

SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN PEACE PROCESSES: LESSONS FROM TURKEY AND COLOMBIA

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the dynamics of peace processes which determine the fate of peace negotiations. There are two main factors under focus to evaluate their impact on the process itself: the problem of commitment to peace and the existence of spoilers. Both have dramatically shaped the direction of recent negotiations, where in Turkey parties failed to find common ground due to a lack of political will and overall commitment; in Colombia, in contrast, a peace accord with FARC was signed in 2016 despite spoilers almost derailing the peace process when the public voted against the peace accord in a referendum. Deploying comparative case analysis, this study makes a unique contribution to the existing literature on peace process by analyzing in depth two highly topical cases through the lens of what has been identified as two prominent problems that can negatively affect a peace process and demonstrating how conflict parties succeeded or failed in addressing these problems. It is hoped that the insights gained from this comparative study on Turkey and Colombia will add to the wider discussion on best practices in peace processes.

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Her koşulda yanımda olan aileme...

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------|---|
| AKP | Justice and Development Party (<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i>) |
| ANAP | Motherland Party (<i>Anavatan Partisi</i>) |
| AUC | United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (<i>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia</i>) |
| CHP | Republican People's Party (<i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i>) |
| DTP | Democratic Society Party (<i>Demokratik Toplum Partisi</i>) |
| ELN | National Liberation Army (<i>Ejército de Liberación Nacional</i>) |
| FARC | Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (<i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia</i>) |
| GAP | Southeastern Anatolia Project (<i>Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi</i>) |
| HDP | Peoples' Democratic Party (<i>Halkların Demokratik Partisi</i>) |
| HEP | People's Labor Party (<i>Halkın Emek Partisi</i>) |
| ISIS | Islamic State of Iraq and Syria |
| KCK | Kurdistan Communities Union (<i>Koma Civakên Kurdistan</i>) |
| M-19 | The 19th of April Movement (<i>Movimiento 19 de Abril</i>) |
| MHP | Nationalist Movement Party (<i>Milliyetçi Halk Partisi</i>) |
| MIT | National Intelligence Organization (<i>Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı</i>) |
| PCC | Colombian Communist Party (<i>Partido Comunista Colombiano</i>) |
| PKK | Kurdistan Workers' Party (<i>Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê</i>) |
| PYD | Democratic Union Party (<i>Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat</i>) |
| TAK | Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (<i>Teyrêbazên Azadiya Kurdistan</i>) |
| UP | Patriotic Union Party (<i>Unión Patriótica</i>) |

INTRODUCTION

In the last two years alone, as many as 2,552 people, including at least 385 civilians, have lost their lives in clashes between the Kurdistan Workers' Party or the PKK (in Kurdish: *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê*) and Turkish security forces.¹ After the third ceasefire period, which had lasted two and a half years, broke down in 2015 the conflict entered one of its deadliest phases. The conflict between the PKK and the Turkish state has been going on since 1984 with total casualties amounting to 30,000-40,000.² There have been several attempts to settle the dispute between the Kurdish minority and Turkish political authorities since the 1990s. The latest and most comprehensive peace process was initiated in 2013 after months of negotiations with the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan whose appeal for the disarmament and withdrawal of the PKK was read in public both in Turkish and Kurdish. The peace process – also known as “Çözüm Süreci” in Turkish (the Solution Process) – has consummately collapsed in 2015, when both the PKK and the Turkish military resumed hostilities. While full-scale warfare continues in southeastern Turkey, no concrete steps toward peace have been taken since then.

On the other hand, 2016 witnessed most promising developments in the 52-year conflict between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (known as FARC – *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*) and the Colombian state. The conflict – one of the deadliest in the contemporary world – has caused more than 220,000 deaths by 2013, more than half of whom were civilians.³ Preceded by earlier futile efforts, peace talks between the FARC and the state were initiated in 2012 with the aim of bringing an end to the conflict. Both parties finally reached

¹ “Turkey’s PKK Conflict: The Rising Toll” (International Crisis Group), accessed March 10, 2017, <http://www.crisisgroup.be/interactives/turkey/>.

² Ibid.

³ “Colombian Conflict Has Killed 220,000 in 55 Years, Commission Finds,” *The Guardian*, July 25, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/25/colombia-conflict-death-toll-commission>.

a highly anticipated agreement in August 2016, leading to an October 2016 referendum as an attempt to ratify the peace deal. The result of the referendum came as an utter shock: 50.2% of the Colombian public voted against the agreement while 49.8% voted in favor.⁴ Today, despite the frustration of the referendum, implementations of a revised peace deal are under way, largely due to the voices of discontent expressed within both public opinion and the opposition, who continue to play a significant role within peace-building efforts. Yet, President Juan Manuel Santos and the Colombian government seem determined to end the violence in the country in collaboration with a FARC equally resolved to pursue a peaceful solution to Colombia's half a century-long civil war.

Various reasons for peace processes to fail can be identified, however this study will focus mainly on two factors that directly affect the nature of these processes: (1) the intention and political interests of parties for peacemaking – the level of commitment, and (2) the existence and effect of spoilers on peace processes. The main argument of this paper is that the will and capacity of parties to reach peace influences the likelihood to end intra-state conflicts. I also argue, in accordance with the pertinent literature, that the presence of spoilers and their impact on the process play important role for peace negotiations either to succeed or fail. The assumption is that the type of conflict is another important determinant for parties to reach a common ground to settle the conflict. The cases of FARC and PKK exemplify two different types of conflict, with the former rooted in socio-economic cleavages without an ethno-nationalist component, while the latter features a distinct ethno-nationalist nature. Thus, as argued by some, the PKK case might present a more rigid, and thus more difficult to resolve conflict than the case of FARC due to the

⁴ "In the Shadow of 'No': Peace after Colombia's Plebiscite," Latin America & Caribbean (International Crisis Group, January 31, 2017), <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia/060-shadow-no-peace-after-colombia-s-plebiscite>.

former's demands of an ethno-nationalist nature. The research will conduct a comparative case analysis through which both cases will be examined in relation to specific events during both Colombian and Turkish peace processes.

Rationale for the Research

This research has been originally motivated by my direct experience of the PKK-conflict in my home country and my attempts to identify international examples of best practice in order to ideally determine factors that are conducive for peace and how to avoid or address factors that are detrimental. The relations between insurgent groups' and incumbent political authorities will constitute the basis of this research. In terms of research design, there are two reasons for specifically selecting these two cases. First, their historical and structural relevance is well-suited to the research topic and second, existing literature suggests a solid ground for a comparison and contrasting of these two cases. Vera Eccarius-Kelly was one of the firsts to provide a comprehensive comparison between the FARC and the PKK, looking exclusively into resource mobilization and structural organization, though.⁵ She provides a compelling argument for comparing the two cases, in which she highlights that,

“[b]oth groups operate in partial or fragile democratic environments in which the conduct of military forces has been inconsistently constrained; both groups have engaged in classic insurgent strategies that focused on providing an alternative to state structures by temporarily holding sovereignty over territory or populations; and both groups emerged

⁵ Vera Eccarius-Kelly, “Surreptitious Lifelines: A Structural Analysis of the FARC and the PKK,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, no. 2 (April 2012): 235–58.

during the Cold War period, benefited from state sponsors for a while ago, and framed their ideological motivations as left-wing revolutionary or ethno-nationalist.”⁶

Expanding on the rationale Eccarius-Kelly put forward, I will focus on chronological events and ideological resemblance of both cases, which necessitates a brief outline of the criteria behind the rationale for this research.

In this sense, both group share,

- a Marxist-Leninist ideology and organizational structure due to resource mobilization and self-funding;
- similar historical events which caused the establishment of insurgencies (*La Violencia* in Colombia and strategic repetitive state violence in Turkey);
- failed efforts of political representation in the national assembly (Union Party in Colombia and several pro-Kurdish political party establishments in Turkey);
- Several attempts at peace negotiations with the state at similar periods of time;
- recent peace processes that constitute the most comprehensive attempts at peace in both conflicts.

The time frame of the study will roughly fall between the years 2009-2016, when the most recent peace talks have begun and ended in both countries. This time frame will be used in order to narrow down the scope of events in the histories of these protracted intra-state conflicts. This research will contribute to conflict resolution and peace studies by focusing on the dynamics in peace processes through a contemporary lens which demonstrate how conflict parties succeed or fail. As mentioned earlier, with the exception of Eccarius-Kelly, FARC and PKK have been

⁶ Ibid, 236.

largely studied separately. However this study, for the first time, aims to establish a comparative and contrasting framework with an eye on recent developments in both countries and through the lens of the pertinent theoretical literature on contemporary peacemaking.

In light of these events, this research seeks to address the following questions in the context of the Turkish and Colombian cases; what are the factors behind peace negotiations that may affect and/or change the processes? On what level do the insurgent groups' demands shape the peace negotiations which may lead to success or failure? How important is the state and the insurgents' will and capacity to end the conflict? By looking at socio-economic factors, ideological determinants and the state's position in the peace process, we will be able to broaden our understanding of intra-state conflict. Ultimately, **this thesis will advance a twofold argument and provide empirical evidence for it by way of the conflicts in Turkey and Colombia. Hypothesis 1: the commitment and capacity of warring parties in an intra-state conflict designate the result of a peace process. Hypothesis 2: the existence of spoilers in a peace process might undermine the negotiations and cause the peace process to fail, depending on the strength and structural impact of the spoiler within the opposition.** The core arguments of this study are grounded in some of the most relevant contributions from the literature on peace process, such as the studies of Hampson, Darby, Lederach and Zartman, and it is my ambition to apply those to and substantiate them with my comparative analysis of recent peace processes in Turkey and Colombia.

Methodology

The methodology of the research is based on qualitative research, since the character of the research questions requires a comprehensive inquiry and interpretive research, for which quantitative methods would not have been useful. Causal mechanisms between the variables are

intended to be discovered. The study aims to see the impact of independent variables, the commitment of parties to peace and the actions of spoilers, on the dependent variable, the result of the peace negotiations. The major theoretical texts on peace process and intra-state conflict resolution are going to be discussed in the next chapter by way of an in-depth literature review. Subsequently, a further assessment and analysis of the historical background and ideological dimension in both cases will be conducted in the following chapters.

The core of the study will be formed around a comparative case analysis. Case study method assists to develop an understanding of a complex issue, extending it through comprehensive research. As Soy states; “case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships.”⁷ In other words, comparative case studies are useful to identify new or omitted variables in individual cases to see the implications of causal mechanisms.⁸ Yet, at first it needs to be outlined what is a “case” and “case study” as a research method. As Bennett defines, a case is “an instance of a class of events of interest to the investigator, such as instance of revolutions, types of governmental regimes, economic systems,”⁹ or peace processes as is the interest of this research. The case study as a research method is then, “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.”¹⁰

⁷ Susan K. Soy, “The Case Study as a Research Method,” *University of Texas at Austin*, 1997, <https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/l391d1b.htm>.

⁸ Andrew Bennett, “Case Study Methods: Design, Use, and Comparative Advantages,” in *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations* (The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 19.

⁹ Ibid, 28-29.

¹⁰ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 4. ed, Applied Social Research Methods Series 5 (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009), 18.

Yin defines three purposes that can be used for case study method: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory.¹¹ Interpretive and evaluative cases are also defined as other purposes by McDonough and McDonough.¹² In this categorization, the approach to cases for this research would fit into more than one category due to its multi-purpose grounding. Due to its narrative form my analysis would fit into the descriptive form, yet it is also an explanatory approach due to the causal mechanism where pattern-matching is used to search a phenomenon in multivariate cases. Finally, it is evaluative and exploratory because my intention is through my examination of the relevant peace processes to add to the discussion of best practices in conflict resolution. The comparative case method is a distinct form of multiple case studies where the goal for the researcher is to explore the empirical relationships among variables.¹³ In other words, comparative case analysis deals with more than one case or country which results in cross-sectional studies and cross-case research, i.e. cross-case comparison and contrasting.¹⁴ In order to avoid analytical overreach, this study remains limited to two cases with a contemporary time frame in which we can see quite clearly the relationship between the designated variables.¹⁵

The strengths of case studies are “the ability to identify new or omitted variables, examining intervening variables that help to define causal mechanisms, developing historical explanations of particular cases, attaining high levels of construct validity, and generating new theories.”¹⁶ Yin states two aspects of the case study that makes it unique as a research method; direct observation of the events being studies and interviews of the persons involved in the

¹¹ Ibid, 8.

¹² Jo McDonough and Steven McDonough, *Research Methods for English Language Teachers* (London: Arnold, 1997).

¹³ Arend Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” *The American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (September 1971): 683.

¹⁴ Peter Lor, “Methodology in Comparative Studies,” in *International and Comparative Librarianship*, 2011, 12.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Bennett, “Case Study Methods: Design, Use, and Comparative Advantages, 27.”

events.¹⁷ In contrast, there are limitations of case study method in terms of its lack of robustness as a research tool. The criticisms argue that the case study method potentially lacks of an independence of cases and a lack of representatives which makes it a weak vehicle to form generalizations since it is often based on a small number of cases. Furthermore, there always is a risk of case selection biases.¹⁸ According to Lijphart, the limitation of the comparative method is its dealing with many variables in small number of cases.¹⁹ Yet he suggests specific ways to minimize this problem such as increasing the number of cases, focusing the comparative analysis on “comparable” cases and “key” variables. In this matter, this study, building its comparative analysis on two recent peace processes, designates two key variables – commitment problems to peace, and spoiler issues – and focuses the effects of these variables to the process itself.

Comparative case analysis will generate the main methodology of this thesis, yet the mode of analysis will also be inspired by the “process tracing method.” Without an actual claim of process tracing being a distinct method for this research, it only will be utilized in its general guidelines to conduct a thorough investigation. To explain further, process tracing is the mode to trace the intervening variables whether they move as predicted between the hypothesized cause and observed impact.²⁰ While process tracing can be both a deductive or inductive element to the research, the goal of this study is, while maintaining an inductive approach, to stay open for unexpected variables during the research that may lead to development of a new hypothesis in the end.²¹ Without putting process tracing at the center of the methodological approach here, the core

¹⁷ Yin, *Case Study Research*, 11.

¹⁸ Bennett, “Case Study Methods: Design, Use, and Comparative Advantages.”

¹⁹ Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method.”

²⁰ Bennett, “Case Study Methods: Design, Use, and Comparative Advantages, 22.

²¹ Ibid.

elements of this mode of analysis will be applied within the comparative case analysis methodology.²²

This research will use primary sources of official documents and speeches from key decision makers in the respective conflict settings. Also official reports from international research bodies and institutions (International Crisis Group, Institute for Economics and Peace, International Institute for Counter-Terrorism etc.) and the official websites of insurgent groups²³ will be consulted together with firsthand accounts, such as former/current fighters' interviews and memoirs. In addition to general literature on peace processes, case specific scholarly contributions will be drawn on as key sources for analysis.

Due to limitations of what is possible in an MA thesis, fieldwork and interviews *in situ* had to be excluded. Instead, document analysis will be conducted under the consideration of designated key evaluation questions which will provide the necessary link between the cases.²⁴ For further evaluation, process tracing will be considered as a sub-application for the methodology. This study will first elaborate the ideological and structural background of the insurgencies as well as their efforts of political representation in domestic politics. Earlier peace attempts in both countries and a detailed review of recent peace negotiations will form the main body of the thesis. Furthermore, the spoiler effect and commitment problems in peace processes will be examined in each case in order to expand our understanding of the challenges that may

²² See for further information on "process tracing": Bennett, "Case Study Methods: Design, Use, and Comparative Advantages"; Derek Beach, "It's All about Mechanisms – What Process-Tracing Case Studies Should Be Tracing," *New Political Economy* 21, no. 5 (September 2, 2016): 463–72; Tulia G. Falletti, "Process Tracing of Extensive and Intensive Processes," *New Political Economy* 21, no. 5 (September 2, 2016): 455–62.

²³ See PKK Online - <https://www.pkkonline.com/en/>; FARC-EP International - <https://farc-epeace.org/>.

²⁴ Delwyn Goodrick, "Comparative Case Studies" (Unicef), *Methodological Briefs Impact Evaluation No.9*, http://devinfohive.info/impact_evaluation/ie/img/downloads/Comparative_Case_Studies_ENG.pdf.

impair a peaceful solution to such protracted conflicts. In conclusion, the findings of the research and future prospects will be presented.

CHAPTER 1 – THEORETICAL GROUNDING

Any peace process can hardly succeed or be analyzed without understanding the motivations behind an insurgency, what type of methods they use and what it takes to reach an agreement. An insurgency is “a strategy adopted by groups which cannot attain their political objectives through conventional means ... but through asymmetric violence, psychological warfare and political mobilization.”²⁵ Today’s insurgencies, on the other hand, are significantly different from the political struggles that have marked the last few decades of conflict. Together with modernization and globalization, the strategies and political aims of insurgencies have shifted in accordance with the conditions of the contemporary world. Even though large-scale conventional warfare between states is extremely rare today, rising political grievances throughout the world—such as the collapse of traditional political, economic and social orders—provide a new impetus for today’s insurgencies. These insurgencies are then also fueled by the presence of weak regimes, growing transnational organized crime, and widespread availability of arms.²⁶ In this matter, the PKK and the FARC are two of the most effective and powerful insurgencies in the world which have the ultimate goal to force the state into negotiations to realize their political demands.

Metz and Millen categorizes insurgencies into two groups: “national insurgencies” – groups that challenge the regime with an expectation of reform or total removal of the government, and “liberation insurgencies” – groups with the goal of autonomy or liberation of a certain territory based on grounds of race, ethnicity or culture.²⁷ Reliant on these definitions, one might suggest that the FARC fits into the category of national insurgencies, while the PKK can be considered

²⁵ Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, “Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response,” Monograph (Strategic Studies Institute, November 2004): 1.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, 3-6.

suitable for both types of categorization depending on its ethno-nationalist and revolutionary socialist claims, and which of those it has prioritized over time. What Bernard Fall calls “revolutionary warfare” differs from conventional guerilla warfare due to the combination of guerilla methods with political action.²⁸ For Fall, the military aspect in revolutionary warfare should be the secondary aspect, because the insurgency by its nature is political, ideological and administrative.²⁹ In line with this argument, David Kilcullen also suggests that if an insurgency was intended to retaliate, the counter strategy should not be only in military action but decision makers should conceive of the situation as a political warfare in which political outcomes matter more than military success.³⁰ In other words, the political and ideological aspects always need to be included in any counterinsurgency strategy.

As state responses to the insurgents’ demands will be examined in this study, the FARC and PKK cases are highly relevant to see the significance of state approaches and mutual political compromises in an intra-state conflict. Ian Beckett determines several factors in a government’s response to the conflict which are: recognition of the need for political action; complete civil-military co-operation; isolation of the insurgent from public support; appropriate use of military force to support pacification; and lasting political reforms to prevent the insurgency from recurrence.³¹ In addition, recognizing the globalization effects on insurgency such as urbanization and easy access to worldwide audience; and awareness of a complex conflict ecosystem is essential to succeed in either counter-insurgency or peace negotiations.³²

²⁸ Bernard B. Fall, “The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency,” *Military Review*, October 2015, 40–48.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ David Kilcullen, “Counter-Insurgency Redux,” *Survival* 48, no. 4 (December 2006): 123.

³¹ I. F. W Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and Their Opponents since 1750* (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2004), <http://www.crcnetbase.com/isbn/9780415239332>.

³² Kilcullen, “Counter-Insurgency Redux.”

Reaching peace, as a common saying goes, is always so much more difficult than resuming a war. And whether or not a peace process succeeds or fails depends on many determinants but mainly on the ability to transform a ceasefire into a genuine political settlement.³³ As John Darby reminds us, the peace process is mistakenly seen as a linear progression from war to peace as if segmented problems can be dealt with separately in a continuous fashion. Yet, Darby debates that there are several factors such as handling immediate stalemates, efforts to compromise, and the management of spoilers, all of which should be considered simultaneously in order to settle the conflict.³⁴ For him, a peace process “is not a predictable sequence from violence to settlement” and especially stages of demobilization, disarmament, and reconstruction should be paid the greatest attention to in order to eliminate the distrust among parties.³⁵ Likewise, Pillar claims that termination of warfare is highly sensitive because it may function as leverage for both parties during the bargaining process. Mutual action is needed to reach an agreement which might be either profitable for both, in favor of one of the parties, or requiring concessions from each party.³⁶ Therefore the commitment and will of parties to peace is the most essential factor in the entire process.

“Commitment problems occur because neither the government nor the rebels can credibly commit themselves to uphold the negotiated settlement in the future.”³⁷ Mutual distrust shapes the strategies implemented by each side because the government cannot trust whether the rebels will stay loyal to disarmament, while the rebels cannot be sure if the government implements the

³³ Fen Osler Hampson, *Nurturing Peace: Why Peace Settlements Succeed or Fail* (Washington, D.C: United States Inst. of Peace Press, 1996): 6.

³⁴ John Darby, “Violence: Post-Accord Problems during Peace Processes,” *Masaryk University*, 1–17.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Paul R. Pillar, *Negotiating Peace: War Termination as a Bargaining Process* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), 37–40.

³⁷ Michaela Mattes and Burcu Savun, “Fostering Peace After Civil War: Commitment Problems and Agreement Design,” *International Studies Quarterly* 53 (2009): 739.

political reforms as agreed. Therefore, it is not very common that insurgents see a ceasefire as economically and politically beneficial,³⁸ unless they are sure that they are strong enough to negotiate their demands. Nevertheless, if there is a potential for alternative ways other than violence, parties may favor a negotiated settlement that includes some power-sharing. According to Seema Patel, among seventy five conflicts which had ended by 1998, twenty one of them were concluded by peace agreements, while twenty four were resolved by victory of one of the parties, and the rest had held some kind of a ceasefire agreement – meaning that successful negotiations and implementation of agreements is actually possible.³⁹ Peace is achievable, though, only when certain conditions were created for negotiations to begin and succeed.

The first set of conditions to initiate a promising negotiation process, as Huntington argues, are a sense of political community, an established government with popular legitimacy, and a domestic consensus on the current issue, all of which are necessary grounds for state stability and can prepare the ground for peace talks.⁴⁰ Yet, for each warring party, a strong evidence of commitment to peace and creating the right climate are essential along with the readiness of the parties to compromise and their leaderships' capability to improve negotiations.⁴¹ If parties can agree eventually on the demands of both sides then it refers to a “win-win” situation.⁴² For Darby, the key objectives to convert war into peace consist of three phases – demobilization, disarmament, post-conflict reconstruction.⁴³ In addition, Patel emphasizes that deep-rooted mistrust between parties may be overcome through managing spoilers, building coalitions and

³⁸ Seema Patel, “Stopping Internal War: Theoretical Frameworks for Multiparty Negotiations” *Tufts University*.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 11. printing (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1976).

⁴¹ Adrian Guelke, “Negotiations and Peace Processes,” in *Contemporary Peacemaking: Conflict, Violence and Peace Processes* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 53.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Darby, “Violence: Post-Accord Problems during Peace Processes.”

even coercive diplomacy at times when an inducement to settle is needed.⁴⁴ As Hampson expresses, bringing parties to the negotiation table is only part of the challenges in reaching peace:

“If one is lucky enough to secure an agreement, an even greater challenge is to translate the agreement into a concrete package of mutual commitments and undertakings that will end violence once and for all while restoring political order.”⁴⁵

Among the enabling objectives listed above, “ripeness theory” is one of the most widely discussed in terms of peace processes. Ripeness theory claims that “change from violence to negotiation is possible only when the conflict and its perpetrating actors have reached to a certain maturation point” which can advance the conciliation and peace-building efforts.⁴⁶ William Zartman defines ‘the ripe moment’ as a perceptual event and a fleeting opportunity which must be seized. As he suggests, two concepts – “mutually hurting stalemate” and “way out” – are the necessities to seize the moment.⁴⁷ The former indicates that “the parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory and this deadlock is painful to both of them,”⁴⁸ while the latter means seeking an alternative policy, a “way out”, in these circumstances, even though a specific solution cannot be delivered right away.

In contrast, Lederach criticizes ripeness theory in terms of its practical limitations. He discusses the efficacy of ripeness, first by saying that the theory presents an awkward challenge and paradox, and creates a predictive capacity which practitioners are meant to use as a guideline

⁴⁴ Patel, “Stopping Internal War: Theoretical Frameworks for Multiparty Negotiations.”

⁴⁵ Hampson, *Nurturing Peace*, 5.

⁴⁶ John Paul Lederach, “Cultivating Peace: A Practitioner’s View of Deadly Conflict and Negotiation,” in *Contemporary Peacemaking: Conflict, Violence and Peace Processes* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 30–31.

⁴⁷ William Zartman, “The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments,” *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 1, no. 1 (September 2001): 8–18.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 8.

for process.⁴⁹ He argues that the key objectives vary in each context and the predictive capacity may mislead the practitioner by defining a fixed standpoint. Furthermore, ripeness theory assumes that actors involved in the process are aware of when the time is right, but this recognition is actually a luxurious vision which can be realized mostly by outsiders. Finally, the same outsiders with those ‘outside-neutral’ views carry the potential to enter and leave the process with a destabilizing presence that can cause an inaccurate process evaluation which Lederach calls “cherry picking.”⁵⁰ Despite these criticisms, ripeness theory shall be regarded as one of the main theoretical frameworks in this research while bearing in mind the critiques of the theory.

Aside the above mentioned conditions for a peace agreement to thrive, there are several obstacles that almost any peace process encounters. The major complications towards peace are the failure of compromise or irreconcilability, the presence of “spoilers” who seek to shape or destroy the process, obdurate or weak political leadership, and failure to implement the agreement.⁵¹ Lack of coordination between mediators and the parties in the conflict, lack of attention by the international community, lack of trust, detailed information, and intelligence might sabotage the process and exacerbate the conflict.⁵² Above all, the will to settle the conflict and the capacity to fulfill the terms of the agreement matter most. Each of these circumstances may seriously damage the process however, the problem of spoilers should be discussed further in detail in order to better understand their potential for undermining peace negotiations.

⁴⁹ Lederach, “Cultivating Peace.”

⁵⁰ Ibid, 33-34.

⁵¹ Stephen John Stedman and Donald Rothchild, “Peace Operations: From Short-term to Long-term Commitment,” *International Peacekeeping* 3, no. 2 (June 1996): 17–35; Guelke, “Negotiations and Peace Processes.”

⁵² Patel, “Stopping Internal War: Theoretical Frameworks For Multiparty Negotiations”; Stedman and Rothchild, “Peace Operations.”

At the core of any peace process is the belief that both the insurgency and the state would accomplish their goals and improve their positions through successful negotiations. Yet, the greatest source of risk comes from the leaders and parties who believe that peace threatens their power and interests and who, therefore, lean toward sabotaging the process.⁵³ There are numerous factors that affect an actor's behavior which might cause greater damage during the process than at the beginning. Pearlman states that the position of a group in the internal balance of power, the existing resources which are expected to improve its position, and the access to these resources are significant examples of such factors.⁵⁴

The success of a peace process highly relies on the presence of pro-peace third parties, positively influencing meetings and encouraging the desired outcome. As Hampson states clearly: "peace settlements that enjoy high levels of third-party assistance and support during the entire course of peacemaking and peace-building process are arguably more likely to succeed than those that do not."⁵⁵ Yet, the spoiler problems stem from those third-parties involved in the negotiation process who do not benefit from building peace, but try to undermine the negotiations. For Stedman, several determinants affect the result of the spoiling act such as the goal of the spoiler, the intention behind non-cooperation, the degree of the commitment and the unity within the spoiler as a group. Also the degree of leadership and control over followers influence the process along with the impact of international actors – so called "custodians of peace."⁵⁶

⁵³ Stephen John Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," *International Security* 22, no. 2 (Autumn 1997): 5–53.

⁵⁴ Wendy Pearlman, "Spoiling Inside and Out: Internal Political Contestation and the Middle East Peace Process," *International Security* 33, no. 3 (Winter 2008): 85.

⁵⁵ Hampson, *Nurturing Peace*, 13.

⁵⁶ Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes," 17.

The reasons behind the spoiling act are widely described as mistrust between parties, shifts in domestic political incentives, imbalanced distribution of power, lack of legitimate political representation, and differences in policy preferences between the parties.⁵⁷ What Stedman specifies as state strategies to deal with spoilers includes: (1) inducement or addressing the opposition's grievances; (2) socialization which helps to integrate former criminals into society; (3) or coercion to reduce spoiler's capacity to sabotage the peace.⁵⁸ On the other hand, states and individual state actors may also use methods to spoil the peace mainly because they fear losing their position. As I will discuss later in detail, the spoiler problem is one of the main elements in the Colombian peace process, while spoilers are acute in Turkey's peace process with the PKK, but they are not the main factors which caused negotiations to fail. The problem of Kurdish conflict in Turkey was that neither party was deeply committed to the peace.

Reputation building theory, on the other hand, is another argument to be discussed which claims that states might deliberately undermine a peace process due to the concerns of a potential civil conflict in the future. Barbara Walter articulates the determinants behind a state's act of either negotiating or thwarting peace. According to Walter, first and foremost, the factors shaping state behavior are either economic importance, strategic importance, and/or related to psychological importance of the claimed territory in case of separatist movements. She claims that if the value of disputed land is high, strategically crucial for state security, or holds historical significance as the identity of a homeland, then the government is likely to fight for the territory instead of mediating the dispute.⁵⁹ The second most important motivation is the possibility of

⁵⁷ Kelly M. Greenhill and Solomon Major, "The Perils of Profiling: Civil War Spoilers and the Collapse of Intrastate Peace Accords," *International Security* 31, no. 3 (Winter 2006): 7–40; Pearlman, "Spoiling Inside and Out: Internal Political Contestation and the Middle East Peace Process."

⁵⁸ Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes."

⁵⁹ Barbara F. Walter, "Building Reputation: Why Governments Fight Some Separatists but Not Others," *American Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 2 (April 2006AD): 313–30.

future challengers. If a country has more than one possible insurgency, then the state is less willing to negotiate peace since concessions to earlier separatists might signal weakness for potential successors.⁶⁰ Thus reputation theory argues that governments are likely to resist negotiating a peace, no matter how long or how violent the conflict is, if the conflict is about highly valued territories within multiethnic societies with additional potential challengers.

Using the existing literature elaborated above, I will discuss the FARC and the PKK conflicts in Colombia and Turkey in the following chapters, and evaluate the recent peace processes in the light of ripeness theory and the literature on spoiler and commitment problems. The FARC-Colombia peace process indicated that both parties have reached a certain level of maturity when the insurgent group and the state came to an agreement for demobilization, but the opposition in the government along with public discontent contributed to the peace deal being rejected in a referendum. On the other hand, one might see the PKK-Turkey's peace process as a miscalculated attempt for initiating the solution process (*Turkish*: "çözüm süreci") which had not yet reached ripeness. The negotiating parties also lacked commitment and the will to settle the conflict which might be perceived as acts from both sides undermining the process. The Turkish state's unwillingness to continue peace negotiations may be judged as a fear of encouraging potential separatist movements in the future –the fear of other Kurdish movements in neighboring countries – as well as the issue at stake involving the psychological, economic and strategic importance of the disputed lands, factors that would align with the reputation building concept.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER 2 – HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The above detailed theoretical frameworks based on the pertinent literature will now be complemented with empirical evidence from the case studies. A comparative analysis of the PKK and the FARC conflicts on the basis of factors such as political ideology, state oppression, organizational structure and political representation is essential in order to compare and contrast the chosen cases. In that sense, understanding the relation between designated key variables and their impact on the process will display an important reference for future studies on conflict resolution and peace processes.

2.1 Kurdish Nationalism and the Rise of the PKK

The Kurdish population, being the fourth largest ethnic group in the Middle East⁶¹, has faced constant state oppression under the nation-state building policies of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria – policies which were designed to transform those states’ ethnically mixed populations into single-nation states through assimilation, by force, or a combination of both.⁶² Specifically, Turkey’s intense assimilation policies, involving the imposition of “Turkishness” over ethnic minorities, continuously hindered the Kurds’ quest for expression of Kurdish culture and language.⁶³ Subsequently, several large scale Kurdish rebellions broke out, demanding ethnic recognition, yet each Kurdish uprising continued to be suppressed by the state’s armed forces. During the 1950s-60s, social and economic changes in Kurdish society, such as increased urbanization and educational developments, have once again incited the Kurds’ protests for

⁶¹ Alynna J. Lyon and Emek M. Uçarer, “Mobilizing Ethnic Conflict: Kurdish Separatism in Germany and the PKK,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no. 6 (January 2001): 928.

⁶² Martin van Bruinessen, “Shifting National and Ethnic Identities: The Kurds in Turkey and the European Diaspora,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 18, no. 1 (1998): 39.

⁶³ Lyon and Uçarer, “Mobilizing Ethnic Conflict,” 929.

recognition.⁶⁴ However, waves of arrests and death squad killings kept protests at bay. In the 1970s, though, the number of the protests grew, igniting a separatist movement of Kurdish nationalists under the name of the Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK (*Kurdish*: Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê) in 1978. These Kurdish nationalists, who were left with no legitimate channels for seeking remedy to their grievances, launched a guerilla war against the Turkish state in 1984.⁶⁵

The PKK held a Marxist-Leninist ideology aimed at liberating Kurds who had been oppressed and exploited by the assimilationist states of Middle East, and fighting against Western imperialism.⁶⁶ The PKK's Kurdish nationalism combined Marxist-Leninist socialism with a Stalinist leadership model and a Maoist strategy in order to seize territorial control and fight against what they argued were imperialist structures.⁶⁷ Combining both nationalist and socialist ideologies, they gained increasing support from Kurdish society in south-eastern Turkey, also mostly due to the locals' victimhood of long-term and systematic state oppression in the region.

Turkish political authorities, who at first did not consider the PKK a serious threat, tried to eliminate the insurgents solely by military means.⁶⁸ This led to martial law being imposed in 1987, covering ten south-eastern cities where the majority of Kurdish population resided.⁶⁹ Under martial law, villages were bombed, tens of thousands were displaced from their houses, and thousands were detained, tortured and killed.⁷⁰ A specific white-colored Renault model – “Beyaz

⁶⁴ Cengiz Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey: From Protest to Resistance*, Exeter Studies in Ethno Politics (London: Routledge, 2012): 9.

⁶⁵ Lyon and Uçarer, “Mobilizing Ethnic Conflict,” 930.

⁶⁶ Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 11-12.

⁶⁷ Mitchel P. Roth and Murat Sever, “The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 10 (September 18, 2007): 904.

⁶⁸ Özlem Kayhan Pusane, “Turkey's Military Victory over the PKK and Its Failure to End the PKK Insurgency,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 51, no. 5 (September 3, 2015): 728.

⁶⁹ Lyon and Uçarer, “Mobilizing Ethnic Conflict.”

⁷⁰ Bahar Baser, “DIASPORA POLITICS AND GERMANY'S KURDISH QUESTION” (Diasporas and Security, England: University of Kent, 2013).

Toros” – became the symbol of the state’s forceful detentions in the Kurdish villages where most detainees never returned home.⁷¹ Despite the PKK’s violence and recruitment-by-force strategies among Kurds, support for the PKK had increased because it was often seen by disillusioned and disenfranchised Kurdish youth as the only alternative left in fighting against state violence.

The Kurdish insurgency displays a hierarchical structure in its organization which Eccarius-Kelly likens to an octopus-like model, with tentacles spread over neighboring countries, stretching as far as Europe, through which they direct their activities such as recruitment, fund-raising, and the drug trade.⁷² While the line between terrorism and crime is generally blurred, Sever and Roth claim that the PKK fits the criteria for organized crime due to the fact that they are involved in the drug trade, the supply of illegal goods and services, and also utilize intimidation and corruption, and most prominently in the diaspora, extortion.⁷³ However, the argument here is that the PKK’s actions are more ideologically oriented with an ethno-national emphasis on their traditional leftist ideology rather than purely economic.⁷⁴

In terms of political representation, the PKK has not had direct affiliation with any political party, yet a number of pro-Kurdish political parties have been closed down due to their supposed connections to the insurgent group. Although the PKK was formulated as a political party in 1978, its full transition to an armed struggle caused it to lose its legitimacy, thereby limiting its administrative influence only within the south-eastern towns that they illicitly control in Turkey.⁷⁵ Kurdish activists in 1960s first tried to find their place in the Workers’ Party of Turkey with

⁷¹ Ayça Söylemez, “Beyaz Toros Gelirse...,” *Bianet: Bağımsız İletişim Ağı*, October 21, 2015, <http://bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/168526-beyaz-toros-gelirse>.

⁷² Eccarius-Kelly, “Surreptitious Lifelines.”

⁷³ Roth and Sever, “The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate,” 903.

⁷⁴ Eccarius-Kelly, “Surreptitious Lifelines,” 243.

⁷⁵ Kayhan Pusane, “Turkey’s Military Victory over the PKK and Its Failure to End the PKK Insurgency,” 728-31.

strong socialist roots.⁷⁶ However, they later established the first pro-Kurdish party, the People's Labor Party (also known as HEP), the first of many to be banned from politics in 1993.⁷⁷

The lack of political representation of Kurds in Turkey is one of the main reasons behind the Kurdish conflict persisting to date. Each and every pro-Kurdish party with a political agenda to resolve the Kurdish problem has been outlawed and banned due to its alleged links to the PKK. The Turkish parliament's lifting of Kurdish MPs' immunities in 1994, and the imprisonment of 4 MPs, including the first Kurdish female MP, Leyla Zana, for 15 years on charges of treason and affiliation with the PKK, was one of the prime examples for suppression of Kurdish political representation.⁷⁸ The parliament, repeating its earlier decision on lifting immunities, detained 12 deputies of People's Democratic Party (HDP) in 2016, which had become the 3rd strongest party in parliament with ten percent of the votes in the 2015 national elections. By bending the constitutional regulations on the immunity of MPs, the two co-leaders of the party, Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ, were arrested, and the latter's parliamentary membership being revoked recently.

2.2 'La Violencia' and the Protracted Colombian Conflict

The history of political violence in Colombia is not only associated with the FARC, but refers to an earlier period in history known as 'La Violencia,' lasting between 1948 and 1958. For years, the issue of land distribution has formed the core of much discontent between local peasants and the Colombian state. The violence commenced when land distribution was controlled by a tiny elite backed by the conservative hierarchy of the Catholic Church in the early

⁷⁶ Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 6.

⁷⁷ HDP Europe, "History of Kurdish Political Parties in Turkey," accessed April 29, 2017, http://en.hdpeurope.com/?page_id=537.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

20th Century.⁷⁹ In the simplest terms, Colombian society was divided into two, with one side being comprised of landowners and Church leaders organized by the Conservative Party, while the other included reform-minded peasants and their allies under the Liberal Party. The sixteen-year rule of the Liberal Party (1930-46) came to an end after conservatives used political violence to re-establish the oligarchical order.⁸⁰ Following the murder of Liberal leader Jorge Eliezer Gaitan in 1948, thousands from each party took up arms, resulting in as many as 200,000 casualties.⁸¹ The country-wide violence was brought to an end with a coalition between the conservatives and liberals which later formed the National Front.⁸²

However, during *La Violencia*, some smaller guerilla groups inched closer to the Colombian Communist Party or PCC (*Spanish*: Partido Comunista Colombiano). One of the group leaders, known as Manuel Marulanda Velez or “Tirofijo” (*Sureshot*), formed the Marxist-Leninist guerilla group today known as FARC.⁸³ Seven decades later, the FARC is still operating as a Marxist insurgency, fighting against political exclusionism and social and economic inequality in Colombia,⁸⁴ with various methods including explosive attacks, forced recruitment, selective assassinations, kidnappings and drug trafficking.⁸⁵

The FARC, less ideologically rigid than the PKK, had favored a centralized command structure and a hierarchical order based on democratic centralism, the Leninist principle of party

⁷⁹ Alfredo Molano, “The Evolution of the FARC,” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 34, no. 2 (Sep/Oct2000): 23.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Norman A. Bailey, “La Violencia in Colombia,” *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 9, no. 4 (October 1967): 562.

⁸² Molano, “The Evolution of the FARC,” 26.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Juliana Bustamante-Reyes, “Colombia’s Path to Peace,” *New Zealand International Review* 42, no. 1 (Jan/Feb2017): 14–17.

⁸⁵ Sebastián Riomalo Clavijo, “Conflicting Approaches to Peacebuilding? Explaining Political Attitudes towards Armed Conflict Issues in Colombia through Ideas and Interests” (National Planning Department (Colombia), 2016).

structures.⁸⁶ However, its political networks had largely developed from its militant and criminal units. While the PKK collected sympathy and support of neighboring countries, as well as the Europe, due to its ethno-nationalist cause, the FARC struggled to find significant international support because of its high profile involvement in the drug trade and organized crime, with the exception of certain neighboring countries, such as Venezuela.⁸⁷ Contrary to the general state discourse for FARC being a drug cartel, though, they have to be understood as a professional armed force, adopting a revolutionary socialist approach, for whom the drug trade was a means to the end of financing the armed struggle. The insurgency started with as few as 500 supporters in the 1970s, growing into an army of 20,000 soldiers by the early 2000s,⁸⁸ and featured a centralized hierarchical structure, a general staff, military training schools and political agenda.⁸⁹

FARC's administrative structure is highly organized, what Eccarius-Kelly calls a "centralized wheel structure" which accordingly turned into a system of multiple decision-making nodes recently.⁹⁰ By today, the chain of command has significantly lost control of individual units and the political justifications for drug trafficking as a means to fight the insurrection has blurred with personal gains.⁹¹ After the Colombian government striking them with unprecedented force during the presidency of Alvaro Uribe (2002-2010), one main argument is that the organizational dissolution and military weakening of the FARC has extremely affected

⁸⁶ Eccarius-Kelly, "Surreptitious Lifelines," 237-38.

⁸⁷ Jay Nordlinger, "Getting to Peace in Colombia," *National Review* 68, no. 23 (December 19, 2016): 30-32.

⁸⁸ Clavijo, "Conflicting Approaches to Peacebuilding? Explaining Political Attitudes towards Armed Conflict Issues in Colombia through Ideas and Interests," 86.

⁸⁹ Molano, "The Evolution of the FARC," 27.

⁹⁰ Eccarius-Kelly, "Surreptitious Lifelines."

⁹¹ Ibid.

its decision to enter recent peace negotiations. Peace talks have aimed to provide the rebel group with the representation in Colombian politics.⁹²

However, FARC's efforts for political representation has its roots back in the 1980s, when the FARC's political wing Patriotic Union (*Spanish*: Union Patriótica or UP) was founded. Under the presidency of Belisario Betancur (1982-86), the first instance of peace negotiations prepared the ground for FARC leaders' attempts to convert their military force into a political party.⁹³ With great support from other Colombian leftist and communist groups, the Patriotic Union gained respective parliamentary representation in the 1986 elections. Yet, the siege of *La Casa Verde* peace meetings on November 6, 1985 by the guerilla movement M-19 (19th of April Movement) ended with more than 100 casualties and hundreds of hostages, changing the nature of the negotiations.⁹⁴ Even though the Patriotic Union was willing to continue peace talks, the now-stronger paramilitary forces attacked and murdered most of the UP's members, arguing the UP was nothing more than a political front for FARC to rationalize its use of violence. The continuous attacks by paramilitary forces backed by drug cartel leaders, such as Pablo Escobar, degraded the peace negotiations in time and finally annihilated the Patriotic Union.⁹⁵

FARC, returning to the armed struggle, kept up the fight for almost 70 years, turning it into the world's longest guerrilla war. The civil war cost the lives of more than 220,000 people (of which 82 percent were civilians) and internally displaced close to seven million.⁹⁶ The prolonged war between the Marxist rebels and the government continued in high-frequency, but low-

⁹² Bustamante-Reyes, "Colombia's Path to Peace," 1.

⁹³ Molano, "The Evolution of the FARC," 27.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Kevin Young, "A Partial Peace in Colombia," *Against the Current* 32, no. 187 (April 2017): 9–11.

intensity violence.⁹⁷ After the insurgent group agreed to demobilize in 2012, four years of negotiations finally bore fruit with mutual efforts, ultimately ending with a peace deal in 2016.⁹⁸

As the Colombian conflict appears to finally move in the direction of peace, the Kurdish problem in Turkey not only remains a frozen conflict, but the past two years even brought a dramatic increase in violence. These two examples of protracted conflicts are significant and illustrative examples to understand the dynamics in peace processes. The PKK and FARC's similarities in Marxist ideology, organizational structure, self-funding, precipitating events to violence, continuous state oppression, and lack of political representation offer ample ground for comparing the two cases. Recent peace processes in Turkey and Colombia provide the prime impetus for analyzing each process through a comparative lens in the following.

⁹⁷ Clavijo, "Conflicting Approaches to Peacebuilding? Explaining Political Attitudes towards Armed Conflict Issues in Colombia through Ideas and Interests," 85.

⁹⁸ Bustamante-Reyes, "Colombia's Path to Peace."

CHAPTER 3 – EARLIER ATTEMPTS AT PEACE

3.1 The 1990s in Turkey and the Policies of Turgut Özal

During the 1990s and 2000s, a variety of political actors tried their hands at attempts to ease political polarization and to implement institutional reforms in Turkey.⁹⁹ One important attempt for peace was initiated by the leader of right-wing Motherland Party (*Turkish*: Anavatan Partisi or ANAP), Turgut Özal, who had served as Prime Minister (1983-89) and later as President (1989-93) until his death. Özal, born in a Turkish family with partial Kurdish roots, had formed ANAP in 1983 after the ban on political parties was lifted by the military government after the 1980-coup.

The attitude he developed towards the Kurdish problem is particularly noteworthy since it constituted the first significant step to resolve the Kurdish conflict. Between 1983 and 1993, crucial steps were taken to find common ground between the Kurdish insurgency and the Turkish state. Discourses about a “common identity” were aimed at re-conceptualizing national identity through the emphasis on cultural differences, while at the same time emphasizing mutual commonalities of Islamic and Ottoman heritage.¹⁰⁰

The first crucial step was the change from a martial law regime in the southeastern cities to a state of emergency in 1987 which reduced the level of military tension in the region.¹⁰¹ This was followed by the removal of the ban on the public use of Kurdish language and initiating secret talks with the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan which implied a first, albeit weak sign towards

⁹⁹ Cengiz Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey: From Protest to Resistance*, Exeter Studies in Ethno Politics (London: Routledge, 2012): 3.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Özlem Kayhan Pusane, “Turkey’s Military Victory over the PKK and Its Failure to End the PKK Insurgency,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 51, no. 5 (September 3, 2015): 728.

recognition of Kurdish identity.¹⁰² Despite the Turkish army's hard line position towards the Kurdish problem, Özal sent his state officials to northern Iraq (known as Iraqi Kurdistan) to establish relations with the local Kurdish leaders.¹⁰³ These efforts in Iraqi Kurdistan brought about a one-month ceasefire declared by the PKK in 1993.¹⁰⁴ One motivation behind this early attempt in the late 1980s may be related to Western powers' sympathy with the Kurdish nationalist cause. Kurds, who were widely seen as the victims of an assimilationist and militarist regime, gained large public support in European countries with an aim to acknowledge their minority rights. Realizing the importance of European support, Özal announced the Turkish state to be "the protector of the Kurds" with the urge to gain international consent after demanding a safety zone to be created in Iraq for Kurdish refugees in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War and failed Kurdish uprisings there triggering a military onslaught by the regime of Saddam Hussein.¹⁰⁵

One of the biggest development projects, the Southeastern Anatolia Project (*Turkish*: Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi or GAP), was initiated in 1989 with a "Master Plan," aiming at regional economic growth, social stability and increasing sectoral employment.¹⁰⁶ The strategic goal of the project was the revitalization of cultural, social and economic activities, as well as the unspoken objective for normalization of relations with the Kurdish population in the region. Yet, the ongoing clashes in the 1990s between the PKK units and the Turkish military critically damaged the implementation of the project. Hence GAP, still incomplete, remained one of the largest and most costly projects in the Republic's history. The years between 1990 and 1999 saw

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Mesut Yegen, "The Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey: Genesis, Evolution and Prospects" (Istanbul Şehir University: Global Turkey in Europe, May 2015).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ van Bruinessen, "Shifting National and Ethnic Identities: The Kurds in Turkey and the European Diaspora."

¹⁰⁶ See further information "GAP Bölge Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı" (T.C. Kalkınma Bakanlığı), <http://www.gap.gov.tr/index.php>.

the most violent action of the war. In addition to the state-PKK clashes, mass Kurdish uprisings, called *Serhildan* in Kurdish, broke out in the 1990s¹⁰⁷, dragging the Turkish state into a stalemate. Rising unrest in southeastern Anatolia put Turkish forces in a position where they were not able to quell the uprisings with use of force. The Kurdish insurgency PKK, on the other hand, was strong but not powerful enough to defeat the Turkish military, which might be seen as the “hurting stalemate” in the history of Kurdish conflict. Both parties, realizing that they did not possess the strength to overwhelm their adversary, yet remained unable to seize the opportunity to turn the stalemate into a “way out”.

Turgut Özal’s untimely and perhaps even suspicious death in 1993 brought these attempts at reaching out to the Kurdish civilian population and the PKK to an end, when hardliners took power again. They implemented an operation called “Castle Plan”, already designed in the early 90s during Özal’s presidency. Özal had been strictly opposed to the operation because it proposed to widen the range of means used against the Kurdish insurgency. Castel Plan was also highly criticized because of its authorization for establishment of counter-guerrilla paramilitary units and death squads, who performed clandestine attacks including assassinations of businessmen and state officials who allegedly supported or were linked to the PKK.¹⁰⁸ The operation terminated the ceasefire declared by the PKK in 1993 and officially ended the first attempt for conflict resolution. Even though one of Özal’s successors, Necmettin Erbakan tried to follow Özal’s path to keep indirect contacts and meetings with Öcalan, he could not gather enough political support to maintain negotiations.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Harun Ercan, “1990’lar Kronolojisi,” Toplum ve Kuram, (July 11, 2014), <http://toplumvekuram.com/1990lar-kronolojisi/>.

¹⁰⁸ 1998 Human Rights Report (Ankara: Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, 2000), 56-58.

¹⁰⁹ Kayhan Pusane, “Turkey’s Military Victory over the PKK and Its Failure to End the PKK Insurgency,” 734.

3.2 Peace Attempts in the Presidencies of Betancur and Pastrana

Colombia underwent three unsuccessful peace negotiations in the 1980s and 1990s. The first of these peace attempts was during the presidency of Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) who announced a Peace Commission right after his inauguration in 1982.¹¹⁰ Betancur reached out to the guerrilla movements to open peace talks through a commission which had planned to grant fighters the chance to be pardoned via a broad amnesty law.¹¹¹ Even though the call for demobilization was not taken up by a majority, after three months some four hundred guerrillas had accepted the amnesty terms, mostly from guerrilla groups other than FARC.¹¹² Betancur tended to see the conflict as a consequence of economic inequality, poverty and injustice. Thus, the peace initiative was mainly successful in terms of realizing and addressing the grievances and objectives of the leftist guerrilla groups.

In 1984, the negotiations with FARC ended with an agreement on a one-year ceasefire which was later extended until 1987.¹¹³ A small demilitarized zone was built in the municipality of La Uribe where the meetings between the government and the insurgent group were held. In light of these promising first steps, FARC decided to transform their military force into a political party under the name of Union Patriótica or UP.¹¹⁴ Other guerrilla groups such as the M-19 (*19th of April Movement*) were also involved in the peace negotiations. M-19, which took its name from the date of the 1970 presidential elections that were believed to be fraudulent, was a guerilla movement with an ideological orientation combined of nationalism and revolutionary

¹¹⁰ Alfredo Molano, "The Evolution of the FARC," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 34, no. 2 (Sep/Oct2000): 27.

¹¹¹ June S. Beittel, "Peace Talks in Colombia," *Current Politics and Economics of South and Central America* 6, no. 2 (March 1, 2013): 193.

¹¹² Harvey F. Kline, *Chronicle of a Failure Foretold: The Peace Process of Colombian President Andrés Pastrana* (Tuscaloosa, Ala: Univ. of Alabama Press, 2007): 17.

¹¹³ Beittel, "Peace Talks in Colombia," 193.

¹¹⁴ Molano, "The Evolution of the FARC," 27.

socialism.¹¹⁵ During meetings in Bogota, a group from M-19 besieged the Justice Palace in La Casa Verde, accusing Betancur of violating truce terms and a general failure to implement political reforms.¹¹⁶ The Colombian army responded by force, resulting in some 100 people killed, including UP members and Supreme Court judges.¹¹⁷ Following this event, UP was repeatedly attacked by paramilitary groups and drug traffickers. During these fights, more than 2,000 UP members were killed, including its presidential candidates and soon enough, the UP was exterminated, pushing FARC back to the armed struggle.¹¹⁸

The peace talks during Betancur government were based on an increasing level of mutual trust, goodwill and the capability to agree on specific issues.¹¹⁹ However, following the attacks against the UP, the aggression between the government and FARC led to the halt of negotiations. Successor presidents, Virgilio Barco (1986-1990) and Cesar Gaviria (1990-1994), were unable to take up the talks again from where they were left. Although there was another attempt for an amnesty law during Barco's presidency, an offensive unleashed by the state's armed forces against FARC escalated violence once again.¹²⁰ The reasons behind the second failure of peace talks during the Barco and Gaviria presidencies – compared to Betancur's efforts – are argued to be due to “different ways of conceptualizing the peace; belief that the war can still be won; economic strength of the guerrilla groups; lack of variable proposal on both sides; and lack of unity on both parties.”¹²¹

¹¹⁵ “Colombia: The 19th of April Movement,” Country Studies Series (Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, 1988), <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-3127.html>.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Colombia Reports, “1985 Palace of Justice Siege,” December 15, 2016, <https://colombiareports.com/palace-justice/>.

¹¹⁸ Beittel, “Peace Talks in Colombia,” 193.

¹¹⁹ Kline, *Chronicle of a Failure Foretold*, 20.

¹²⁰ Molano, “The Evolution of the FARC,” 27.

¹²¹ Kline, *Chronicle of a Failure Foretold*, 19.

The third major attempt at peace was initiated by President Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002). The Conservative Party leader established communication channels with FARC to end the 30-year long conflict. The FARC, willing to consider a peace dialogue, was asked to demilitarize five municipalities under its control, equal to a region the size of Switzerland.¹²² Direct talks were held between Pastrana and Marulanda, the leader and founder of the FARC. Both sides agreed on the withdrawal of military and police forces from the five municipalities and on the formation of unarmed civilian forces to keep the local order in the demilitarized zone.¹²³ However, FARC's lack of commitment to the agreement through the continuation of ransom kidnappings, drug trade, and hostage taking damaged the negotiations badly and resulted in the cessation of the peace process. The peace talks were officially closed when President Pastrana ordered the military to re-take the demilitarized zone in February 2002.¹²⁴

Negotiations under the Pastrana government, was the furthest among the earlier attempts that both parties have reached where both recognized the benefit of political transformation, instead of prolonging the armed struggle. After years of physical and psychological warfare, each party was willing to settle the conflict yet lacked mutual trust in one another that was necessary to make political concessions, causing the negotiations to fail.

During the same period, Pastrana was working to develop a strategy called "Plan Colombia", supported by the US in order to end the armed conflict in the country, to fight drug trafficking and other criminal activities and to promote regional development by reducing poverty.¹²⁵ Yet, the efforts remained fruitless due to the escalating violence between the warring parties after negotiations broke down in 2002. By the time the third peace talks had been

¹²² Beittel, "Peace Talks in Colombia."

¹²³ Molano, "The Evolution of the FARC," 31.

¹²⁴ Beittel, "Peace Talks in Colombia."

¹²⁵ Ibid, 180.

frustrated, Colombian society, disappointed with the situation, believed that the whole process was a signal for the weakness of the government. In this setting, Álvaro Uribe, who succeeded Pastrana, had no intention of opening a new round of peace negotiations; on the contrary, he was determined to deal FARC a final, lethal blow.

Uribe's policies during his presidency were a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they had a significant diminishing impact on the FARC's organizational and military strength which was assumed to be the main motivation behind FARC entering the recent peace negotiations under President Santos.¹²⁶ On the other hand, it is also argued that Uribe's aggressive policies increased violence in the country. In addition, Uribe's support for and reliance on paramilitaries constituted another obstacle to peace. As in the Castle Plan in the Turkish context, the Colombian government had already granted legal status to paramilitary groups by law decrees in 1965 and in 1968 to fight guerrilla movements in rural areas.¹²⁷

During the Barco government, the paramilitary groups had expanded their activities through drug trade and kidnapping which helped them to fund their fight against the leftist guerrilla.¹²⁸ In 1997, by then financed to a significant extent by the Medellín Cartel of drug kingpin Pablo Escobar, these local paramilitary groups merged under the name United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (*Spanish acronym: AUC*).¹²⁹ The Colombian state for long has been known for its ignorance of the paramilitary activities, even at times accused of collaborating with them against the guerrilla movements.¹³⁰ When the Uribe government offered an amnesty to the high ranking AUC members in 2003, many commanders and soldiers benefited from reduced

¹²⁶ Bustamante-Reyes, "Colombia's Path to Peace."

¹²⁷ Kline, *Chronicle of a Failure Foretold*, 13.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Enzo Nussio, "Learning from Shortcomings: The Demobilisation of Paramilitaries in Colombia," *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 6, no. 2 (January 2011): 88.

¹³⁰ Beittel, "Peace Talks in Colombia," 190.

prison sentence under the 'Justice and Peace Law'.¹³¹ However, the illusion of a peace agreement between the paramilitaries and the state was considered to disguise the suspicious alliance between the two. The Colombian state has been rightly blamed for using paramilitary groups as its illegal armed forces to retaliate against FARC, a tendency that increased significantly during the Uribe years.¹³²

¹³¹ Nussio, "Learning from Shortcomings," 88.

¹³² Ibid.

CHAPTER 4 – RECENT PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

4.1 The Solution Process

After the frustration of peace attempts in the 1990s, clashes between the state and the PKK continued in an escalatory fashion. In an environment of economic exhaustion and constant ethnic conflict, the Justice and Development Party or AKP (*Turkish*: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) won the majority of seats in the 2002 national elections. In the meantime, Turkey which has reached to the level of full candidate status for EU membership, accelerated its efforts to find a solution to Kurdish problem and initiated negotiations with the PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan who was captured in 1999 in Kenya after he had to flee his sanctuary in Syria. Upon his capture, he called on the PKK for a unilateral ceasefire which lasted until 2004 and started the rebels' withdrawal from Turkey to Iraqi Kurdistan.¹³³ Later in 2008, several meetings between government-approved negotiators and PKK leaders took place in Oslo in order to negotiate reciprocal demands. "The Solution Process" introduced in 2009, lasted until 2015 when the last unilateral ceasefire announced by the PKK broke after the Turkish armed forces hit the PKK camps in the Syrian border region.¹³⁴

We may divide the solution process into two periods marked by important developments and events; 2009-2011 and 2013-2015. The gap between 2011 and 2013 was due to the cessation of the second unilateral ceasefire announced by the PKK which cost hundreds of lives. However, during the first years of AKP government between 2002 and 2009, several positive developments occurred due to Turkey's accession process with the EU. Following the promotion of Turkey's status to an official candidate for full membership in the EU in 1999, several political and social

¹³³ Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*.

¹³⁴ "Turkey Expands Bombing Raids to PKK Targets in Iraq," *Al Jazeera*, July 25, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/07/turkey-extends-bombing-campaign-pkk-targets-iraq-isil-150724212302167.html>.

reforms were requested by the EU due to the requirement of fulfilling the Copenhagen Criteria.¹³⁵

One major area to comply with the criteria was in relation to minority rights which indirectly affected the government's policies for the long-term Kurdish question. The EU demanded immediate reforms on subjects related to human rights abuses, cultural rights of minorities as well as the lifting of the state of emergency in southeastern Turkey.¹³⁶

One of the first major steps was the amendment of constitutional Article 26, removing the statement, "no language prohibited by law shall be used in the expression and dissemination of thought."¹³⁷ The removal has provided a legal basis for learning, teaching and publishing in mother languages other than Turkish. This was later followed by the repeal of the twenty-year long emergency rule in southeastern Anatolia. Soon after, numerous reforms were carried out, especially in the areas of cultural rights of different ethnic groups, of education, publication and broadcasting in Kurdish. Lastly, capital punishment was suspended, thus sparing Öcalan's life after he was sentenced to death in 1999.¹³⁸

The so-called "Oslo Meetings" started in late 2008 between the PKK and the Turkish government. Several international organizations were involved in the process whose names were to be kept confidential according to an interview with Murat Karayılan, the acting leader and co-founder of the PKK.¹³⁹ As many as twenty meetings were held mostly in Oslo between 2009 and 2011 with representatives from both sides; Turkey, it is understood, was represented by the

¹³⁵ Ayşe Betül Çelik, "Transnationalization of Human Rights Norms and Its Impact on Internally Displaced Kurds," *Human Rights Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (August 1, 2005): 988.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Yeğen, "The Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey: Genesis, Evolution and Prospects," 3.

¹³⁸ Çelik (2005); Yeğen (2015).

¹³⁹ Murat Karayılan, Oslo'dan Bugüne "Perde Arkası," interview by Radikal, Newspapers, April 28, 2013, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/cengiz-candar/oslodan-bugune-perde-arkasi-1-1131383/>.

undersecretary of the National Intelligence Agency (*Turkish acronym: MIT*).¹⁴⁰ In the first round of peace talks, some concrete steps were taken as confidence building measures: opening Kurdish literature courses in private schools and universities, establishing the first official Kurdish TV-channel broadcasting 24-hours in Kurdish (TRT 6 or TRT Kurdî) as well as reinstating the ancient Kurdish names of some villages.¹⁴¹

In the light of these developments, Öcalan, from his prison on İmralı Island, declared a ceasefire in 2010 along with outlining a road map for conflict resolution.¹⁴² In an interview with Karayılan, published in the PKK's official website, he explains this development:

*“Our leader Öcalan saw the positive attitude of the state or the negotiating team for a solution ... and sent us a letter which calls for extension of unilateral ceasefire.”*¹⁴³

The PKK set five conditions for the Turkish government to meet: (1) stopping military and policing operations; (2) releasing Kurdish politicians who are unjustly detained; (3) enabling the imprisoned Kurdish leader, Öcalan to actively participate in the peace process; (4) establishing commissions to investigate the process; (5) and removing the 10 percent threshold for the national elections.¹⁴⁴ In addition, Öcalan suggested forming three commissions for monitoring the peace process namely; Commission for the Constitution, Commission for Peace, and Commission for Truth and Justice.¹⁴⁵ Although both sides agreed to form the requested

¹⁴⁰ Aytac Kadioglu, “The End of Turkey’s Kurdish ‘Peace Process’?” (The University of Nottingham, February 15, 2016), <http://nottspolitics.org/2016/02/15/the-end-of-turkeys-kurdish-peace-process/>.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Yegen, “The Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey: Genesis, Evolution and Prospects,” 7.

¹⁴³ Murat Karayılan, Ceasefire extended after a letter from Ocalan, PKK Online, accessed May 10, 2017, <https://www.pkkonline.com/en/index.php?sys=article&artID=79>.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Yegen, “The Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey: Genesis, Evolution and Prospects,” 7.

commissions, the Turkish government showed no interest in continuing the process after winning the national elections in 2011 which was the end of the first round of peace talks.

Once again returning to armed conflict, the ceasefire was renounced after the 2011 elections and hundreds of lives were lost in the following 18 months. Thousands of Kurdish politicians, journalists, trade unionists were arrested with the charge of relations to the KCK – Kurdistan Communities Union (*Kurdish*: Koma Civakên Kurdistan)¹⁴⁶, the umbrella organization for the PKK and other factions of the Kurdish movement with the aim of implementing Öcalan’s ideology of “Democratic Confederalism” or democratic autonomy.¹⁴⁷ Öcalan’s model for the Kurdish cause – democratic confederalism – refers to a bottom-up democracy which enables self-sufficient people to govern themselves at the local level with a certain degree of autonomy within the framework of a confederation.¹⁴⁸ Cemal Bayık, one of the founders of the Kurdish movement, stated in one of his interviews that the “Democratic Autonomy Project” is the key objective to solve the conflict, emphasizing;

*“Kurdish people want to enjoy their cultural rights and education in their mother language. They want to live in a democratic country. They demand self-determination in Kurdistan.”*¹⁴⁹

In 2013, as a part of the second round of peace talks, the AKP government passed a law enabling defense in one’s mother tongue in the courts which was one of the main problems

¹⁴⁶ Kayhan Pusane, “Turkey’s Military Victory over the PKK and Its Failure to End the PKK Insurgency.”

¹⁴⁷ “PKK Peace Talks and Democratic Confederalism,” *The Kurdish Project*, <http://thekurdishproject.org/history-and-culture/kurdish-nationalism/pkk-kurdistan-workers-party/>.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Cemal Bayık, Turkish side is not willing to solve the Kurdish question, PKK Online, <https://www.pkkonline.com/en/index.php?sys=article&artID=86>.

during the long-lasting KCK trials.¹⁵⁰ This was followed by the release of 8 soldiers and civil servants who were held by the PKK in Iraqi Kurdistan. In March, upon Öcalan's call, the PKK declared the third unilateral ceasefire and agreed with the Turkish government on the PKK militants' withdrawal from Turkey to Iraqi Kurdistan.¹⁵¹ Öcalan's message for his representatives to read in public was proclaiming that;

*"We are at a point today when the guns will fall silent and ideas will speak. It is time for armed fighters to move outside [Turkey's] borders. This is not an ending, but a new beginning."*¹⁵²

Simultaneously, the AKP formed a commission called the "Wise People Committee," composed of well-known authors, journalists, artists, academicians and representatives of NGOs with a total of 63 members. Groups of eight to nine people were assigned to seven geographical regions of Turkey with the task of explaining the ongoing solution process to the public, working like a public relations agents to promote public support for the peace process.¹⁵³ Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan held meetings with the committee despite the criticism of Turkish establishment and opposition parties, asking for a full report in two months. The opposition - the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) – was highly critical about the wise people committee, announcing that they would not take part in this commission.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Yegen, "The Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey: Genesis, Evolution and Prospects," 9.

¹⁵¹ Kadioglu, "The End of Turkey's Kurdish 'Peace Process'?"

¹⁵² Constanze Letsch, "Kurdish Families Separated by Decades of Conflict Hold Their Breath for Peace," *The Guardian*, March 21, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/21/kurdish-families-conflict-peace>.

¹⁵³ "Turkish Press Review," *Anadolu Agency*, April 5, 2013, <http://www.turkishpress.com/news.asp?id=383824>.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

However, the PKK withdrawal was halted soon after the PKK blamed Turkish security forces for building new military facilities in the localities they had just abandoned.¹⁵⁵ At the same time, Turkish authorities were blaming the PKK for not keeping their promise of withdrawal and disarmament. Yet, the PKK remained loyal to the ceasefire and its determination for peace bore fruits in 2014 with the new “Law to End Terror and Strengthen Social Integration” enacted by the AKP government which precipitated the release of almost all KCK convicts by the end of 2014.¹⁵⁶

In 2015, the appearance of the peace process began to change. Threatened now by a stronger opposition from the new pro-Kurdish political party – the People’s Democratic Party or HDP – Erdoğan and the AKP began to thwart the process in order to gain enough support for constitutional change with the intention of transforming the republic from a parliamentary to a presidential democracy. While getting closer to the 2015 national elections in June, both the AKP and the opposition HDP’s discourses sharpened blaming one another for disloyalty and treason.¹⁵⁷ Erdoğan, ambitious to change the parliamentary system to a presidential republic, seemed to be using the unrest in the country and the solution process to gain more support. Surprisingly, the June elections resulted in a strong showing of the HDP who passed the 10 percent threshold, thus entering parliament as the first pro-Kurdish party. The AKP, after having lost its absolute majority, refused to form a coalition with any political party in parliament, therewith forcing snap elections.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Kadioglu, “The End of Turkey’s Kurdish ‘Peace Process’?”

¹⁵⁶ Yegen, “The Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey: Genesis, Evolution and Prospects,” 9.

¹⁵⁷ Kadioglu, “The End of Turkey’s Kurdish ‘Peace Process’?”

¹⁵⁸ Elliot Ackerman, “Turkey Is a Dictatorship Masquerading as a NATO Democracy,” *Foreign Policy*, March 29, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/29/the-dictatorship-in-natos-clubhouse-erdogan-kurds-turkey/>.

In the meantime, the Syrian civil war which had been escalating since 2011 influenced the process severely. In October, 2014 the Kurdish city of Kobane was besieged by the radical Islamist group, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, known as ISIS.¹⁵⁹ The Democratic Unionist Party (PYD) which is considered the Syrian wing of the PKK, was fighting ISIS to defend Kobane and other regions with Kurdish population. The PYD has received support from Western powers in terms of arming, training and supplies which was strongly criticized by the Turkish government.¹⁶⁰ Despite ISIS bombings in Ankara and Istanbul, the Turkish state strictly refused to send military aid to Kurdish fighters in Syrian border, and condemned those who did.¹⁶¹ Kurdish mass protests erupted against the Turkish state's attitude towards the siege of Kobane.¹⁶² Following the June 2015 elections, the Turkish military's raids on the Kurdish camps in Syria were the last straw that ended the ceasefire.¹⁶³ With the return of the PKK to the armed struggle and the Turkish government stepping up its military campaign to a level unseen since the 1990s, the situation today in Turkey's south-east resembles an outright civil war, and the peace process appears to have ended for good.

The solution process was a clear example that the "ripe moment" had not yet arrived for the PKK-Turkey conflict. Neither side was committed enough to look for alternative policies aimed at ending the war – a "way out," nor were they willing to lay down their weapons, doing so would require political compromise. Furthermore, one can claim that the Turkish state's reluctance to cease fighting could be based on the "reputation building theory". The disputed lands were high value to the state, both strategically and psychologically. Additionally, it was

¹⁵⁹ Burak Bilgehan Özpek, "What Are Erdoğan's Real Intentions in the Kurdish 'Solution Process?'," *The Turkey Analyst* 8, no. 5 (March 11, 2015).

¹⁶⁰ Kadioglu, "The End of Turkey's Kurdish 'Peace Process'?"

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Yegen, "The Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey: Genesis, Evolution and Prospects."

¹⁶³ Ackerman, "Turkey Is a Dictatorship Masquerading as a NATO Democracy."

feared that other Kurdish movements in the neighboring countries might demand similar concessions from fellow state authorities. If the PKK were to gain autonomy on any level or regional self-determination, this would trouble Turkey's relations with the neighboring countries.

4.1.1 Spoiler and Commitment Problems in Turkey's Peace Process

There were several important factors why the process failed. The spoiler issue is an acute problem in case of the Kurdish conflict. Even though the fundamental cause of failure is not the spoilers themselves, they influenced the process dramatically. First among these spoilers was the constant resistance of the opposition parties in parliament – CHP and MHP – with different objectives, agitating against the Solution Process. The AKP government failed to create a unified support from the political opposition and assumed that the public and international support would eventually make them agree with the terms of the government's peace process. Yet, their assumption turned out to be wrong and for a very long time both opposition parties refused to give any support to the AKP's solution process.

CHP's opposition was actually unexpected because they were one of the first who offered taking some action to solve the Kurdish problem in the 1990s.¹⁶⁴ However, during the AKP years, the CHP transformed into a perennial opposition and rejected almost every policy the AKP offered by default. The CHP opposition was not just about disagreement with the government, but also about a strategy that turned into a relentless rejection of any initiative started by the AKP based on the fear of AKP's success in future elections. During the solution process, they displayed a low profile opposition, claiming that the AKP's management of the process was

¹⁶⁴ Tanju Tosun, "CHP, Kürt Sorunu ve Çözüm Süreci," *Al Jazeera Turk*, October 29, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/gorus/chp-kurt-sorunu-ve-cozum-sureci>.

flawed and the necessary steps should have been taken in the National Assembly.¹⁶⁵ The CHP argued that the process was causing ethnic disintegration of Turkish society and threatening national unity.¹⁶⁶

Similarly the MHP, the ultranationalist front in the opposition, was strongly objecting the whole process on the grounds of national territorial integrity. They maintained their hard line approach to the PKK problem, endorsing military defense against the insurgent group.¹⁶⁷ MHP's "defensive nationalism" was not only based on its ideological background but also its fear-based policies and authoritarian biases.¹⁶⁸ This nationalist approach was gaining support from the Turkish armed forces which is considered as the historical protector of national unity and the values of the Turkish nation-state. The Turkish military did not relax its aggressive pursuit of a military solution, even after Öcalan's capture in 1999, when he asked for a unilateral ceasefire from the PKK. During the rebels' withdrawal to Iraqi Kurdistan, the Turkish armed forces continued its operations, killing hundreds of Kurdish fighters and undermining peace attempts.¹⁶⁹ The Turkish army, "incapable of distinguishing guerrilla fighters from non-combatants," repeatedly killed locals during its attacks and gained the hatred of the population.¹⁷⁰

Yet, none of these actors damaged the peace process as much as the PKK and the AKP government themselves. Both were lacking the genuine will to end the conflict. The PKK, for instance, to exert public pressure, were organizing mass demonstrations in the predominantly Kurdish cities whenever they felt like the government was backpedaling from their promises.

¹⁶⁵ Yegen, "The Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey: Genesis, Evolution and Prospects," 3.

¹⁶⁶ Özlem Kayhan Pusane, "Turkey's Kurdish Opening: Long Awaited Achievements and Failed Expectations," *Turkish Studies* 15, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 88.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Özpek, "What Are Erdoğan's Real Intentions in the Kurdish 'Solution Process?'"

¹⁶⁹ Yegen, "The Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey: Genesis, Evolution and Prospects."

¹⁷⁰ van Bruinessen, "Shifting National and Ethnic Identities: The Kurds in Turkey and the European Diaspora."

When the protests were met with excessive armed force, the violence was escalating in the region, negatively affecting the relations between the government and the insurgency.¹⁷¹ Especially the break-away faction of the PKK, the so-called Freedom Falcons of Kurdistan or TAK, torpedoed the solution process with terrorist bombings in Ankara and Istanbul.¹⁷² The Syrian civil war, likewise, negatively affected the peace negotiations. The PKK-affiliated group in Syria, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), was fighting against the Islamist extremists to keep them off their self-declared autonomous region. In the meantime, Turkey was under severe attacks from ISIS by way of suicide bombings. While these attacks made the Turkish state reconsider its position to ISIS, Turkish authorities refused giving any kind of support to the Kurdish group, PYD; on the contrary, they even prevented Kurdish volunteers from Europe and Turkey to join the defense of the besieged city of Kobane. All this contributed to tensions with the Kurdish insurgents exacerbating.¹⁷³

Similarly, the AKP's actions were blocking democratic and peaceful ways Kurdish movements can use to express their demands for recognition.¹⁷⁴ The banning of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party or DTP; the continuing pressure on Kurdish politicians under the guise of so called "KCK investigations"; and ignorance towards Öcalan's road map for the solution process were demonstrating that the government was not that keen to end the conflict.¹⁷⁵ The AKP's decision to resume the war with the attack on PKK camps in Syrian border region after the June 2015 elections was an indicator that the government was not willing to share power in a

¹⁷¹ Vera Eccarius-Kelly, "Interpreting the PKK's Signals in Europe," *PERSPECTIVES ON TERRORISM* 2, no. 11 (August 2008): 10.

¹⁷² "Timeline of Attacks in Turkey," *Al Jazeera*, February 19, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2016/06/timeline-attacks-turkey-160628223800183.html>.

¹⁷³ Kadioglu, "The End of Turkey's Kurdish 'Peace Process'?"

¹⁷⁴ Duran Kalkan, Ceasefire may be extended if Turkey gives guarantees, *PKK Online*, <https://www.pkkonline.com/en/index.php?sys=article&artID=117>.

¹⁷⁵ Yegen, "The Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey: Genesis, Evolution and Prospects."

coalition, but instead fueled ethnic tensions to manipulate the citizens' desire for stability and order.¹⁷⁶ Cemil Bayık, one of the top leaders in the PKK mentioned that the government's will was never sufficient:

*"The Turkish side is not willing to solve the Kurdish Question. Democratic Autonomy will not divide Turkey. Some deliberately attack our proposals to manipulate public opinion."*¹⁷⁷

Mainstream media coverage was also not very helpful to the peace process either. In 2009, a group of 34 PKK fighters and Kurdish refugees, left the Habur and Kandil camps in Iraqi Kurdistan and arrived in Turkey for pleading amnesty, supposedly as a sign of good intentions by the PKK to advance the peace process.¹⁷⁸ Yet, the Kurdish insurgency used this as an opportunity to promote their public relations, turning the border crossing of refugees and former fighters into a procession hailed by hundreds of sympathizers. Likewise, most of the Turkish media, under the influence of the state discourse, covered the news with the headlines, saying that "the surrender of the PKK militants turned into a show of strength and victory," calling the arrival of refugees and rebels a disgrace and scandal.¹⁷⁹ All these events negatively affected public perception of the peace process, subsequently contributing to the failure of peace negotiations.

4.2 2012 Peace Talks under President Santos

Present peace negotiations are the fourth major attempt in thirty years between the Colombian government and the FARC. President Juan Manuel Santos followed Alvaro Uribe Velez in whose government Santos had been defense minister between 2002 and 2010. President

¹⁷⁶ Ackerman, "Turkey Is a Dictatorship Masquerading as a NATO Democracy."

¹⁷⁷ Bayık, Turkish side is not willing to solve the Kurdish question.

¹⁷⁸ Yegen, "The Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey: Genesis, Evolution and Prospects."

¹⁷⁹ "Habur'dan Diyarbakır'a gövde gösterisi," *Milliyet.com.tr*, October 21, 2009, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/habur-dan-diyarbakir-a-govde-gosterisi-gundem-1152997/>.

Santos's successful electoral campaign was built on the promise of maintaining the far-right's "false positive" strategy, Uribe's counterinsurgency that cost more than 4,000 civilian lives.¹⁸⁰ In his first year in office, he maintained the hard line approach of the previous government towards the FARC. In November 2010, for example, the Colombian military killed the then-FARC leader, Alfonso Cano.¹⁸¹ A week later FARC announced Rodrigo Londono Echeverri – known as Timochenko – as his successor.

During Santos's first years of office, his reluctance for peace, one might say, could be directly attributed to the "reputation building theory". Born from this were the policies that determined the state approach to the Colombian conflict. As reputation building theory argues, the importance of debated territory and the potential existence of future challengers play huge role in the state deciding whether or not settle the conflict. The economic importance of the disputed territory aside, Santos, keeping with the hard line policies of Uribe, hesitated to grant political concessions to FARC. Since other guerilla groups such as the National Liberation Army or ELN (Spanish: *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*) might have similar demands to FARC, granting concessions could weaken the position of the state against guerilla groups.

Timochenko as the new leader, though, presented a pacifist approach to the government and agreed to enter into a political dialogue with the Santos government. In line with FARC's new conciliatory attitude, the Colombian government began to work on the issue of transitional justice which has been one of the central concerns both for the victims of the conflict and the guerrilla movements. Transitional justice was described as "a distinctive conception of law and

¹⁸⁰ Young, "A Partial Peace in Colombia."

¹⁸¹ Beittel, "Peace Talks in Colombia," 186.

justice in the context of political transformation.”¹⁸² In order to deal with the effects of human rights violations and to promote the rule of law, several mechanisms such as truth commissions, reparation programs and amnesty laws were designed for the transition.¹⁸³ In June 2011, the Victims’ Law was enacted by the government, providing the legal ground for taking necessary steps during negotiations and officially recognizing the existence of an armed conflict in the country which was essential for political dialogue to proceed.¹⁸⁴

Colombian popular attitude towards the peace process, on the other hand, was of vital importance. The government had to convince Colombians to gain public support for the peace negotiations by highlighting the potential benefits of signing a peace agreement. The Colombian conflict has affected more than 6 million people most of whom were internally displaced with a number of 220,000 casualties over the last six decades.¹⁸⁵ As a result of so much suffering there was a tremendous cleavage within Colombian society in terms of how and at what price to pursue a lasting peace; a public divide which tragically played out in the referendum results in 2016. Research findings suggested that Colombians’ attitude towards conflict-related issues was divided. On the one hand, people who were living in the areas closer to the conflict were less ideologically oriented, and more emotional, therefore more in favor of peace. On the other hand, people living away from the conflict zones held stronger ideological convictions and were less emotionally affected, thus less likely to be in favor of a peace agreement.¹⁸⁶

Nevertheless, peace talks began in Oslo, Norway, in October 2012 which later moved to Havana, Cuba where the negotiations were concluded. During the peace negotiations Norway and

¹⁸² Bustamante-Reyes, “Colombia’s Path to Peace,” 14.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Sebastián Riomalo Clavijo, “Conflicting Approaches to Peacebuilding?” 86.

¹⁸⁵ “Colombia: Events of 2015” (Human Rights Watch, 2015), <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/colombia>.

¹⁸⁶ Clavijo, “Conflicting Approaches to Peacebuilding?.”

Cuba served as the “guarantors” of the peace process for both parties. In addition, each party had one “accompanying” country; Chile for the Santos government, Venezuela for the FARC.¹⁸⁷ After four years of negotiations the parties came to agree on a bilateral ceasefire to end the 52-year long conflict. A peace accord was prepared including mechanisms for disarmament and reintegration of the guerrilla fighters, also offering reduced sentences for those who confess acts of violence and hand in their weapons.¹⁸⁸ Victims were proposed the compensation of lands lost to the FARC during the conflict, as well as granting the FARC ten seats in the Colombian Congress.¹⁸⁹

On 24 August 2016, “the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace” was signed by the parties mainly covering the following topics:

- Land reform, since land titles and ownership were the original cause of the conflict;
- Political participation of FARC in the country’s politics;
- Ceasefire and the decommissioning of weaponry;
- A plan for solving the illegal drug-trafficking problem;
- A framework for post-war justice with the victims as the central concern;
- Implementation, verification, and endorsement of those accords.¹⁹⁰

The peace agreement has been ratified with a ceremony in Cartagena, Colombia with the presence of several heads of state along with then-UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon.¹⁹¹ The next step was the public approval via national referendum on October 2. Yet, there were several

¹⁸⁷ Nordlinger, “Getting to Peace in Colombia.”

¹⁸⁸ Young, “A Partial Peace in Colombia,” 9.

¹⁸⁹ Matthew Bristow, “A Failed Peace Process Could Mean More Pain,” *Bloomberg Businessweek*, no. 4494 (October 10, 2016): 17–19.

¹⁹⁰ Bustamante-Reyes, “Colombia’s Path to Peace,” 14.

¹⁹¹ Fox News World, “The Latest: Tight Security ahead of Colombia Peace Ceremony,” September 26, 2016, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/09/26/latest-tight-security-ahead-colombia-peace-ceremony.html>.

obstacles on the way – as in Turkey’s Solution Process – which had almost derailed the whole process. In the Colombian conflict, the spoiler problem was more concrete and acute compared to the Turkish case. As mentioned earlier, the existence of paramilitary groups was a constant problem that was harmful to any peace attempt with FARC. On the other hand, former president Uribe turned out to be the main spoiler during the process undermining the negotiations via his opposition. Yet, Uribe’s actions during his presidency were also worth to consider as an undermining effect for peace, because his hard line approach surely protracted the almost six-decade long conflict. Any peace deal in Colombia would not only face these two obstacles but also other opposing voices within the pro-peace wing. Therefore, despite all, FARC and Santos’ determination for peace and success in negotiations is irrefutable and worthy of commendation.

4.2.1 Spoiler Problem in Colombia and Uribe’s Opposition

Without any doubt, Uribe’s opposition was the major spoiler of the peace process. During his time in office as president, he displayed a complete reluctance for peace. He had pursued a far right policy, calling “democratic security,” and resumed escalatory warfare instead of opening new round of negotiations. He put citizens’ security at the center of his policy as the ultimate concern of state action. To this end, even a new semi-trained peasant militia was established to operate from their homes and fight FARC.¹⁹² Furthermore, the Colombian military was accused of killing civilians, dressed up as guerillas as a way to inflate their combat kill numbers, which reportedly amounting to 3,000 to 4,000 since 1986.¹⁹³ This scandal of extrajudicial killings was later called “false positive killings,”¹⁹⁴ most of which were associated with the era of Uribe’s

¹⁹² “Colombia: President Uribe’s Democratic Security Policy” (International Crisis Group, November 13, 2003).

¹⁹³ See further information “Situation in Colombia: Interim Report” (International Criminal Court, November 2012); “Colombia: Events of 2015”; Fellowship of Reconciliation and Colombia-Europe-U.S. Human Rights Observatory, “The Rise and Fall of ‘False Positive’ Killings in Colombia: The Role of U.S. Military Assistance, 2000-2010” (The Role of US Military Assistance, May 2014).

¹⁹⁴ Colombia Reports, “False Positives,” March 14, 2017, <https://colombiareports.com/false-positives/>.

presidency. Uribe's hard line offensive against the FARC and other guerrilla groups helped to reverse the Colombian security decline and decreased the drug trade.¹⁹⁵ His policy combined counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics with an effort to regain state control over the entire national territory.¹⁹⁶

In 2003, Uribe initiated a new offensive against guerrilla forces called "Plan Patriota" with the goal to retake the territory that had been ceded to FARC earlier. The plan intensified the clashes between parties, yet, successfully reduced the FARC's military strength to some extent.¹⁹⁷ He managed to reduce the number of the FARC rebels by more than half, from 20,000 fighters in 2002 to 8,000 in 2010.¹⁹⁸ An interview with Tanja Nijmeijer – alias Alexandra Narino – posited the impact of the Uribe's policies on the conflict:

"...the war against the insurgency has increased, too, with Plan Colombia and Plan Patriota, the latter of which was carried out by former President Alvaro Uribe Velez. This fueling of the dirty war by the state and its paramilitaries has produced more false positive killings, disappearances, massacres, and thousands of political prisoners.

*...this has led to an apparent decline of leftist political groups, at the same time it has produced a clear re-empowerment of the social movements making their political and social demands. It has also resulted in the consolidation and radicalization of leftist fighters who are still alive."*¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ Beittel, "Peace Talks in Colombia," 185.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Colby Martin, "Colombia's New Counterinsurgency Plan" (Stratfor, March 29, 2012), <https://www.stratfor.com/weekly/colombias-new-counterinsurgency-plan>.

¹⁹⁸ Clavijo, "Conflicting Approaches to Peacebuilding? Explaining Political Attitudes towards Armed Conflict Issues in Colombia through Ideas and Interests," 86.

¹⁹⁹ Tanja Nijmeijer, Prospects for Peace: Negotiations with FARC, Fall/Winter2014.

A ten-million dollar aid package, as part of the Clinton-sponsored Plan Colombia was the largest U.S. military aid in the region. It helped Colombia not only to promote social and economic development but also to promote rule of law, human rights, reintegration of ex-combatants, and support to victims, but most importantly it developed alternative strategies to drug cultivation which helped reducing FARC's sources of income.²⁰⁰ Plan Colombia expanded during Uribe's presidency, this time with the support of the US President George W. Bush. Uribe's request to purchase smart weapons from the US was accepted, which the Colombian military then successfully employed against FARC. These plans had a negative impact on relations with FARC since Uribe's administration showed no interest in ending violence.

Similar to his former attitude, Uribe consistently opposed to the peace process after Santos started negotiations with the FARC in 2012 and used his popularity among his right wing supporters to establish the Centro Democratico Alternative Party which became the second biggest political party in parliament in 2014.²⁰¹ Before the referendum on the peace deal in October 2016, Uribe initiated a "No" campaign, calling people to vote against the peace deal which contributed to the polarization of the country.²⁰² He was arguing that the agreement at issue amounted to a surrender to FARC, granting impunity and opportunity for political participation to the rebels while ignoring the victims of this conflict.²⁰³ He accused Santos of "handing the

²⁰⁰ USAID, "USAID Assistance for Plan Colombia," February 8, 2016, <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/usaaid-assistance-plan-colombia>.

²⁰¹ Clavijo, "Conflicting Approaches to Peacebuilding? Explaining Political Attitudes towards Armed Conflict Issues in Colombia through Ideas and Interests," 86.

²⁰² Bustamante-Reyes, "Colombia's Path to Peace."

²⁰³ Eva Fagan, "A Vote Against Peace: Uribe's 'No' Campaign" (Council on Hemispheric Affairs, August 19, 2016), <http://www.coha.org/a-vote-against-peace-uribes-no-campaign/>.

country to the FARC,” claiming that this agreement might create a precedent for other guerrilla movements.²⁰⁴

However, his concern was not only political but also strategic. Uribe represents “the rural elites who specialize in cattle ranching, land speculation and narco-trafficking.”²⁰⁵ Those elites’ relationship with the paramilitary forces or so-called AUC was highly controversial. Accordingly, the Colombian elite were the prime beneficiaries of the paramilitary theft of lands. They were also the most prominent actors in high profile cases of state corruption. The ‘parapolitica’ scandal which was revealed in 2006 showed the AUC’s infiltration into politics and their strong ties with politicians in the parliament – mostly allies of President Uribe.²⁰⁶

Uribe was not the only one to criticize Santos in Colombian politics, though. Former Vice President Francisco Santos Calderón accused the existing agreement of being more like a business deal rather than a genuine peace agreement.²⁰⁷ Similar to Uribe, he emphasized the lack of attention in the agreement to the victims of the violence. On the other hand, the Summit and the People’s Congress – a nationwide progressive movement on peace and justice – was strongly rejecting a “neoliberal peace” due to it disregarding structural causes of the conflict, and focusing too exclusively on ending the physical violence.²⁰⁸

As a result of all this, the country was deeply divided between “yes” and “no” campaigns when facing the most critical referendum in its history. President Santos displayed a more moderate approach towards FARC compared to the “hard-liner” Uribe. Santos supporters were thinking of political concessions as the necessary price to pay in return for a long-lasting peace.

²⁰⁴ Young, “A Partial Peace in Colombia.”

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Hanna Stone, “Colombia Elites and Organized Crime,” *InSight Crime Foundation*, 2016, 18–19.

²⁰⁷ Fagan, “A Vote Against Peace: Uribe’s ‘No’ Campaign.”

²⁰⁸ Young, “A Partial Peace in Colombia.”

In contrast, “Uribistas” – Uribe supporters – were strictly against the peace deal due to their strategic and economic concerns.²⁰⁹ As a matter of fact, the referendum, took place on October 2, 2016, resulting in “no” votes gaining a slightly higher percentage than those voting “yes.” With a low turnout of 37 percent, the electorate voted against the peace deal by an extremely narrow margin: 50.2% voted “no” while 49.8% voted “yes.” The country was also divided regionally due to differences in voting behavior. For example, in Choco, one of the western provinces most affected by the conflict, 80% of the electorate voted in favor of the peace deal, while in Casanare, an eastern province where the locals were continuously extorted by FARC and other groups, 71% of the electorate voted against.²¹⁰ The capital, Bogota also said “yes” to the peace deal with 56 %.

Although Santos and the FARC’s determination paved the way for a revised peace deal to make the accord acceptable for those who voted “no,”²¹¹ the defeat of the referendum brought several questions concerning the future of the Colombian peace. First, understanding the motivation behind the Colombian people’s rejection of the peace deal was crucial to appeasing the opposition to the peace agreement. Accordingly, many “no” voters thought the peace deal was too lenient with the rebels or were not trusting FARC to disarm and stay committed to peace.²¹² Secondly, the referendum result created a consensus on the idea that the Santos government is losing its strength, while the Uribe opposition seemingly gained power. Even though the referendum was defeated with a very narrow margin, Uribe now with a stronger and united opposition, insisted on several changes to the agreement with FARC. These demands for correction of the deal were concerning issues such as:

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ “Colombia Referendum: Voters Reject Farc Peace Deal,” *BBC News*, October 3, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-37537252>.

²¹¹ “Colombia Signs New Peace Deal with Farc,” *BBC News*, November 24, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-38096179>.

²¹² “Colombia Referendum: Voters Reject Farc Peace Deal.”

- Those who found guilty to be sentenced to jail terms and deemed permanently ineligible for political office;
- The special jurisdiction for transnational justice to be scrapped;
- Any adjustments to the constitution to be dropped;
- Special judicial treatment for members of the FARC convicted of those crimes.²¹³

The revised agreement was signed between the parties on November 24, 2016 without submitting it to a second referendum. The bigger question was why and how the Santos government got away with the new deal without facing Uribe's opposition and public refusal. Following the signing of the new peace deal in November, Congress ratified the revised accord, with the abstentions of the members of Uribe's Centro Democrático Alternative Party, and the Conservative Party.²¹⁴ There were two reasons for the Santos government not holding another plebiscite; first, they were reluctant after the first referendum's unpredictable result, second, organizing another referendum would take about two months which would mean extending the bilateral ceasefire with the FARC but would also endanger the fragile agreement.²¹⁵ Therefore, despite Uribe's opposition, the revised peace accord has passed with majority support in Congress. What is left now is the no easier task of implementing the peace accord.

²¹³ "Reassembling Colombia's Rejected Peace Deal" (International Crisis Group, October 6, 2016).

²¹⁴ "Peace Is Ratified. When Is 'D-Day?'" *Colombia Peace*, December 1, 2016, <http://colombiapeace.org/page/3/>.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

CONCLUSION

The last few years have seen crucial political developments in Colombia and Turkey both of which are keys to preserving regional peace and stability. While Turkey's "solution process" with the Kurdish insurgency PKK failed due to commitment problems, the Colombian peace deal with the FARC was revived after the shocking defeat of the referendum. However, the future of both countries' peace remains ambiguous. Turkey seems to be far behind where Colombia is today, while Colombia is in the implementation phase of the peace accord with FARC, historically ending 52 years of violence despite all the efforts to undermine the peace deal. Yet, the Colombian government's ability to implement the promised reforms in the agreement will determine the future of peace in the country.

What this research focused on specifically is the two major dynamics that potentially changed or shaped the process itself: the will and capacity for peace, and the role of spoilers. My argument was twofold: first, the will and capacity of warring parties in an intra-state conflict to a great extent determines the likelihood of a peace process to succeed; and second, the existence of spoilers in a peace process might undermine the negotiations and cause the peace process to fail, depending on the strength and structural impact of the spoiler. The former, also called a commitment problem, is one of the most influential factors. Whether parties involved have the genuine will to reach peace profoundly affects the direction of events. The selected cases displayed clearly that while parties to the Kurdish problem in Turkey lacked the will to end the long-lasting violence in the country, the Colombian conflict ended due to the fierce commitment of both parties to peace even faced with a strong opposition.

In terms of the existence of spoilers, they were present in both countries, trying to undermine the peace negotiations. However, the spoiler problem in the Colombian peace process

was much more effective than the case of Turkey, due to Uribe's popularity and public discontent with the peace deal. The defeat of the referendum might be considered as a sign of the success of the spoilers in Colombia. In contrast, there were several spoilers in Turkey's peace process with the PKK such as the Turkish military, the opposition parties in the parliament and PKK-affiliated groups trying to sabotage the negotiations. However, they were not the primary factor in the failure of the peace process as Uribe's opposition was to the Colombian process. The leading factor in the case of Turkey was the actual parties in the conflict, the PKK and the AKP government, both lacking commitment to peace.

While analyzing these factors, ripeness theory and reputation building theory were utilized along with the wide breadth of literature on spoiler problems in the peace studies. As ripeness theory claims, it is essential for both parties to reach a ripe moment to see the settlement as the optimal solution for such conflict rather than continuing use of force. The Colombian conflict has shown that both parties came to a point that the use of violence is no longer advantageous for either party, thus signing a peace deal became the best alternative to negotiate their demands. In contrast, the PKK-Turkey conflict showed that neither party was genuinely willing to end the conflict, meaning that the necessary "hurting stalemate" has yet not been reached to consider other alternatives than use of arms.

In terms of reputations building theory, both cases showed that the state authorities hesitated in granting political concessions to the insurgencies either due to potential successors in the future or the damage that could come to relations with neighboring countries. While claimed territories were highly important in both countries economically, strategically, and psychologically, Colombia initially feared future challengers demanding similar privileges given

to FARC, whereas Turkey was psychologically dedicated to the idea of territorial unity of the “motherland.”

In conclusion, this research aims to serve as a source of reference for future studies in peace and conflict resolution on what works and what does not in peace processes. It is important to acknowledge that reaching peace necessitates a genuine will to end intra-state violence while recognizing the demands of the parties as well as being aware of the potential obstacles on the way. The cases of Colombia and Turkey effectively illustrate the challenges of contemporary peacemaking in cases of protracted conflict. The future holds many uncertainties for both countries in terms of peace-building and political stabilization. Peace is possible only when parties stay committed to their promises with sincere intentions to end violence and transform a battle field into a political opportunity.

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