from 1995-1998. First, the development of the Colombian military doctrine in that period and the United States and other countries' influence on it, as well as its eclectic combining with the national doctrine in the face of the irregular conflict, was addressed through qualitative analysis. Then, the practices and their relationship with the doctrine were analyzed in a sample of 180 then active Army officers participating in surveys, interviews and a focus group, based on four operational setbacks suffered at the time. It was found that, although the officers recognized and valued the doctrine, they faced complex situations that led them to take initiatives with varying results.

KEYWORDS: armed conflict; Colombian Army; military doctrine; military strategy; practices; sociology

RESUMEN. Este artículo investiga la doctrina militar del Ejército colombiano y su relación con las prácticas frente al conflicto armado interno en los años 1995-1998. Primero, mediante un análisis cualitativo, se aborda el desarrollo de la doctrina militar colombiana en ese periodo y la influencia norteamericana y de otros países en ella, así como su mezcla ecléctica con la doctrina nacional frente al conflicto irregular. Luego, mediante encuestas, entrevistas y un grupo focal, se analizaron las prácticas y su relación con la doctrina en una muestra de 180 oficiales del Ejército de la época, tomando como base cuatro reveses operacionales sufridos entonces. Como resultado se encontró que, aunque los oficiales reconocían y valoraban la doctrina, se enfrentaban a situaciones complejas que los llevaban a tomar iniciativas propias con resultados muy variables.

PALABRAS CLAVE: conflicto armado; doctrina militar; Ejército colombiano; estrategia militar; prácticas; sociología

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Introduction

Examining and understanding military doctrine is vital for Colombia at present. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) has concluded that the Colombian State has systematically persecuted different social groups, violating their fundamental rights under State policies, following the guidelines of a “National Security Doctrine.” The State has conceived an internal enemy that has prompted the creation of paramilitary groups to counter it through criminal activities (CIDH, 2018). A lack of studies on the IACHR’s doctrine has produced its distortion in Colombia and the region.

This research aims to explain how the officers’ practices compared with the doctrine established by the military institution to address the internal armed conflict. To this end, the object of study selected is active officers of the Colombian Army between 1995 and 1998, who presented themselves in a specific way, with their own imageries, and distinct practices. It follows the hypothesis that the officers’ practices, in the period studied, were dictated by the environment around them, which caused them to take initiatives that affected, positively or negatively way, the performance of the units under their command.

With this in mind, the Colombian and American military doctrines used by the Army during the internal armed conflict were examined to determine how they influenced the development of military operations in this period when the FARC-EP guerrillas carried out systematic attacks on the Colombian Army.

Background on the Colombian military doctrine

Since the birth of the current Colombian Republic, when the struggle for independence began in 1810, the doctrine has guided the use of its military forces in peace and war times. It went from a royalist to a nationalist armed force, forsaking the influence of the Spanish doctrine of thirds and colonelship of Charles III’s royal ordinances. It adopted tactics and techniques typical of the French doctrine until the beginning of 1907 when Generals Rafael Reyes Prieto and Rafael Uribe Uribe hired four Chilean missions with Prussian doctrine influence (Arancibia, 2002). From 1914 to 1942, according to Helg (1986), the Colombian Army was influenced by the Swiss, German, and French doctrine, which brought about the use of European style uniforms and military unit models. By 1942, and the Second World War, the influence began to be American. This influence became more evident with Colombia’s participation in the Korean War in 1950 after signing the Military Assistance and Advisory Pact (PAM) in 1949, which was ratified on April 17, 1952, as the Military Assistance Agreement (Rodríguez, 2006).

By 1953, Colombia was sinking into a crisis under the violence unleashed since 1948. Until then, the Colombian Armed Forces had not been organized to act as a counter-guerrilla force. A year later, they began a transformation process, when several Colombian officers were trained as *rangers* at the Ranger School in Fort Benning, Georgia to create, in late 1955, the *Escuela de Lanceros* (Cavalry School) at the Tolemaida fort in Colombia (Torres, 2000).

By the 1960s, General Alberto Ruiz Novoa, as commander of the Army, declared that peace and war conditions demanded a doctrine for national defense and another for war. Thus, the armed forces adopted instruction programs, organizational units, and combat procedures appropriate to this type of war. Translations of articles on guerrilla and counter-guerrilla tactics were published, several manuals on the subject were translated, and international military conferences on security were organized. A specific doctrine on security and defense began to be constructed (Torres, 2000).

While this was happening domestically, the United States set its doctrinal compass to "Active Defense," which responded to the threat of nuclear weapons and was a war of attrition, given the disparity of conventional forces. Colombia had access to this type of doctrine, it was even translated into Spanish, but the country never implemented it, given the configuration of its internal social issues (Jordán, 2014).

Starting in the 1980s, the Colombian Army implemented the Operational Directive for the Defense and Internal Security *Tricolor 83* (Ejército Nacional de Colombia [EJC], 1983) based on the same 1960s and 1970s doctrine. However, by 1986, the United States had changed its doctrine. It approved the *AirLand battle* to prevail in a hypothetical war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in Central Europe, forsaking the use of nuclear weapons, but without ruling out their use (United States Army, 1986). Meanwhile, the Armed Forces of Colombia employed the doctrine contemplated in the counter-guerrilla manuals for the irregular scenario, understanding that "their prolonged popular warfare action broke with the traditional and orthodox schemes of regular wars." (Guerrero, 1989, p. vii).

The 1990s began with the demobilization of four insurgent groups headed by Simón Bolívar Guerrilla Coordinating Board (The M-19, Quintín Lame, EPL, and the PRT) and the launch of a new Carta Magna. Within the incumbent government's policies, "the peaceful revolution" was implemented (Llorente & Deas, 1999) and, with it, the Plan for Defense and Internal Security *Tricolor 92*. This Plan included orders to conduct counter-guerrilla operations to prevent the fulfillment of the VIII Conference of the FARC in which this subversive group intended to move from a guerrilla group to an army (EJC, 1992a), or go from guerrilla warfare to a war of movement known as the "new mode of operation." (Ferro & Uribe, 2002, p. 117)

In 1994, during the Samper administration and its “*Salto Social*” (social leap) policy, the *Plan Tricolor 96* was developed (Echeverry, 1997). Then, “public order zones” were created, and “war bonds” were issued to create more military units, thus expanding the manpower to 120,000, in a misguided attempt to manage public order.

In March 1996, the United States decertified Colombia (Leal, 2006). In this context, between 1995 and 1998, the complexity of the country’s public order situation allowed for multiple combats between the Colombian Army and the FARC, which left more than 315 soldiers dead and 310 kidnapped.

The Military doctrine in the 1990s

According to those interviewed in this research, Colombia drew its conventional warfare doctrine from the American doctrine. First, from the “Active Defense” doctrine (United States Army, 1949), from the end of World War II to the end of the 1970s, when the Americans changed their doctrine to “AirLand battle” (United States Army, 1986). Then, with the Persian Gulf War in 1991, when they changed to the “Full-dimension operations” doctrine (Benson, 2012). However, because of Colombia’s particular situation, the Army employed an eclectic national security doctrine and defense doctrine. It was based on the one developed by France during the war in Indochina (1945-1954) and the war in Algeria (1954-1962), which gave theoretical consistency, structure, and homogeneity to the approach to guerrilla warfare (Comando General de las Fuerzas Militares, 1969). The focus of this doctrine was at extremes. First was the need to learn from the enemy and copy its strategies, tactics, methods, and techniques. The second was an evaluation of psychological warfare, given that one of guerrilla warfare’s main characteristics was considered to be the control of the population, its values, and ways of life. Similarly, there was no distinction between the civilian and military fronts or between war and politics. It was an unconventional war in which the enemy employed dirty tactics, techniques, and methods, infiltrating society to dominate it (Goodman et al., 1990).

Based on this doctrine, and having identified that these guerrilla groups’ strategy was based on Mao Tse Tung and Vo Nguyen Giap’s strategy manuals (Leal, 2006), the Military Forces issued regulations and manuals to guide the fight against subversion. Among them, the *Rules of Engagement for Counter-Guerrillas* of 1969 (Comando General de las Fuerzas Militares, 1969), the *Manual of urban guerrillas and counter-guerrillas* of 1977 (EJC, 1977), the *General instructions for counter-guerrilla operations* of 1979 (EJC, 1979), the *Counter-Guerrilla Combat Manual* of 1982 (EJC, 1982), and the *Rules of Engagement for Counter-Guerrillas* of 1987 (Comando General de las Fuerzas Militares, 1987). Thus, this doctrine deals with

the combat of counter-guerrillas. It identifies the guerrilla groups' phases, how they operate, and how they should be confronted. With the years, the issue of irregular combat began to be addressed, which did not only allude to subversion or guerrillas but also terrorism, drug trafficking, and illegal self-defense forces (Comando General de las Fuerzas Militares, 1987).

The operational regulations were subject to the national security doctrine used at the Ministry of Defense and General Command of the Military Forces' strategic level, which translated into a power, made up of the political, economic, psychosocial, and military dimensions of the State (Fuerzas Militares, 1996). Similarly, they followed the orders of the Operational Directive in place (*Plan Tricolor*), which, was used, following the General Staff manual, to plan military operations, reducing risks, analyzing the enemy's capabilities, and choosing the best course of action according to the conditions of the activity to be carried out (Fuerzas Militares, 1984).

Theoretical framework

This research takes a sociological and historical approach. On the sociological side, it used Max Weber's (2002) models of bureaucratic administration within rational-legal domination and Charles Moskos' plural model (Moskos & Wood, 1991). The historical was framed within Michel de Certeau's (2000) practices of cultural history. For the Colombian case, the sociological models were discussed based on the research's results, which entered into dialogue with the cultural history practices.

According to Weber (2002), military organization or structure can be defined as one that is governed by principles of hierarchy and delimitation according to the different levels of power, authority, specialization, adequate training, loyalty to objectives, and written rules. It is a rational structure because it seeks to achieve specific objectives with delimited and calculated actions. It is legal because it contains the Institution's entire structure of rules and norms, commanded according to the workplace hierarchy of authority.

Under these conditions, the military organization can be studied in the *operational*, *administrative*, and *functional*, and *human talent* sense (Gutiérrez, 2002). The operational involves examining its functions as an organization according to its missions. Considering that the organization obeys strategic and tactical principles, has centralized management and decentralized execution, it is based on doctrine and cohesion, and it relies on its members' moral values. The administrative and functional involves examining the military structure of those who plan war, develop policies, and manage resources, among other things. Lastly, human talent involves authority provisions according to the levels of command, assignments, and positions; this inclu-

des officers, non-commissioned officers, soldiers, and civilians serving the institution (Gutiérrez, 2002).

According to Charles Moskos' "pluralist" model, the operational and administrative are entwined. During the 1990s and organized in the bureaucratic sense, according to Weber's theoretical model, Colombian military institutions have undergone modifications, evident in a combination or coexistence of the institutional and occupational models (Moskos & Wood, 1991). The institutional model "is developed according to values and norms that are above individual interests and to which the members of the military institution submit and respond" (Moskos & Wood, 1991, p. 45). In the occupational, "individual or family interests are prioritized over considerations of membership in military groups of arms or corps, and [...] membership in the military organization is no longer vocational but exclusively an occupation" (Gutiérrez, 2002, p. 181).

In the latter model, remuneration for military work is linked to technical capabilities, reflecting the general corporatism of military life. There is also a subjective civilian control, which acts on military training to include civilian ways of life so that military ideals and traditional mysticism are no longer cultivated. Based on this, it can be concluded that the more administrative and bureaucratic forces were occupational, while the operational or frontline forces maintained the institutional features.

According to cultural history, practices as a category of analysis, are human actions that construct "scenarios of production of a negotiation, transaction, and rebuttal of network meanings and higher power relations" (De Certeau, 2000, p. 42). Practices are linked to imageries and representations. Thus, this research considers that the practices of Colombian Army officers mingle both in representations and imageries and from this perspective, there are power relations identified as strategies and tactics (De Certeau, 2000).

A strategy is the calculation (or manipulation) of the power relationships made possible by a subject of will and power, like the Army's Institution of the, in this case. A tactic is a calculated action that determines the absence of independent action. The executor has no autonomy because the action takes place in a field imposed and organized by the law of a superior instance. This means that those involved in tactics are not free to carry out their practices; they are framed within imposed rules. This practices model applies in this study because the Army has an established doctrine, designed under the ought to be (subject to will and power). Thus, within the Institution, a group of officers acts within a superior instance in the hierarchical organization.

It is worth mentioning that De Certeau's category of practices applies within the military sphere because of the practices of everyday culture in which micro-resistances emerge; this should not be confused with the concept of *subversión*, which involves

disrupting the regular or characteristic order of the State. The category functions as a model to observe some individuals within the military culture who, in addition to using weapons that compromise their lives and civilians', carry out daily practices in which micro differences can be perceived if studied in detail. These differences are not perceived if they are studied generically, where only obedience and uniformity are looked at within a dogmatic order (De Certeau, 2000).

Methodology

This research followed an inductive method with a qualitative approach (Cardoso, 2000). For its development, the the Colombian Army's military doctrine and officers that faced the internal armed conflict between 1995 and 1998 were used as objects of study. The sample design considered the rotation of approximately 9,500 officers (male and female) per year, which were classified hierarchically by general, superior, and subordinate ranks.

The tools used for this research¹ included Excel tables for document review, survey questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. Snowball sampling was used for the interviews, and nationwide visits were carried out to find the officers (Table 1). Visits were also made to the archives of the "General José María Córdova" Escuela Militar de Cadetes (ESMIC), the Centro de Estudios Historicos del Ejército (CEHEJ), the central library of the Military Forces, as well as other archives of various decentralized military units.

From a universe of 9500 officers (EJC, 1996b), using a sample size calculator (99% confidence level, 10% margin of error), a sample of 163 officers was obtained, 1.7% weighted to stratify them by military ranks (Table 1). Of the random stratified sample clusters, 4% were weighted, given four specific cases of military reversals, which were taken as a base (Las Delicias, El Billiard, San Juanito, and Tamborales) from the thirteen found in the period studied (Table 2), which left 315 militaries dead and 300 kidnapped, That is, 82 dead and 60 kidnapped in 1996, 89 dead and 18 kidnapped in 1997, and 184 dead and 222 kidnapped in 1998 (Torres & Rodríguez, 2008). For documentation, using the snowball technique, the doctrine was searched between 1995 and 1998 (directives, manuals, and regulations, among others). The content structure analysis technique was used to analyze the contents qualitatively (Flick, 2004).

¹ These tools are part of the author's doctoral research. The results presented in this article complement that research by providing new knowledge.

Table 1. Sample of active officers between 1995 and 1998 at random, stratified by cluster

Classification	Military rank	Quantity	Weighted	Stratified random sample *	Weighted	Random sample clusters **
General	General	50		1		0
	Colonel	300		5		0
Superiors	Lieutenant Colonel	1000		17		2
	Major	1150	1,7 %	20	4 %	2
	Captain	1500		26		2
Subordinates	Lieutenant	2500		43		4
	Sub-Lieutenant	3000		52		5
TOTAL		9500		163		15

* The number per rank results from the 163-officer sample ratio to the universe of 9500. These officers also included line officers, administrative officers, and extraordinary officers.

** The conglomerates correspond to officers in the extreme cases.

Source: Created by the author.

Table 2. Military Reversals of the Colombian Army between 1996 and 1998

	Case	Location	Date	Dead	Kidnapped
1	Puerres	Nariño	April 16, 1996	31	
2	Las Delicias	Caquetá	August 30, 1996	27	60
3	La Carpa	Guaviare	6 September ,1996	24	
4	San Juanito	Meta	February 4, 1997	20	
5	Patascosy	Nariño	December 21, 1997	10	18
6	El Billar	Caquetá	March 4, 1998	62	43
7	San Juan Arama	Meta	March 13, 1998	7	
8	Restrepo	Meta	April 12, 1998	12	
9	Miraflores	Guaviare	August 3, 1998	13	73
10	La Uribe	Meta	August 4, 1998	29	7

Table cotinues...

	Case	Location	Date	Dead	Kidnapped
11	Pavarandó	Antioquia	August 3, 1998	14	9
12	Tamborales	Chocó	August 14, 1998	50	100
13	Mitú	Vaupés	November 1, 1998	16	
Total				315	310

Source: Army Operational Bulletins (CEHEJ, 1996, 1997, 1998). Tactical cases of La Carpa (EJC, 1996a), Patascóy (EJC, 1997a), Las Delicias (EJC, 1996c), San Juanito (EJC, 1997b).

To construct the survey, taking into account the perception of behavior, the concept of Martínez's (1996) psychometry was used as a reference. The questions were closed-ended with dichotomous nominal responses. The questions, aimed at elucidating the latent variable of the practices (question 7), were supported by questions on representations, for which socio-demographic questions were considered (introduction to the questionnaire) or questions on imageries (questions 3 and 10). The same exercise as the survey was performed to construct the interview. The questions asked were classified to offer an answer to the doctrine's underlying concept. In this regard, the focus was on the officer's training as the primary group (question 5), training between 1995 and 1998 (question 8), relationships (question 9), and assimilation of the doctrine (question 17). As for the focus group, the questionnaire focused on the results obtained from the surveys and interviews to reverse and debate the doctrine's topics.

For the interpretation and generalization of the information collected, codes or nodes were created for the empirical material (collected in the field), which served as information boxes to be interpreted by Nvivo *software*. Folders, sets, and case nodes were created in this program. The navigation tool was used to export elements, sheets, and folders. In the abstraction process, open coding steps were followed, then axial coding, and finally, selective coding was subjected to the Strauss and Corbin model (Flick, 2004).

Results

The word "doctrine" comes from the Latin *doctrina*, meaning "set of teachings" and, in one branch of knowledge, "belief system." In the military field, the international definition (NATO, Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Chile, among others) is that doctrine is the fundamental principles by which military

forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives. For the Colombian State, represented in its Armed Forces, the 1990s doctrine is a guide that comprises fundamental principles and concepts that guide the commander in selecting his actions in the development of military operations (EJC, 1990).

Consequently, between 1995 and 1998, Colombia employed a doctrine to deal with the internal armed conflict. This conflict is defined as irregular and prolonged, rooted in ideology, and low intensity. It has been catalyzed by phenomena, such as drug trafficking, and involves actors, like guerrilla, self-defense, and paramilitary groups. The conflict with these actors has resulted in the State's social decomposition and more than fifty years of warlike confrontation (Pizarro, 2004). According to one of the Historical Commission on the Conflict and its Victims' (2015) hypotheses, this conflict began with the FARC's birth on May 27, 1964, and decided to confront the legally constituted government.

Based on this context and the conceptualization of the existing doctrine, a dialogue was initiated with the Colombian Army's officers to examine the power relationships within practices and their relationship with the doctrine. They were selected based on several operational setbacks between 1995 and 1998. In cultural history, practices are human actions that construct "scenarios of production of a negotiation, transaction, and rebuttal of network meanings and higher power relations" (De Certeau, 2000, p. 42). From a sample of 163 officers, considered a stratified random sample at the beginning of the research (Table 1), 180 officers were used to apply the instruments (Table 3).

Table 3. Interviewed and surveyed by military rank between 1995 and 1998

	Respondents	Interviewees	Focus Group	Total
General	1	1		2
General Major	1	1		2
Brigadier General	1	1		2
Colonel	1	1		2
Lieutenant Colonel	3	1		4
Major	3	8		11
Captain	6	5	15	26
Lieutenant	22	8		30

Table continues...

	Respondents	Interviewees	Focus Group	Total
Second Lieutenant	72	20		92
Ensign	2			2
Cadet	1	1		2
Lance corporal*		1		1
Soldier*	1	2		3
No response	1			1
Total	115	50	15	180

* Although the lance corporal and soldier were not officers between 1995 and 1998, they were two exceptional cases because they became officers in the subsequent years, thanks to extraordinary and administrative courses.

Source: Created by the author.

Based on the surveys' demographic sample and Samuel Rivera's work, it was possible to obtain one officer from the different military hierarchy levels for this research. The officers were middle class, city-born, self-represented ethnically as mestizo, and Catholic. They had participated in frontline combat and had command experience in military operations, an adequate level of education at the interview time, and a significant understanding of the military institution's practices. The officers were experts in the development of counter-guerrilla military operations and had high values and virtues and a commitment to the institution and country (Rivera, 2017). The concept of *representation* used in this research was "materiality, the current form of signifying reality through the communication devices that bring a discourse that is exhibited, that is exposed before the gaze, and that is presented publicly." (Chartier, 1996, p. 80)

In this analysis, the senior officers interviewed, who had the most command responsibility, tried to justify or align themselves with the imaginary ideal of being commanders and placing the existing doctrine into practice. Their military training, introduced in the eighties and framed in Charles Moskos' institutional model, was strongly linked to the imageries of being a righteous officer, given the values inculcated, such as military honor, sacrifice, and fulfillment of duty. This imagery worked as a "set of mental images that operate as a network and are resignified as time goes by." (Escobar, 2000, p. 76).

The officers' imagery, built on the values and principles internalized since their training stage, was also guided by the military doctrine carried out in combat experiences both in the country and abroad. The participating officers stated that the military doctrine taught in the training schools was reinforced in the commissions abroad.

The analysis indicates that 37 of the officers interviewed had no commissions abroad between 1995 and 1998. Another 13 traveled to the U.S., Italy, Chile, Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, and Israel. Most of these commissions were exchanges to get generally familiarized with other armies. Those in the United States studied the American doctrine, which, at the time, was “*Full-Dimension*” or “Total Dimension.” The officers in Israel said that they had been part of the Colombia Battalion in the Sinai Peninsula, as part of the Multinational Task Force, of which Colombia has been part since 1982.

In the 1980s, some Colombian officers went to Fort Gulick in Panama for the month-long C3 command, control, and communications course, while others, in the 1990s, went to Fort Benning, Georgia. This lasted until 1994 when Colombia was decertified and did not return to the U.S. for the C3 course. This course taught the specialties of infantry, cavalry, artillery, engineering, and logistics. It included physical training and instruction on the American armament used in Colombia, the passing of combat tracks, defense and internal development, double-action exercises using systematized polygons, and military operations planning from tactical to platoon levels (ESMIC, 1989). This information was confirmed in an interview (case 39).

Regarding the critical documentary analysis, according to the Colombian Army’s Doctrine Directorate’s diagnosis presented to the high command, the doctrine at that time was the product of multiple influences derived from the internal armed conflict. It had an American persuasion that had not evolved to the operational principles of the 1986 “LandAir Battle” and 1993 “Full-Dimension” (Rojas, 2014). This document also states that the 1990s doctrine did not meet the minimum effectiveness characteristics necessary to achieve the objective of standardizing fundamental principles, tactics, techniques, procedures, terms, and symbols to guide the Army’s actions. Twenty-one regulations and 164 manuals were found in the personnel, operational, logistics, and administrative areas that were not organized, hierarchical, standardized, or updated, making the troops act in an isolated manner. Publications of mandatory observance are referred to as *Regulations*, whereas manuals summarize the rules that facilitate the instruction of the different weapons or services (Rojas, 2014).

To analyze the doctrine in practice, the cases of the operational setbacks were used, based on the versions of the officers who were in combat and the official versions recorded in the tactical cases and daily operational bulletins for 1996, 1997, and 1998 (CEHEJ, 1996, 1997, 1998). Based on Charles Moskos’ pluralist model countered with the officers’ interviews, in the Army, by the nineties, the institutional is identified more in the elite units, such as the Special Forces and the Mobile Brigades 1 and 2, than in the standard units. The latter did not have all the support described in the doctrine.

In the case of Las Delicias, there were 27 deaths and 60 abductions. The soldiers were regulars (standard unit) and had been incorporated into military service accor-

ding to Law 48 of 1993. The training lasted 18 months and followed the Instruction and Training Directive 300-4 of 1992, according to appendices 3 and 4 of the third and fourth phases (EJC, 1992b). Thus, the regular soldiers carried out the orders given by their superiors. The the interviews' analysis showed that among the causes of the Las Delicias setback were tactical and operational procedure factors. These included the lack of combat intelligence, absence of reconnaissance patrols, and the military base's consideration as a barracks or backward command post where there was an administrative arrangement, without taking advantage of the irregular doctrine (case 20 interview).

Sixty-five percent of those surveyed said there was no improvisation in practice, even if the doctrine was not complied with; however, 31.3% said it was. One such case was the 52nd Counter-Guerrilla Battalion in El Billar, an attack that left 62 dead and 43 kidnapped, where the priority was to get an elite unit out quickly. The same was true in the case of San Juanito, an attack that left 20 dead. The commander improvised by sending troops to the combat zone without the necessary means and commanders (Case 18 interview). This node showed that the the officers interpreted doctrinal variables of organization, material, personnel, leadership, and training differently.

In the case of Tamborales, there were 50 dead and 100 kidnapped. Three different tactical units carried out the military operation under the command of a Captain; doctrinally, the command should be centralized in a senior officer. Moreover, the counter-guerrilla companies should have been a single battalion and not, as in this case, three battalions (11th, 25th, and 35th counter-guerrilla battalions). Thus, the organizational norm was interpreted differently in response to a contingency. The same occurred in the attack on the military communications base in Pavarandó on August 3, 1998, where there were 14 dead and 9 kidnapped (case 10 interview).

The response of 62.5% of the interviewees coincided in that the officers, at all levels, developed their own initiatives according to the conditions of the environment in which each officer was located. The officers surveyed and interviewed mentioned improvisation in handling several fundamental aspects, such as granting members of the frontline units permissions or time off, disregarding who remained in the area of operations; this happened in the case of El Billar (case 10 interview). The evidence shows that the high command that directed the Colombian Army knew about this type of improvisation (case 1 interview). Officers interpreted the doctrine according to their imageries and representations. However, the reason to tolerate these contingencies and the absence of doctrinal capacities was inculcated from training, including founded values, principles, and duties (plural model linked to the institutional). Therefore, the fact that the officers carried out their practices conditioned by the en-

vironment was admitted. In this respect, one of the interviews said, “in 60% or 70%, because the rest was up to one to improvise in the area” (interview case 21)

There was no war political leadership. In that sense, in the areas of operations, we lieutenants and captains, at that time, were alone, there was no other State entity that was following the guidelines of a security and defense policy to stabilize the country, and it was not a responsibility of the Army but the entire State. (Focus group)

When asked about doctrinal conditions during the 1990s, interviewees described them as precarious and reiterated the troops’ excessive time in the area of operations. Additionally, the tables of organization and equipment (TOE) were not the required. A deficiency in the provision of helicopters, facilities, and the force’s size could also be established, implying a command shortage at the lower levels of junior officers and non-commissioned officers.

Although the officers of the Special Forces and Mobile Brigades 1 and 2 stated that they had all the support referred to in the doctrine for military operations, they also pointed out that there were complaints in the normal units concerning the provision of uniforms, boots, and supplies, which were delayed by weather conditions. Despite not having the ideal conditions on the field of combat, the doctrine had to be fulfilled on the frontline by adapting to the environment’s conditions.

In the officers’ focus group workshop, it was established that the doctrine was perfect for fulfilling the military operations, that they all knew what they had to do concerning personnel, intelligence, and administration exactly. However, 50% of Major, Captain, Lieutenant, and Sub-Lieutenant ranks said that they were not perfect because some very complex situations prevented the fulfillment of the doctrine. It also showed that the officers in the operations area, guided by a conviction of sacrifice motivated by the principles, values, and duties, which were very marked in them, tried to coincide with their superior command’s intention even if they did not have the capacities that were indicated in the doctrine.

Discussion

During the period studied, officers adapted according to the environment to some strategies specified in the Army’s doctrine, which translated into tactics. In this sense, the strategy acted as a manipulator of the power relations between a subject of will and power, like the Army, and the tactic carried out as a calculated action without a place of its own to execute actions on an imposed terrain (De Certeau, 2000, p. 42).

The practices were analyzed in how the officers’ captured, handled, and understood the doctrine within the army headquarters’ strategies, framed in the guidelines of

the National Government. Therefore, the doctrine can be understood, not as a copy of reality, but as the production of strategic practices (manuals and regulations), in this case, the Army's, seeking to legitimize or justify actions and conducts, like effectiveness in operations.

The military doctrine used by the Colombian Army between 1995 and 1998, according to the analysis, had two scenarios. One was conventional, framed in the "*Full Dimension*" doctrine, the other, was the national, framed in the irregular doctrine. When comparing the doctrine's analysis with the officer's interview information, it is evident that many of the American manuals were translated, and an attempt was made to adapt them to the Colombian context. The adaptation did not work because the Americans were technically more advanced; thus, the doctrine did not coincide. Although nearly all the officers agreed that the American doctrine was supportive, it was a non-hierarchical mixture of the "Active Defense," "LandAir Battle," and "Full-Dimension" American doctrines with the Colombian counter-insurgency doctrine.

There is a high regard for the U.S. military doctrine in operations. However, it was also mentioned that the Colombian military doctrine, as explained, was a doctrine built eclectically, without hierarchy and order. Each of the officers sent abroad returned with their manuals and translated and incorporated them into the Colombian doctrine. In this sense, senior officers who traveled to the U.S. before 1993 had the mindset to act according to the LandAir Battle doctrine. Officers that traveled after 1993 had the mindset to act according to the Full-Dimension doctrine.

Viewing the Colombian military doctrine from 1995 to 1998 through the officers involved in Army operational setbacks shows that senior officers justified the doctrine (how operations ought to be) as part of their values and principles (Moskos' plural model). Meanwhile, on the frontline, junior officers had to improvise in terms of the military doctrine when facing the contingencies of the internal armed conflict and tolerate the military units' precarious conditions.

Conclusions

The practices studied are a type of practice in which human actions configure "scenarios of production of a negotiation, transaction, and rebuttal of network meanings and higher power relations" (De Certeau, 2000, p. 42). Thus, the officers in the different military operations lines had to comply with the conventional doctrine (of American influence) or the irregular established by the superior command. Officers at the general level —represented within the framework of social conservatism and with imageries fixed on the fulfillment of duty, conviction, and service vocation— were confronted with adverse conditions emerging from the Colombian armed conflict's

public order context and the conditions and capabilities of military units concerning doctrine. With this in mind, practices contrary to the doctrine were observed. These included failures to use of the Full-Dimension American doctrine and the officer's adaptation to the military units' primary groups, whether elite or standard, and their means to survive in the frontline. These practices sometimes allowed them to depart successfully or led them to operational setbacks.

This effort prompts further research into the subject. Theoretically, the Colombian doctrine is linked to manuals and regulations that, in the "ought to be," do not involve actions against the values and principles inculcated by the Institution. However, in practice, according to the results, the doctrine adapts to the operational conditions, affecting the military units positively or negatively.

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