

**MENDEL UNIVERSITY IN BRNO**

Faculty of Regional Development and

International Studies

**Analyzing Colombia's civil conflict, the peace process  
and future prospects using study cases**

Bachelor's thesis

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**Brno 2017**



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Šárka Hettmerová

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## **Abstract**

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The presented thesis deals with the „Analyzing Colombia's civil conflict, the peace process and future prospects using study cases“. The theoretical part contains general aspects, informations about the historical background in Colombia, impingement of the selected principal parties, uneven land distribution and its impacts on the origin of more than 50 years long conflict and its description, explanation of difficult efforts to reach peace agreement through the history until it was reached in November 2016 with an outline of the historical context. The practical part of research is semi structured questionnaire conducted by undergraduate students living in Colombia and in the Czech Republic. This part analyses the information obtained from the survey. The study was conducted by the means of literature review and use of primary and secondary literature. The aim of this thesis is to analyze historical causes of the conflict, the main involved actors and social implications. The information should serve for people outside the Colombia, who hardly understand the current events related to peace process which associates Colombia only as the country full of drug problem.

**Key words:** Colombia, Guerrilla, Conflict, Peace process, Peace agreement

## **Abstrakt**

Hettmerová, Š. Analýza konfliktu v Kolumbii, mírového procesu a budoucích a vyhlídek za použití případové studie Bakalářská práce. Brno: Mendelova univerzita. Fakulta regionálního rozvoje a mezinárodních studií, 2017. Vedoucí bakalářské práce Ing. Eduardo Alfredo von Bennewitz Álvarez, Ph.D.

Tato bakalářská práce se věnuje tématu “Analýza civilního konfliktu v Kolumbii, mírového procesu a budoucích vyhlídek za použití případové studie.“ Teoretická část mapuje obecné aspekty a informace o historickém zázemí v Kolumbii. Dále popisuje vybrané dominantní skupiny podílející se na více než 50 letém konfliktu, společně s nerovnoměrným rozložením půdy a s ním související dopad na průběh konfliktu. Práce se zabývá průběhem a obtížným dosahováním mírové dohody na pozadí historického kontextu, končící podpisem finální mírové dohody v listopadu 2016. Studie byla provedena na základě rešerše literatury s využitím primárních a sekundárních zdrojů. Cílem práce je analyzovat historické příčiny konfliktu, jeho hlavní aktéry a sociální důsledky vyplývající z konfliktu. Praktická část výzkumu je postavena na polostrukturovaném dotazníku, který byl vyplněn vzorkem vysokoškolských studentů žijících převážně v Kolumbii a České republice. Následně jsou informace získané z průzkumu analyzovány a provedeny identifikace možného potenciálu pro zlepšení situace. Informace by měly sloužit lidem pocházející ze zemí mimo Kolumbii, kteří jen stěží dokáží pochopit aktuální události spojené s mírovými procesy, a Kolumbii mají asociovanou pouze jako zemi drogových problémů.

**Klíčová slova:** Kolumbie, Guerilla, Konflikt, Mírový proces, Mírová dohoda

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## **Introduction**

There are so many countries in the world where people suffer, for instance, from bad living conditions, lack of natural resources, or bad quality of water. That is often the reason for emerge of the violent groups, fighting each other over causes of little importance. Colombia is not like these countries. Throughout the history, Colombia suffered a lot speaking about the conques at the very first beginning, armed struggles based mostly on the high unequality and the subsequent escalation of the internal civil conflict into more than half a century long warfare where at least 220 000 people have died. To name some of the causes of the conflict, it would be high level of inequality or weak and corrupt state. Colombia, in spite of being the oldest democracy in Latin America, since its independence in 1810 there has always been a low level of national cohesion. The lack of state control over the territory was always a big issue as well.

Colombia is devided into smaller parts due to the Andean mountains ranges, which serves as natural barriers of significant society division. Internal civil conflict, which started in the second haf of the last century, was based on the confrontation between the central Colombian government and left-wing insurgent group, trying to achieve better living conditions. In a course of time, there emerged other group of different ideologies, fighting against the left-oriented ones. As the conflict became worldwide problem, the drug producing and subsequent trade was the major financing of the conflict. In 1980s is marked the first intention to end the conflict by peace agreement with the biggest guerrilla group – FARC. The greatest emphasis to achieve given peace agreement emerged in 2000s, by implementation of financial and military support of United State.

Nowadays, the final peace agreement with FARC has been signed, but there are still many questions and issues to deal with in order to improve the quality of the life in Colombia and to provide a better future for the next generations. Taking into account the opinions of the Colombian people, the peace process is going to need a long time to get rid of so many problems which caused the violence.

This thesis focuses on analyzing the roots of the violence, Colombian civil conflict, peace process and it is based on the public opinion of the Colombian student and their general opinion regarding the conflict and peace process. Colombia is still rich country with a great potencial, taking into account the magnitude of the fertile land and natural resources.

# **1 Methodology and aim of the thesis**

It is hypothesized that the conflict produced profound impacts on the Colombian society and young people agree and are well informed about the final peace agreement.

The perception that the rest of the world has of Colombia is sorely lacking information and therefore creating a stereotype that is not always true. Colombia is frequently associated with drug trafficking and famous drug cartels. The aim of thesis is to provide more information about context of the conflict situation, which is the main cause of other problems. The objective is to focus on the brief historical cross section starting explaining the roots of the conflict in the country, outline basic historical events that formed the present worldwide point of view at Colombia and shortly delineate the main events regarding the peace process. The informations in tesis should serve to people, who have not many knowlages about the history of the country, and do not understand the context of the events that happened in Colombia. It should change the percepcion of the country from not only the drug and criminal point of view, to understanding the causes of problems.

The main objective of this thesis is to analyze the historical causes of the conflict, the main involved actors and social implications. Analyze the evolution of the conflict from its origins, the escalation of the violence, the attempts of peace agreements and perception of Colombian student on the conflict history, peace process linked to the future prospects of the country and residents of Colombia.

The theoretical part deals with the general basic information about the Colombia and describes the roots of violence and following escalation of the conflict. There are chosen three major groups and they are analysed from their inception till the end of their activity. The following point is dedicated to the land tenure and unequal distribution of land, which is one of the major causes and also a consequence of the conflict. The last point of the theory describes the most important events about the peace process. The empirical part of thesis analyzes the responses from the questionnaire and on the base of given answers analyze future prospect.

During the analysing of the history, there has been used the primary and secondary sources in order to search for the information in professional literature. Because of the timeliness of the last part of topic, the information for the study has been taken mostly from the online electronics documents and articles on the internet databases, mainly in English, but for the lack of information also in Spanish. There were used available impartial internet resources and web pages.

The empirical part includes the semi-structured questionnaire composed from 15 questions and all were posed in Spanish in order to obtain as much information as possible. In the research participated 31 students, it is not considered as representative sample. The collection of data took approximately one month and were obtained via emails and social networks, especially Facebook page called “University students from Colombia“ (*Estudiantes universitarios de Colombia*). Thereafter, data were processed, disaggregated in types of answers, analyzed and basic statistic was performed.

# I. THEORETICAL PART

## 2 Geography

Geographically, the whole Latin America can be divided into North America, Central America, Caribbean and South America. Colombia is a country located in the northwest of South America, bordered by Panama and Caribbean Sea on the north, Venezuela and Brazil in the east, Peru and Ecuador in the south and the Pacific Ocean on the west (Bennewitz Álvarez, 2014). The residents are mostly Catholic and Spanish speaking people (Bbc news, 2016). Colombia is the gateway to the South American continent, and certainly part of the journey, which was used by the first people migrating from North and Central America. It is also known that this South American country owes its name to the famous explorers Christopher Columbus, even though he has never been there (Moya, 2011)

The population is estimated to be 48,2 millions of inhabitants (United Nation Development Programme, 2017). The majority of residents live in the north and west area of the country because of the crop production and farming opportunities. There is the place where natural resources are found a lot. The extensive grasslands of the llanos are around 60 percent of the country and are situated on the south and east (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). The Colombian people are quite used to experiencing and being a part of a diverse and vibrant culture. Approximately 54 percent of the inhabitants are mix of Spanish and Native American origin or mestizo. Unmixed White European Colombians are around 30 percent and the rest of the inhabitants are African Colombian, Mulatto, Palenquero, or Raizal and Native South Americans. The key aspect of Colombia's economy is coffee production which is known for its high quality (World Atlas, 2016).

In Colombia an enormous demographic transition is perceptible. There is a steady decrease of mortality, fertility and a population growth rate. In 1960 the fertility rates were magnificent. Statistically, there were more than 6 children per childbearing aged woman in Colombia. In 2016 it was reported to have fallen to a record low of 2.02. Colombia also has one of the worst income inequality ratios in the world. The majority of people live under the poverty line (Index Mundi, 2016).

### **3 History of Colombia**

The colonization of the Latin America started at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century and continued for four centuries. The Andes and some parts of Central America were colonized by Spaniards in order to find precious metals (Santiso and Dayton-Johnson, 2012). Thus, the history of Colombia is highly influenced by Europeans, especially by Spanish. By the colonial era in Latin America there were formed norms, law and other important things related to the legal arrangement. The armed conflicts and movements have emerged and it determined today's character of the territories (Bennewitz Álvarez, 2014).

The conquest of the present day Colombia began in 1508, when Alonso de Ojeda, one of Christopher Columbus's companions, arrived at Cartagena (Smith, 1997). Generally the term colonialism describe colonial power over the territories and unequal relationship between the colonists and the indigenous peoples. The indigenous people often produced some accomplished gold work and pottery (Potter, 2008). On the very first beginning of the confrontation between the indigenous tribes and the Spaniards, the native people were tolerant. Nevertheless, after a short time they became hostile when Spaniards started to enslave them and tried to take their land. In 1544 the majority of the territory which was incorporated into the viceroyalty of Peru was under the Spanish control (DeRouen, 2005).

In the mid 16th century The New Kingdom of Grenada was set up, it was a group of Spanish colonial provinces, corresponding to modern Colombia, Panama and Venezuela (Smith, 1997). Historically, Colombia was part of the New Granada which was established in 1717. The reestablishment in 1739 meant a change of the administrative province. The independence movement in Colombia started in 1810 after some struggles, independence was achieved in 1819. Another big establishment we can talk about was Gran Colombia and it included Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, and Venezuela as we know them today (Bakewell and Holler, 2010).

Efforts to establish an independence of Colombian politics was problematic and it was connected to some difficulties such as violence and confusion. In 1850 two political parties were founded. One was Liberal and the other one Conservative

(DeRouen, 2005) The parties were controlled by elites and neither of them gave too much attention to the political pressure from the civilians who were not satisfied. The key facet was the same fundamental ideology which they shared as a social and economic entity (Wiarda and Kline, 2011). Later, in 1863 Gran Colombia became known as the Republic of Colombia. Panama separated from Colombia in 1903 and become an independent state (Moya, 2011).

Historically speaking the Conquest was the most important event regarding the ethnically diverse population. The most numerous group of indigenous people were the Chibchas (Muisca). The Chibchas used to settle in one place and they have endured through a long time. They have been oriented to the agricultural livelihood (Wiarda and Kline, 2011). The governor of New Kingdom of Granada<sup>1</sup> was dependent upon the Viceroy of Peru and Lima almost for two centuries. It was quite a long process of discussions between two capitals, Peru and Audiencia of Santa Fe de Bogotá. Colombia belonged to viceroyalty of Peru until 1739. The same year Bogotá was declared as a center of a new viceroyalty of New Granada (Wiarda and Kline, 2011).

### **3.1 Historical description of the violence**

In order to understand the process of the conflict, it is essential to explicate the following term, which is the base for understanding the events.

#### **3.1.1 Guerrilla**

The world guerrilla comes from the Spanish term “little war”. Its origine is possible to find in Spanish rebellion against French troops after Napoleon’s invasion of the Iberian Peninsula in 1808. Generally speaking, these are an armed groups are operating mostly in the rural areas, which is the advantage, because of the knowlages of the terrain. Even though they often operate in a small groups, they can grow large. In order to achieve destabilization of the government system, they attack military, police and government forces and officials (Siegel, 2016). The term Guerrilla and Terrorism are often used interchangeably to characterize the same thing. Terrorism is considered as group with negative connotation with very strict opinions, on the other side Guerria is more neutral with more positive connotation (Ganor, 2005). Over the history, the guerrilla fighters have been called also rebels, insurgents, partisan or bandits for instance.

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<sup>1</sup> Establishment of the New Kingdom of Granada in 16th century (Moya, 2011).

### **3.2 Roots of Violence – major political parties**

From the political point of view there were two mainstream parties, Conservatives and the Liberals. They have been in conflict almost from the beginning of the 18th century when the party politics were introduced. Both parties were in charge of large periods of power. The obvious contradiction between these two political groups was the main reason of the struggle that started to be more intensive since 1819 when Colombia got freedom (DeRouen, 2005). Political party of Liberals favored greater sovereignty for the states. They also required land reform and one of the most important aims was to provide better conditions for peasants and farmers and give them a source of strength. On the other hand the Conservatives inclined to the strong central government and they were considered as a privileged class regarding the land redistribution (Murillo, 2011). In 1899 Liberals tried to take control over the country and the disputes between the parties escalated into a huge conflict today known as a War of a Thousand Day (1899 – 1902). The estimated number of the victims during this conflict was one hundred thousand. As a consequence after so many years of the warfare these two political parties started to share power together. The Conservatives were leading political party from the turn of the century until the 1930. Liberals were in the center of power between the years 1930 – 1946, but this period was not very successful because of the continual violence that dominated over the country (Kline, 2012).

### **3.3 Preliminary explanation**

In a long term, Colombia belongs to the most problematic states of Latin America. Not only because of the “conquista period“ point of view but also because of the local and international conflicts that are an integral part of the country’s history. Just in the nineteenth century occurred eight general civil wars, two wars with Ecuador fourteen local civil conflicts, and three barracks' coups (Sanchez, 1985). The most important actors of this armed struggle conflict refer to the long-term weak state institutions and dangerous rebel groups. The majority of the victims were civilian commoners (The Guardian, 2013).

Colombia in history suffered a lot. The government was not able to coordinate the conflict in many large areas. Conflict with armed guerillas groups started from the mid – 1960s. The roots of this confrontation goes back to the times of La Violencia. This term refers to the armed struggle between the years 1948 – 1958. The inception of

this long lasting conflict was murdering one of the popular liberal politician Jorge Gaitán. The unrest started in the capital city – Colombia but it spread the whole country immediately (Kline, 2012).

### **3.4 Civil wars**

The important part of the general unrests represents civil wars. There are many causes of this kind of conflict and they differ a lot. The causes are related to the position to be assigned to the church in its relations with the state. Another topic would be the question of the slavery whether to choose abolition or nonabolition. Equally important as the characteristics already mentioned is the attribute of the political organization – if they were more federal or centralize. The overall effect depends also on the power structure because only a few people were often in charge of the public decision making (Sánchez, 1985)

The way of the leadership always has an underlying magnitude in the conflict process. People in the power structure were often involved in the warfare not only in the politically oriented strategies but they were also military leaders. They were in charge of commands making process and controlling activities of their forces. Leaders had a few facts usually in common as the participation in the political directorate, the rank of general in an army or high social status. This social status represented mostly the ownership of the land, hacienda holding (large estate) or merchant kind of profession. Generally speaking the military or political leaders were fighting for their own interests. In terms of the keeping the properties, leaders were forced to deal with the mutual agreement procedure to avoid the loss of their own property (Kline, 2012)

#### **3.4.1 Causes of unrest (19 century)**

From the beginning of the 19 century, Colombia received a huge amount of foreign investments and loans. The United States paid Colombia 25 milion dolars regarding its intervention in Panama's push for independence from Colombia. As a result of these loans there has been settled the organization called the United Fruit Company, which took place in Santa Marta. At that time there started to increase unrest between the workers and holders of the international companies. These workers did not have the right to vote neather the land properties. Labours required better work conditions, such as higher wages, but they failed. In 1928 the workers organized a strike for one month. The whole dispute escalated in a big demonstration where seventy-five



workers have been killed, because they disobeyed orders to leave the square where the demonstration has happened. This event is known as a “Banana Massacre” (Collier and Sambanis, 2005)

In the times of Great Depression (1929–1941) Colombia was in the middle of the hectic political situation with many changes in the socio-cultural life. Leaders of the certain political parties has changed from one to another, Conservative to Liberal Party and the whole political system went through the transition. Conservatives did not agree on a lot of issues and especially the one regarding the reform that allowed the government right to take privately owned property and favored squatters over land owners. Another part of the reform was the power of the Catholic church that has been reduced and system of the taxes was changed as well. This particular system helped the government but for the elite class it was not as favorable as for the politicians (Collier and Sambanis, 2005).

### **3.5 Events before La Violencia**

The second half of the forties was marked by struggling between the left-oriented parties (Partido Liberal Colombiano, Partido Comunista Colombiano) and conservatives (Partido Conservador Colombiano) (Lansford, 2014). Both parties were made up primarily of the wealthy, bourgeois elite from of the country’s capital. The members of all three sides began to arm themselves, formed a paramilitary organization and they formed the first guerrilla movement, initially linked to liberals but which later became independent actors (Bíla, 2006). The results of the presidential election in 1946 did not end clearly. One of the two candidates from the Liberal Party was land-reform movement leader Jorge Gaitán and he divided the votes of the liberals with another candidate. The consequence was that the election won the conservative candidate Mariano Ospina Pérez. He made an effort to share the power with the Liberals, but this movement was not successful and the unrest spread throughout the country. Gaitán was a very popular politician and was expected the most to be next president of Colombia but in his second presidential campaign in 1942 he was assassinated (Kline, 2012).

### **3.6 La Violencia**

The murder of Gaitán was followed by increasing riots, lootings and demonstrationes called “Bogotazo” and it took place in Bogotá. The same day after the attack was killed over the 2 000 people just in a few hours. This incident escalated a

period full of violence that had begun eighteen years ago. The result of those days of violence was that a lot of people died and much of the Capital was destroyed and burned to the ground, This events kicked off the period of ten years long armed struggle known as “The Violence“ (*La Violencia*) (Congress Country Studies, 1988).

Eventually the government was able to contain the circumstances in Bogotá. President Ospina and the government started to be more repressive, especially after the period of Bogotazo. He attempted to caml down the situation throught the authoritarian policies like hiring armed groups of peasant origin called Chulavitas<sup>2</sup>. In 1949 he forbade any kinds of mass meetings and in the same year he fired all Liberal governors and he issued the command to close Congress. However the violence did not end as Ospina wanted to. The beginning of 1950s was a fierce situation especially in the countryside and rural territory where the conflict was mainly between the armed liberal and conservative combatants (Wiarda and Kline, 2011).

In 1953 anti-Communist General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla came to power by force. He became a head of the government and one year after he was elected president of the country. His election as a supreme politician was caused by the military coup. It is an undeniable fact that military made a big part of the violence, even though in that time the violence decreased (Congress Country Studies, 1988)

### **3.7 National front and post-civil war (La Violencia) events**

Pinilla represented a big threat to Liberal and Conservative party. From the 1957 five military generals took over the power of the country. Finally the two parties realized that the fighting could not continue and he armed struggle called *La Violencia* was ended in 1958 with an adoption of the agreement when both political parties, Conservatives and Liberalist assented to be governed by the “National Front“ (*Frente Nacional*) (Kline, 2012). Bouth political parties were so affraid of his dictatorship that they made a deal that for the next four presidencies each party would have claim over two presidents and it would switch every four years. The main principle was that one party occupied the place of the president as its candidate while the other party won the seat of prime minister. Based on this arrangement between the leading groups, the government was supposed to cut down the violence in the street by the political and

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<sup>2</sup> Chulavitas was the Conservative police force. The main aim of their existence was to counteract the liberal party militants opposed to the conservative government (Radio Televisión Nacional de Colombia, 2016)

military pressure. The agreement was good for the political parties and for the upper class in the cities but not so great for the rural community who were still devastated from the civil war (Congress Country Studies, 1988).

Despite of all effort to reduce the conflict situation in the country the agreement was not effective enough. From the political point of view it partly calmed down the extent violence but for a longer period of time, it was not efficient at all. People were not content due to the intangibility of the government. Only two political parties had a power over the Colombia that of the elites and that of the working class and they did not allow to participate any other party to co-decision procedure. The variety of the governance was the reason why it was not possible to reform agrarian sector, which was needed. Elites were satisfied and made the best of the current situation. On the other hand at the same time working class and the middle class were neglected and increasing social crisis was in imminent danger to expand (González, 2004).

The seventies were the sign of National Front and even though this political structure covered a long period of time as a governing party, there were many contradictions. The ruling parties stopped the period of La Violencia and started economic and social development in Colombia but they did not cooperate as needed and they failed to stop the armed groups, which continued in its activities. Throughout the country there were many territories where state power had no influence and some parts were under the control of guerrillas. The period between the years 1948 and 1958, La Violencia was the cause of the death for more than 300,000 Colombians (Congress county country studies, 1988).

Speaking about this ten-year civil war that happened between 1948 and 1958, it was a terrible time for the country. According to the authoritative sources the bloodshed that occurred in that period resulted in more than 200 000 death people. In this given period the approximated number of displaced person from their homes were around one million people. Majority of these people were forced to move from their homes situated in the countryside (Wiarda and Kline, 2011).

Generally speaking during the time of la violencia it is important to emphasize that there were two particular period of more intensive struggle that broke out. The first one was between 1948 and 1953. The second phase when the violence has increased was between 1954 and 1958. According to the statistic, which were kept in Tolima department<sup>3</sup> for instance, nearly 2000 families were forced to leave their homes just in the period between 1946 and 1958 (Norman and Bailey, 1967).

Before this period Colombia was in permanent state of crisis. That is why Guerrilla groups started to be a significant and powerfull participants in the conflict and they fully established themselves in the 1960s (Combs and Slann, 2009).

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<sup>3</sup> Tolima is located in the Andean region, in the center-west of the country and it is one of the 32 departments of Colombia (Toda Colombia, 2015).

## 4 The internal conflict and revolutionary armed groups

The struggle for civil rights has lasted more than five decades drawing in left-wing rebels and right-wing paramilitaries (Bbc news, 2013). The conflict was the cause of the largest internal population displacement in the world. Around 7 million people were forced to leave the country, mainly peasant, indigenous and Afro-descendant communities and they were dispossessed of at least 6 million hectares of land (Guereña, 2016).

The root of the conflict was an increasing problem of extreme land concentration and the conflict itself served to strengthen paramilitary structures that have illegally appropriated more land than the guerrillas. The first movements of the regional guerrilla groups started in the 1920s and 1930s. One of the reason was that peasant struggled because of the dissatisfaction with the working conditions imposed in day-workers by owners of the coffee plantation and conflict about land tenure in general. In a course of time these groups united (Guereña, 2016). The bigger and most important guerrilla group that took up arms against the government was The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*). During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the FARC was one of a number of new, small guerrilla groups. The second largest Marxist guerrilla group was National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*) which is known by its Spanish acronym ELN (Combs and Slann, 2009).

To mention other important insurgent groups, that were part and parcel of the entire conflict, it would be the “19th of April Movement” (*Movimiento 19 de Abril*) – M-19 and the “Popular Liberation Army” (*Ejército popular del liberation*) – EPL (Gus, 2011). For the purposes of this bachelor thesis, the following chapter is going to described only three most important armed groups, which participated in the Colombian conflict.

## 4.1 FARC

### 4.1.1 Short evolution of the FARC

FARC was the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary guerrilla movement and belongs to one of the oldest and largest Colombia's left-wing rebels considered also as the world's richest guerrilla living army. It was a military wing of the Communist Party of Colombia, that, after the creation of the National Front, was expelled from the political life. They have been engaged in armed conflict with the Colombian government for the past half of century. The core of FARC's existence is rooted in political persecution during decade of political violence known as La Violencia that afflicted mostly rural Colombia. Their origin is possible to find in the Liberal guerrilla bands but later they turned to communism (Buxton and Phillips, 1999). At the early beginning it was considered as an agrarian movement trying to defend landless peasants without any financial stability (Leech, 2011).

Unlike the other famous communist guerrilla National Liberation Army (ELN), FARC at the beginning was not directly inspired by the Cuban revolutionary Fidel Castro or Soviet Union (Méndez, 1990).

In the military dictatorship times, dissident members of the Liberal and Communist parties left mainstream politics and they started to set up communist and agrarian "independent republics." At the beginning it was just a small guerrilla group that settled in Marquetalia, which was a rural municipality in the Andean plains. It was the biggest cooperative with something around 1 000 members (Collier, Sambanis, 2005). The band was led by Manuel Marulanda aka "Tirofijo" (*Sure shot*). He became the most important leader and in that time he was only 18 years old. FARC was founded in 1964 after the attack of the Colombian military. The attack was the key facet for the survivors who decided to declare war against the government (Leech, 2011).

Immediately afterwards the attack, guerrillas from Marquetalia met with other communities and they established the First Guerrilla Conference. In this conference participated more than approximate 350 guerrillas and they formally declared themselves founded Southern Block, which later became nation-wide FARC. The main issue which Southern Block required was land reform and better conditions for the people living in the countryside. The other part of their mission was to defend the members of the Southern Block and generally the communities of followers. On the

second Guerrilla Conference in 1966 the name of group was changed to The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Gus, 2011).

Throughout the 1970s, while National Front was still the head of the politics, the government supported rural economic development model and the main objective was to remove all barriers to free investment in the countryside. The consequence of this act was a bigger concentration of land ownership, the undermining of small-scale peasant producers and the rise of peasant proletarianization. Due to the implementation of current development program, there was a significant number of unsatisfied peasants trying to organize invasions of the properties on the countryside. The example can be the fact, that the farmers attacked large *haciendas*<sup>4</sup> and divided particular land properties between each other. Nevertheless the landowners were able to find the way how to get their land tenure back through the local political forces. Many farmers were forced by the living conditions to go to the cities where the situation was getting worse due to increased urban unemployment (Colombia Reports, 2017c).

#### **4.1.2 Commencement of kidnappings and drug trafficking**

From the second conference there was a shift in strategy that was affecting the whole guerrilla movement. Many years the main leaders of the group and other members were focused just on defending peasants from the government military interferences as the main objective and FARC functioned for the most part as a defensive force. During the middle 1970s, in the Colombia's rural areas this guerrilla movement started to form infrastructure, school system and other services such as medical care that state was not able to take care of. For example there were established training camps for guerrillas (Gus, 2011). In that time many people like students, intellectuals and other peasant leaders joined this guerrilla group (Leech, 2011).

FARC has grown from a small peasant organization to its enormous military strength. Because of the economic situation, FARC collected taxes from the local businesses, but even though it was not enough to finance all these expenditures already mentioned. Thus, they decided to maintain the struggles in the urban areas and use kidnappings and intimidation to have a better economic position which helped them to grow (Collier and Sambanis, 2005) In addition to assassination and murders in general,

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<sup>4</sup> The system of Spanish Colonial world, which provided rich agricultural land, ownership of ranches or plantation (Hudson, 2010).

the kidnapping is the major criminal activity, related to the conflict. In that time group kidnapped a certain number of people whereas at the beginning they focused primarily on the government members and elites so that middle- and upper-class Colombians. The drug trade in Colombia began in the 1970s, when the poor workers started to planting marijuana as a much more profitable source of livelihood, than the legal production. Thus, besides the rising number of kidnappings, FARC initiated a drug trafficking, especially focusing on the cocaine (Stanford University, 2015).

Peasants started colonizing the Colombian Amazon already in the 1950s which were followed by the violent displacement of peasants by large landholders. In the 1970s there was a significant growth of commercial agriculture to the parts of the country which were not so much populated and colonization of the land that was not utilized (TNI, 1999). The colonizers of the unused land were living like permanently displaced peasants. It was one of the reasons why they started growing coca<sup>5</sup> as a profitable business without any doubt. Peasant settlers made an effort to set up agricultural production in inhospitable jungle ecosystems. Anyway they did not find anything which would be more profitable and easy to market as coca. At the beginning of the cocaine boom, FARC tried to turn the peasants off growing the coca plant. Due to the urban unemployment that increased significantly, people flowed to FARC-controlled regions (Independent, 2013).

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, when the cocaine consumption in the U.S. and Europe came into fashion, Colombia became one of the biggest world centers for growing of coca. FARC was funded by the quickly growing drug producing, so they recruit and armed more combatants. Some of them were sent to the Soviet Union for military training (Stanford University, 2015).

### **4.1.3 FARC EP**

For a very long time FARC focused primarily on local issues more specifically they were fighting mostly in rural areas and the confrontation with the government military forces was not so intensive. Seventh Guerrilla Conference took place in 1982. The leadership of the group has discussed the current problems and the meeting resulted in a significant shift of strategy that followed the change of the name to FARC EP. The

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<sup>5</sup> Coca is a plant that was used for medical care, but it is also raw ingredient for cocaine. In the Andes it has been used for thousands of years to deal with the sickness and using as a mild stimulant (Bbc news, 2015).



acronym EP as a “People’s Army“ (*Ejército del Pueblo*) (Dudley, 2004 ). The aim of this shift of the strategy was to double its military capacity for the purpose to have greater access to the natural resources and move closer to the middle-sized cities (Colombia reports, 2017c).

Government and FARC had the first peace debates in 1982. As a part of the deal, FARC and Colombian Communist Party agreed on the peace negotiations and in 1985 they established a new political party Patriotic Union (*Union Patriótica*) – UP. At the beginning the party was highly successful, participated in the elections in 1986 and obtained a large portion of the votes. Nevertheless their political boom was severely weakened by the attack on the UP leaders by right-wing paramilitary groups. They were murdered, kidnapped or forced to into exile. Given violence destroyed the party (Kline, 2012).

Even though the peace process with the government was still running, FARC did not take into account the peace talks and continued in the kidnappings and other brutal strategies. The reason why they did not stop was that they did not consider the government proposals for the reform as a suitable for them. In that time the groups like AUC or MAS<sup>6</sup> emerged and assassinated FARC members and their supporters and they used these strategies from the 1980s and through the 2000s. On 1999 a quarter of the people in the country demonstrated against the widespread violence in the streets. In that time FARC initiated peace talks with the government and United States introduce “Plan Colombia”, which was the finance support (\$9 billion U.S) to improve the socio-political situation in the country. Anyway president Pastrana terminated the peace negotiation with the FARC before the end of his term (Leech, 2011).

The term of the new president Álvaro Uribe started in 2002 and his main objective was to fight against guerrillas. A part of his program was to increase the quality of the army and cooperate with the USA on the mutual targets. FARC lost a major part of its influence over the country, lost a lots of the guerrilla’s members and and above that, the UP was no longer a valid member of the political scene. The following president Juan Manuel Santos, who started his term in 2012, initiated again peace talks with FARC that were repeatedly suspended because of the contravention of the cease-fire agreements for example still lasting kidnapping for the ransom. The

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<sup>6</sup> Explained in the following chapter.

aspects of the peace talks will be more specified in another chapter (Stanford University, 2015).

A crucial part of the role in the structure of FARC played the emancipation of women. According to the government estimates, women and girls make up something around 30 percent of FARC. They often serve to intelligence gathering, collect information about movements of the government troops or serve as informants in the cities or bigger villages (Bbc news, 2002).

By the USA, FARC is considered a terrorist organization (Country reports on terrorism, 2015). President Santos is trying to persuade the USA to remove the group from the list of terrorist organizations (The guardian, 2016a). The European Council has suspended the FARC from its terrorist list in addition to support peace process (European External Action Servis, 2016).

Following figure shows the highest amount of the fighters from FARC, which was marked in 2002.

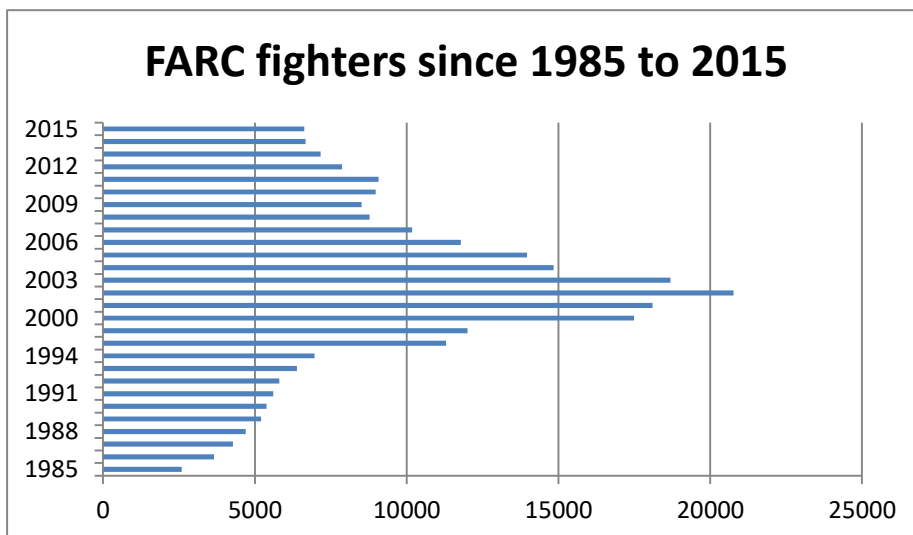


Figure 1. FARC fighters since 1985 to 2015 (source: Colombias Report, 2016)

## 4.2 ELN

National Liberation Army (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*) – ELN. Colombia's second largest leftist guerrilla group was formed in 1960 just as Colombia was emerging from a brutal struggle "La Violencia". Their strategic aim was to defend the

rural poor people against the Colombian's government and North America's imperialist economic, military and political concern. In comparison to FARC, ELN was considered as a more politically motivated from the early beginning. The ideological grounds were the reason why they shied away from the drug producing and illegal trade for quite a long time unlike the FARC (Collier and Sambanis, 2005). The group started as Colombia's version of Cuba's 26th of July Movement. The person who established ELN (Fabio Vasquez) was trained by Fidel Castro (Colombia reports, 2017b)

ELN was funded in 1964 with the stated aim of fighting Colombia's unequal distribution of land and riches. ELN was formed from Catholic radicals and left-wing intellectuals. The group was from the very first beginning highly influenced by the Marxist ideology and revolutionary events in Cuba related to Che Guevara (Bbc news, 2017). At the beginning they recruited some people from the church, like Camilo Torres. He was a popular and outspoken priest who died in his first battle in 1966. Other priests were from Spain. History of the ELN is connected with the year 1962, when a group of university students, who received training in Cuba, returned to Colombia and officially began the ELN's insurgency struggle in 1964 (Aviles, 2012). About ten years after, ELN was almost eliminated. 135 of the 200 members of the group were killed, including founders Fabio and Manuel Vásquez Castaño (Colombia reports, 2017b).

The new leadership Manuel Perez and Nicolas Rodriguez Bautista, in order to rebuild ELN, they started the period of kidnappings focusing on government officials and rich landowners (Tarazona and Ardila, 2015). In the course of time by 1980s they became professionals in kidnappings especially on the cars, airplanes and any kind of vehicle for water travel. They made much of the revenue from the ransoms. But they had also other activities like bank robbing and murdering the officials related to the Colombian army or government. By the mid-1990s ELN reached its peak more than 4 500 members and many supporters. For this left-wing rebel group the era from the 1990s a big oil companies (especially British Petroleum and Occidental Petroleum) become not only part of the extortion, but it made also one of the highest revenue by kidnapping its workers and bombing the company's pipelines (Bbc news, 2013).

Internal conflict and rising attacks by the paramilitary groups and the Colombian armed forces caused that new millennium 2000s was marked by increasing weakness of the ELN. As consequences of these events they lost a significant number of

territories including their former home area - Bolivar Province (Combs and Slann, 2009).

The start of the peace talks in 2001 with Colombian government represented by President Pastrana<sup>7</sup> did not take a long period of time, on the contrary it quickly broke down. Following peace talks with President Uribe<sup>8</sup> were unsuccessful as well and government maintained the military pressure on ELN. From 2009 the increased internal conflicts caused indiscipline of several members of the group who started to communicate with the drug traffickers in order to achieve better financial stability (Colombia reports, 2017b).

There were many attempts to peace talks between government and ELN but the most of them has failed. In 2014 the peace process was opened and still is (Bbc news, 2017). ELN appeared on the USA Department's list of designated foreign terrorist organizations (Rabasa, 2002).

### **4.3 United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC)**

#### **4.3.1 Origin of the self-defence forces**

From the mid-1960s Colombian government struggled with the left-wing guerrillas. To name at least the two biggest one, it would be The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and The National Liberation Army (ELN). As these groups became more and more powerful, government conceded control of many areas to these Marxist guerrillas or to regional self-defense forces, that were consist of armed civilians. During a very short time these self-defense groups adopted an offensive strategy, performing certain function of the state, they murdered left-wing leaders and so-called "friends of guerilla" or struggled against guerrillas. Initially these groups were considered as a government military forces, but during the time the government lost control over the groups and they become violent in general (Combs and Slan, 2009)

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<sup>7</sup> Andrés Pastrana Arango, 30th President of Colombia for the term of office between 1998 – 2002 (Aviles, 2012)

<sup>8</sup> Álvaro Uribe Veléz, colombian President for the term of office between the years 2002 – 2006 and than later 2006 – 2010. (Aviles, 2012)

The roots of the paramilitaries go back to the early 1980s. Because of the significant increase in the kidnappings, mainly organized by FARC, wealthy landowners, as major targets of the attack, decided to establish the organization called “Death to Kidnappers” (*Muerte a Secuestradores*) – MAS. However this illegal group murdered not only the kidnappers, but also many innocent civilians, activists, union leaders and politicians that were suspected of guerrilla activity (Combs and Slan, 2009)

#### **4.3.2 The evolution of AUC**

In 1997 the majority of the local and regional paramilitary groups were merged into counterinsurgency umbrella organization called United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia) – AUC. These groups were relatively independent of each other (Collier and Sambanis, 2005). This right-wing umbrella paramilitary organization was officially formed by drug traffickers and landowners to fight against kidnappings and extortion organized by other left-wing groups (Bbc news, 2013).

The leadership of the group represented three brothers of the Castaño family - Fidel, Carlos and Vicente. In 1980s they were serving in Medellin cartel, represented by Pablo Escobar<sup>9</sup>. These brothers of Castaño family received military training by Israeli mercenary Yair Klein. AUC organized numerous attack, massacres and assassinations, focusing primarily on the left-wing activists like FARC or ELN, but also on civilians, who were speaking up against them. After the murder of two associates of Castaños by Escobar, the founding brothers deserted in 1989 from the Medellin cartel to cooperate on the establishment “Persecuted by Pablo Escobar” - The Pepes (*Los Pepes*) a short-lived vigilante group made up of enemies of Pablo Escobar. To achieve an aim, to kill Escobar, they cooperated with the sectors of Colombia’s security forces. After the Escobar’s death, they took over some of the Medellin’s drug routes (Bowden, 2009).

The next generation of a big paramilitary organization come from The Pepes. In 1994 the members of this group established Peasant Self-Defense Forces of Cordoba

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<sup>9</sup> In his own name Pablo Emilio Escobar Gaviria, was a notorious drug lord, drug trafficker and narco-terrorist. He was a leader of one of the most powerful drug empires ever built – Cartel de Medellín (Cañón, 1994)

and Uraba – ACCU, unofficially known as the “Tangueros“. In that time this hostile events like assassinations, laid the foundation of the violent and brutal character which the AUC is eventually known for (Colombia report, 2012).

The paramilitaries were financed by the landowners and businessmen, but the drug trafficking was the main income. The drug industry made more than 70% of the group’s income. The AUC once operated in two-thirds of the country composed of around 30,000 soldiers. The AUC was labelled a terrorist organization by United States and the European Union in 2002 (Combs and Slan, 2009). President Alvaro Uribe began negotiations with The AUC about demobilization in 2003. In 2006 the demobilization was finally successful. Anyway even after this act, some of the paramilitary members, who did not agree with the demobilization, continued in the assassinations and other illegal acts (Rabasa, 2002).

#### **4.3.3 Paramilitary scandal**

The whole AUC history completed the event called “Colombian parapolitics scandal” (*parapolitica*), which broke out in 2006, just after the demobilization. The scandal was connected with a significant number of congressmen and hundreds of public officials who had illegal ties. These members of the government were linked through secret alliance between some of the president’s most prominent political supporters and paramilitary organization AUC (New York Times, 2007). Politicians of all level of government were accused of using paramilitary backing for political support and benefit. The number of accused politicians and other officials including businessmen is estimated on 11 thousand according to the Prosecutor General’s Office (Colombia reports, 2012). This event is directly linked to the corruption behavior, which is one of the most serious problems in Colombia.

## 5 Land tenure

### 5.1 Inequality

According to the Guereña (2016), inequality in Latin America, and so in Colombia, is not possible to cut down without solving the problem regarding land distribution and related issue, the right of the poorest groups of people in the territory.

The fact that land is the key asset for the producing and so for the livelihood has not changed since the ancient times. The twenty-first century is not an exception. By the land tenure it is possible to state that its high significance level is equal to store of wealth, and source of status. The special importance it has in the countryside of the states that are considered as developing countries (Faguet, 2016). The term “Land distribution“, has always been a structural problem in Latin America. Particularly this term had been the main cause of the wars, civil unrest, hunger or large displacement of people, not only in Colombia. Especially during the last two centuries had been caused so many issues already mentioned above, than any other before. Yet Colombia retains as a country with a concentration of ownership of land amongst the highest in the world. Many of these people were encouraged to fight for land, but not everybody was so tough to face that kind of problems by their own. High inequality in Colombia is still one of the main unresolved problems (Oxfam, 2016).

According to the United Nations Development Program (2017), Colombia transferred a large amount of land which is equal to the entire United Kingdom. It is the main cause of the high difference between unbearable levels of poverty and richness of the population. It demonstrates the fact that in rural areas, land distribution is so inequitable around 1% of the population has in the hands more than half of Colombia’s best land. In another word 52% of farms are owned by 1.15% of landowners. The rural GINI coefficient<sup>10</sup> is 0.85 only a fifth of the potentially productive land is actually being put to use.

Rural poverty and economic exclusion of the rural population played always a crucial role in the question of land inequality. One of the explanations for the internal conflict in Colombia in a previous century was also unequal access to the distribution of

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<sup>10</sup> Standard measure for inequality among economists where a 1 means complete inequality, where one person owns everything (Bbc news, 2015b).

land resources. Nevertheless the large farms called latifundium have endured till nowadays (Faguet, 2016).

## **5.2 Colonial times**

### **5.2.1 Origin of land tenure**

The origin of the land distribution is entrenched in the colonial period of Spanish America. During those times there was established a system of *encomienda* in feudal Spain. It was a labor system and royal grand, legally defined in 1503, by which the Spanish crown tried to define the status of the indigenous inhabitants of its American colonies. It refers to the system that was used by Spain to provide a reward for the conquistadors. By this status, it allowed the holder of the grand, called *encomendero*, as the individual received free labor and tribute from indigenous people in return for protecting and Christianizing them. It was his duty to educate and feed the natives. The origin of encomienda represented the territorial reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslim who had occupied it beginning in 711. Encomienda represents only inheritable right to use given a piece of land, not the possession of the land (Faguet, 2016).

Even though the first purposes of given law system were meant for good to cut down the level of abuses of the forced labor (*repartamiento*), unfortunately it became more known as a kind of enslavement and the end results were destructive for Indians (Ruiz and Korrol, 2006). The Spanish crown tried to end abuses of the system by the Law of Burgos and the Low of the Indies but none of them were successful (Mirow, 2010).

The encomienda system was created to purpose to meet the needs of the mining economy which was in its beginnings. In the course of time the mining movements were replaced by agriculture and the previous system was not so efficient eventually. It demonstrates the significant decline of the Indian population. Even though encomienda was treated as a private property, after of the loss of its effectiveness, it was replaced by the latifundium (Faguet, 2016). It was kind of land tenure dominated by large rural estates or large farms of 500 hectares or more. In a meantime it was created an unequal, two-tiered initial distribution of land, because of the smaller plots to other Spanish and criollo farmers by the crown (Faguet, 2016).



By many historiographers, systems of *encomienda* is considered as one of the most harmful institutions that was implemented in the New World by Spanish colonist (Lambert, 1967).

### **5.3 Land concentration**

Originally, there was a simple and very logical system, where the land was owned by the individuals who worked on it. Over time this system got more difficult. Subsequently, Spanish crown let government estates, sell to private buyers. In 1821 the government admitted the direct transfer of public land into private sphere or personal interest. Under the influence of the colonial system land property which was owned by Church or indigenous communities was protected from the colonization. By the year 1810 this intentiones were canceled (Institut des Hautes Études sur la Justice, 2015).

Elite power has always been very strong. The ruling class was in charge of the utilization of uncultivated public land called *baldios*. The government was organized by rich members therefore by the elite part of the population. That fact was followed by forming even more extensive estates for wealthy people. The land was not considered anymore exclusively like a source of production. This old angle of view was replaced by possibility and opportunity of avoiding payment of taxes, effort to fight inflation and providing loans. The process of soil cultivation by poor workers was many times like this: poor peasants were forced to leave their land and move to other peripheral territories that would become productive because of them. Afterward, the elites would force them to leave the land again in order to an extension of territory and strengthen control over their properties. These poor farmers without any land property would look for it deeper in the jungle or in the mountains (Colombia Politics, 2017).

The following figure shows land distribution in order to realize the high level of inequality in Colombia.

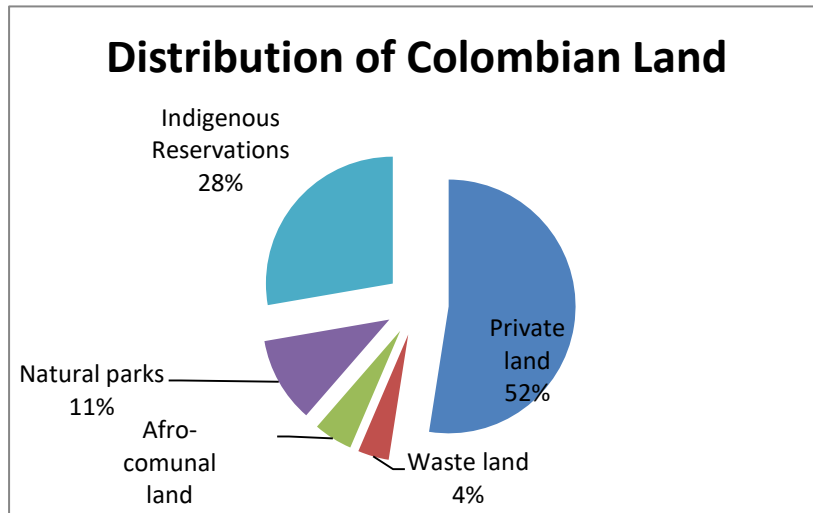


Figure 2. Distribution of Colombian Land (source: Faguet, 2016)

#### 5.4 Land ownership and agrarian reforms

Like in other states of Latin America or post-colonial political systems, the valuable possession of the land was forcibly kept by way of the assassination of indigenous inhabitants, colonialism, encomienda system, agrarian reforms or some kind of political oriented violence. This system functioned more that 500 years approximately.

In the colonial times land was distributed on the base of the Spanish principle “dwell and work“(morada y labor). In a course of time the system changed and the principle was allowed only under the condition of taxes payment in order to ensure a valid title. This arrangement allowed the land exploitation in 16 century either through valid property titles or through informal holding. As the farming frontier expanded, this principle has led to unequal access to land obvious for tenants, settlers, regional individual producers and farmers (OECD, 2015).

After the independence of Colombia in 1810, there was organized campaign, related to the land property. It was highly supported by the government. After so many decades of war it was needed to sell as many properties as possible to pay the debts. Access for the land property was possible to achieve by “individual occupation” and

work 10 years in Colombia. Nevertheless the basic purpose of the planning was not efficient and it ended with the distribution of land owned mainly by elites. The principle of the land tenure was that the owner would lease a given parts of his property to the peasant, who lived there with his families as well and the peasant paid for the lease of the land (Institut des Hautes Études sur la Justice, 2015). During the 20s century, Colombian government passed a series of laws with the goal to establish proper agrarian reform and improve the wellbeing of the state.

#### **5.4.1 1936. Law 200**

Late twenties and thirties were marked by conflicts caused by settlers, indigenous and tenants. Especially through 1920s when the peasants that had worked the land more than 10 years required to become valid property owners. Between the 1924 and 1936 a conflict between the owners and workers significantly increased. During these years there were adopted a few policies to calm down that acute situation nevertheless the tension was still serious (OECD, 2015)

The Law 200 from 1936 was implemented in order to organize social function of property and specify the relationship between the workers and and the owners of large properties. The main requirement of the workers was to become free farmers without any relationship of submission on large properties and obtain better entry to the lands. Another purpose of this reform was to transform extensive land with the low level of productivity into more efficient capitalist areas. It was not received well, because of the fear of the property owners, unresolved problem of private and state property and ongoing bad working conditions. Anyway the intention of the land reform failed (Institut des Hautes Études sur la Justice, 2015).

#### **5.4.2 1944. Law 100**

After 1940, when the conservative party gained President elections, it was approved counter reform to the modifications known from the previous law and re-established agriculture agreements. There were implemented other reforms that focused primarily on the partnership contract, which was considered as a nationwide value and that is why the use of land increased from 10 to 15 years to avoid expropriation. However the social profit coming from the reform's intentions, was eliminated and the public tension increased (OECD, 2015).

### **5.4.3 1961. Law 135**

The period of the civil war and confrontation between the two political parties was followed by another approaches of land reform. This time the law from 1961 was ment to be efficient and focused principally on three different topics (Institut des Hautes Études sur la Justice, 2015).

The Law 135 was created by Colombian Institute of Agrarian Reform (INCORA) and according to OECD (2015) it covered following approaches.

- reallocate the land tenure between the poor workers and re-establish viable properties in the territory where the small estates occupied the most of the region
- promote production of the land and its productivity, and support effective economic exploitation of lands whis are not used nor cultivated
- establish public services in order to increase living conditions and wellbeing of small tenants, farmers and generaly the rural population

The low was not efficient and not much was accomplished due to the political pressure. The expropriated lands were not in a good conditions. There were many issues and the land ended up undistributed.

### **5.4.4 1973. Law 4 and 1975. Law 6**

Great owners of the landholdings lived in constant concern about the expropriation of their estate so thay persuaded the government to end with the land reform policy. Through given laws there was planned an agricultural reform. In terms of time the first law was related to the contract between the central government and the workers on rural areas and refered to the conditions of the land tenure, allocation of the land and its expropriation. The law concentrated on the level of productiveness from the regional point of view and by amount of produced crops in order to support policy of productivity and commercialization. Given law additonally set up the conditions around the financing structure for agriculture and concentrated more deeply on the agreements regarding lease of the lands and other the topics associated with it. The amount of agriculture contracts were decreased deliberately by government so that the workers did not demande ownership of the properties so much (Institut des Hautes Études sur la Justice, 2015).

#### **5.4.5 1982. Law 35**

Particular law, called also Amnesty Law, was dealing with the question of the negotiations with the rebel groups and was developing the theme of the policy of peace. The greatest merit of this law was the organization of the easier way of administration and better access to obtain the land mainly in the areas marked by the struggles. Politics regime established "Integrated rural development programme" (DRI) which was devoted to concentrate on living conditions of the penniless workers and tried to enhance the previous attempts of the land distribution. (OECD, 2015).

#### **5.4.6 1988. Law 30**

After a long period of unrest between the ruling class and rural territories and deficiency of the mutual socio-political oriented discussion, government finally declared a new purpose of agrarian reform. The main objective was to improve road infrastructure focusing mainly on rural areas, support the approach to credit, ensure welfare of the rural population and set up the goals in education of rural workers. The law also sought to simplify the process of acquisition and expropriation of the land in order to achieve better conditions of the redistribution of the landholdings. There was a growth of the exploitation of the free lands and increased focus on the native society through the creation of the reserve zones. Anyway the final effect of given law was not as the government intended and there remain a large amounts of the poor families without any subvention (OECD, 2015).

#### **5.4.7 1994. Law 160**

In the period of 1980s and early 1990s, the growing conflict initiated to spread throughout the rural territories and non-state violent revolutionary groups brought under control rural areas. Farmers were forced to move from those areas into the bigger municipalities or cities. The aim of this action was to set up crucial zones to organize next steps. By the law 160, the land redistribution was promoted and so that was established the acquisition system that rested in the negotiations between the farmer and the owner. It was followed by other steps, like informate government about the negotiations to make a transaction. Generally speaking unlike the previous land distribution scheme, the law was created on the base of the market system for the transfer of land. Not on the expropriation of the unused land with low level of productivity. According to the government estimations the purpose of this reform was to redistribute 1 million ha, but only 598 332 was reallocated. Moreover only 5,6 % of

the entire landholdings were redistributed, the rest was classified as a free land. Law implemented that all tenants territory, unless they have been declared for business development, become “National Association of Peasant Reserve Zones” (canceled in 2003). These conditions for proceeding led to change of beneficiaries into medium size businessmen and to involve peasants in managing the decisions. Law is still ongoing legal framework that settles the form and implementation of policies concerning landholding distribution (OECD, 2015).

Central Colombian government approved several numbers of laws regarding to the widespread displacement of the rural inhabitants, speaking about restitution and resettlement afford. The Law 387 from 1997 incorporated violence in order to fight against the issue already mentioned – displacement. Additionally, it took under control the vacant land by entrusted the proper organizations to take care and protect these lands. In additional decree from 2001 demanded certain conditions that forced the selected institutions to determine the tenants, owners and the inhabitants of the territory, or to warn before the displacements. Another decree from 2005 related to the titling of the collective land, which belonged to the administration of the native and Afro-Colombian people. However, these kind of regulations were not efficient enough and it demonstrate the fact that only one third of the population, removed from their place, obtained assistance (Institut des Hautes Études sur la Justice, 2015).

Access and control over the land are at the top of the list of problems that can improve or on the contrary cancel running peace process in Colombia. Part of this plan is to focus on the rural areas and it’s unequal concentration of the properties that already caused countless violent struggles. The aim is to achieve this prospect by establishing eventually effective reform. Still, it is not clear if the implementation of the peace talks will finally efficiently turn around the current distribution of landholdings and ends the conflict that is causing this issue (OECD, 2015).

## 6 Summary of the peace process

According to state's Victims' Unit (*Red Nacional de Información*) (2017):

- 8 million victims<sup>11</sup> in general
- more than 7 million victims of forced displacement
- 46,000 victims of enforced disappearances
- at least 30,000 cases of hostage taking
- more than 10,000 victims of torture
- some 10,800 victims of anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance

The majority of victimization occurred after 2000, peaking in 2002 at 744,799 victims. All of this violence happened during the half-century armed conflict. These acts occurred between the years 1985 and 2017.

To understand these consequences, it is necessary to go further to the beginning of the first peace negotiations. Generally the conflict escalated in 1980s, due to the activity of the several leftist rebel groups, drug trade, which was financing the armament throughout the Colombia and right-wing paramilitary groups, who started to form themselves against the increasing power of guerrillas. Since the first emergence of the guerrilla's confrontation till the end of the president Pastrana's term in 2002, every ruling party have tried to deal with the situation through the peace talks (Clayton and Conniff, 2005). First intention of the reasonable peace talks started in 1982, after the newly elected government of the president Belisario Betancur. He established "Peace commission", which meant to be a crucial instrument in the ongoing peace talks. There has been signed many agreements, in order to achieve peace. However, none of these issues were ever resolved completely. A ceasefire brokered in 1984 and there was released a few of imprisoned guerrilla fighters. FARC was let to participate in the politic via their new party "Patriotic Union" as part of the peace talks. As already mentioned, many of the members of the party were killed, which meant the end of the peace negotiations during the following presidential administration (Bouvier, 2009).

During the 1990 and the following year, the government was in the process of signing peace agreement with M-19, EPL guerrillas "Popular Liberation Army" and other two smaller rebel groups. These groups decided to demobilize under the condition of the amnesty for the acts they committed during the conflict. In that time there were

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<sup>11</sup> Affected by war-related events.

various attempts to make a peace deal with the FARC, but even so no success has been achieved. On contrary FARC left the politics scene and initiated the military campaign, which was financed from their drug business and kidnappings (Henderson, 2015).

### **6.1 Pastrana's term**

As the Guerrilla groups, especially FARC, became stronger, state of Colombia became more and more fragile. With regard to the situation, Andres Pastrana, who served as a president of Colombia between the years (1998-2002), allowed the peace process with another guerrilla groups. Meanwhile the country received military and diplomatic aid from USA called "Plan Colombia". When Pastrana was discussing possibility of the peace with FARC, AUC emerged, followed by the wave of violence. Even though the peace talks kept going for three years, no success such as peace agreement has been achieved. As one of the attempt of reaching agreement with the FARC, Pastrana established demilitarized zones – DMZ, of some 42000 km<sup>2</sup> (Clayton and Conniff, 2005).

Those three years have been one of the most violent Colombia's period they have ever faced to. The emergence of the paramilitary groups like AUC was one of the causes. AUC were contra any kind of negotiation with FARC. In the period of Pastrana's presidency, there were over 3000 kidnappings each year, more than 5400 assassinations and many attacks on the civilians. Generally speaking, Pastrana during his mandatory initiated the modernization of armed forces and improved crucial strategies against kidnappings and growing coca. In 2002 peace talks were canceled by the Pastrana at the end of his presidential term (Kline, 2012).

In 2001, during the Pastrana's term, there has been established International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). Through "transitional justice mechanism"<sup>12</sup>, this non-profit organization was in charge of seeking responsibility for mass atrocity and human rights abuse (ICTJ, 2017).

### **6.2 Uribe's term**

Disappointment regarding the failure in the peace talks was followed by new elections of president Álvaro Uribe, who served between the years (2002-2010). He refused to have any talks referring to the future until the country eliminates the causes

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<sup>12</sup> The procedure how the countries are able to come out from the times full of violence and conflict on a whole or permanent abuse of the human rights (ICTJ, 2017).



of the violence and terrorism activity and generally set up a long-term strategic plan, how to effectively fight against guerrillas. To compare Uribe's government the previous one of president Pastrana, Uribe's intentions with guerrillas were very stringent and it was very popular standpoint for the Colombian people. However, it is important to state the high difference between those two extent of time – politics of peace intenciones contra policy of fight. That was the cause of the growth of armed struggles (Kline, 2012).

Uribe declared the war against left-wing guerrilla groups equal to war against drug traffickers and terrorism. The support from USA started to work and state military force successfully pushed FARC more into the jungle. The demobilization of the paramilitary groups happened between 2003 and 2006. The success of Colombia government and US cooperation were not only positive and it demonstrates significant number of the victims (Echavarría, 2010).

During the first Uribe presidency term, he achieved a great success in targeting on the guerrillas by decrease the number of kidnappings, terrorist act and assassinations in general. Primarily he focused on maintaining the peace over Colombia and he achieved in the greater control over the land by the central government, talking about the territories, which were very long time under the influence of guerrillas. The positive results coming from his first term to the high popularity, thus he was re-elected for the next political season (Kline, 2012).

The second term he continued in decreasing of the kidnappings and general unrest over the country. By the end of his presidential term, he was oriented primarily on the fight against terrorism, particularly FARC. Because of his strict policy, FARC lost lots of their high-ranking members including the founder of the guerrilla group Manuel Marulanda, whose death in 2008 has weakened the group as well. Even though there were no official peace process during Uribe's term, his government started the talks, but it was concealed (Echavarría, 2010).

### **6.3 Peace process between the Colombian government and FARC–EP**

Supported by the media and political and military apparatus created by Plan Colombia during the 8 years of the presidency of Uribe, the former minister of defense, Juan Manuel Santos, was officially inaugurated as president of Colombia in 2010. Already in his inaugural speeches he promised to stay and develop the Uribe policy and he talked

about the peace policy tied up with the possibility of the peace process with guerrillas. After more than five years of talks and while the country was still in a war, he already initiated peace talks with the FARC under conditions of tight secrecy. The meeting eventually proceeded in agreement on direct peace negotiations, in order to finally achieve the end of 52 years of bloody conflict. It was definitely not the first time when the government tried to negotiate peace with FARC (Kline, 2012).

According to the Colombia Reports (2016), the popularity of president Santos was strengthened due to the inauguration of formal talks in Oslo (Norway), followed by the official negotiations, which started in Cuban capital, Havana in 2012 with the general agreement. Given agreement included agenda, made up from the six points.

### **6.3.1 Agenda**

- **Rural reform**

- As a part of the draft law “Integrated Agrarian Development Policy”, two groups agreed on the intentions regarding decrease of the poverty in the rural territories and additionally to establish better equality of the land as it was one of the major causes of the violence.

- **Political participation**

- Despite that FARC, during the conflict, had many members of ideological thoughts, who had no intentions to develop violent behaviour, they have been persecuted by the government and the organizations linked to the state. The agreement allowed equal negotiations with FARC, and participation in the political scene, that would be safe for this historically known guerrilla group.

- **End of the conflict**

- The main objective that both parties agreed on was demobilization and disarmament of the FARC and the structure to support guerrillas lowest class and prepare the institutional framework to help them with the reintegration to the civilian life. There has been published the conclusive ceasefire

- **Illicit drugs**

- Coca fields, their growing and additional cocaine production and trade were long time the main foundation of the FARC and its activities, but also for the paramilitary groups. The preliminary established the following drog policy after the conflict.

- **Victims**

- More than 7 million victims due to the Colombian conflict and politically motivated violence since 1940s have caused half a million people no longer alive. That is enormous amount that can not be ignored. Thus, the government agreed to The International transitional justice tribunal and a Truth Commission, but with no judicial authority included. The main objective for tribunal is to solve the complains to the crimes linked to the war times.
- Another issue that would be solved are FARC members without any accusation of the war crimes. These people would be supported in the reintegration through amnesty program. The former member that would be suspected from these kind of crimes, could spend maximally 8 years outside the prison, however under “restricted movement” and with the obligation to cooperate with the justice.
- The guerrilla members convinced from the war crimes, but also the military members, politicians and other citizens who only partially excepted the cooperation in order to explain their crimes, woud face max 8 year in prison. For those who reject any kind of cooperation with justice would face up to 20 years in prison.
- Victims Fund and a Land Fund would be established in order to support and fund the victims

- **Implementation**

- The state asked the public to express their personal opinion through the referendum and so approve the peace agreement in order to let FARC to start with the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration. Another point related to the implementation was that during a temporary specified period of time, there ment to be the option for 17 000 members of FARC to call for amnesty, except the members, who committed very serious offenses against the humanity or other war crimes. Colombian government should had to assist and support the reintegration of FARC members.

#### **6.4 The way to the final agreement**

The peace talks were formally guaranteed by Norway and Cuba, and sponsored by Chile and Venezuela (E-International Relations, 2017). The maintenance of the security development was successful. It demonstrate the number of 4200 rebel groups, gangs and members of guerrillas around, who were assassinated or they decided to

demobilize in 2010. The following year it was 3000 more. Taken on the whole the amount of the FARC members significantly declined 16,000 in 2001 to approximately 8,000 in 2011. The same year president Pastrana adjusted counter-insurgency plan in order to make FARC weaker. He required stopping violence and lawlessness, release hostages and not to use the power of force to accomplish particular aim (Bbc news, 2008).

The peace talks continued to 2013 but no bilateral cease-fire has been achieved and it resulted in decline of the popular support of government. There were many issues that meant to be in the agreement, but were kind of questionable, for example possibility for the members of guerrillas to political participation or opportunity to change the constitution. However in 2014 president Santos retained his post in the head of the state. In a meantime, the government and FARC agreed on the majority of the points, but government was forced to stop the peace talks. The reason was the kidnapping of high-ranking army officer, who was subsequently released and the talks were renewed (E-International Relations, 2017).

#### **6.4.1 The Colombian peace plebiscite**

On October 2, 2016 after nearly four years of negotiations, the Colombians were asked to endorse or reject the peace agreement between the Colombian government and FARC guerrillas, headed by Timoleon Jimenez. On the side of “yes” was primarily President Santos, but it was also supported by many politicians not only from Colombia, but also from the foreign countries. One of the supporters of “yes” to peace, was UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. However, the campaign for “no” was also strongly supported and led by the Colombia’s populist former president, Alvaro Uribe. (Bbc news, 2016). Shortly before the plebiscite, Uribe shared his feeling about the future decision of the country with Colprensa news agency by the statement, “*My soul is not prepared to debate with criminals.*” (The Guardian, 2016b).

The results of the referendum end up unexpectedly in favor of the campaign against the peace agreement. Reportedly 50,2 % of the population who participated in decision making-procession, rejected the agreement, on the other hand, 49.8 % people voted for yes. One of the reasons why so many people voted against the peace was, that many of them thought that given agreement would let the criminals go away with the assassinations without any punishment and generally the contract was too permissive.

After the plebiscite, Uribe stated, that he is not completely against the peace, but he requires the renegotiation of some parts of the agreement, for instance, eligibility for public office of the former FARC criminals, already convicted of the war crimes (Bbc news, 2016).

The final result of the plebiscite forced the negotiators to continue in the talks and finally they came out with the modification of more than 50 points of agreement. Despite objections by many people, who rejected and so that suspended the signing of the original deal, President Juan Manuel Santos and rebel leader Timochenko signed revised peace agreement. According to Uribe, the agreement should have been submitted for consideration to the critics, before the final signing. Political analyst Alejo Vargas from the National University opposed to this claim by statement: *“No peace agreement would have been good for them because they are playing politics with it, with a view to the 2018 presidential elections.”* The opponents of the peace are unsatisfied and says that the most important points are still unresolved (The Guardian, 2016c).

The following figure shows the distribution of votes, according to individual provinces. The center of the country, where the mountains and jungle are concentrated and where the guerilla groups were operating the most, more residents voted for no.

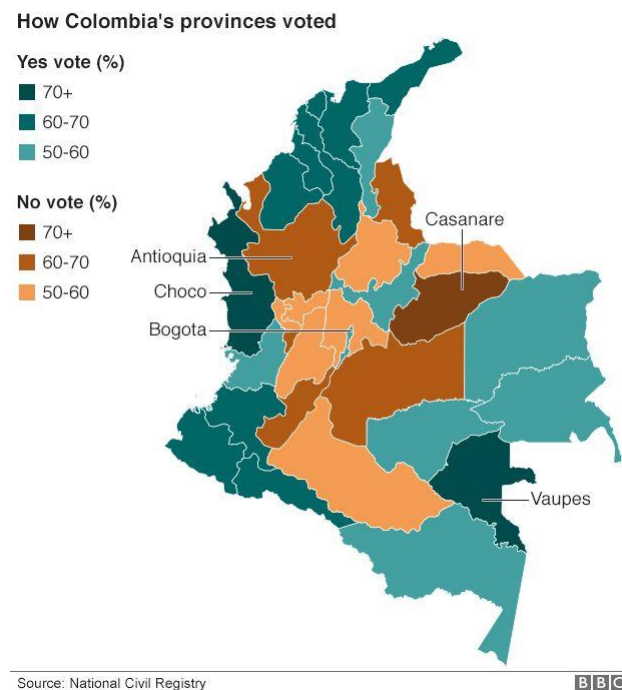


Figure 3. How Colombia’s provinces voted, (source: Bbc news, 2017)

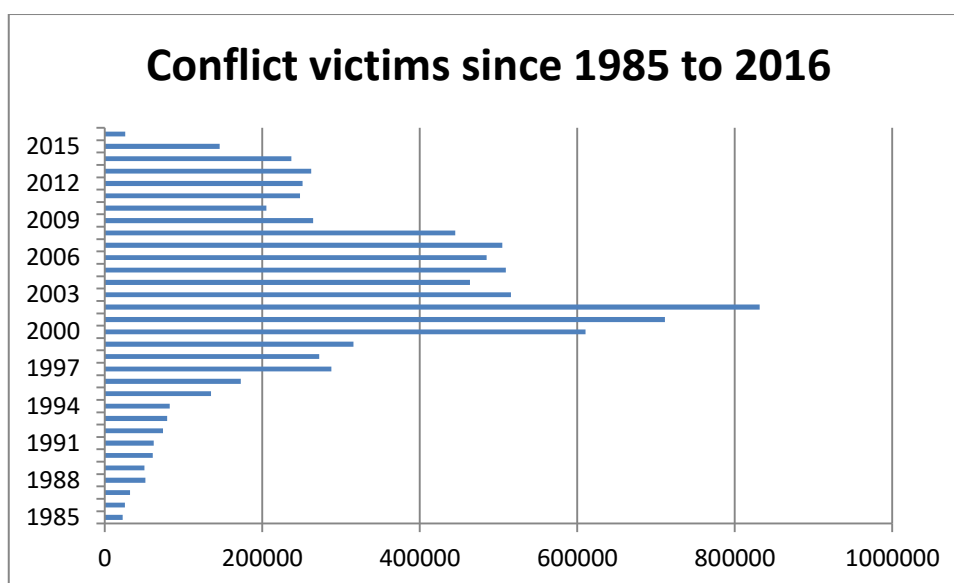


Figure 4. Conflict victims since 1985 to 2016 (source: Colombias Report, 2016)

Previous figure demonstrated the numbers of victims during the past year with the highest increase in 2002.

## 6.5 Final peace agreement

After four long years full of discusiones and negotiations between FARC and central government of Colombia, represented by President Santos, they finally achieved peace agreement in 2016. Even though, FARC was not the only guerrilla group, still acting in the country, for sure it was the biggest one<sup>13</sup>. Thus, after more than 50 years of the nation's civil conflict, it is perceived as a great success (E-International Relations, 2017).

Preliminarily, to highlight one of the most important points of the final agreement - Compensation of the victims, according to current president of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, *“What victims demand most — even more than reparation or justice — is the truth. The victims want to know what happened, how it happened, when it happened, where it happened and why it happened.”* (Colombia reports, 2017a).

The Final Peace Agreement reached at the Negotiation Table in Havana between the Government of Colombia and the FARC–EP, contains the following items. The objective of given topics are to reach long-lasting peace by setting up important

<sup>13</sup> FARC counted 6 000 fighters in 2016 (Bloomberg, 2016).

changes regarding to the post-conflict situation. The Items includes an accords, however to facilitate the understanding of the whole issue, there are mentioned only some of them.

According to the Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz(2016), Colombia's agreement includes following points:

**Item 1 Toward a new Colombian countryside: Comprehensive Rural Reform (CRR)**

- The main objective is to eliminate high differential between the countryside and cities. Another aim needed to achieve is to develop living conditions especially in the rural territories and generally for all citizens. As an integral part of the CRR, it is necessary to involve all regions of Colombia in order to decrease the level of poverty, support equality and promote better conditions linked to the rights of the citizenship.

**Item 2 Political participation: a democratic opportunity to build peace**

- In order to end the conflict and improve the participacion on long-lasting peace forming and consolidation, it is needed to be allowed to participate new powers in the political scene and to increase the level of democracy. According to the final agreement, there should be deeper and broather communication between different political parties and so that the consolidation of pluralism. Concerning the political involvement, there should be always proper guarantees to develop future visions. One part of the agreement also refers to the elimination of violence regarding all Colombians. It should contribute to wide open democracy space.

**Item 3 End of the conflict**

- The aim of given point is to completely end up with the hostile kind of communication and other offensive acts not only between the Colombian Armed Forces and FARC, but across all the country between the citizens. Further, lay down the arms and became ready to the reincorporation of the FARC membres into the civilian life, which develop more the following structure.

- Other point, which contains Item 3 is “Reincorporation of the FARC-EP into civilian life – in economic, social and political matters – in accordance with their interests”. The aim is to achieve powerful structure of constant peace, not only temporarily, but for the longer period of time. Thus, it is necessary to provide effective reincorporation including the social, economic and political structure. The reincorporation is possible under the circumstances of termination of the internal conflict, support and maintain the peace environment across the country and to make sure not to happen these kind of conflict again. Elimination of the threats that could possibly cause new conflict.
- Another part of the agreement talks about strict politic and intervention against social or political movements and illegal organization participating on the crimes such as homicides, massacres or human rights abusing. Targets like a criminal organization related to the paramilitary side, would be persecuted as well. The actions against the peace building would be punished. There are several certain ways how to achieve these aims and it consists in establishing proper programmes.

#### **Item 4 Solution to the problem of the illicit drugs**

- In order to prevent conflict coming from the persistence of drug producing, there is going to be implemented “National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Crops Used for Illicit Purposes“ and given program will concentrate to the specific affected territories, where the crops were used to illicit cultivate.
- For working on the peace process and its permanent maintenance it is nearly an inherent part to eliminate widely discussed drug problem. It contains also the illegally cultivated crops for the illicit use purposes and following distribution and trade of the drugs. Thus, there were set up new suggestions to fight against drug production and subsequent trade, organized crime and on contrary promote the equal access to the human rights and general health care.
- Support the voluntary substitution of crops used for illegal business and develop alternative agrarian development.



### **Item 5 Agreement regarding the victims of the conflict**

- There has been decided one of the highest level of importance – victim compensation.
- There will be created the instrument by which should be achieved the aims of this part of the agreement - “Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-Repetition”. Given system is composed of many programs in order to achieve the aims that has been set. The main task of the given program is to face the impunity linked with investigation of serious crimes, as already mentioned.
- Clarifying the truth, looking for the missing people and providing reparations for any kind of abuses that has been caused.

### **Item 6 Implementation and verification mechanisms**

- The objective is to verify and monitor the implementation of components included in the final agreement and additional solving the potential conflicts. The part of the agreement is Committee, which deals with the follow-up, verification and dispute resolution. There will be an observer mechanism serving to the control for the international community and so helping to guarantee fully usage of final agreement in practice.
- In order to achieve transparency implementation, there should be created Integrated Information System to facilitate the access to the important informations.

As already mentioned, first peace agreement was rejected by voters in referendum on 2nd of October 2016. However six weeks after the referendum, the Colombian government reached a new agreement. According to the revised and subsequently changed some points of the final accord, the both parties, FARC or Colombian government, for example agreed on the compensation for victims using their own assets and meanwhile the deal is going to enter into force, they will not take any of the special transitory seats in Congress. Due to the afford to achieve the peace, president Santos won Nobel Peace Price. USA declared their fully cooperative attempts with Colombian

government in order to promote effective implementation of the final agreement (Bloomberg, 2016).

In 2016 Plan Colombia celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. 10 billion of US Dollars was spend on the fight against drug. The approaches of the USA left thousands of killed, including massacres, mass graves, and death squads. The American fight against drug traffickers was supposed to decrease export of cocaine of 50% till 2006. However, Colombia is still considered as a world's number one in cocaine producing (Environmentalist against war, 2016)

## II. EMPIRICAL PART

### 7 Analysis of data

The whole research is based on the subjective feelings of the respondents and on data collected by the interview and the survey. Data were collected from 31 respondents. All respondents are age of 18 till 28 years old and are only students from Colombia. The questions were in Spanish in order to obtain more information. The questionnaires are often based on the key words and association. The targeted group has been chosen in order to obtain the information about the opinion and general overview of the young generation.

The results related to the characteristic of population, obtained from the interview, are presented in figure 5 to figures 10. The survey consists of students mainly from Colombia (94 %), and 6 % from the Czech Republic. Gender representation is 35% female and 65 % male. All of them are undergraduates and average age of the students is 21 years old (26 %). The most common type of studies is management (23 %). Current living place is very diverse. The largest representation has Bogota, with 26 % of respondents living there. Similar data show Figure 9. as a place of birth, where Bogota is again leading element with 32 % of answers.

All information about respondents are presented in the Annex 1.

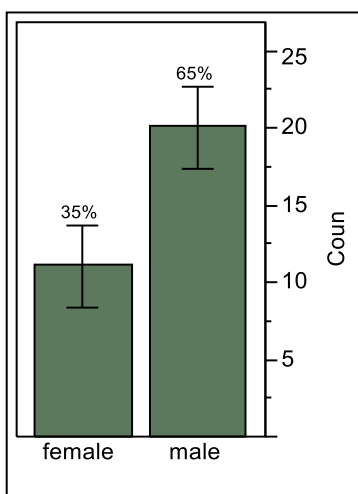


Figure 5. Gender distribution, (%)  
(source: own figure)

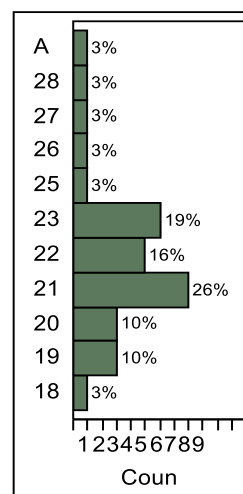


Figure 6. Age distribution, (%)  
(source: own figure)

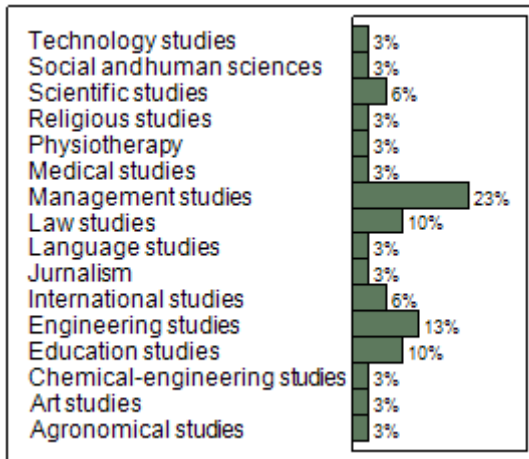


Figure 7. Typ of studies, (%)  
(source: own figure)

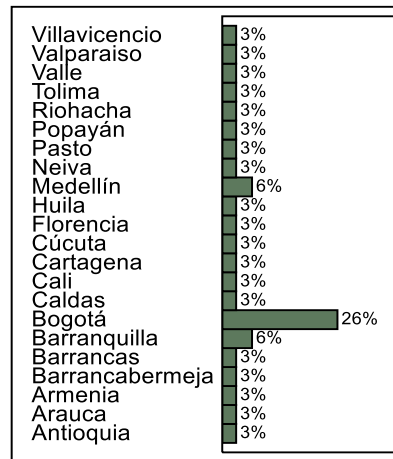


Figure 8. Current living place, (%)  
(source: own figure)

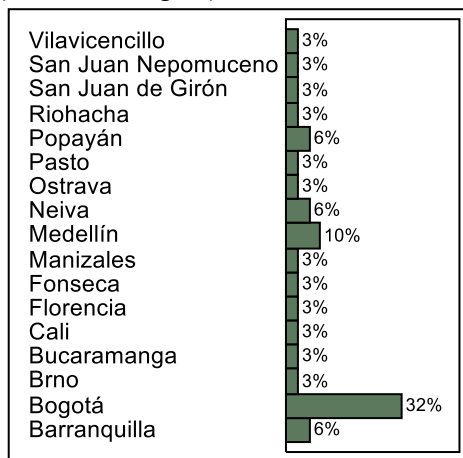


Figure 9. Place of birth, (%)  
(source: own figure)

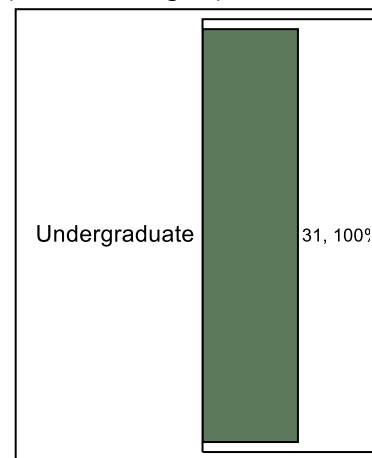


Figure 10. Level of studies, (%)  
(source: own figure)

### 1 The main association with the term “conflict”, related to the Colombian history

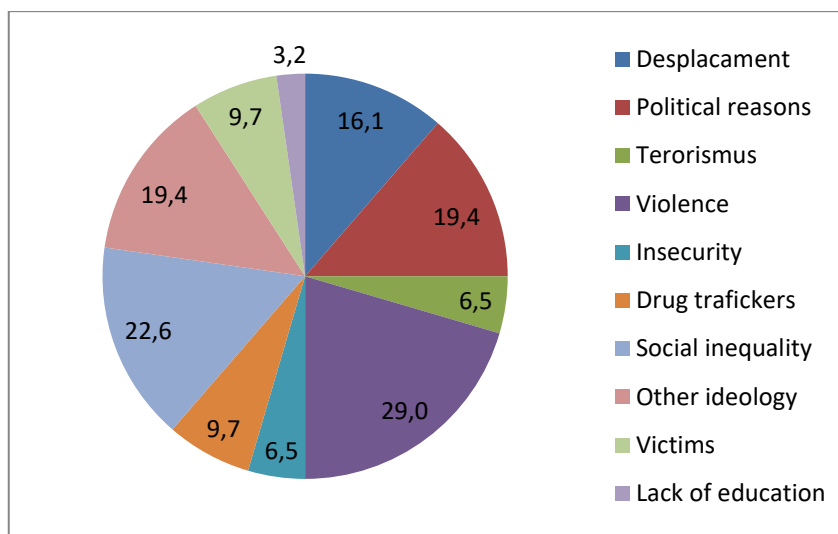


Figure 11. Associations with the conflict, (%) (source: own figure)

The purpose of this question was to find out the predominant associations with the conflict regarding Colombian history. Taking into account the young interviewed students, who hardly remember the serious war time, the most frequent respond was the violence (almost 30 %). 22 % of respondents perceive the conflict as arising from the social inequality. Almost 20 % people see the conflict as the cause of the confrontation of different ideologies.

## 2 Opinion on peace plebiscite (referendum) and "yes" or "no" to peace

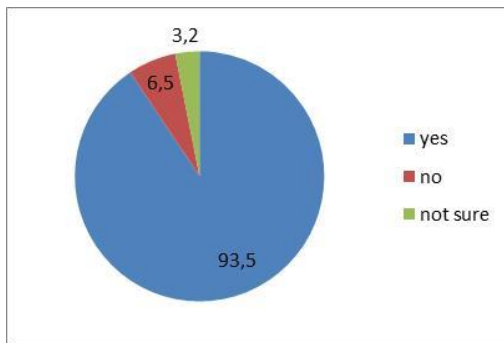


Figure 12. yes/no to referendum, (%) (source: own figure)

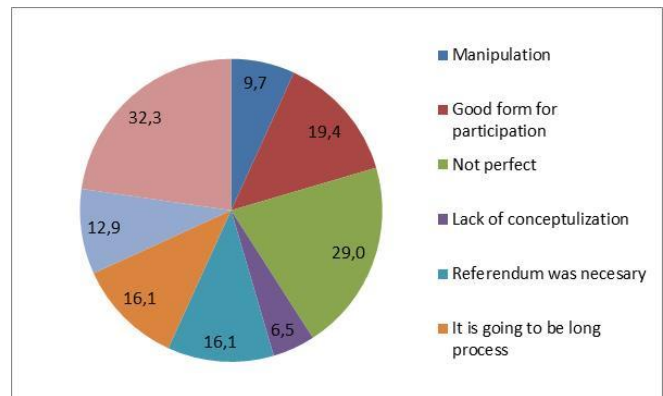


Figure 13. Opinion about referendum, (%) (source: own figure)

Majority of the people perceive the referendum about peace as a great opportunity for development of the country. More than 60 % of students found it positively to participate on the state decision making in order to express their opinion for better future of the country for residents of Colombia. Even though that almost everybody voted for „yes“ and see the referendum as very usefull tool to achieve better development of the country, around 30 % of the respondents shows lack of satisfaction with the structure of referendum (related to achiving new peace agreement anyway) and more than 50 % admit that generally the peace proces is going to take a very long time due tu its imperfections. From the obtained data results, it is possible to state that almost every single respondent has very strict opinion on the referendum. Only 3 % are not sure whether they should have to vote for yes or no. Respondent 3 said *„it is quite known that it contains some parts that are often very unfair, but thanks to the referendum it was possible to change the final text of peace agreement“*. According to author’s personal experience from the mutual communication with the Colombian people (it must be added that they are not students and they are not considered as a

participants in the interview), they often showed dissatisfaction with the low level of knowledge about the agreement, before participating on the referendum. It demonstrates the statement of the responder 11 “before the referendum, people often did not even read the agreement between the FARC and Central government.”

### 3. Question related to opinion about current president Juan Manuel Santos.

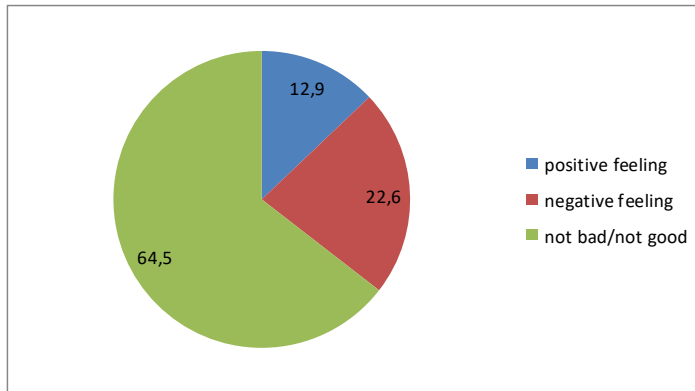


Figure 14. President Santos level of popularity among Colombian population, (%) (source: own figure)

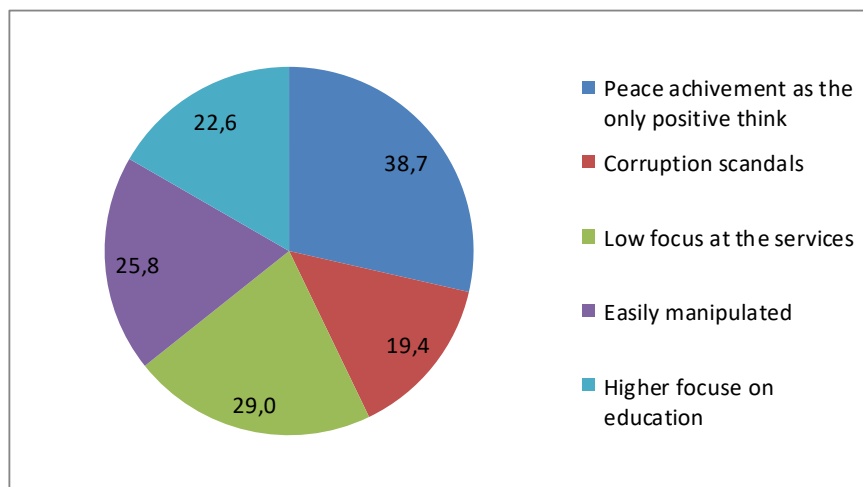


Figure 15. The main targets to focus, (%) (source: own figure)

There is markable occurrence (more than 60 %) of responses about the connection between the President Santos and corruption behaviour. Although responders are not strictly accusing him from any kind of corruption cases, according to respondent, there is still evident public unrest due to the lack of policy of investigation. “He is very pasiv president, speaking about solving the corruption cases or attacks by other terrorist groups than just FARC.” This kind of answer is broadly occurring in the context of the only positive thing – achieving peace with FARC. It seems that the responders have opinion that President Pastrana has always been searching for the

“peace process topic” kind of conversation, but at the expense of low policy of the services and other important thing to running the state.

On the other hand, positive thing on its presidency is, according respondent 8, *“increase of foreign investments, because of the publicity generated abroad from the peace process and the benefits that can have this for entrepreneurs, under the condition of investing in our country.”*

#### 4. How did the conflict affected you

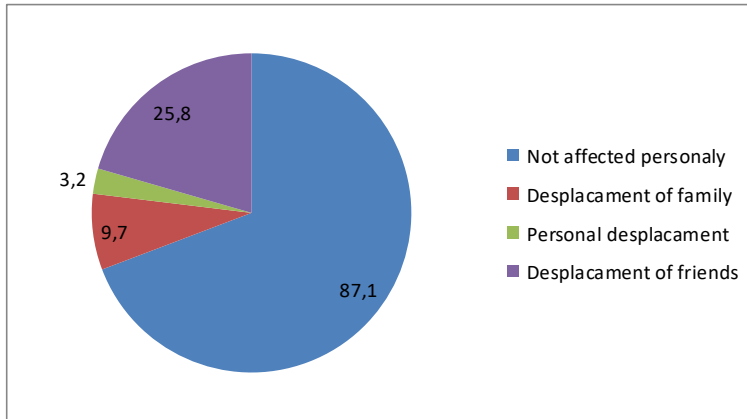


Figure 16. Level of influence by conflict, (%) (source: own figure)

Logically speaking, the majority of the respondents answered that they were not affected personally by the violence and for sure it is due to their low age. Anyway, 30 % of responders has an experience with displacement of the close family members and almost 30 % had to face the displacement of their friends. Only one respondent had to face the displacement personally. Respondent 8 is sharing personal stories about his close family friends *“I have seen how they kill their families, how they torture them in dirty and pestilent camps, of both the guerrillas and the Colombian army (which has also committed great crimes) and yet, I have also seen how these same people who have suffered so much, today they totally agree that this peace process and keep going. And I am sure that it is hardly possible that other people in Colombia feel what they felt.”* The statement is admirably referring to the people, who despite of very hard personal life experiences are still willing to focus on the future of country and next generations.

## 5. The level of information about the final peace agreement

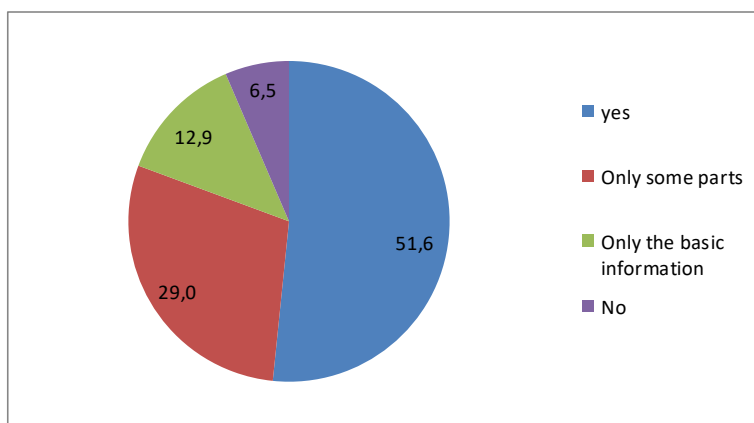


Figure 17. Level of information about the final peace agreement, (%) (source: own figure)

According to the Figure 17, more than a half of the interviewed students are familiar with the points of the final peace agreements. Approximately 30 % said that they know only some parts of the agreement, the ones they are interested in and 12 % knows only the basic informations. From the data received it clearly states that almost nobody is totally uninterested in the topic of the peace agreement. It is important to point out the importancy of the proper selection of the press in order to obtain clear informations. Respondent 17 states *“I do not know the details of the final peace agreement, however according the news, it seems to me that people from FARC are going to reach more benefits that the people who really need it, for example children from Guajira, where is significant lack of water, or the region Choco and Nariño – the most forgettable region from all the country.”* As a positive thing can be regarded the fact that independently of each other, 16 % student are having public discussions on their universities.

## 6. Positive and negative things about Colombia

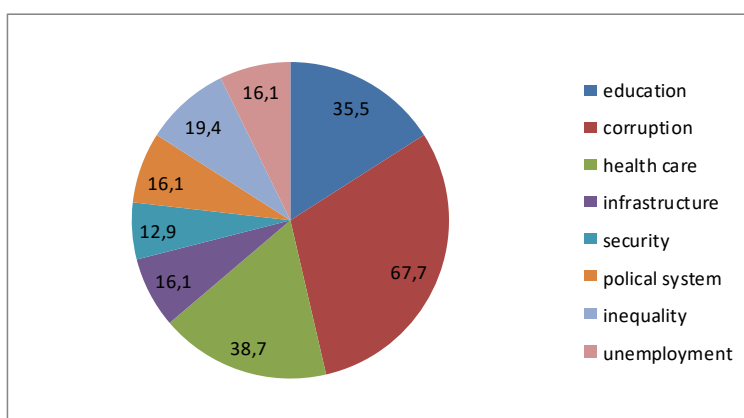


Figure 18. Positive associations about Colombia, (%) (source: own figure)



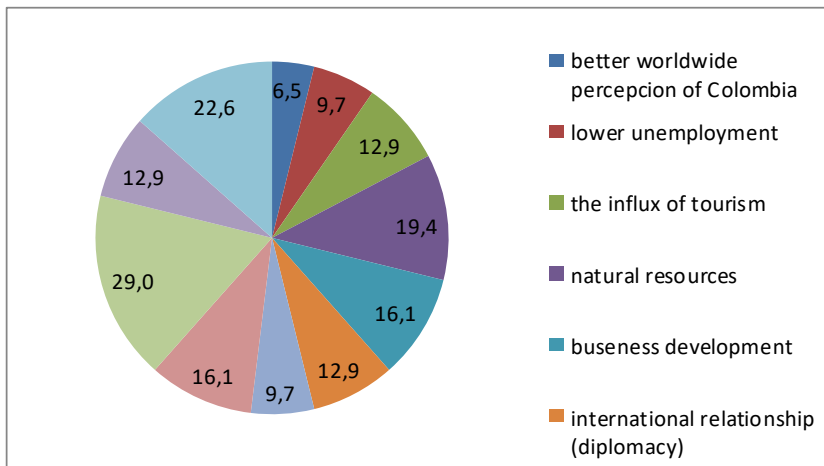


Figure 19. Negative associations about Colombia, (%) (source: own figure)

The question was examining the perception of Colombians, how they see their country and if the conflict history influenced the point of view only to the negative perception. To start firstly with the positive judgment, from the Figure 6a, it is evident that Colombians are still very proud on their country in relation to the natural resources and hard working people. More than 90 % of students see the most positive thing peace achievement, which according to the 20 % of respondents is linked to better world wide perception of Colombia and business development.

On the other hand the negative part of the perception is quite comprehensive as well. The most importance undoubtedly has the corruption. As the history already experienced various kind of corruption scandals, and political scene is still unpersuasive in reassure the social concern. As already known from the theoretical part, one of the main causes of the civil conflict was the inequality, which, as obvious from the data research, is still stumbling block. It declares the statement of the responder 12 “*corruption is the cancer of our society*”. Across the negative emerged the idea already mentioned in the question about the president. Respondent 18 is convinced that there is much more needed to focus on to political or social structure than just the peace process with FARC, to achieve better living conditions in Colombia. State, as a responsible institution, that should provide proper services, is considered as a neglected problem, especially services as a health care 38 % or education 35 %.

## 7. The future prospects for territories once occupied by FARC from the respondents point of view

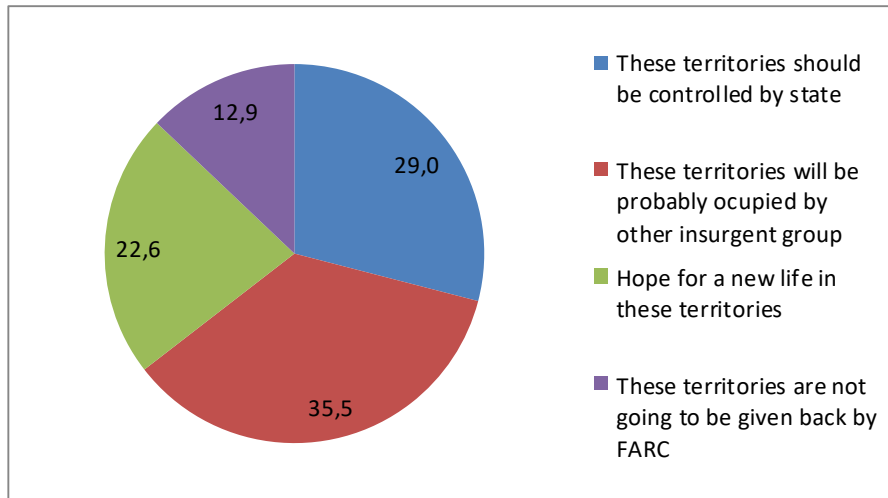


Figure 20. Prospects for the given territories, (%) (source: own figure)

One of the most frequent opinion from the research (approximately 30 %), is is that these territories should be controlled by state in order to prevent occupation of territories by other armed group. It links to the next similar opinion. 35 % students are already convinced that after the FARC leave given countryside, the areas are going to be occupied by other insurgent groups. Just over 20 % of respondents believe in efficient development program that is going to be implemented in these rural areas. According to the statement of respondent 13, *“I am going to be positive, in these areas it I possible to start a new life, but taking into account, that it can take more than the time of one generation”*.

## 8. An overview of development program implemented by government in these territories

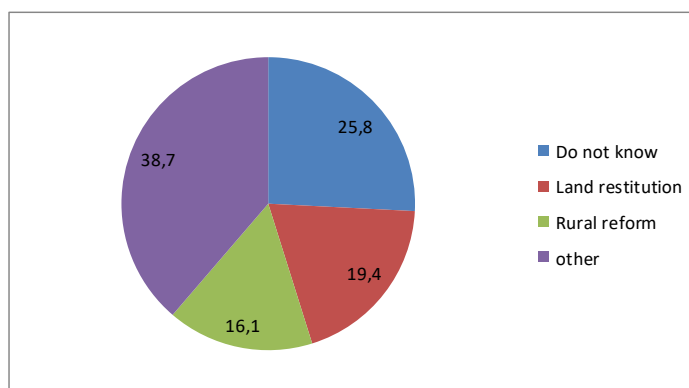


Figure 21. Awareness about implemented programs, (%) (source: own figure)

Given topic seeks the general awareness about the implementation of the development program in the territories once occupied of FARC and what is the most common answer. Due to the diversity of the answers, it is not possible to state, which kind of development program is the most widely known. However, to point out the interesting statement referring to the future of given territories, respondent 23 said „These programs seek to train peasants to grow fruits and vegetables that have export potential, replacing the coca crops which are grown on the orders of the armed groups.” Given program is already about to be implemented and according to Colombia Reports (2017) farmers who grow almost 34 % of Colombia’s coca agree participate in the government

### 9. Criminal people and punishment

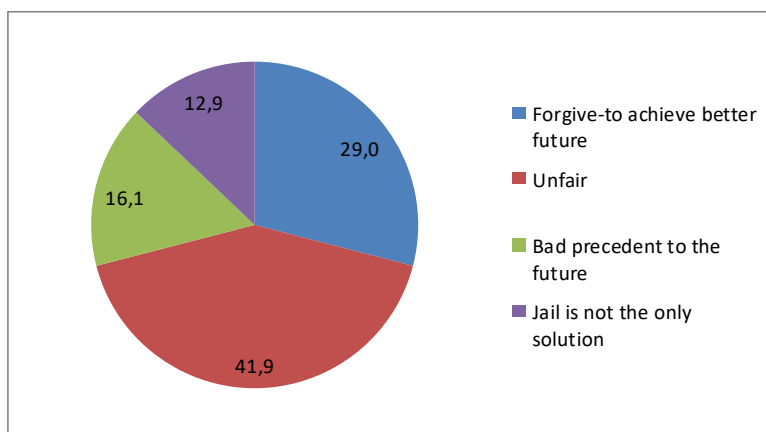


Figure 22. Punishment for criminals, (%) (source: own figure)

One of the most common topics, used by the opposition, is a low level of punishment for the more or less serious crimes, which has been committed by former members of FARC during the time of armed struggle. According to Figure 19, the research shows that 40 % of the respondents are concerned about unfair justice and are convinced to punish all kind of crimes. Around 16 % of students responded that in case of low level of punishment, it would be bad precedent for the future and showed discomposure of committing the crimes in future, without being punished. On the other hand, data shows high willingness to “forgive” the past in order to achieve better living conditions for future Colombia. According to respondent 1, for many victims the most important thing is not the revenge, but to know the true. *“To get these people to jail it is not the solution. I consider much more important to get know the true and reach the*

*reparation who deserve it.” Taken on the whole, data shows readiness of the Colombians to let go the crimes which has been committed in the past and face to the future in peace. It demonstrate the statemet of respondent 8, “If we continue to look for a major punishment for the perpetrators of violence, it can take years and years and still not find the way how responsible people should pay for their crimes.”.*

It is hard to say that for young people who haven't lived in that time full of violence

## 8 Future prospects

During the interviews, the respondents often mentioned corruption as one of the most important tasks that should be managed in the future if the peace agreement will have any change to success. Based on the interviews, corruption arose as one of the most important aspects which should be taken into account, especially in the areas where the conflict took place because it could easily jeopardize all efforts carried out during all the past years to reach the final peace agreement. The rising threat of corruption is especially in the areas where the conflict took place. Regarding the historical events, as already mentioned the “Colombian corruption scandal” for instance, people in Colombia are confused whether to have confidence in the government officials or rather not. Despite of long process of civil war full of corruption scandals this aspect is still relevant nowadays.

Based on the literature review and the opinion of the respondents, it is essential to gain knowledge and understanding of the past traumatic experience to avoid the future repetition of such a devacle in the country. Aspects as a better land distribution (one of the causes of the conflict), is essential and it is expected that a better wealth and capital distribution will lead to decreasing the poverty and shortening the economic disparities and inequality.

It is necessary to take into account the youth of the respondents, who did not experience so much violence, nonetheless these young people shows a high measure of sympathy with the victims. Generally speaking, students are convinced that the government should take very good care about the victims and integrate them into the civil society and provide them with tools (education, financial aid, health care) among others. This is one of the reasons, why majority of the students support the peace agreement.

The results obtained from the questionnaire demonstrate the willingness to deepen the peace process and to continue with the development programs and fully implementation of given methods in order to achieve better quality of life. According to the research, Colombians are aware, that the peace process is not a “silver bullet” and the whole process is going complex and will take a long time so that it is necessary to be patient with the implementation of all programs to see the results.

In order to reach better living conditions, it is necessary the proper functioning of the state institutions, which guarantee rational levels of governance that allows the whole society to develop and prosper. The development of the inclusive societies is one of the most important

With regard to drug problem production in Colombia, almost 20 % of respondents, independently on one type of question, answered that they see the opportunity in development of the country by eliciting cultivating coca crops followed by drug production. The way how to achieve it is to focus on replacement of coca crop in another profitable crops possible to cultivate by the farmers. According to Colombia reports (2017d) this plan is gradually filled, because farmers in charge of growing almost 34 % of coca in the country confirmed the participation in program focused on replacing illicit crops with a legal alternative.

To prevent the recurrence of similar negative events as the civil conflict, it is mainly up to government not to neglect social exclusion and support participation of the communities really taken into account their necessities, for instance, provide farmers with the financial aid, technical training courses, which is more discussed in rural development plan and broadly spread awareness about respect for the human rights.

## 9 Conclusion

The aim of the thesis was to analyze the conflict background, ongoing implementation of the peace process and general public opinion of the Colombian students on the conflict, peace agreement and how they perceive the future challenges in relation to the peace agreement. The questions tried to investigate how the aspect of the war influenced the opinion of young generation and their view of the current Colombia.

The theoretical part describes the roots of violence, main historical events, selected most important groups, who participated in the conflict, land tenure, with reference to the land distribution and description of peace process. The empirical part presents obtained data results from the interview with 31 respondents. To data collection, the research was conducted from quantitative technique by semi structured questionnaire. The answers reveals the subjective perspective of respondents on the whole conflict and peace agreement.

As a young generation, chosen to participate in the research, it was assumed that they are going to agree and be highly interested in the individual parts of the final agreement, taking into account the future decision making, which will concern them. This hypothesis was confirmed only partially. As already mentioned, more than 50 % of respondents are sure they know all the parts of final agreement. Taking into account the high importance of the knowledgement of the topic, which is going to influenc every single resident in Colombia, the results are not as expected. Anyway, as expected, the majority of the students are supporting peace agreement.

However the results of the research show the willingness of the young generation, participants of the research, to “forgive” the past committed crimes and rather to focus more in deeping more the peace implementation process. Taking into account the statement of the participants, the signing of the peace agreement with the guerrillas, represents an opportunity to solve the problems of the country.

The interviewed students are aware, that negligent implementation of the peace agreement can not pave the way to sustainable development for country neither for the populations. According to the data obtained, Colombians are fully aware of the beautifull and magical qualities of the country which they live in. For young generation, it is essencial to resolve the inheritance of the conflict full of uncertainty and not to turne it over the future generations.

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## List of Abbreviations

**ACCU** Peasant Self-Defense Forces of Cordoba and Uraba

**AUC** United Self-Defense Forces

**CRR** Comprehensive Rural Reform

**DMZ** Demilitarized Zone

**ELN** National Liberation Army

**EPL** Popular Liberation Army

**FARC** Revolutionary Forces of Colombia

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

**MAS** Death to Kidnappers

**UN** United Nations

**UP** Patriotic Union



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## Annexes

### Annex 1: List of questions asked in interview

The first informations are related to the characteristic of population, followed by the questions.

Gender

Civil status

Occupation

Typ of studies

Birth place

Current living place

1. What does the term “conflict” means for you related to Colombian history?
2. What do you thing about the peace plebiscite, are you for “yes” or “no” to peace?
3. What do you thing about Presiden Juan Manuel Santos?
4. Did the conflict affect you in the personal way, familial, work or other way?
5. Do you know the detailes of the most important aspects, included in the agreement?
6. Could you name some positive and negative things about Colombia?
7. What do you thing that is going to happened to the territories once occupied of FARC, and now should be occupied by farmers?
8. Do you know what kind of development program has government already implemented in these territories?
9. What do you thing about those criminals who commited very serious crimes without going to the jail?

## Anexe 2: Basics information about the research sample

Participant	Gender	Civil status	Age	Type of studies	Birth place	Current living place	Level of studies
1	M	single	22	Scientific studies	Riohacha	Riohacha	U
2	M	single	21	Technology studies	Popayán	Popayán	U
3	M	single	22	Language studies	Barrancas	Fonseca	U
4	M	single	23	Management studies	Valle	Cali	U
5	M	single	23	Religious studies	Medellín	Medellín	U
6	M	single	28	Scientific studies	Huila	Popayán	U
7	M	single	21	Management studies	Bogotá	Bogotá	U
8	M	single	19	International studies	Caldas	Manizales	U
9	M	single	20	Jurnalism	Villavicencio	Vilavicencillo	U
10	M	single	21	Engineering studies	Barranquilla	Barranquilla	U
11	M	single	22	Law studies	Florencia	Florencia	U
12	M	single	22	Engineering studies	Antioquia	Medellín	U
13	F	single	27	Art studies	Cali	Ostrava	U
14	M	single	20	International studies	Arauca	Bogotá	U
15	F	single	26	Agronomical studies	Tolima	Brno	U
16	F	single	21	Physiotherapy	Bogotá	Bogotá	U
17	F	single	23	Management studies	Pasto	Pasto	Ue
18	F	single	23	Education studies	Armenia	Neiva	U
19	F	single	19	Social and human sciences	Barranquilla	Barranquilla	U
20	F	single	20	Education studies	Valparaiso	Medellín	U
21	M	single	21	Management studies	Bogotá	Bogotá	U
22	M	single	21	Law studies	Bogotá	Bogotá	U
23	F	single	21	Management studies	Medellín	Bogotá	U

24	F	single	23	Engineering studies	Bogotá	Bogotá	U
25	F	single	22	Management studies	Bogotá	Bogotá	U
26	M	single	21	Management studies	Bogotá	Bogotá	U
27	M	single	18	Engineering studies	Cartagena	San Juan Nepomuceno	U
28	F	single	25	Medical studies	Valpariso	Bucaramanga	U
29	M	single	23	Chemical-engineering studies	Cúcuta	San Juan de Girón	U
30	F	single	21	Law studies	Neiva	Neiva	U
31	M	single	19	Education studies	Bogotá	Bogotá	U