

CLASS CONFLICT AND CIVIL WAR DURATION

THE FARC INSURGENCY

by

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Keywords: class conflict, civil war duration, FARC insurgency

This study explores the effects of class conflicts on civil war duration. Colombian civil war, the FARC insurgency, is examined from a class-based perspective. I argue that class-based civil wars last longer than non-class based civil wars such as identity conflicts because class conflicts have deeper roots embedded in the social, political, and economic aspects of the society. Through the examination of existing theories in the civil war duration literature, I propose four arguments in the context of class conflict. First, size of the bargaining range affects the conflict duration in terms of clash of interests and divergent preferences among the parties which belong to the opposing classes. Second, commitment problems are likely to occur in class-based conflicts because the parties constitute an existential threat to each other which prevents credible commitment. Third, poverty, exploitation, and ideological attachment increase the participation and support to the insurgency that prolongs the conflict. Lastly, external interventions increase the conflict duration considering the role of number and quality of veto players. Results show that size of the bargaining range is smaller, commitment problems occur, ideological attachment increases the participation and support, and external interventions are determinative in the Colombian conflict.

# SINIF ÇATIŞMASI VE İÇ SAVAŞ SÜRESİ

## FARC AYAKLANMASI

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Anahtar Kelimeler: sınıf çatışması, iç savaş süresi, FARC ayaklanması

Bu çalışma, sınıf çatışmalarının iç savaş süresi üzerindeki etkilerini araştırmaktadır. Kolombiya iç savaşı, FARC ayaklanması, sınıf temelli bir perspektiften incelenmektedir. Bu çalışmada, sınıf temelli iç savaşların sınıfsal olmayan iç savaşlardan, örneğin kimlik temelli iç savaşlar, daha uzun sürdüğü tartışılmaktadır. Çünkü; sınıfsal çatışmalar toplumun sosyal, politik ve ekonomik dinamiklerine yerleşmiş derin köklere sahiptir. İç savaş süresi literatüründe varolan teoriler incelenerek, sınıf çatışması bağlamında, dört ana arguman ileri sürülmüştür. Birincisi, pazarlık menziline büyüklüğü, savaşın süresini, karşıt sınıflara üye olan tarafların çıkar çatışması ve tercihlerinin farklılığı açısından etkiler. İkincisi, sınıfsal temelli çatışmalarda taahhüt problemlerinin ortaya çıkması olasıdır çünkü taraflar birbirlerine varoluşsal bir tehdit oluşturur ve bu da güvenilir bir şekilde taahhütte bulunmayı engeller. Üçüncüsü, fakirlik, sömürü ve ideolojik yakınlık ayaklanmaya katılımı ve verilen desteği artırır ve bu savaşın süresini uzatır. Son olarak, veto yetkisi olan aktörlerin nitelik ve niceliğini düşünerek, dış müdahaleler savaşın süresini uzatır. Sonuçlar, Kolombiya iç savaşında, müzakere menziline kısa olduğunu, taahhüt problemlerinin ortaya çıktığını, ideolojik yakınlığın katılım ve desteği artırdığını ve dış müdahalelerin belirleyici olduğunu göstermektedir.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUC: United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia

CGSB: Simon Bolivar Coordinating Body

CON: National Workers' Confederation

DCA: Defense Cooperation Agreement

ELN: National Liberation Army

EPL: People's Liberation Army

FARC-EP: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army

FRELIMO: The Mozambique Liberation Front

MPLA: The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola

M-19: 19<sup>th</sup> of April Movement

PCC: Communist Party of Colombia

Plan LASO: Latin American Security Operation

PSR: Revolutionary Socialist Party

SACTA: Supplemental Agreement for Cooperation and Technical Assistance

UNITA: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

UP: Patriotic Union

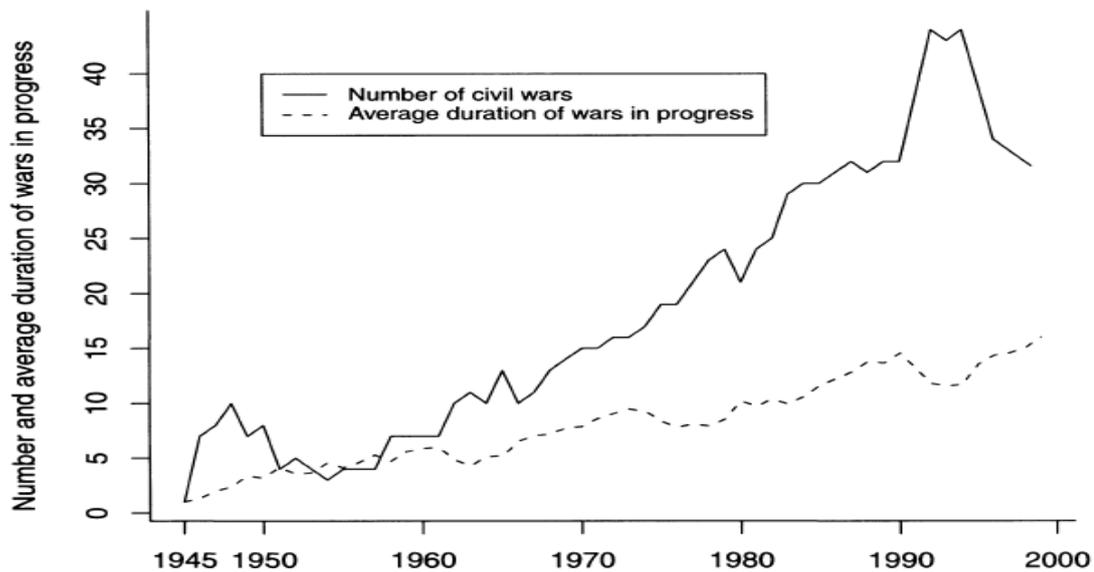
## 1. Introduction

This study examines the effect of class conflict on civil war processes. More specifically, I focus on the question of whether or not civil wars emanating from class conflict last longer in duration. Class structure in a society is built by the dialectical interaction of economics, politics, and social factors in which an exploiting class and exploited classes are created and recreated. Interests of the exploiting class defined as the owners of means of production are in continuous clash with the interests of the exploited classes who sell their labor for living and disposed of means of production. State apparatus is under the control of members of the exploiting class and superstructure is constructed in accordance with the interests of the exploiting class that encompasses political and social aspects such as law and education. As such, exploited classes are subject to structural and superstructural dynamics set by the exploiting class unless they alter the control of state apparatus and own the means of production. In this context, class structure has deep rooted historical determinants that are perpetuated by constant exploitation of resources and power. Therefore, class conflicts are harder to resolve in the short run once precipitated.

My argument rests on Marxist thought. According to Marxism, a social setting bases on structural (*base*) and superstructural dynamics that create classes and determine economic, political, and social relationships (Resnick & Wolff, 1982). Structure basically encompasses economic dynamics while superstructure is composed of political and social conditions such as law and education. Mode of production and the way the surplus value is extracted determine the main classes of a society— landlord and serf in feudalism, bourgeoisie and proletariat in capitalism. The important point that Marxism contributes to the conflict literature is the class struggle precipitated by exploitation and subordination of one class by the other. Without exploring the continuous clash of interests between the social classes, it is not possible to grasp the whole picture of conflicts that capitalism creates. Civil war literature overlooks the class relations which merit unique attention since social classes and class conflicts persist in current world system. More interestingly, even grievance models (Collier & Collier 2004) do not examine class conflicts. This discrepancy in the literature weakens the explanatory power of conflict studies as well as policy interpretations. In this context, I attempt to fulfill this gap by questioning the effect of class conflict on civil war duration. At the same time, importance of civil war duration is underlined by the fact

that war duration has been increasing since the end of Cold War despite a decrease in conflict onset (Fearon, 2004: 276). In this regard, studying conflict duration becomes an urgent issue in terms of both theory and policy. This study argues that civil wars emanating from class conflicts last longer in duration compared to other types of civil wars. To provide validity to my hypothesis, I process-trace the FARC insurgency in Colombia.

Figure 1. Number and Duration of Civil Wars in Progress



Source: Fearon (2004).

## 2. Theoretical Motivation

Civil war etiology and how to define it is an ongoing debate in conflict literature. There are various approaches on what civil war is. Singer and Small (1982) set three criteria for defining a conflict as war: a) involving sustained combat, b) involving organized armed forces capable of “effective resistance,” and c) resulting a minimum 1000 battle-related casualties within a twelve month period. On the other hand, the Uppsala Conflict Data Project defines an armed conflict as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government or territory or both where the use of armed force between two parties results in at least 25 battle-related deaths” in which one of the parties should be the government of the state (Gleditsch et al., 2001). Similarly, Kalyvas (2006) defines civil war as an armed combat between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of the conflict which takes place within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity.

In this paper, I attempt to contribute to the definition and classification of civil wars through a revisit to Marxist theory of class conflict. I argue that class-based civil conflicts merit special attention due to its long term effects and higher likelihood of occurring since class conflict is inherent in the capitalist mode of production. However, class conflict is a highly neglected issue in the literature and I attempt to fill this gap with an exploratory approach.

Class analysis is needed in conflict studies because the ongoing clash of interests of exploiting and exploited classes persists under capitalism. However, in real life, one may not observe an overt class based conflict in every capitalist society. Various conditions would combine in order such a conflict to turn into armed conflict. Firstly, exploited classes should be mobilized and conscious. Mobilization and consciousness might be triggered through higher levels of exploitation and political means. In order to mobilize, exploited class should be organized and engaged in politics through political vanguard parties and/or unions. Being organized is the primary source of power of exploited classes because number of recruitments is associated with the level of organization and justifies their cause against the state. Secondly, demands of the exploited classes should highly be unsatisfied and repressed so that improvements of rights and satisfaction of demands through negotiation or other peaceful means are not possible. Poverty of exploited classes, long working hours and low wages, restriction of unionization rights, perception of unfairness and inequality, and uninsured employment might be examples of dissatisfaction of demands. Thirdly, historical conflict heritage and cultural aspects of society might also affect the likelihood of overt conflict occurrence. Previous protests, riots, and uprisings against the state might constitute historical examples for the current conflict and accumulation of those previous conflicts might trigger large scale violence and armed combat. This conflict heritage might also evolve into a cultural feature that the way conflicts are dealt with becomes culturally valid and acceptable. In addition, imperialist policies imposed by external states and the government as well as economic crises are also the likely interveners that affect conflict outset and set preconditions.

Existing studies on civil war mainly draw on greed and grievance based explanations (Collier & Hoeffler, 1998, 2004; Fearon, 2004; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Ross, 2004; DeRouen & Sobek, 2004; Fearon, 1995; Gartzke, 1999; Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom, 2004; Cederman, Hug, and Krebs, 2010; Cunningham, 2010; Lindsay &

Enterline, 2000; Justino, 2009). Greed based studies interpret class related factors, for example inequality and poverty, in the context of opportunities to rebel which overlooks the role of state as the primary actor of policies and grievances caused by class differences. On the other hand, grievance based approaches neglects the role of classes although class related factors such as inequalities are examined.

In order to test this argument, Colombian Civil War fought by FARC guerillas against the Colombian state is selected as the case study for three reasons. First, Colombian case is generally associated with greed based causes in the literature and to the best of my knowledge there is not any studies specifically examining the duration of Colombian conflict. Second, Colombian case is a protracted conflict with several failed negotiations which has lasted more than four decades causing at least 50.000 losses of lives. Third, it has also one of the world's largest internally displaced people, many of whom disappeared, which make this case crucial in terms of its humanitarian costs. Theoretically, it is important to examine Colombian conflict from a class conflict perspective because the existing studies mainly base on greed based explanations mostly highlighting the role of the drug trade as providing opportunity to rebel. Therefore, challenging this mainstream perspective is crucial to expand theoretical work.

### **3. Historical Background**

Colombia is a South American country with a total area of 1.138.910 square km and bordered by Panama, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Caribbean Sea, and the North Pacific Ocean. It gained its independence from Spain on July 20, 1810. Its capital is Bogota and the official language is Spanish. The population amounts to 45.745.783 as estimated in 2013 ("Colombia", n.d.). Main ethnic groups are comprised of mestizo %58, white 20%, mulatto 14%, black 4%, mixed-black Amerindian (American Indian) 3%, and Amerindian 1% and 90% of the population is Roman Catholic ("Colombia", n.d.). Mestizo is a person of mixed European and American Indian ancestry while mulatto is a person of mixed white and black ancestry according to Merriam-Webster dictionary. Urban population amounts to 75% of total population. The unemployment rate is 10.8% and 37.2% of the population live below the poverty line. It is one of the most unequal countries in the world (and the most unequal in Latin America) with a Gini index of 57.2 according to 2009 estimation ("Gini Index", n.d.), which places

Colombia at 91 among 192 countries (“Income Gini Coefficient”, 2012). The economy is dependent on agriculture and, since the 1980s, illicit crops while the level of industrialization has remained low until the mid 1980s (“Industry”, n.d.). Present day Colombia is engaged in conflict between the Liberals and Conservatives from its foundation to the National Front of 1958 which paved the way for the rise of new guerilla groups and conflicts. Liberals and Conservatives constitute the oldest political parties in the country. The Conservatives are in favor of continuation of Spanish-descended aristocracy and status quo. The Conservatives support a strong centralized government with a control over the economy and strong links between state and church. In terms of electoral system and political rights, the Conservatives are for limited voting rights. On the other hand, the Liberals want a more federalist system with a focus on stronger regional governments. In terms of economics, the Liberals support free economy without government control. The Liberals favor universal voting rights and division of state and the church. The Conservatives are mostly situated in the cities while the Liberals are mostly from the country side.

On July 20, 1810, revolutionaries ended the Spanish domination with an uprising yet conflicts over the control of land continued for nine more years. After nine years, General Simón Bolívar Palacios defeated the Spanish and became the first president of Great Colombia which is comprised of today’s Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador. After the secession of Ecuador and Venezuela in 1830, the remainder of Great Colombia was named as the Republic of New Granada with General Francisco de Paula Santander as its first president. The 1886 constitution gave the country its present name and opened an era of Conservative rule for 45 years. Political and economic instabilities as well as the political factionalism characterized the years after the new constitution and the War of a Thousand Days (1899-1902) between the Liberals and Conservatives destroyed the country. With the presidency of General Rafael Reyes Prieto (1904-9), a period of internal peace started which lasted until 1930. The period until 1930 was known as the Conservative Hegemony. Colombia grew economically stronger by mid-1920s due to developments in coffee production which became the second leading producer after Brazil. However, this peaceful era started to decline when troubles in labor occurred in coffee, petroleum, and banana industries. The petroleum industry faced two massive strikes in 1920s while a worse banana strike occurred in 1928 against United Fruit which resulted in killing of 13 strikers. Together with the first impacts of

Great Depression, Conservatives lost their power and were replaced by the Liberals after almost half a century (Hudson, 2010).

Enrique Olaya Herrera who was a Liberal was elected to presidency in 1930 (president, 1930-4). Olaya government became more effective in terms of social and economic reforms than previous Conservative administrations. An important legislation passed during Olaya government which approved the eight-hour working day and guaranteed the right to organize. Alfonso López Pumarejo (president, 1934–38, 1942–45), successor of Olaya, furthered the reforms related to labor and rejected use of force against strikers. He also supported the workers in labor disputes as well as the agrarian reform law. An education reform prohibited, de jure, racial and religious discrimination in educational institutions. López also won the support of the newly founded Communist Party of Colombia (PCC) although he did not share power with it formally. With the onset of the Second World War and during President Eduardo Santos Montejé's tenure (1938-42), cooperation between the US and Colombia increased. The Conservatives returned to power with the election of Luis Mariano Ospino Pérez to the presidency (1946-50). This oscillation between the ends of political spectrum was due to conflicting interests and policies of the two parties. The party who seized the power tried to establish opposite policies of the other such as centralization vs. decentralization and the relationship between the state and the church.

This oscillation yet led to another war, this time twelve years of conflict began in 1946 known as La Violencia which cost 300.000 lives and lasted until 1958 when the National Front was formed by the Conservatives and Liberals. National Front was established under "Declaration of Sitges" that bases on joint government of Liberals and Conservatives. Although National Front dissolved in 1978, according to 1886 Constitution, losing party is given fair participation in the government. In mid-1960s, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) which is the leading guerilla group in Colombia up to day and leftist National Liberation Army (ELN) as well as Maoist People's Liberation Army (EPL) were founded. It is followed by the foundation of another guerilla group M-19 (19<sup>th</sup> of April Movement) in 1970. The multitude of insurgent groups is interesting considering the variety of ideological orientations. FARC is a Soviet-affected Marxist group whereas ELN is affected by the Cuban revolution. EPL is a smaller group with Maoist orientations expecting revolution from the country side. Finally M-19 is a more social democratic organization with nationalist tendencies.

Between 1978 and 1982, the Colombian government focused on ending insurgencies by various guerilla groups. A cease-fire was negotiated in 1984 by Conservative President Belisario Betancur, which granted amnesties to guerillas and release of political prisoners. However negotiations were ceased one year later when M-19 attacked Justice Court in Bogota. Over 100 people died as the result of government efforts to retake the building, including 11 Supreme Court judges. After this incident, M-19 started to weaken and finally was incorporated into a peace process together with several smaller groups in late 1980s. As such, negotiations continued between the government and guerillas and, during this process, FARC and Communist Party of Colombia (PCC) founded Patriotic Union Party (Union Patriotica - UP). Second half of the 1980s was marked by continuing negotiations and extreme violence as well as increasing power of drug cartels and paramilitary groups. In 1989, M-19 signed a peace agreement with the government and became a legal political party. However, violence continued to increase and resulted in assassination of three presidential candidates. 1991 marks an important change in Colombia's political affairs: The 1886 Constitution was changed and the new constitution banned the extradition of Colombian citizens (though this provision was abolished in 1996). It also reformed political institutions. Another noteworthy development was the murder of Medellin drug cartel leader Pablo Escobar by the security forces.

As a result of increasing violence and state weakness, a significant umbrella organization for the paramilitary group United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) was founded in 1997. Nevertheless conservative President Andrés Pastrana Arango initiated another round of peace talks with the insurgents despite the increased attacks by FARC and ELN. These talks ended after three years, when the insurgents kidnapped a congressman and other political figures. The Pastrana administration's efforts to solve problems were hampered by high unemployment, countrywide guerilla attacks, widespread drug production, and an increase of paramilitary groups. In order to confront these challenges, Pastrana launched unpopular Plan Colombia aimed at combating narcotics industry, promoting peace, and strengthening of democratic and social institutions. Plan Colombia is also supported by the US on issues such as improving governing capacity, counter-narcotic operations, and assistance for the Colombian National Police.

Álvaro Uribe Vélez, won presidential elections in 2002, immediately after his election started a new phase of counter-insurgent activities based on hard-liner war rhetoric. First, AUC was demobilized as part of the countering violence with the Santa Fe de Ralito Agreement. Second, Uribe launched Plan Patriota which was seen as a continuation of Plan Colombia. It aimed at countering insurgent activities and gaining military presence at remote areas controlled by the insurgents as well as introduction of social programs (“Colombia: Conflict Profile”, n.d.). Like Plan Colombia, it is financially supported by the US. Another important event was the enactment of Justice and Peace Law in 2005 by the Uribe administration. Justice and Peace Law envisioned reduction of punishments for guerillas and paramilitary groups if they surrender their arms, abandonment of violence, and return of illegal assets. In 2006, preliminary peace talks between the government and ELN began in Cuba and were followed by talks with the FARC in 2007, pushed by French President Nicolas Sarkozy who advised the release of FARC leader Rodrigo Granda to act as intermediary. Giving way to this pressure, President Uribe freed Granda and announced unilateral release of imprisoned guerillas. When FARC reportedly murdered 11 assemblymen from Valle del Cauca, it provoked a massive protest and demanded negotiations to begin in order to release of kidnapping victims (Hudson, 2010). Late Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez was invited to act as mediator but due to disagreements about Chávez’s role, process was interrupted. Yet, FARC released six political hostages to Chávez in 2008. In the meantime, “parapolitics scandal” occurred which revealed the tie between paramilitary group AUC and lawmakers and public officials around 2006-7. Reports alleged that even President Uribe had relations with these paramilitary groups.

2008 marked an important date for the FARC: FARC leader Raúl Reyes was killed and the main FARC-EP leader died due to a heart attack. Year 2008 was also important in terms of Colombian government. Another scandal occurred in the country, “false positives scandal” which refers to the killing of noncombatants and presenting them as guerillas. Nevertheless, FARC launched “Plan Rebirth” in order to improve its guerilla warfare after losing its high profile leaders. Plan included use of land mines and snipers to strengthen the organization. Yet, government designed “strategic leap” to counteract Plan Rebirth of FARC and further diminish its military capabilities. Strategic leap based on use of military offensive in areas where FARC has strong military presence. Following the strategic leap, Colombian government signed a Defense

Cooperation Agreement (DCA) with the US in 2009 called Supplemental Agreement for Cooperation and Technical Assistance and Security (SACTA). DCA aimed at facilitating bilateral cooperation on security issues in Colombia and gave US access to agreed specific Colombian facilities. Finally, in 2010, present Colombian President Jose Manuel Santos was elected whose term continues until 2014.

#### **4. Roots and the Structure of Insurgency**

Spain was defeated by revolutionaries and domination ended in 1810 which transferred the rule from colonial administrators to Spanish-descended Colombian oligarchy who served their own interests. 1886 constitution opened an era of 45 years Conservative rule which is characterized by political factionalism and economic instabilities. Especially, War of a Thousand Days (1899-1902) destroyed the Colombian economy. The war related economic problems lasted until 1922 when the country experienced significant growths in banana, manufacturing, and petroleum sectors. Likewise the coffee industry expanded considerably. However, the majority of Colombians did not benefit from this growth and, with the participation of Revolutionary Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Revolucionario - PSR), banana workers went on strike in order to secure better working conditions in December 1928. It was the largest labor movement until that day and ended in intervention of Colombian military after one month. In the meantime, as early as 1920s, after the October Revolution of 1917, socialist ideas begin to spread in Colombia. However, links between the local labor activists and world socialism were few until the mid-1920s. By the foundation of Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR) with the Third National Labor Congress in 1926, a more radical discourse and the need to connect to international socialist organizations occurred in Colombia. Anti-imperialism and anti-Yankeeism became strong points of identity among socialists (Vanegas, 2008). National Workers' Confederation (CON) was also affiliated with the Red International and, as Giraldo underlined, it "played an active role in anti-imperialist campaigns such as the campaign of solidarity with the Sandino struggle and opposition to US armed intervention in Mexico and Nicaragua (as cited in Meschkat, 2008, p.43). Ties between the PSR and Comintern further developed when Moscow decided to send a special delegation to Colombia in 1929. As the defeat of banana strike led to the dissolution of PSR, the Colombian Communist Party - PCC was founded in 1930 as the Colombian section of Comintern.

In 1948, a popular uprising known as Bogotazo occurred in Bogotá when Liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán was assassinated. According to Leech (2011, p. 9), La Violencia did not only include “battles between Liberals and Conservatives but also between oligarchy and land-starved peasants”. Therefore, seeds of class conflicts were planted in Colombia and rural and urban workers started organize around Communist Party of Colombia (Partido Comunista Colombiano - PCC). As such, peasant leaders of armed groups during La Violencia were members of PCC including Marulanda Veléz who became the supreme commander of the FARC. In 1954, General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla launched a military offensive against communist peasants and banned PCC. As the result of military offensive, many peasants were displaced who later formed self-defense groups in areas where they resettled. And, these regions later became strongholds of the FARC.

In 1962, Plan LASO (Latin American Security Operation), which was a US-backed initiative, was launched against the communist peasants. In line with the Plan LASO, a military offensive called Operation Marquetalia against the peasants commanded by Marulanda Veléz was initiated in 27 May 1964. One year later, Southern Bloc (Blogué Sur) was formed by the communist peasants and First Guerilla Conference took place in which utilizing guerilla strategy was approved. In the meantime, a decree to form the paramilitaries was accepted in 1965. Paramilitary groups were supported by business sector, large land owners, and later drug traffickers. By the Second Guerilla Conference of 1966, Southern Bloc officially became the FARC. FARC members are mainly communist peasants and members of the PCC who are not divided by ethnicity. There is no information about the ethnicity of the FARC members which shows that it is a group formed by communist peasants who are from different ethnic origins rather than from a specific ethnicity.

In the 1970s, National Front was still dominant in the political life and thus there were two competing parties, Liberals and Conservatives. In such an atmosphere, there was no room for radical or socialist parties in the political sphere. In terms of economy, Pastrana government’s (1970-74) rural development model led to concentration of land ownership which drove peasants to urban areas leading peasant proletarianization and the rise of urban unemployment. National Civic Strike occurred under these conditions in 1977 and the following year President Turbay (1978-82) initiated the National Security Statute which allowed the military and police to enhance their activities against

the insurgent groups. FARC was still a relatively small organization in the beginning of the 1970s but during this period FARC consolidated its influence and grew to ‘a small army of 3000 with a centralized hierarchical structure, a general staff, military code, training school and political program’ (Molano, 2000). Moreover, FARC was operating as a de facto government in areas under its control in the 1980s. With strategic decision regarding the shift to more offensive and large-scale confrontation, FARC changed its name to FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army) in 1982. On the other hand, FARC started to enhance its political activities. In 1984, FARC and the government signed the Uribe Accords which paved the way for a ceasefire and peace talks.

Organizational structure of the FARC consists of the Secretariat composed of seven members, the Central High Command containing thirty guerillas, and below the seven blocs operating in different regions and, within each bloc, there are fronts, columns, platoons, and the smallest unit squads (Leech, 2011: 17). According to University of Maryland database, financial sources of FARC are drug trafficking and production, extortion, kidnapping, and hijacking (“Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia”, n.d.). However, drug trafficking issue is a phenomenon of 1980s and FARC was founded in 1960s hence before 1980s there should be other sources of funding beyond extortion, kidnapping, and hijacking. In fact, FARC tax both licit and illicit crops and according to Holmes, Gutiérrez de Pineres, and Curtin (2006, 2007) illicit crops are not significant sources of funding and relative distribution of coca is not related to the high levels of violence. In addition, Law 002 of FARC indicates that ‘any individual or business in Colombia with assets worth \$1 million or more was required to pay a tax’ (Leech, 2011: 39). Therefore, taxation of licit and later illicit crops appears to be the primary sources of funding. FARC recruit from landless peasants in rural areas however due to its relationship with the PCC there are also members from urban areas and middle classes as well as university students and intellectuals. A study on motivations for joining guerilla groups in Colombia underlines the role of socioeconomic injustice and inequality as argued by Florez-Morris (2007) although this study does not cover FARC itself, I think the findings are also applicable to FARC considering the economic conditions of the country and the ideology of the organization.

## **5. Literature Review**

The FARC insurgency has been famous for how protracted it has been in terms of its duration and number of internally displaced people. As such it merits close attention to see if class conflict can help us better understand this persistency. Considering that Colombian conflict has been mostly examined from greed based perspective, it is important to explore class aspects of this conflict. While duration literature provides several explanations for this persistency, class dimension might be useful for a deeper understanding of the conflict. To do so, I review both civil war duration and class conflict literatures in order to bridge these two perspectives and fill the gap in the literature.

### **5.1.Civil War Duration**

Conflict duration is an important factor in the civil war literature because it is likely to affect casualties, intensity, and terms of settlement. How and when a conflict can be ended is crucial in order to prevent protracted conflicts in terms of both theory and policy. Literature on civil war duration mainly explores three dimensions: international, domestic economic and political. Firstly, international aspects in civil wars mainly draw on third party interventions, effect of civil war state environment, world politics, and sanctions imposed by external parties. Regan (2002) examines the effects of third party interventions on civil war duration by accounting type and timing of intervention and argues that unilateral interventions early in the conflict that support opposition increase the expected duration whereas the only intervention type that strongly associated with shorter duration is biased ones contrary to general understanding of neutral interventions as shortening the conflict. Another study by Cunningham (2010) also observes that external states mostly bring their own agendas and demands which are distinct from that of two sides' and states intervening with an independent agenda lengthen the duration of civil wars. On the other hand, Balch-Lindsay and Enterline (2000) link duration to international politics and argue that third parties and presence of a civil war in the neighboring state prolong conflicts while frequency of bordering states and local militarized interstate disputes in the neighborhood decrease the duration. Sanctions imposed by external states or institutions constitute another aspect of international dynamics. As Escriba-Folch (2010) observes, international sanctions, especially by institutional bodies, are successful in both

reducing the duration and peaceful resolution in terms of the higher likelihood of negotiated settlement outcomes.

In terms of domestic economic and political factors, Fearon (2004) finds that civil wars emerged from coup attempts and popular revolutions as well as anti-colonial wars tend to be relatively short whereas peripheral insurgencies involving rural guerilla groups and generally operating near state borders are significantly hard to end. However, cases of rebels benefiting from contraband financing and involving land or natural resources conflicts between a peripheral ethnic group and state-supported migrants from a dominant ethnic group last quite long while ethnic diversity, per capita income, democracy, and ideology are found to be having little or no independent effect (Fearon, 2004). On the contrary, Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom (2004) finds that low per capita income as well as high inequality and moderate degree of ethnic division prolong the conflicts. In addition, Elbadawi and Sambanis (2002) also underscore ethnic fractionalization and democracy as lengthening the duration. However, Wucherpfenning et al. (2012) claim that it is not ethnicity per se but rather the relationship between ethnicity and political institutions that affect duration.

On the other hand, De Rouen and Sobek (2004) examine impact of state capacity on the duration and argue that democracy, effectiveness of bureaucracy, and military power lead longer duration. Similarly, capabilities are also examined by Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan (2009) in the context of who fights against whom. Analysis demonstrates that civil wars involving strong rebels are more likely to end in a shorter time period and with decisive outcomes whereas weaker rebels operating in the periphery refers to longer duration which prevents a decisive outcome and reduces the probability of government victory outcome. Outcomes of the conflict linked to duration also by Bandt et al. (2008) who argues that civil wars ending in government victory and causing higher rates of casualties lead shorter duration. Another study by Acemoğlu, Ticchi, and Vindigni (2010) underlines that civil wars persist in weakly institutionalized states due to unwillingness of elite's to build a strong army which jeopardizes government's control in domestic politics and risks a military coup. Buhaug, Gates, and Lujala (2009) links geographical factors with rebel capabilities and the results show that civil conflicts operating in periphery and located near international borders as well as in regions with valuable natural resources last longer while military capability of rebel group reduces the duration of civil war.

Poverty is another factor that is found to be determining civil war duration. As Justino (2009) argues, poorer households are more likely to participate and support an armed group and higher risk of violence increases the probability of participation and support of households. Lastly, from a different angle, Cunningham (2006) examines the parties to the conflict and discusses that civil wars with multiple actors (veto players) are of longer duration due to diversity of preferences and information asymmetries.

## **5.2. Class Conflict**

Class conflicts and the effect class divisions may have on internal wars are highly neglected in conflict studies. To the best of my knowledge, there are no studies exploring the role of class structure on civil wars. Class conflicts are mostly studied in sociology and sociological studies generally draw on whether class is still a relevant concept and examine differences on conceptualization of social classes (Resnick & Wolff, 1982; Polulantzas, 1973; Myles & Turegun, 1994; Manza & Brooks, 1996; Pakulski & Waters, 1996; Resnick & Wolff, 2003). Only one study reviewed in this research tests Marx's theory of rebellion (Boswell & Dixon, 1993). Therefore, this section is limited in terms of conflict relationship despite the diversity of class related studies.

How class and occupation is related is examined by Wright (1980) underlining that although class and occupation refers different concepts, there is still a relationship between them. Author argues that it is necessary to know that under what conditions occupational structure performs as selection determinant which might either underpin or undermine class formation and how occupational structure selects types of class struggle from the established limits of class formation (Wright, 1980). With a related concern, Olsen (2010) observes the effects of class conflict on industrial location and finds that production technology and industrial location is shaped by class conflict because larger plants provides better opportunity for class-based organization.

On the other hand, Manza, Hout, and Brooks (1995) provide an explanation for how class might affect voting behavior. Authors argue that the voting trends in capitalist countries since 1945 can be portrayed as a "trendless fluctuation" or "realignment" in specific cases rather than dealignment but voting has not completely been independent of class in no democratic countries. In addition, authors underline that institutional structures and global economic change can increase the significance and determination

of class divisions considering the growing economic inequalities. In a more recent study, Hout, Brooks, and Manza (1996) underscore the persistence of classes in late industrial societies. Empirical evidence reviewed in this study underlines centrality of class-based stratification in the society. According to the authors, class is a key determinant of material interest, it paves the way for the formation of collective actors seeking social change, and class membership influences the life chances as well as the behaviors of individuals (Hout, Brooks, & Manza, 1996). Prevalence of class divisions and the importance of working class is also examined by Sakellaropoulos (2002) pointing out that recent transformations in capitalist societies do not alter the primacy of working class in productive processes, rather class divisions and importance of working class prevail as long as the exploitation, relations of domination, and capitalist character of dominant ideology persist. Another study by Westergaard (1996) further provides support for the effects of classes and class divisions with a case study on Britain and argues that class divisions are still salient in Britain basing on especially the economic indicators. More importantly, Westergaard (1996) underlines that other social divisions such as race and gender that are evaluated as more salient than class are in fact shaped by the class structure.

A more recent study by Brooks and Svallfors (2010) tests the effects of class on policy attitudes with a focus on Nordic countries and the results show that class-related factors have greater influence on policy attitudes, especially on the issues of equality than education level, demographic factors, and values. Another study by Dawson (2010) examines the role of class and class divisions vis-à-vis citizenship rights with a case study on South Africa and put forwards that inclusion of citizenship rights in the constitution does not overcome class inequality because class inequality and struggle continue even if people are recognized as citizens and given citizenship rights due to the impact of capitalist system.

On the other hand, other studies test the validity of Marxian economic categories such as labor exploitation and inequality. Zafirovski (2003) examines the problem of labor exploitation in advanced capitalist countries and argues that labor exploitation occurs due to the characteristics and mechanisms of globalized market competition and shows a growing trend, with the US having comparatively highest rates considering the decline in real wages and increasing income inequality. With a different Marxian concept, falling rate of profit theory, Maniatis (2005) analyzes process of income

distribution and capital accumulation in the postwar Greek economy for the 1958-1994 time period and falling rate of profit theory appears to be a significant tool for the assessment of capitalist development process because the level and trend of rate of profit provide insight for the conditions of recovery from stagnation and crisis in a capitalist economy since the phases of capital accumulation and growth depend on the rate of profit.

Boswell and Dixon (1993) and Cramer and Kaufman (2011) provide the strongest guidance in linking class-based conflict to civil war duration. Firstly, Cramer and Kaufman (2011) argue that perception of distribution as fair or unfair affects people's decisions on redistribution and participation in protests against inequality and examine how different people perceives distribution of wealth. Poorer people and middle class are more likely to judge that distribution is very unfair than other social classes whereas high levels of GDP per capita and high growth decreases the perception of unfairness (Cramer & Kaufman, 2011). Therefore, it can be inferred that inequalities increases the risk of conflicts and is likely to affect conflict duration in terms of its effect on the participation and support. On the other hand, Boswell and Dixon (1993) test Marx's theory of rebellion and point out that higher level of economic development leads to rebellion through its effect on the size of working class and class exploitation. Moreover, as predicted by Marx, market crisis condition the impact of class exploitation on revolts because it increases exploitation and unemployment which affect vulnerability of working class. Therefore, industrial development in conjunction with market crisis leads to rebellions by proletarianization and increasing class exploitation (Boswell & Dixon, 1993). Authors also add that market crisis does not only affect the working class but also the peasantry and other classes through secondary exploitation. In this context, it can be argued that civil conflicts can be triggered by the market crisis in countries with a certain level of economic development referring to size, power, and organization of working class or peasantry.

## **6. Theoretical Framework**

Civil war literature provides various hypotheses on why and when some civil wars last longer than the others. This study will ask whether accounting for class-based conflicts can contribute to this debate. In doing so, this study will focus on civil war in Colombia that has persisted for the last five decade. More specifically, I argue that civil

wars caused by class conflict last longer than non-class based civil wars. Because, clash of interests and incompatible goals between the opposing classes in a class-based conflict shrink the bargaining range and parties continue to fight. In class-based civil wars, likelihood of external intervention which increases duration is higher due to the links between the exploiting class and transnational capitalist class. In addition, higher rates of exploitation and poverty also prolongs the conflict in class-based civil wars by increasing participation and support since rebels mainly recruit from exploited classes who are most vulnerable to exploitation and poverty. My argument stands out from the rest of the existing literature because I reintroduce Marxist theory within a bargaining framework and by doing so I provide an alternative approach to explaining the economic and social roots of civil war dynamics.

First criterion of a class based conflict is that the main crowd of rebels should be members of exploited classes. Second, opposing party, which is the state in civil war cases, should be members of exploiting class. Third, demands of the rebel group should be based on equality and elimination of exploitation and poverty. That is, will for equality and elimination of exploitation should be on the agenda of rebels. Fourth, means of action before the actual war starts should be strikes, protests, and demonstrations that mainly draw on equality related demands. Fifth, there should be a vanguard political party or a union that organizes the class members and drives the political struggle. Therefore, main character of the conflict should be based on class paradox, unequal division of resources and its outcomes, and poverty. Lenin describes the revolutionary situation as follows:

“(1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the “upper classes”, a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for “the lower classes not to want” to live in the old way; it is also necessary that “the upper classes should be unable” to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in “peace time”, but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis *and by the “upper classes” themselves* into independent historical action.” (Lenin, 1915)

Beyond the preconditions outlined above, the points Lenin makes constitute the precipitants of a class based conflict.

A class based conflict indicates the presence of clash of interests and incompatible goals between the exploiting and exploited classes, *ceteris paribus*. In a class based civil war, rebels are members of exploited classes and the state/government is composed of the members of exploiting class. Therefore, two parties constitute an existential threat to each other due to opposing interests and divergent preferences. In such cases, likelihood of a negotiated settlement should be lower as the conflicting interests increase (divergent preferences), bargaining range decreases since the adjustment of demands are less likely. As Cunningham (2006) argues, divergent preferences among veto players “shrink the range of bargains that all parties prefer to continued warfare” (p. 879). Hence, the smaller the bargaining range is and the more divergent preferences are, the longer the duration. Parties would prefer continued warfare rather than a negotiated settlement to get better outcomes.

Size of the bargaining range is crucial in order to terminate conflicts and reach a negotiated settlement. The larger the bargaining range, the higher the probability of a settlement since there is more opportunity to find a common ground. However, there are obstacles to finding such common ground and set of agreeable terms. Cunningham (2006)’s work highlights the role of divergent preferences among the parties as a factor decreasing the probability of reaching agreeable terms and shrinking the bargaining range. Cunningham (2006) argues that civil wars with multiple actors (veto players) are of longer duration because the more divergent the preferences are the smaller the bargaining range which decreases the number of agreeable terms and hence lengthen the duration. In class-based civil wars – which limit our argument to capitalist societies – preferences are divergent because there are two opposing classes in question whose goals and interests are incompatible and coexistence of these two classes depends on the subordination of one by the other. Incompatibility of goals is related to how these classes are constructed.<sup>1</sup> Bourgeoisie’s rule means the exploitation and subordination of the proletariat. On the other hand, proletariat’s rule means the nonexistence of bourgeoisie because in a socialist system, proletariat is the owner of the means of

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<sup>1</sup> In order to be clear and concrete, classes are named as the bourgeoisie and the proletariat but it does not have to be proletariat in every case depending on the degree of industrialization. Less developed countries might experience a mixed production – industrial or agricultural – and if agricultural production is dominant in the economy, agrarian class is in question instead of proletariat as the main actor.

production and there is equal share of resources as well as equality in wages. As such, there is no place for private property and free market economy in a socialist society. In the Colombian case, FARC members are from the exploited class – mainly from agrarian class which is the most exploited and poor section of the Colombian society. Colombian state is ruled by the exploiting class – bourgeoisie – considering that it is a capitalist country (agrarian capitalism began to develop in 1950s) and what sustains capitalism is that owners of the production are the rulers of state apparatus. Moreover, policies of Colombian government and the ruling class show their tendency towards exploitation as in the examples of land reforms in 1960s, opening of economy in 1980s, and adoption of neoliberal policies in 1990s show.

However, in identity-based/ethnic conflicts, ethnic identity is not constructed in opposition to a class but another ethnic group which might not be the ruling elite in every case. The exploiting class is by definition the ruling elite in every capitalist country so class is constructed in opposition to one another where one rules and the other one is ruled. As such, in class-based conflicts goal of the exploited class is not a political concession or seats in the parliament but to challenge the authority as a whole and be the authority in the country designed according to terms of equality and justice which is to be applied to whole society not only to a specific group. In ethnic conflicts, if opposed ethnic group is in power, the goal is generally sharing the political power and getting social or cultural rights to be applied to that specific ethnic group. Therefore, in class-based conflicts, preferences of two parties are significantly divergent and this zero-sum situation shrinks the bargaining range which prevents termination of conflict by a negotiated settlement.

Moreover, normally, enemy (exploited class: proletariat/agrarian class) can be divided and conquered.<sup>2</sup> However, in class-based conflicts, enemy is mobilized through class consciousness and hence dividing and conquering becomes more difficult. The demands become more crystallized with less flexibility. The different segments/groups of the exploited class are united by, and their demands are crystallized through what Sherif (1958) calls *superordiante goals*. *Superordinate goals* are “goals which are compelling and highly appealing to members of two or more groups in conflict but

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<sup>2</sup> While Marxist theory is built on the modernization (i.e industrialization), many of the arguments included therein can be applied to premodern agrarian Latin American countries because the point is that the main type of production determines the primary classes in a society.

which cannot be attained by the resources and energies of the groups separately” (Sherif, 1958: 349-50). Through these superordinate goals such as elimination of exploitation or increases in wages, exploited class can unite and stand solid. What is more, the class mobilizers such as vanguard party or the union leaders have a stake in staying solid because it is the staying solid that holds the class together and brings success for the cause. In identity conflicts, however, groups might be composed of different classes so that they are more vulnerable to intra-group conflict and divisions. One can divide and rule/conquer such groups more easily in this respect unless there are superordinate goals which make concessions and bargaining more probable in identity conflicts. In addition, the politics between these groups, rather than the identity or cultural differences among themselves affect or create the level of antagonism. As Posner (2004) argues, existence of cultural or identity differences is neither sufficient nor necessary condition for the salience of political or social divisions. In this respect, I argue that size of the bargaining range is larger and preferences are less divergent in identity conflicts.

On the other hand, commitment problems in civil wars also play a crucial role for the termination of conflict. Actors need to commit credibly in order to reach and implement a settlement. Walter (1997) argues that parties cannot credibly promise to follow the terms of a settlement because they are asked to lay down their arms and demobilize without a legitimate government and legal institutions to enforce parties. According to Walter (1997), only third parties can guarantee that the terms of settlement will be followed by each party. Author underlines three conditions to be credible: a) third party must have self-interest in intervening and keeping the promise, b) must be willing and able to use force when it is necessary, and c) able to signal resolve (Walter, 1997: 340-41). In class-based conflicts, bourgeoisie tends to cheat in the case of a settlement because any concessions given to the exploited class harms the interests of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, since the ultimate goal of the exploited class is to take over the power and change the current system, bourgeoisie cannot trust to exploited class. Alternatively, exploited class cannot lay down the arms and demobilize naively trusting its enemy whose primary duty is to exploit them and existence depends on the existence of exploited class. Bourgeoisie can cheat and crush the exploited class right after the settlement in order to perpetuate the status quo. However, in class-based conflicts, third parties cannot suffice to guarantee a settlement. Considering Walter (1997)’s first

condition for credibility – self-interest – parties also cannot trust to third parties because this self-interest will be tied to either side’s interests. In other words, for example, if a state representing the transnational capitalist class intervenes, it is against the interests of the exploited class whereas a state supporting the equality and justice intervenes, bourgeoisie will not accept it since it endangers its interests. Intervention of a neutral party is suspicious since states in the current world system are ruled by the members of transnational capitalist class, except socialist or egalitarian countries such as Cuba. Conversely, it is easier to commit in identity conflicts because demands of the parties can be satisfied through power sharing or extension of cultural rights. Third party credibility can hold for identity conflicts since there is no existential threat or shared interests with one of the parties but rather reconcilable demands that can be guaranteed by the intervening states and are likely to benefit those states as well in terms of opportunities that peace provides such as investments and trade.

Another aspect of civil war duration is participation and support. Justino (2009) point out that higher vulnerability to poverty leads higher participation in and support to rebels which lengthen the duration of civil war. On the other hand, Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom (2004), examining the role of inequality, hypothesize that higher rates of inequality prolongs the civil war because costs of recruitment is lower. In the light of these arguments, class-based civil wars follow a similar logic in terms of effects of poverty and inequality. Given the fact that rebels are members of exploited classes and have an agenda including will for equality, elimination of exploitation and poverty in class based civil wars, the higher the rate of exploitation and poverty is, the longer the conflict duration. More specifically, higher rates of exploitation and poverty affect a wide portion of exploited classes and the more widespread exploitation and poverty is, the more participation and support to insurgency is provided for the rebels who mainly recruits from the exploited classes. In this context, inequality and poverty are likely to increase participation and support to rebel group when once the war started and higher degrees of participation and support prolong conflict as it augments the rebel capability. For a civil war to be class-based, main body of the rebel group should be composed of exploited class and have an agenda based on equality, elimination of exploitation and poverty. In this framework, I discuss that the higher the rate of exploitation and poverty is, the longer the conflict duration. More specifically, higher rates of exploitation and poverty affect a wide portion of exploited classes and the more widespread exploitation

and poverty is, the more participation and support is provided for the rebels who mainly recruits from the exploited classes. For example, an article on CNN highlights that “Espousing anti-U.S. and Marxist ideology, the group draws the overwhelming majority of its members from the rural poor. Its aim is to overthrow the government.” (“Five Facts about Colombia’s FARC rebels”, 2012). In other words, participation and support is provided through the effect of poverty and exploitation rather than coercion since the rebels aim at elimination of inequality and exploitation for the whole exploited class. The consistency of interests and goals draw recruits and support. In non-class based conflicts, however, poverty and exploitation are not as significant as in class-based conflicts and participation and support are generally provided through kinship or identity related factors rather than a common bounding grievance, namely poverty and exploitation. Moreover, what makes poverty and exploitation crucial factors for participation and support is that main body of rebels are composed of exploited class which is not present in non-class based conflicts in which parties are composed of different classes.

In class based conflicts, parties who are members of opposing classes are assumed to have different, if not opposing, ideological motivations due to perception of inequalities, exploitation, and unfairness. Considering that rebels’ cause emanates from will for equality and elimination of exploitation, rebels and the main vanguard party have an egalitarian ideology which is against the current status quo and the ruling elite. Rebels and the vanguard party use ideology as a part of their strategy through propaganda. Rest of the exploited class is likely to be under the effect of this propaganda and share similar ideology due to the fact that they share the burden, grievances, and costs related to current system in the country. In this framework, I hypothesize that the higher the degree of ideological affiliation with the rebel group, the higher participation and support is provided which increases the conflict duration. On the other hand, this ideological clash between the rebels and state is also likely to prevent bargaining which lead continued fighting and prolongs the civil war.

Considering that the rebel group has a vanguard political party/union in class based conflicts as in the cases of China and Nepal, organization and unionization is likely to increase which is associated with participation and support to the insurgency because organization makes the exploited class more powerful and eliminates collective action problems. Trade unions or other types of collective institutions increase solidarity

among the class members and establish a framework for actions, movements, and struggle of the class. Unions and/or political parties can also undertake leadership role for the class which brings integrity and solidarity and thus collective action. Considering Colombia, Communist Party of Colombia has a relationship with the FARC and is involved in the foundation of the FARC as a vanguard party that strengthened the organization of FARC. The Observer defines the FARC as “Farc - the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - emerged in the 1960s as the military wing of the Colombian Communist party and went on to gain worldwide notoriety as a Marxist guerrilla group committed to violent class struggle on behalf of the poor.” (“A History of FARC”, 2009). Moreover organized members of classes become more politicized, more conscious, and ideologically stronger than unorganized members. Therefore, the more exploited class is organized and unionized, the more participation and support is gained and hence higher likelihood of longer conflict duration. In Colombian case, FARC has an egalitarian agenda drawing from the Marxist-Leninist ideology and aims at providing equality by eliminating exploitation. As Marulanda Velez underlines in the opening speech of Oslo negotiations, “the peace we want and fought for during so many years, consists in eliminating the enormous inequalities in this country” (“Our Dream, Peace with Social Justice and Sovereignty”, 2012). In FARC-controlled areas, FARC further tries to address structural inequalities by providing free schooling and medical care as well as protection from the state forces and paramilitaries. For example, FARC has been against the land reforms of 1960s which monopolized the lands in the hands of large landowners while leaving the peasantry landless. In addition, as Richani (2002) posits, FARC recognized the need of peasantry for cultivating coca for survival despite its anti-narcotic stance (as cited in Brittain, 2010: 111). However, FARC has also enacted crop substitution plans/programs when the rural political economy is deteriorated and peasantry left with nothing but cultivation of illicit crops for living beginning in the 1970s and they taxed big distributors/traffickers and used these taxes for supplying basic needs of the local people in FARC-controlled regions (Brittain, 2010). These examples show that FARC creates an alternative “state” close to its ideals which led by Marxist-Leninist principles. That kind of alternative state formation increases the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and FARC and diversifies the preferences which further shrink the bargaining range. What is more, this makes FARC more legitimate in the eyes of peasantry and provides more participation and support.

External intervention is another variable that is widely discussed in its relation to civil war duration and resolution. Regan (2002) argues that if intervention on one side attracts counter-intervention, conflict prolongs and regardless of type or target of the intervention, external interventions lengthen the civil war. Similarly, Balch-Lindsay and Enterline (2000) point out that greater degree of support to either side by third parties lengthens the duration because when a third party intervenes on behalf of one side, others are tended to counterbalance by intervening in support of the opposite side. As such, balanced third party intervention leads extremely longer duration (Balch-Lindsay & Enterline, 2000). In terms of capacity of parties, Brandt et al. (2008) underline that interventions increase capacity of one side which prevents its imminent defeat and hence prolong the conflict. Alternatively, Cunningham (2010) posits that independent external interventions increase the duration because external actors bring their own agendas and demands which are distinct from that of two sides'. In addition, as stated before, multiparty conflicts are of longer duration (Cunningham, 2006). Interventions by international organizations (IO) can either shorten or lengthen the conflicts depending on democratization aspect of the intervention and the size of the ethnic group as Metternich (2011) argues. Because when the size of the ethnic group is smaller, an intervention with a democratization mandate lead a commitment problem since popular government cannot credibly promise the unpopular rebel leader a share in the democratic political order. Therefore, literature shows that external interventions lengthen duration of civil war in terms of increasing the capacity of parties and balancing power, bringing different preferences and independent agendas to the conflict as well as commitment problems.

The interesting thing about class-based conflicts is that the bargaining set is quite limited. But this limitation is not necessarily linked to the presence of a high number of players, in other words, a high number of veto players who can block negotiations (see Cunningham, 2006). Unlike Cunningham (2006) who focuses on the absolute count of players in a civil war, I argue that the quality (i.e. strength) of veto players is also important. Class-based conflicts exhibit a different characteristic in this respect. My theory collapses the number of domestic players into basically two categories: the proletariat (or the agrarian class in Colombian case) and the bourgeoisie/capitalist class. However, the transnational capitalist class also plays an important role in class-based civil conflicts because, in cases of class-based conflicts, rebels do not constitute a threat

only to the state but also to the transnational capitalist class due to their goals which aim at eliminating exploitation. In this context, transnational capitalist class is likely to intervene on the side of capitalist government with their separate agendas in order to protect their interests and protect the current status-quo as well as to exploit resources of civil war state. While not increasing the veto-player count significantly, the transnational capitalist class commands over vast resources towards maintaining its advantageous position in global decision-making processes regarding redistribution of resources and the sustainment of surplus born out of the exploitation of proletariat. To be even more cynical, civil war itself also helps the transnational capitalist class to further exploit the proletariat in countries experiencing such conflict.

On the other hand, due to solidarity and internationalism aspect of Marxism both in theory and practice, other transnational actors such as socialist countries or organizations are also likely to intervene in class-based conflicts on the side of rebels and support them. For example in the cases of Mozambique and Angola Marxist-Leninist FRELIMO (the Mozambique Liberation Front) and MPLA (The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), respectively, received support from the Soviet Union while the US supported anti-communist UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) in Angolan civil war. However, in post-Cold War era, there are no examples of such solidarity related interventions. This is because intervention can be made through both opportunity in terms of capabilities and willingness. In the current world system, socialist countries have willingness to intervene but do not have opportunity to do so. Nevertheless these specific characteristics of class-based civil wars are more prone to intervention, overt or covert, by the transnational actors and the quality of those interventions are important rather than the quantity in my theory. In non-class based conflicts, I expect interventions only due to, if and when occurs, severity, higher rates of civilian casualties, or humanitarian issues rather than material interests and/or solidarity/internationalism which are strong incentives for intervening. External intervention and support is also present in Colombian case. While the US supports government due to its interests and economic relationships with Colombia, Soviet Union and Third International support FARC due to class solidarity and for the goal of a socialist state.

## **7. Analysis: Peace Process and Negotiations**

Throughout the history of Colombian conflict, there are six episodes of peace talks and negotiations including the present initiative of Santos administration. The interaction between the Colombian government and the FARC oscillated between exerting military pressure and initiating peace negotiations since the 1980s. Except the Betancur, Pastrana, and Santos administrations' initiatives, negotiation agendas were quite limited and mostly ignored the root causes of the conflict which might be one cause of the failure of those negotiations. Most prominent issue in the negotiation efforts is the agrarian reform and development that is considered to be the founding factor of the insurgency. Other issues discussed from the 1980s to the current era includes disarmament and political reincorporation, humanization of the war, victims' reparations, amnesties for the insurgents, exchange of prisoners, human rights, natural resources, revision of the economic and social development model, and reform of the justice system.

In this section, I examine the history and content of the negotiation initiatives according to presidential chronology. The size of the bargaining range seems the most important and relevant category in explaining the conflict duration in Colombian civil war underlining the diversity of preferences and clash of class interests. Findings also suggest that commitment problems are present and determinative in these efforts. Role of the ideology as a cause of the increase in participation and support and hence the duration is effective in several attempts. Finally, prolonging effect of the third party intervention as well as the number and quality of veto players arguments also hold for the Pastrana administration negotiations.

### **7.1. Belisario Betancur Presidency, 1982-1986 (Conservative Party)**

First phase of negotiations was initiated during the Betancur administration (1982-1986). Negotiations began between the government and the FARC with an agreement on a bilateral ceasefire including establishment of a small demilitarized zone in the municipality of La Uribe, Meta (Beittel, 2013). Goal of these negotiations was to point both objective and subjective conditions of violence (Arnson, 1999). Objective conditions draw from the political and structural causes of the conflict while subjective conditions refer to the needs of individual revolutionaries. As a result of the peace talks between the government and the FARC, Uribe Accords was signed on 28 March 1984.

Uribe Accords includes provisions about a ceasefire, an end to kidnapping and extortion, creation of national Verification Commission, modernization of political institutions, agrarian reform, strengthening of community and political organizations, improvement of education, health, housing, and employment, protection of the rights of citizens (“Key Texts and Agreements”, n.d.). After the signing of Uribe Accords, FARC founded Union Patriótica (Patriotic Union – UP) in order to reincorporate into the political life and major insurgent groups formed the Simon Bolivar Coordinating Body (CGSB) (“Belisario Betancur Presidency”, n.d.). UP is a Marxist political party (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1989). UP participated in 1986 congressional and presidential elections and gained 14 senators and congressman. However, many UP candidates and elected officials (about 3000) were assassinated by the right wing paramilitaries with the objective of annihilation of UP from the political sphere. Therefore, the ceasefire was violated and ended in 1987.

There are two points in this negotiation process to remark: a) demands of the FARC/conditions of the Uribe Accords, and b) the result of political reincorporation initiative. Firstly, there are structural demands in the Uribe Accords which are related to root causes of the conflict as this study claims. Demand for the elimination of exploitation and inequality as one of the main causes of the insurgency is reflected in the provision of agrarian reform. For a peaceful end to the conflict, negotiation is conditioned upon structural changes by the FARC. However, agrarian reform bases on mainly the redistribution of land which harms the interests of large landowners and the ruling class. There is a clash between the FARC’s demands for agrarian reform and the interests of the ruling class. Because redistribution of land or agrarian reform aimed at elimination of inequality and exploitation in general means also the redistribution of wealth and so the ownership of means of production that defines the classes. Ruling class cannot readily agree on its own end by sharing the means of production. Without the ownership of means of production, ruling class is not the ruling class anymore. Therefore, this demand poses an existential threat to the ruling class, and highlights the divergence of the preferences and the clash of interests between the FARC and the government. In this context, size of the bargaining range shrinks due to these divergent preferences between the parties. Likewise, the ruling class or the state cannot credibly commit to such an agreement considering the potential outcomes of an agrarian reform that redistributes land and so the power. Even if the ruling class agrees on a reform, it

would not totally eliminate exploitation and inequality which in turn leads to perpetuation of these grievances in the long run that recreates the conditions of conflict. Moreover, such a reform to be successful and to overcome grievances, it requires change of the mode of production – the capitalist system – as well. And, change of the mode of production means transfer of power and wealth which is not negotiable for the ruling class without use of force. Therefore, the ruling class cannot credibly commit to such an agreement and these conditions decrease size of the bargaining range which prevents a peaceful resolution and in turn prolongs the conflict.

Another structural condition in the Uribe Accords is the demand for improvement of education, health, housing, and employment. Partial improvements or reforms in these areas seem possible and agreeable in terms of the interests of the ruling class. However, the question is how far the government can go and to what degree it can commit to such terms. Because, although particular improvements are attainable under the conditions of capitalism considering social welfare state policies implemented in developed countries, there is no guarantee that the government or the ruling class will continue to such reforms in the long run. In addition, without a certain degree of development, in less developed countries such as Colombia, providing effective improvements in that kind of areas requires a strict commitment to welfare state policies and more resources. Although data on health expenditures or employment is not available for the years 1982-1986, some development indicators of Colombia is presented below in table

**1:Table 1: Development indicators for years 1982-1986.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>GDP (current US \$)</b>	<b>GDP per capita (current US \$)</b>
<b>1982</b>	39.0	1,387
<b>1983</b>	38.7	1,348
<b>1984</b>	38.3	1,303
<b>1985</b>	34.9	1,163
<b>1986</b>	34.9	1,141

**Source:** The World Bank.

Likewise, use of resources for welfare policies rather than individual gains means a sacrifice for the ruling class as well as it is against the interests of the transnational capitalist class and the rules of the free market economy. Such an endeavor underscores

the divergence of the preferences between the government and the insurgents which also binds the transnational capitalist class in terms of bilateral agreements and international trade. Nevertheless, while partial improvements are negotiable and attainable for the government for a shorter time period, how satisfactory and adequate they are for the insurgents and the majority of society is ambiguous considering effectiveness and sustainability of such improvements in the long run. Considering the neoliberalization policies of the Colombian state and the agreements that bind Colombia in the context of the free market economy as well as the resources Colombia has, improvements are limited and not sustainable. Therefore, structural changes in these areas are not possible and negotiable for the government while they lie underneath of the root causes of the conflict that is necessary for a peaceful resolution and eradication of the conflict.

Second, the political reincorporation initiative – formation of the UP – should be interpreted in terms of participation and support and mobilization aspects outlined in the theoretical framework. UP was the vanguard party and political wing of the FARC which aims at mobilization of the exploited class and its reincorporation into the politics. As a political means, UP became efficient in terms of increasing participation and support as well as mobilization considering its success in the 1986 elections. In this context, collective action problem was eliminated which makes the struggle more solid and powerful. Likewise, elimination of the collective action problems through mobilization and hence increase of participation and support highlights that demands of the insurgency will be furthered and the struggle as well as the clash of interests will continue also in the political sphere in the foreseeable future. This means that the conflict will prolong and the duration will increase. Assassination of the UP members and elected officials and annihilation of the party by force can be interpreted in the context of posing an existential threat to the ruling class and clash of interests considering the ideology, demands, and goals of the UP.

## **7.2. Virgilio Barco Presidency, 1986-1990 (Liberal Party)**

Second wave of peace negotiations was initiated during the Virgilio Barco Presidency, 1986-1990. When the ceasefire was ended in 1987, Barco administration took initiative to restart the negotiations. However, this time, the state was more reluctant to discuss deeper causes of the conflict and hence negotiation agenda was

quite limited and superficial. Starting point of the negotiations must have been the premise that the state is the legitimate authority and the insurgents act outside the law and it should be limited to disarmament and political reincorporation (Arnson, 1999; 178). Likewise, it was stated that “the government need not negotiate political and social reforms with the guerillas” (Arnson, 1999; 178). Negotiations ended with the agreement of two sides on the disarmament and reincorporation of the 19<sup>th</sup> April Movement (Movimiento 19 de Abril – M-19) and the FARC and the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional – ELN) stayed out of the process. Reluctance of the government to discuss social and political reforms underscores the role of size of the bargaining range and commitment problems. There is a negative bargaining range in these negotiations which prevented a peaceful solution and led to the continuation of the conflict. Because, limiting the negotiations only to disarmament and reincorporation also limited the bargaining range since it does not cover the root causes of the insurgency. On the other hand, the government, at the first place, rejected to commit to the demands of the insurgents such as reforms. Therefore, as the bargaining range shrinks and commitment problems increase, it is not possible to end the conflict.

### **7.3.César Gaviria Presidency, 1990-1994 (Liberal Party)**

Gaviria as the candidate of Liberals became the president by gaining % 47.81 of the votes in 1990 (Center on Democratic Performance, n.d.). The Gaviria administration attempted to apply Barco model to the negotiation of disarmament and reincorporation but it failed to gain support of the FARC and ELN. The government responded with a military attack to the FARC’s stronghold, La Uribe, which led to further distrust between the parties (Posso, 2004). Nevertheless, discerning the desire of people for the reform of the constitution, Gaviria established a *Constituyente* (constituent) and opened the way for the participation of amnestied insurgents as a negotiating strategy. However, military attack and the following the FARC and ELN offensive distracted the work of the Constituyente which highlighted the failure of military solution (Arnson, 1999; 179-180). Although the Gaviria administration opened up the negotiations again with the FARC and ELN which were held in Caracas, Venezuela, CGSB leadership rejected such model and demanded a broader negotiation agenda (Chernick, 2007; 63). First thing on the agenda was a cease-fire and also a demilitarized zone on which the parties could not agree in terms of its size. As Arnson (1999) argues, discussions on the

size of the demilitarized zone underline the importance of local politics and power for the insurgents considering that they wanted the entire municipality.

Negotiations commenced as the parties could not reach an agreement on a cease-fire. In 1992, parties met yet again in Tlaxcala, Mexico. Negotiation agenda was limited to more general issues such as cease-fire, democracy, verification of agreements, paramilitary groups, and national sovereignty without covering the demands for social and political reforms. Although the Gaviria government managed to reincorporate several insurgent groups, reached partial peace agreements, and enacted constitutional reform, it was not sufficient to end the conflicts within the country. On the contrary, insurgent activity expanded and higher levels of violence as well as dirty war occurred. Therefore, 1991-92 negotiations again underscore the role of size of the bargaining range. As the bargaining agenda focused only on the disarmament and reincorporation, size of the bargaining range shrank which led to the continuation and even expansion of the conflict. Because, CGSB asked for a larger demilitarized zone and structural social and political reforms which show the importance of demand for local power and elimination of the exploitation as well as the will for equality. In this context, the bargaining range was too small to negotiate and settle the conflict on a common ground. Likewise the state did not commit to the demands of the insurgents like social and political reforms despite the constitutional reform as the content of negotiation agenda shows. The result of the negotiations once more underlines the necessity of a broader agenda and structural reforms which lie underneath of the conflict.

#### **7.4. Ernesto Samper Presidency, 1994-1998 (Liberal Party)**

Liberal President Samper sought to recommence of the talks with the insurgents through a National Conciliation Commission (“The Peace Negotiations”, 2001). National Conciliation Commission is an autonomous and independent entity founded by the Episcopal Conference of Colombia in 1995 and acted as a mediator for a peaceful solution to the conflict (“The National Conciliation Commission”, n.d.). For the first time, national and international civil society actors such as International Committee of Red Cross were invited to the talks during the Samper administration. There was not a precondition of a unilateral or bilateral ceasefire for the negotiations and the government’s policy included a general law of disarmament and a unilateral move to humanize the war (Arnson, 1999; 184). The ELN agreed to negotiate but the discussions

resulted in limited solutions. On the other hand, the FARC demanded a demilitarized zone as a precondition for negotiations which was rejected by the government and hence the FARC did not sit on the table.

This negotiation attempt lasted quite brief and produced limited results due to its narrow agenda. Likewise it only dealt with the ELN and smaller groups while the FARC was out of the process which is the main insurgent group. Beyond the demand for a demilitarized zone, why the FARC did not sit on the negotiation table is important. One reason can be attributed to the size of the bargaining range as the discussions concentrated on the disarmament and humanization of the war. There was not much on the table to discuss for the FARC which shrank the bargaining range and led to the continuation of the conflict. Without any credible commitment and guarantee from the government, the FARC would not disarm. More importantly, the FARC demanded the removal of the Samper administration from the office as a condition for negotiating (Arnson, 1999; 184) because it did not recognize the government as a valid party. This demand underscores the FARC's one of the ultimate goals and ideological stance toward the current system. As an organization founded on Marxist-Leninist principles, it aims at the altering of power which is in the hands of the ruling class. The ideological clash between the FARC and the government underlines the class dimension of the conflict. Therefore, it can be argued that the opposing ideologies of the parties and class conflict prevented a negotiated settlement. On the other hand, presence of the third parties – national and international civil society actors – did not produced positive effects on the discussions in terms of providing guarantees, increasing commitment, and persuading the parties for a negotiated settlement. However, whether the third parties prolonged the conflict or not is ambiguous to reach a conclusion but it is clear that the participation of third parties did not change the course of the conflict.

#### **7.5. Andrés Pastrana Presidency, 1998-2002 (Conservative Party)**

Conservative candidate Pastrana became the president by gaining % 50.39 of the votes and Liberals lost the elections with % 46.53 after three terms in the office (“Base de Datos Politicos de las Américas”, n.d.). Pastrana is known for his campaign on a peaceful end to the long lasting conflict. As he took the office, first, he granted a demilitarized zone including five municipalities – Switzerland-sized – to the FARC (Beittel, 2013). President took initiative to start peace talks. Negotiation agenda of the 1999 differed from the Samper model in terms of its content. It included a wide variety of political, social, and economic reforms. The agenda

incorporated issues of: “human rights, agrarian policy, natural resources, revision of the economic and social development model, reform of the justice system and the state, accords on International Humanitarian Law (IHL), the redefinition of the peace time role of the armed forces, and international agreements and the democratic mechanisms legitimizing these.” (Posso, 2004)

As the agenda shows, Pastrana tried to initiate a more encompassing negotiation process focusing on the deeper causes of the insurgency than the previous administration. This model also includes participation of political parties, economic associations, representatives of European and American governments as well as UN Secretary General and other UN agencies. Beyond the participation of third parties, the US and the Colombian government launched the Plan Colombia in 2000. Plan Colombia was a US aid to Colombia that was supposed to fight against the drug trade. However, in time, it was also devoted to the counterinsurgency activities (Marquis, 2002). Therefore, the US intervened and became a party to the conflict indirectly. As a result of peace talks, Los Pozos Accord was signed in 2001. This accord included issues such as an end to paramilitary activity, development and social justice, and humanitarian agreement related to exchange of soldiers and insurgents (“Los Pozos Agreement”, 2001). However, tensions soon revealed as the negotiations included commitments to a new Colombia in terms of development and reforms which disturbed large business groups and traditional power holders and negotiations broke when the extension of demilitarized zone ended on January 8, 2002.

Contrary to the previous talks, bargaining range was large enough to initiate negotiation. Because, demands of the insurgents related to development, reform, and social justice were included in the agenda. Yet, despite the latitude of the bargaining range, FARC conditioned a ceasefire on “...extended benefits to the working class” and “immediate wage increases, debt relief, and unemployment benefits for millions of laid-off Colombians.” (“Colombian rebels reject yearend truce”, 1999). Similarly, FARC’s spokesman Raul Reyes underlines that “the end of hostilities will take place when the government solves the problem of employment, housing, health and education.” (“FARC leader says cease-fire must be linked to reduction of social ills”, 2000). On the other hand, there are two important points in this negotiation process to remark: a) involvement of the third parties, b) role of the commitment problems. Firstly, involvement of the third parties increased the number of veto players and brought a wide variety of different interests into the table. There were several players on the table

who could affect or veto the decisions taken. Moreover, not only number of the veto players increased but also quality of the players is significant in order to understand class dynamics that led to the failure of the negotiations. Quality of the players should be examined in the context of class origins of the parties. Especially, the interests and expectations of the business groups and economic associations are determinative in terms of the course of the negotiations. A clash of interests occurred due to the demands for reforms and justice which vetoed by the business groups who are the members of the bourgeoisie. Because, such reforms and development would harm the interests of the business groups while it increases life quality of the majority or ordinary people who are the members of the exploited classes. In addition, Reding (1999) argues that “Yet negotiating with “"communists" is anathema to much of Colombia's upper class... This has allowed the army, with support from businessmen and landlords, to form paramilitary death squads that slaughter suspected leftists...”. Therefore, in the context of class conflict and role of veto players, negotiations failed and the conflict prolonged as the third parties involved.

Second, related to third parties and class dynamics, there are commitment problems in these negotiations. Main power holders and large business groups could not credibly commit to the demands of the insurgents. Commitment to these demands would lead to decrease of profits of the bourgeoisie and power of the ruling elite. For example, an agrarian policy that redistributes the land from large landowners to the landless peasants and revision of the economic and social development model – as stated in the negotiation agenda – in a way that shares the surplus value with the masses through welfare policies decrease the gains of the business circles and large landowners. Likewise, reform of the justice system and the state limits the power of the ruling elite. In this context, business groups and traditional power holders cannot credibly commit to these demands which occurred during the negotiations and led to the failure. Therefore, class differences and interests affected the commitment of the parties and hence the conflict was prolonged.

#### **7.6. Juan Manuel Santos Presidency, 2010- (Social Party of National Unity)**

In 2002, Alvaro Uribe was elected as the president and stayed in the office until 2010. Uribe’s strategy was basically to defeat the insurgents militarily (i.e. Plan Patriota

– a US backed offensive against the insurgents) rather than initiating peace talks and hence there was not any negotiations with the FARC during the Uribe administration. In 2010, Santos won the elections with 69% of the votes and declared that he will continue hard-line security policies (Brodzinsky, 2010). This hardliner stance of the government was reflected in practice when the military killed the FARC's top military commander Victor Julio Suarez (Mono Jojoy) in September 2010 and a year later top leader Alfonso Cano. Before his death, Cano underlines that “democracy was largely a façade in Colombia, concealing a brutally unjust social order that only violent revolution could overturn” which highlights the FARC's stance towards the resolution of the Colombian civil war and class origins of the insurgency (“Alfonso Cano; Armed revolutionary and middle-class Marxist intellectual who was the FARC guerrilla group's chief ideologue and eventual leader”, 2011; p.67). Nevertheless, the Santos administration also launched a number of reforms such as Victims and Land Restitution Law and Peace Framework Law in 2012. Victims and Land Restitution Law foresees a compensation for the victims of the conflict with economic reparations and provides land restitution for the displaced people while Peace Framework Law bases on a transitional justice structure for an eventual peace process (Beittel, 2013). However, this land restitution is not a kind of land reform that the FARC has demanded.

In August 2012, parties set a framework for the talks which consists of five main themes: “1) rural development and land policy, 2) political participation of the FARC, 3) ending the armed conflict including reinsertion into the civilian life of the rebel forces, 4) illegal drug trafficking, and 5) victims' reparations” (Beittel, 2013). After signing of the framework by the parties, formal peace talks have started in Oslo, Norway in October 2012 which later moved to Havana, Cuba. Although the first item on the negotiation agenda is the issue of rural development, it also includes statements by the FARC condemning neo-liberal economic model and foreign investment in the country (Brodzinsky, 2012). Likewise, FARC's opening speech in Oslo underlines the issues of exploitation by the multinational companies of the minerals, mining industry, infrastructure, and their results for the society and environment (“Our Dream, Peace with Social Justice and Sovereignty”, 2012). Name of the some multinational corporations are given in this speech and FARC's opposition to their existence is strongly highlighted. These statements underscore the FARC's ideological stance

against the capitalist economy, exploitation, and their expectations from a land reform and peace talks in terms of its content.

Parties announced that they have reached an agreement on agrarian reform on May 26, 2013 which calls for economic and social development of rural areas and redistribution of land providing land to poor farmers (“Colombia and FARC Rebels Reach Agreement on Land Reform”, 2013). For the first time in the history of negotiations, parties agreed on the land reform, the most important issue for the FARC since its foundation. This step was instrumental for the continuation of the talks and a peaceful end to the conflict: Yet, a long way to peace remains until the parties reaches a final agreement as the fighting between the security forces and the FARC continues in the mountains simultaneously. On the other hand, negotiations resumed on June 11, 2013 in Cuba, to discuss the second issue on the agenda, i.e. the political reincorporation of the FARC. However, FARC’s political participation is opposed by the some sectors of the society such as Colombian Federation of Cattle Ranchers who finds such incorporation unconstitutional (“Colombian Peace Talks Resume in Cuba”, 2013). Nevertheless, negotiations are in progress as of now and a final peace agreement is yet to be seen.

Until now, both parties seem to be committed to this negotiation process and ready to compromise. Agreement on the land reform signals that the issues on the table for a long time are now more tangible. However, the process is not complete yet and there are four more themes to discuss and agree on. Size of the bargaining range is quite large in terms of agrarian reform as the parties seem committed and accept compromise. Nevertheless, the opposition to these reforms from the business circles, as mentioned above, remains notable. Especially the cattle ranchers’ and large landowners’ interests clash with these reforms. In this context, how far the government can go without the support and also opposition of the bourgeoisie is questionable. Whether the government will credibly commit to a radical change in the rural development or not is still ambiguous.

Another potential problem is the issue of FARC’s opposition to and criticism on the mining projects and the extractive industry. FARC’s demands to end extractive industry and its opposition to the exploitation of the resources by the multinational companies show that the FARC is still attached to Marxist-Leninist principles

considering the capitalist economy and imperialism. The FARC's demands question the current status quo and the mode of production in the country as a whole. This highlights the class roots of the conflict and clash of interests between the two parties. For example, FARC's secretariat member Mauricio Jaramillo states that:

“Not all of us look at the same events from the same perspective, which is greatly noticeable when dealing with momentous events of political significance, in which the class point of view exerts a powerful influence. A member of Bogota's most rancid oligarchy will always describe his experiences in a radically different way from they way rebels fighting their kind would.” (“Colombian rebels challenge government negotiator's assessment of peace talks”, 2013)

Additionally, he adds that “and we dream it free of exploitation and injustice” regarding their expectations from post-conflict Colombia (“Colombian rebels challenge government negotiator's assessment of peace talks”, 2013). These statements underline that the FARC still interprets the conflict from a class perspective that might affect the course and outcomes of the negotiations.

On the other hand, the ELN allied with the FARC against these mining and energy projects and more importantly both groups stepped up attacks against the infrastructure that supports foreign direct investment as the 89% increase in the attacks on oil pipelines in the first four months of 2013 shows (Sampaio, 2013). The government's response these demands on extractive industry is that “the development model of Colombia is not on the negotiating table.” (Sampaio, 2013). The FARC's demands considered together with this response raise suspicions about the future of peace talks. However, the FARC might not bring this issue to the current negotiating table but rather might prefer to leave it to the future political struggle if it can participate in politics through democratic mechanisms.

Participation of the FARC in politics is the current theme on the agenda which is also the target of fierce criticism. Since the La Violencia, Colombia is ruled by either the Conservative or the Liberals, except the Santos administration, in other words in a two-party system. Sectors of the political opposition in the Congress are against the FARC's political reincorporation (Sampaio, 2013). On the other hand, there is the historical experience of the FARC in terms of political participation and opening which ended in assassination of the UP members in 1980s. Since the political participation of the FARC means share of power or even the altering of power, how the ruling elite and

the bourgeoisie in general will respond to this potential challenge is crucial. Because, the ruling elite would not willingly give up on the power and needs to consider outcomes of the FARC's reincorporation. If the FARC defeats the other parties and get elected, this is not acceptable for the ruling elite since it is a Marxist-Leninist organization that aims at a socialist state basing on elimination of exploitation and equality for all. Such a challenge of power would lead to a radical change in the economic and political system and loss of power of the ruling elite.

## **8. Overview and Discussion of the Findings**

Analysis of the negotiation processes and outcomes provides evidence for the arguments discussed in the theoretical framework section. Four issues addressed in the theoretical framework stand out: a) size of the bargaining range, b) commitment problems, c) ideological attachment and participation and support, d) role of third parties. The most outstanding argument is the size of the bargaining range which is present in almost all negotiation attempts. Commitment problems are also quite common in these efforts. Role of the ideology as a cause of increase in participation and support and third parties are rather rare but seems effective and determinative. All four arguments are supported by the findings and class dynamics of the Colombian civil war are highlighted as the explanations of conflict duration. In this section, I analyze the findings in the context of theoretical framework one by one and provide a brief discussion on the policy implications and prospects for peace.

Firstly, size of the bargaining range is quite limited in most of the negotiation attempts. From a class conflict perspective, diversity of preferences and clash of interests affect the size of the bargaining range. Because, parties in the Colombian case are members of opposing classes, the bourgeoisie and the exploited class. Interests of these two classes are in continuous clash and their preferences are diverse considering that the existence of the bourgeoisie depends on the exploited class. More specifically, production of surplus value provided through the exploitation sustains the bourgeoisie which creates class antagonism and lead to opposing interests and diverse preferences between these two classes. In the Colombian case, considering the content of the negotiation agendas, issues related to root causes of the insurgency were off the table in half of the negotiations. This non-inclusion of broader topics limited the bargaining range and led to the increase of the conflict duration. Because, for example, a radical

agrarian reform as the FARC demanded is against the interests of the bourgeoisie. Such a reform would decrease the inequalities through redistribution of land. However, while redistribution of the land increases the welfare of the landless peasants, the exploited class, it would harm the interests of the large land owners, part of the bourgeoisie, considering the decrease of their profits and earnings which they would not prefer. Therefore, opposing class interests shrank the bargaining range and led to the prolonging of the conflict.

Secondly, analysis underscores that the ruling elite or the bourgeoisie could not credibly commit to the demands of the insurgents which led to the failure of the negotiations and continuation of the fight. One reason of why the ruling elite could not credibly commit is that the demands of the insurgents were challenging to the current economic system and status quo in the country. Agrarian capitalist economy of the Colombia bases on the concentration of the land in the hands of the large landowners and inequalities. A reform aiming at the elimination of the inequalities requires a radical transformation of the economic development model. And hence, the ruling elite are not expected to commit to such an endeavor that is against their interests. Likewise, reincorporation of the insurgents into the politics poses a threat to the authority of the ruling elite or even might alter the power. Considering that the FARC is a Marxist-Leninist organization that aims at the foundation of a socialist state as its ultimate goal, their participation in the politics is a direct opposition to the authority of the ruling elite and current political system. In this context, the ruling elite cannot risk losing power and hence cannot credibly commit to such demand. Another reason of the commitment problems might be the economic and political capacity of the state. Reforming the development model and power sharing depend on the capabilities. In terms of economic model, considering the goals of the FARC, creation of a development model basing on the elimination of the exploitation and inequalities requires a powerful economy. More specifically, in order to carry out such reforms, a welfare state model is necessary but such model can be initiated through more public expenditure such as providing free health services, education, and housing which depends on the economic power of the state. In addition, this kind of development model harms the interests of the bourgeoisie considering that the surplus value will be spent for welfare policies instead of personal gain. Therefore, since the economic capabilities of Colombia are limited, the

bourgeoisie cannot credibly commit to such development model which in turn prolongs the conflict.

Third issue is the role of ideology as the precipitator of participation and support. As the analysis shows, political reincorporation of the FARC is a frequently discussed issue during the negotiations. Ideological attachment is most visible during the Betancur presidency considering the UP initiative. This attachment increased the support to the insurgents as the success of the UP in the elections shows. Widespread support and participation augmented the capabilities of the FARC in terms of political power. Role of the ideology should be interpreted in terms of not only political devotedness but also in economic terms. More specifically, the FARC's ideology mainly bases on the equality and elimination of exploitation. In this context, widespread poverty and economic inequalities that the masses suffer lead to adoption of the FARC's ideology by the majority of the exploited class. And, as outlined in the theoretical framework, increase of participation and support prolongs the conflict since it augments the capabilities of the insurgents.

Lastly, third party intervention led to the increase of the civil war duration in the Colombian case. Involvement of the third parties did not only increase the number of veto players but also quality of the players. In the context of class conflict, third parties such as business associations and transnational capitalist class represented by the countries like the US caused the failure of negotiations by vetoing issues on the table. More precisely, interests of these third parties clashed with the interests of the insurgents and the exploited class as in the case of agrarian development policy or reform of the justice system. On the other hand, beyond the increase of the number of veto players, quality of these players is also important. By quality, I refer to who they are and what their capabilities are. The third parties involved in the negotiations belong to the exploiting and transnational capitalist class. For example, the US economic and military aid to the ruling elite was in accordance with the demands and interests of the transnational capitalist class which augmented the capabilities of the Colombian bourgeoisie. Their will and capability to veto the decisions led to the failure of the negotiations and hence increased the conflict duration.

Analysis of the negotiation efforts in the context of class conflict provides an alternative explanation to the causes of the longevity of the Colombian civil war.

Despite the uncompromising and protracted nature of the conflict embedded in class antagonisms, the course of the last negotiations presents some opportunities for a peaceful resolution to the Colombian conflict. Agrarian reform is the most important issue on the agenda which is also the founding element of the insurgency. Parties agreed on an agrarian reform as of 2013 and negotiations are proceeding with the discussion of political reincorporation of the FARC. Although the details of the agrarian reform are not clear yet, parties are more committed to this process. However, a radical reform that decreases the inequalities is threatening for the large land owners. They might pressure the ruling elite and veto this decision. This possibility should be evaluated carefully by the negotiators and appropriate policies should be initiated accordingly. I expect a limited reform that does not endanger the interests of the exploiting class while responding the demands of the insurgents and remedying the grievances of the exploited class partially.

At this point, transformation of the insurgency to a political party which is the second issue on the agenda is a crucial step. Because, the FARC will have opportunity to get concessions and increase the welfare of the exploited class through political struggle. However, considering that the FARC is a Marxist-Leninist organization aiming at a socialist state, this kind of a political party is a challenge to the authority of the ruling elite and creates a confrontation. How the ruling elite will respond to, for example, increase of the FARC's support and potential success in the upcoming elections is critical. Assassination of the UP members and candidates during the Betancur administration in the 1980s is a precarious experience which can lead trust issues and might affect the resolve of the parties as well as the commitment of the ruling elite. Therefore, conditions for a healthy opposition and a fair competition in democratic norms should be provided by the ruling elite in order to reach a negotiated settlement. The remaining issues on the agenda would be easier to settle once the political mechanisms have established since these are not related to the root causes of the conflict but rather the outcomes of it.

## **9. Conclusion**

This study examines the role of class dynamics on the duration of the Colombian civil war. I present a Marxist interpretation of the conflict duration by collapsing the different theoretical approaches in the civil war literature. Application of the Marxist class conflict theory to the civil war duration provides an alternative explanation to the existing studies. Most widely accepted approach on the Colombian conflict is the greed based explanations. Examination of the conflict duration from a class conflict perspective challenges these greed based explanations. Analysis underscores the effect of class dynamics as the causes of longer conflict duration rather than opportunities to continue the fight. The theoretical framework established in this study highlights the role of a) size of the bargaining range, b) commitment problems, c) participation and support, and d) third party intervention as the factors prolonging the conflict. Among these four factors, the most outstanding one is the size of the bargaining range. Size of the bargaining range is limited in the Colombian conflict due to the diversity of preferences and clash of interests because the parties are members of the opposing classes. On the other hand, commitment problems occurred several times during the negotiation processes as the demands of the insurgents challenged the interests of the ruling elite and threatened the very existence of it. Increase of participation and support to the insurgents through ideological attachment and widespread poverty and inequalities presents another cause for the longer conflict duration since the participation and support augment the capabilities of the insurgents. Lastly, involvement of the third parties prolonged the civil war because it increased the number of veto players on the table and class antagonism also expanded the quality of the veto players in terms of their will to intervene and capabilities.

Economic, social, and political reforms are necessary for a negotiated settlement to the Colombian civil war. Especially the agrarian question is at the heart of the conflict as the founding factor of the insurgency which is agreed by the parties during the current peace talks. However, extend of this agrarian reform will be determinative for a final agreement. The ruling elite need to give concessions and credibly commit in order to carry out such reform. Because, a redistribution of the land will decrease the profits and earnings of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, exploitation by the multinational corporations and FARC's concerns and demands over this issue presents another challenge in terms of the interests of the transnational capitalist class although it is not included in the negotiation agenda. On the other hand, political reincorporation of the

FARC is the next theme on the agenda which is of utmost importance to transform the armed conflict into a political struggle. At this point, the ruling elite should guarantee a fair and democratic competition as well as safety of the opposition considering the past experience of reincorporation initiative.

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