



**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**MECHANISMS BEHIND THE EXPANSION OF LAST INSURGENCY
ORGANIZATION ELN DESPITE THE PEACE AGREEMENT OF
COLOMBIA**

Master's Thesis

Özge Güner Özsoy

Master of Arts in Peace and Conflict Studies

August 2021



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STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I hereby declare and confirm that this master's thesis is exclusively the result of my own autonomous work based on my research and literature published, which is seen in the text and bibliography used. I also declare that no part of this thesis has been made in an inappropriate way, whether by plagiarizing or infringing.

Finally, I declare that this is written in accordance with the writing rules of the Social Sciences University of Ankara, Institute of Social Sciences.

Özge Güner Özsoy

DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis to primarily the innocent civilians and humanitarian workers who died in armed conflicts worldwide. Also, I dedicate my thesis to my beloved ones; my husband, my parents, and my siblings, who always encourage and support me throughout my life.

I also express my sincere thanks to my thesis advisor, Ersun Necati Kurtuluş, for his mentorship.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
ÖZET	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	viii
LIST OF FIGURE.....	ix
LIST OF TABLE.....	x
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER II.....	8
LITERATURE REVIEW	8
THE BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LAST INSURGENCY ORGANIZATION IN COLOMBIA: THE ELN.....	8
THE HISTORICAL VIOLENT ATTACKS OF THE ELN ASSOCIATED WITH THE PEACE TALKS	12
THE DICHOTOMY IN THE LITERATURE AND LACK OF RESEARCH ON THE ELN	17
CHAPTER III	20
METHODOLOGY	20
CHAPTER IV	31
ANALYSIS.....	31
IDEOLOGY	31
STRATEGY	39
POPULAR SUPPORT.....	46
CHAPTER V	56
DISCUSSION	56
CHAPTER VI.....	61
CONCLUSION	61
BIBLIOGRAPHY	64

APPENDIX.....	81
CURRICULUM VITAE	86



ÖZET

Bu tez, Kolombiya Barış Anlaşması'na rağmen son solcu isyan örgütü Ulusal Kurtuluş Ordusu'nun (Ejército de Liberación Nacional-ELN) genişlemesi için yeterli nedensel açıklamayı araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Kolombiya hükümeti ile o dönem Kolombiya'daki en büyük isyan örgütü olan Kolombiya Devrimci Silahlı Güçleri'nin (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-FARC) Barış Anlaşması'nı imzalamasının üzerinden dört yıl geçti. Barış Anlaşması'nın esaslarına göre; FARC silahsızlanarak siyasi temsil hakkını elde etti ve Kolombiya siyaset sahnesindeki yerini aldı, kırsal ekonomik reformlar uygulanmaya başlandı, uyuşturucu kaçakçılığıyla mücadele hızlandı, geçiş dönemi adalet politikaları tüm taraflarca gündeme alındı. Bununla birlikte, Kolombiya'da ayrıca hem Ekvador hem de Venezüella sınırında sürekli olarak genişlemeye devam eden ve bugün en eski tarihe sahip olan son sol isyan örgütü ELN, 1980'lerde başlayan önceki barış görüşmelerinde olduğu gibi 2017'de, Kolombiya hükümetiyle resmi barış görüşmelerini başlatmayı kabul etmişti. Ancak, yeni seçilen hükümetle yaşanan anlaşmazlıklar ve ELN'nin 2019 yılında Bogota'da bir polis akademisini bombalaması nedeniyle, barış görüşmeleri bir kez daha sonlandırıldı. Oysa, Kolombiya Barış Anlaşması ile başlayan mevcut süreçte ve barış şartları altında ELN yeni üyeler kazanarak genişlemesini sürdürüyor. Bugün ELN, Kolombiya'nın en büyük isyan örgütü olmasına ve genişlemesini sürdürmesine karşın, ne bir isyan örgütü olarak literatürde yeterince yer edinebilmiş ne de son dört yıldır artarak devam eden coğrafi genişlemesi ve organizasyonel büyümesi kapsamlı şekilde araştırılmıştır. İşbu tez, söz konusu olan paradoksal şartlar altında ELN'nin büyümesine yeterli düzeyde sebep gösterilebilecek örtük etkileşimli nedensel mekanizmaları, diğer bir deyişle, ELN'nin ideolojisini, varlığınca söz konusu olan örgütsel stratejilerini ve son olarak ELN' ne verilen popüler desteği, nedensel süreç takibi vasıtasıyla gözlemlenmekte ve incelenmektedir. Sonuçta, mevcut literatürde şimdiye değin ELN vakası odağında kapsamlı olarak araştırılmayan bu nedensel mekanizmaların ve aralarındaki nedensel ilişkilerin kanıtlanmasıyla, ELN'nin Barış Anlaşması'na rağmen genişlemesinin yeterli açıklamasını sağlamaktadır.

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explore the sufficient causal explanation for the expansion of the last leftist insurgency organization, *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN), despite the Colombia Peace Agreement. It has already been four years since the government signed the Peace Agreement and the largest insurgency organization in Colombia, *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC). Following the primary articles of the Peace Agreement, the FARC disarmed and got the right of political representation and took its place in the political sphere of Colombia; the rural economic reforms have started to be implied, countering to drug trafficking has accelerated, the transitional justice policies have been already welcomed. However, the remaining last leftist insurgency organization, the ELN, now with the most extended history, has continually expanded in Colombia as well both across the border of Ecuador and Venezuela. On the other hand, in 2017, the ELN accepted the formal peace talks with the Colombian government as similar to previous peace talks that began in the 1980s. However, one more time, the peace talks were ended because of the disagreements with the newly elected government and the ELN's car bombing at a police academy in Bogotá, 2019. Followingly, under the conditions of the Peace Agreement, which ended the armed conflict with the largest insurgency organization, ELN continues to expand throughout the new presence with a more significant number of members. Either this question or even the ELN itself is still not well-scoped and inquired in the literature. In this thesis, the implicit interacting causal mechanisms, the ideology of ELN, the organizational strategies during its existence, and popular support for the ELN are observed by the causal process tracing. In the end, through the evidence of these causal mechanisms and the causal relations among them, the sufficient explanation for the expansion of the ELN despite the Peace Agreement provides more details than before in the literature.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CICAS	The Center for International Security and Cooperation
CINEP	El Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular
COCE	Central Command
CPT	Causal Process Tracing
DINAL	Dirección Nacional
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
GNB	La Guardia Nacional Bolivariana
NACLA	The North American Congress on Latin America
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OPROB	Observatory for Protection of Child Rights and Welfare
PDA	Polo Democrático Alternativo
RULAC	The Rule of Law in Armed Conflicts

LIST OF FIGURE

Figure 1.1 Cross Border Expansion of the ELN	4
Figure 1.2 The Trend in the Size of the ELN 2016-2020.....	5
Figure 3.1 The Proposed Causal Relation	29
Figure 4.1 The War Fronts of the ELN in Colombia	52
Figure 4.2 The Municipalities where the ELN is Active	53
Figure A.1 The Political Map of Colombia.....	82



LIST OF TABLE

Table 3.1 Implementation of Causal-Process Tracing (CPT).....41



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although Colombia is still challenging with the armed groups, especially the last leftist insurgents in the 21st century, in the 1980s, Colombia was one of the prominent states in Latin America that came to the table for peace negotiations with those groups (Nussio, 2020). During approximately fifty years, several attempts to peace negotiation have been made by both the governments and the armed groups; however, until the 2010s, the attempts became unsuccessful (Tellez, 2019). Starting with the 2010s, the Colombian government has changed its counterinsurgency policies, in other words, the negative trend it inherited from the previous government. Thanks to the peace-oriented new policies, the efforts for peace negotiations also got support from prominently Latin Americas and others around the world (Maldonado, 2017; Tellez, 2019). Hence, in 2012 the representatives of both *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia in English, and the government met intending to end the conflict with the FARC in Havana, Cuba.

As a consequence of the process, the FARC and the government bilaterally signed the Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace on 24 November 2016. However, the agreement's content was revised in accordance with the negative Referendum result (Tellez, 2019). The last version of the Peace Agreement consists of the six parts; comprehensive rural reform; political participation; reintegration into civil life, transitional justice; solution to the illicit drugs problem; implementation; verification, and public endorsement (Peace Agreement Database, 2016). Soon after the Peace Agreement, the homicide rate throughout Colombia fell to its lowest level in the last four decades (Arredondo, 2019).

Indeed, the four years of peace negotiations with FARC had several innovative characteristics. The five essential innovations in the field of conflict transformation

included by the peace negotiations between the Colombian government and FARC could be summarized as; a well-founded framework for the conflict transformation not for the conflict termination, inclusive talks with the participation of victims, and the grassroots representatives such as gender submissions, emphasis on root causes as undeveloped rural areas and drug trafficking, preparation for the implementation phase of the agreement (Herbolzheimer, 2016). Due to those characteristics, the expectations from the Peace Agreements have been raised at the beginning of the implementation period (Herbolzheimer, 2016; Colchester, Felix; Henao Izquierdo, Laura; Lustenberger, Philipp). However, one of the perilous conditions for the end of civil war in Colombia seemed as still be there, ideologically most robust leftist insurgency organization of Colombia, *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN), National Liberation Army in English. (Felter & Renwick, 2017; Strategic Comments, 2021).

After almost a year later signed the Peace Agreement with the FARC, in 2017, the government of Colombia announced the ceasefire ELN as the first attempt at peace negotiations. The timing of the ceasefire and the announcement is noteworthy because two days after the announcement, Pope Francis visited Colombia and gave the message for justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation (Strategic Comments, 2017). While the peace talks with ELN started in Ecuador, 2017, it was moved to Cuba due to the rejection of Ecuador as guarantor state against continuing violence of the ELN (Ramirez, 2018). 2018 was the most critical year with regards to the possibility of peace with ELN because Colombia tried to pass the exam of the first legislative election since the Peace Agreement. Not surprisingly, the most favored conservative candidate Ivan Duque was elected as the next president of Colombia. Unfortunately, Ivan Duque has opposed the peace agreement with the FARC and dialogue with the ELN (Ramirez, 2018). A few months later the election, the ELN conducted a car bomb attack on the General Santander National Police Academy in Bogotá; as a result of that, the Colombians protested the attack the president Duque stopped the peace talks with the ELN, even he demanded the extradition and arrest of the ELN's negotiation delegation in Cuba (The Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2019; Dayton, 2019; Rettberg, 2020). Even until the Peace Agreement the ELN has been seen as less dangerous due to its size but ideologically stronger second

insurgency organization in the conflict history of modern Colombia (Felter & Renwick, 2017; Strategic Comments, 2021).

Meanwhile, the Peace Agreement turned into four years of implementation. The report prepared by the Kroc Institute of Peace (2021) shows that Colombia has seen a significant increase regarding the completion of implementation plans in comprehensive rural reform, illicit drug cultivation and trading, relatively political participation, and transitional justice. On the other hand, within the scope of ending the conflict and implementation and verification, the rising challenges are addressed in the report (Kroc Institute of Peace, 2021). In general, the reports indicate that the progress has been slow down for several reasons, like the Covid-19 pandemic alongside lack of political will. Some governmental entities have continued to delay the performance and verification reports (Abierta, 2021). Consequently, Colombia somehow mired down in the very first four years of the agreement. In the country, social leaders continue to be killed, ex-combatant restarted to organized individually or under the other armed groups, paramilitary groups continue to violence and announce war on the insurgencies, drug trafficking considerably continues, and the needs of the peasant are still there (Kroc Institute of Peace, 2021; Abierta, 2021).

Although the success of the Peace Agreement has been evaluated by means of the implementation plans and its indicator, one issue is even more critical regarding the future of the peace in Colombia, which is the expansion of the ELN now the long-lasting insurgency organization. Many organizations and institutes carrying out observation and reporting activities on the Conflict in Colombia have persistently reported the expansion of the ELN throughout Colombia. Indepaz, one of these institutes, addressed that the ELN is active in the 136 municipalities of Colombia, which increased in just two years by 79 municipalities (Indepaz, 2020). Furthermore, the ELN has expanded throughout both Ecuador and Venezuela (Primicias, 2021; Ellis, 2021). Nevertheless, the most critical matter regarding the ELN expansion across the borders of Ecuador and Venezuela is that ELN has set an ideological agenda and established relations with the other leftist and indigenous groups in these two countries. With reference to the article published by Primicias (2021), the ELN aims to create “*Colectivo Insurgente*” (Insurgent Collective in

English) operating under the leadership of the ELN in Sucumbios, Carchi, and Esmeraldas. Even though the ELN prioritizes the so-called indigenous guards, it also intends to spread into the urban (Primicias, 2021).

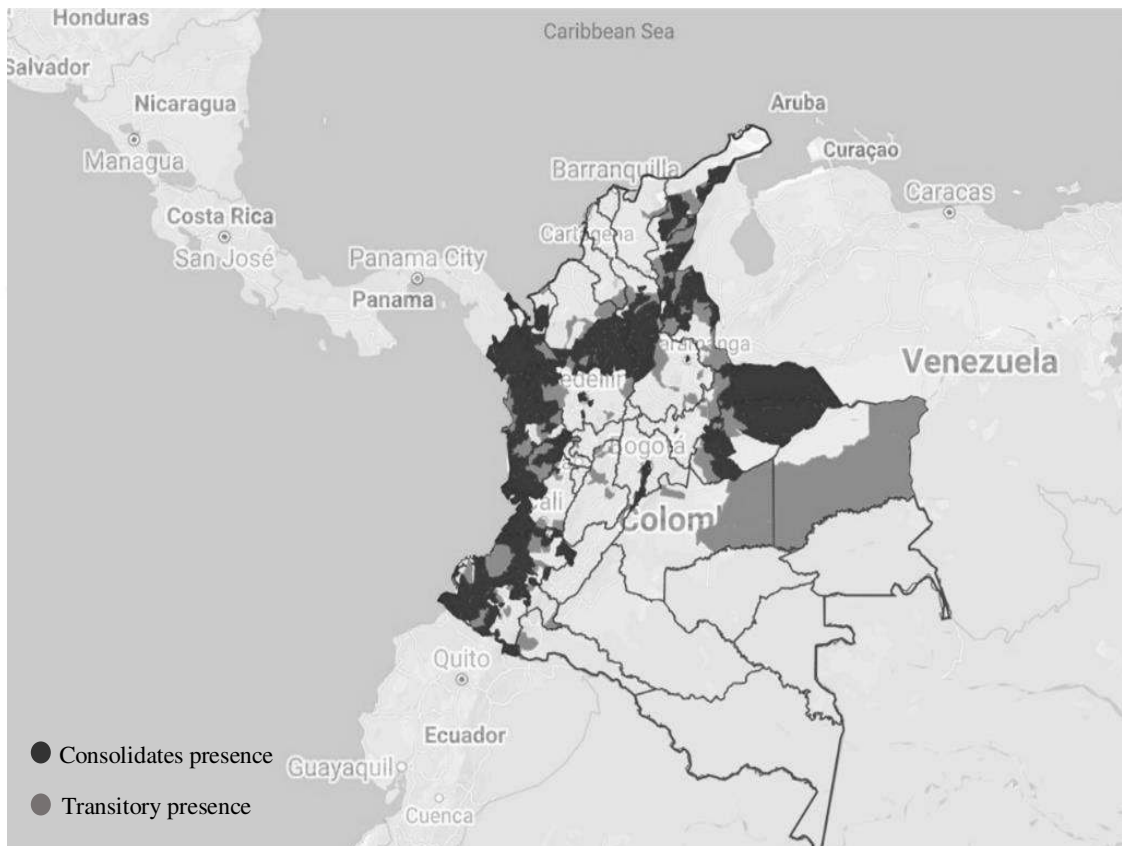


Figure 1.1 Cross Border Expansion of the ELN

Source: Colombia Reports, 2021 retrieved from

<https://colombiareports.com/the-troubled-expansion-of-colombias-eln-guerrillas/>

During this period, the number of combatants and supporters of the ELN inevitably continued to increase. At the Peace Agreement with FARC in 2016, the ELN had about 1,500 combatants, not including the supporters and affiliated groups. However, the estimated number of ELN members exceeds 5000 for 2020, not including the supporters and affiliated groups; this is almost two times in 2018 (Ellis, 2021).

The paradox is arising from that despite the innovativeness of peace negotiations, readiness on implementation of Peace Agreement, high expectations about the success of the implementation performance, the last and relevantly small in size leftist insurgency organization, the ELN, began to expand not only in Colombia exponentially also across the border of Colombia.

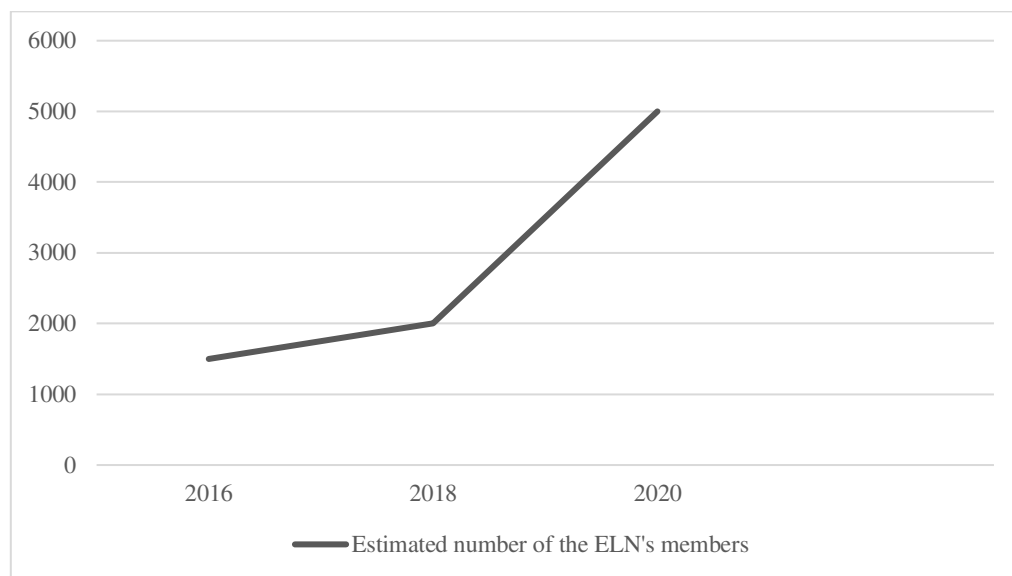


Figure 1.2 The Trend in the Size of the ELN 2016-2020

Source: R., E., Ellis (2021). The Reinforcing Activities of the ELN (National Liberation Army) in Colombia and Venezuela. *The United States Air Force Journal of the Americas*, 3(2), 194-213.

The first necessary factor for the expansion of the ELN coming to mind is that the FARC has demobilized; hereby, the ELN took control where the FARC left with the ex-member of the FARC who did not accept to lay down their weapon. However, the reports based on the observations and the research in the field did not verify that even the findings show a possible falsification. In reference to the current reports on the expansion of the ELN, firstly, the FARC dissident groups have mainly formed by themselves, mainly in the Southern not under the ELN camps, yet they sometimes allied with the ELN and sometimes did not. Secondly, the ELN has many competitors across its war fronts, most prominent ones of them the Gaitanist Self-Defense Forces of Colombia; the Popular Liberation Army; Los Pelusos, a drug trafficking guerrilla group; the Los Rastrojos cartel

(The Ideas for Peace Foundation, 2020; Idepaz, 2020; Weintraub, 2020; El Espectador, 2020; Alsema, 2021; RULAC, 2021; Americas Quarterly, 2021).

Consequently, the exponential expansion of the ELN has been accompanied by significant investments in human resources and increased confrontations with state forces significantly outside its traditional areas of strength in northeast Colombia. Indeed, this happened notwithstanding the Peace Agreement and against it. However, there are not many pieces of research on the expansion of the ELN after the 2016 Peace Agreement. It could show two fundamental reasons for the lack of research in the field; firstly, all these incidents have currently happened; hence the expansion of the ELN is a relevantly new phenomenon. Secondly, its less violent characteristic and small size in number led to less attention. Thereby, the gap between the field and the literature become visible and crucial since the newly added research would contribute to both works of literature, yet most importantly, the end of the conflict in Colombia. The rationale of my thesis just stands at that point.

By my thesis, I will try to get sufficient explanation for the research question below:

Why does the ELN expand despite the Peace Agreement?

Ceteris paribus, the central assumption, will focus on the ELN characteristics as the least inquired context regarding the possibility of peace in Colombia.

The thesis is divided up into six chapters and will first proceed with a literature review to understand how the ELN as the last insurgency in Colombia today evolved and the previous peace talks between the Colombian government and the ELN. Moreover, the literature review chapter provides critical information about the recent research on observable first outcomes of the Colombian Peace Agreement within four years. This theoretically thematic chapter serves as a backbone of the thesis to consider the ongoing process slightly. The literature review is followed by a section on methodology, which explains critical realism as the research paradigm, suitably with the paradigm single within the case study as a research strategy, and the application of causal process tracing

in approaching the causal mechanics. The following chapter deal with the propositions assumed as essential causal mechanisms: ideology, strategy, and popular support, and analyze them through causal process tracing. It is proposed that each causal mechanism triggers the following one within causal relations. Once the ideology of the ELN affects strategy selection, then the strategies affect the popular support for the existence and the ever-increasing continuity of the ELN. Thus, the proposed causal mechanisms together sufficiently determine the outcome, which is the expansion of the ELN. The comprehensive storyline displays the collected data on the three proposed causal mechanisms as the first observation of causal process tracing within each relevant chapter. Then, the comprehensive storylines get ready to ground for analysis of the evidence through other observation types of the causal process tracing: smoking guns and the confession. Second last chapter is the discussion where I discuss the findings and analysis results. In the final chapter, I sum up the overall research and assess the possibility for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter provides an overview of the literature on the ELN and an assessment of the new possible peace agreement with it. The literature review of the thesis is organized regarding essential context to address the general framework in which the research method will be applied. Since the research question mentions the Colombian Peace Agreement, which is also vital to understand the counterfactual outcomes other than the examined one, the latest types of research on either success or failure of the Peace Agreement draw a thematic subline in the review. Thanks to the thematic differentiation on the Peace Agreement outcomes, it is possible to recognize the gaps among the research and contribute to the research field. Therefore, this chapter is divided into three parts; the brief history of the last insurgency organization in Colombia, the ELN, the historical violence attacks of the ELN associated with the peace negotiations, and the dichotomy in the literature regarding the Colombian Peace Agreement and lack of research on the ELN.

Furthermore, this chapter has been updated pursuant to the latest sources throughout the research process. Indeed, the updated review helped maintain an open mind regarding the conclusions drawn from the findings and externally validate the research findings, which aligns with the evidence observations made regarding the process tracing.

THE BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LAST INSURGENCY ORGANIZATION IN COLOMBIA: THE ELN

After the independence, the political history of modern Colombian witnessed the acute separation of the Conservative and Liberal parties. The two-party system of Modern Colombia faced crises several times, yet one of them became a turning point for political history named “*la Violancia*” in 1948 (Daly, 2014; Dodd, 2018; Sanchez et al., 2005).

The excessive incidents were started after the assassination of Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, who was the presidential candidate of the Liberal party (Offstein, 2003). Even though “*la Violancia*” ended with a power-sharing pact named National Front between Conservative and Liberal parties in, 1954 the civil war has continued after the pact since which formally excluded any other political fraction in government; more outstandingly not addressed social inequalities (Daly, 2014; Restrepo, 2004; Picker 2013). Through the trigger of the Cuba Revolution and the Cold War, many armed groups with different motivations, such as no matter the size, emerged following the decade of “*la Violancia*.” The two significant ones, the FARC Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the ELN National Liberation Army, became the insurgency with the most extended history across the world (Sanin, 2004; Sanchez et al., 2005; Osorio et al., 2019). The concept of insurgency, which is a broad span of ideas in the literature, is crucial because firstly, it confuses with other concepts such as terrorism, and secondly, it represents a simple but effective theoretical frame for better understanding the process. Thereby, into the thesis, the concept of insurgency is accepted as:

“A non-governmental organization is working to affect social and/or political change through violent means against existing power structures and in a way that deliberately challenges the state’s monopoly on the legitimate use of violence.”
(Frisch, 2011, p .2)

Even though the formed date of the FARC was accepted as 1964, it was officially announced in 1966 when the Second Guerilla Conference. The Colombian Communist Party (PCC as Spanish abbreviation), which had been highly influential during the 1930s, supported the formation of the FARC. However, as the mainstream ideology at the time of the 1960s, Marxism-Leninism also compromised a basis for the FARC as a peasant insurgency organization (Leech, 2011).

On the other hand, the ELN, now the last insurgency organization operating in Colombia, was officially established in 1965. Indeed, the ELN was formed with a highly ideological outfit combining Marxism-Leninism and liberation theology in the early 1960s. The ELN's presence appeared in July 1964 when it began military training in San

Vicente de Chucuri, Santander. After six months, in January 1965, the ELN pervaded the small village in Santander named Simacota (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). The prominent founders of the ELN are accepted as Brothers Fabio and Manuel Vasquéz Castaño (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). Many sources indicate that the ELN was organized by the students, Catholic radicals, and leftist intellectuals who inspired the Cuban Revolution and Che Guevara (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). More specifically, the government in 1963, post-revolutionary Cuba, brought approximately eight teen Colombian students to get military training.

Additionally, the charismatic leftist Catholic priest Camilo Torres, also well-known by the public of Colombia due to his famous sermons and speeches, joined the insurgency organization in 1965. Although he was killed in 1966 in combat with Colombia's Army in San Vicente de Chucuri, his influence continued the core strategies and ideology of the ELN (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). Furthermore, in line with the conjuncture of the era, other Catholic priests, some of whom were from Spain, joined the ELN, such as Manuel Pérez (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

These characteristics are highly unlike the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). The FARC, whose prominent leaders and members were generally peasants, had close ties with Colombia's Soviet-aligned Communist Party. In other words, Soviet Russia more influenced it than Cuba regarding the ideological outlook and insurgency strategies (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

The late 1960s and the early 1970s seemed catastrophic for the ELN because the mercurial leader, Fabio Vásquez Castaño, started an internal purge (Refworld, 2018;

Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). Even though there is no fundamental reason for this disastrous era when the ELN passed, the sources indicated the disagreements and segregations within the ELN (Nordquist, 2013; Luis van Isschot, 2015; Rabasa and Chalk, 2001). It is estimated that Fabio Vásquez Castaño commanded the execution of approximately two hundred people who were directly or indirectly linked with the ELN. One of the notorious incidents that happened during the internal purge was the assassination of Jaime Arenas in 1971. Arenas were the former student leader who treaded in Camilo Torres Restrepo's footsteps and wrote about the authoritarianism within the organization that threatened the revolution (Luis van Isschot, 2015). In accordance with the several sources, Fabio Vásquez Castaño personally believed that peasants would be the vanguard of the revolution; however, his rivals like Manuel Pérez and Domingo Laín focused on the working class as a vanguard and the urban allies with the discourse of Catholic Marxist ideology (Nordquist, 2013; Rabasa and Chalk, 2001; Rendón, 2014).

The only menace of dissolution for the ELN in the 1970s was not the ideological rifts or revolutionary debates; the Colombian Army surrounded the guerrillas. After the military attacks of the Colombian Army in 1973, the number of surviving members was approximately just sixty-five; in other words, an estimated 135 of its 200 members dead including brothers Fabio and Manuel Vásquez Castaño (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). However, the ELN rebuild itself just after the death of former leader Castaño. Manuel Pérez alias "*El Curo*" and his supporters took control. Under new leadership, the ELN convalesced in the second half of the 1970s (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). During the 1980s, the ELN continued to increase both its number of members and revenues. By the mid-1990s, the ELN reached its acme, the military capability of ELN was 5,000 persons, the number of supporters exceeded 15,000, and more significantly, the number of students, unions, and politicians was at least three times higher than the first decades (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). Although Manuel Pérez died from hepatitis B in 1998, the military actions of ELN maintained being dauntless (Refworld, 2018;

Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). The new top military leader of the ELN became Nicolás Rodríguez, alias “*Gabino*” until 2020.

The 2000s were a time of the eclipse for the ELN. The reasons for the setbacks were that the paramilitary groups, prominently the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia-AUC, perpetrated ghastly offensives in areas of ELN influence, no matter the civilian populations lived there. Another reason was that the cooperation between the ELN and the FARC against right-wing paramilitary groups was interrupted due to the conflict of interest in some regions (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). Furthermore, despite most of them being unsuccessful, the 2000s were the millstones in respect to the attempts of peace negotiation, as mentioned in the following sections (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

THE HISTORICAL VIOLENT ATTACKS OF THE ELN ASSOCIATED WITH THE PEACE TALKS

To peruse the armed conflict among the government of Colombia and the ELN as well as its escalation periods, the major attacks, violations, and the peace talks are dealt with together below. Within this aspect, the below stated major attacks are not comprehensive but selected.

In 1965, the ELN captured Simacota in Santander, where the ELN announced its proclamation and existent at the very first time. It was not reported while there were killed or wounded people there (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

As mentioned previously, the 1970s are the years of internal purge in the ELN’s organization (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). Hence, during this period, it is observed

that the Colombian army just focused on the elimination of the armed groups through military force rather than peace negotiation.

During the 1980s, the government of Colombia attempted to launch negotiations with the armed groups; albeit some armed groups like the FARC agreed to talk on the conditions, the ELN refused to be part of the negotiation (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). Indeed, this was not a coincidence since the ELN started to rebuild and expand itself during these years, especially after 1973 (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

At the beginning of the 1990s, several attempts for negotiations also were unsuccessful, despite one of which led to a pre-accord signed by the ELN (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). The willingness of the ELN for peace negotiation might also be considered. In 1998, the ELN blew up a pipeline in the Department of Antioquia, which caused more than 45 deaths and more than 70 wounded (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). In the following year, 1999, the ELN organized successive attacks. One was that the ELN hijacked an Avianca flight with 43 passengers and crew hostage. Even though the ELN released some of them soon after landing in a remote area of Colombia, it took 35 people, hostages, for almost more than one year. The other was that the ELN kidnapped approximately 200 people from a church, some of whom the ELN released soon and shortly after. The rest of the hostages were released months after the kidnapping, which went down as the largest kidnapping organized by the ELN. During both incidents, any killed or wounded people were not reported (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

These years, in other words, 1998 and 1999, are significant regarding the peace negotiations. Firstly, in 1998 the long-term leader of the ELN Marxist Catholic priest Manuel Perez died, which halted peace possibilities under the National Convention. The

National Convention was a suggestion made by insurgents prominently by the ELN. The National Convention included the representatives of all sectors, government, civil society, church to discuss political, social, and economic problems (ICG Latin America Report, 2002). Furthermore, the ELN proposed a demilitarized Zone of Encounter – ZOE for the National Convention. Secondly, in 1999 the Colombian government rejected the proposal of the ELN on launching the ZOE. Soon after the rejection, the ELN organized the largest kidnapping in the church with almost 200 hostages, and not surprisingly, the Colombian government suspended the peace talks (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

In 2000, although the same government restarted the negotiations under the presidency of eminent conservative leader Pastrana, it ended in 2001 since the parties were not agreed on the conditions (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). The central claim of the ELN for the unsuccessful talks was the military's relationship with paramilitary organizations; on the other hand, the government alleged the unwillingness of the ELN for cooperation. Nevertheless, this failure resulted in the strategy shift of the ELN. In 2005, the ELN formed and upheld a joint political party of the Independent Democratic Pole and the Democratic Alternative -PDA. In 2006, the PDA party won ten seats in the Senate and eight seats in the House of Representatives, a total of eighteen seats in the overall Congress of Colombia. Additionally, the PDA won the capital city of Colombia, the Bogotá mayoral election; however, the success of the election did not continue in following years (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

In between 2002 and 2010, the ELN participated in the peace negotiations, which included Cuba, Mexico, Catholic Church; however, the ELN did not accept each precondition for peace talks as a result of that during eight years, each attempt was failed (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

In 2012, the ELN showed its intent to include peace talks alongside the FARC, and more critically, the outside parties like Papa Francis himself supported the peace talks. Indeed, the official negotiations restarted in 2017, just after the visit of Papa Francis in Colombia (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). Although the government and the ELN signed a ceasefire in 2017, unfortunately, the peace accord could not be signed as in the FARC case during this period. Moreover, during the period, the government of Colombia changed. Soon after this power change and the new government's new demands, the ELN organized a bomb attack on the police academy in Bogotá. As a result, 21 people died, and 24 people were wounded. Then the new government of Colombia stopped the peace talks, called for resending the ELN leaders to be arrested who were the representative of the peace talks and stayed in Havana, Cuba (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

Between 2011 and the present, the attacks of the ELN are precious to examine, the selected ones not mentioned above of which are chronologically summarized as:

In 2011, the ELN organized a suicide attack with a car filled full of explosives in Cauca. One person died, and 16 people were wounded (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

In 2013, the ELN kidnapped a Canadian mining official, Gernot Wober, for ransom. Unfortunately, while the preliminary peace negotiations started, the hostage was released (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

In 2014, the ELN blew up several crude oil holding pools in North Santander and ten distinct energy infrastructures around Colombia. No one was reported as died or wounded. In the same year, the ELN kidnapping a Colombian mayor with the others around him. The main argument of the ELN is that the mayor was involved in an organized corruption trial. The mayor was released approximately four months

later(Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

In 2015, the ELN attacked financial and industrial districts in Bogotá, and eight people were wounded (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

In 2018, the ELN carried at many attacks exceeding ten or more. The attacks accelerated soon after the failure of the extension ceasefire. Eight people died, and approximately 45 people were wounded (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

After the failed attempt for peace negotiation in 2019, the ELN got an aggressive new posture, and it declared an armed strike across Colombia on 14-17 February 2020. Following days of the armed strike declaration, the ELN operated twenty seen operations and showed its new force (Ellis, 2021). However, starting with the early state of COVID-19, the ELN called for a ceasefire with the government of Colombia. The ceasefire period bore the witness to the riot for delegitimizing the government. Additionally, in some parts of the riot, such as the protests of 21 September 2020, the “*Minga*” indigenous protests in Cali in October 2020, the march on the capital city Bogotá, the masses demanded the resumption of peace talks with the ELN. Because of the demands uttered during the riot, the government blamed the ELN for playing an active role in social unrest (Ellis, 2021). Under current circumstances, the ELN still shows its hand for coming to the table only if the government accepts the prepared peace frame of the ELN.

Nevertheless, it does not accept the conditions of the current conservative government. On the other hand, the top leader, in other words, the commander in chief of the ELN, has been changed recently. Eliecer Erlinto Chamorro, alias “*Antonio Garcia*,” became the new leader of the ELN in June 2021, just after the resignation of Nicolás Rodríguez Bautista, alias “*Gabino*,” due to his health problem (Insight Crime, 2021).

THE DICHOTOMY IN THE LITERATURE AND LACK OF RESEARCH ON THE ELN

Even though the literature seems separated into the two directions as success or failure of the Colombia Peace Agreement, the numerous research begun to address risks, threats, slowdowns in the implementation, and future of the peace; however, almost all this research are in report format made by the relevant peace or human rights organizations rather than the academia. Therefore, the important notes taken from mainly assessment reports could be briefed as:

Firstly, one of the most pivotal parts of the Peace Agreement is the Comprehensive Rural Reform, regarding which the fund for 3 million hectares will be created to allow the landless peasants to gain their own lands within ten years. In order to succeed that the Colombian government also gets support from the international communities; as a result, a million hectares have already been distributed. However, due to conjectural constraints like the pandemics alongside the lack of governmental will, the possibility of reaching the target continues to decrease (Abiarta, 2021). Moreover, as well as the rural reform, other programs on critical issues such as infrastructure, rural education, Housing, and drinking water, a guarantee of the right to are well below what is expected in the National Development Plan (Abiarta, 2021). Unfortunately, the main risk might not be originated from these unreached targets; instead, the discrepancy between the principles of the peace accord, to which the government has committed, and the activities carried out by the current government as well as the lack of transparency (Jenssen, 2018; Abiarta, 2021).

Secondly, 2020 was recorded as the year in which ex-combatants experienced the most violence for four years. Furthermore, the violence against ax-combatants has continues to rise. The actual reason for that is shown as an inappropriate implementation of reintegration programs. The ideology or interpersonal networks and much other severe matter are largely absent in the programs. Therefore, despite the increased number of ex-combatants, the killers have not been detected or pursued (Jenssen, 2018; Gutiérrez D., 2020; Amaya-Panche, 2021).

Thirdly, the ex- combatants are not the only civil targets, the civil society, and local leaders as well. For four years, accurately 322 social leaders and/or their relatives were assassinated. The assassinations have primarily occurred in the Cauca and Narino departments of Colombia, both of which are the ex-FARC fronts and recently some parts under control the ELN (Herrera, 2021; Amaya-Panche, 2021).

Fourthly, people continue to leave their homes; the total number of people fleeing the other region of Colombia exceeds seven million. Furthermore, according to the report prepared by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in the first four months of 2021, displacements in Colombia increased by 101 percent by the same period in 2020 (OCHA, 2021).

Finally, although the reports indicate a reduction in coca cultivation, in the most critical region for productivity, Catatumbo, the cultivation rate continues to rise. Indeed, Catatumbo is the prioritized region with regard to the Peace Agreement, specifically for the solution to illicit drugs. Nonetheless, the government has not successfully implemented any crop replacement program in the region. Additionally, in other regions, the attacks among the cartels, paramilitary groups, and other armed groups to capture the drug trafficking and coca cultivation routes have been maintained (Jenssen, 2018; Gutiérrez, 2020; Amaya-Panche, 2021).

The lack of academic research is both an obstacle and an opportunity for the thesis. Thus, the one thing that could be assured as progress for the future of Colombia Peace is the increasing number of qualified research in the field, prominently concerning the ELN no matter which is conducted by academia or the civil society.

The reason for the emphasis of the ELN is so apparent that in the literature, the ELN has not gotten attention as much as the FARC when they are compared to the powerful leftist insurgencies in Colombia. Since the FARC has been more extensive in size than the ELN and it had power in drug trafficking, in other words, it had a great source of finance for its violence; the ELN became the least researched one (Sacquety,

2006). Thereby, since the ELN is the longest-lasting insurgency in Colombia today, and it has expanded contrarily to the expectations, the ELN has started to be considered (Alsema, 2021). Nevertheless, still, in the literature, the contextual gap between the peace studies on Colombia and the specific research on the ELN is considerable.

Consequently, although it is possible to do this research through the assessment of the Peace Agreement implementation, including the programs, indicators, the state capability, and the obstacles just among the parties, A qualified and significant research could need the other approaches, which seem like a blind spot in the literature. Hereby, the fundamental characteristics of the ELN, which are its ideology, more particularly liberation theology, its strategies, precisely the resource and ally strategies, and lastly, the popular support to it, will be inquired as such casual mechanisms leading to its extraordinary expansion in Colombia.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the research paradigm, research design, and methodology applied throughout the thesis. Regarding the research question, “Why has the ELN expanded despite the Colombian Peace Agreement?” the research aims to reach sufficient explanations of causal mechanisms arising from the outcome. Critical realism fits into the study as a research paradigm since the research question addresses the causal process in the complex social world. Furthermore, the research is a qualitative single case study proceeded throughout the iterations via an inductive testing approach; in other words, process tracing constitutes the primary methodological tool to analyze the empirical material and describe the sufficient mechanisms.

The chapter is structured as follows: Firstly, the principles of critical realism will briefly be indicated, and the foremost reasons for taking on as research paradigm will be explained. After that, the qualitative single case study research strategy and process tracing methodology will be described in-depth, and why these choices are necessary to the study will be elucidated. Then, the type of data, the data collection process, and the framework for data analysis will be spelled out. Finally, the limitations of the applied methodology will sum up.

Even though before and after Bhaskar’s studies, the precious multifold studies have contributed to the philosophical discussions regarding critical realism, in this thesis, the general assumptions of Bhaskar’s critical realism are followed up. Thus, Bhaskar’s understanding of critical realism could be summarized around three main principles: ontological realism, epistemological relativism, and judgmental rationality.

Reality exists independently from our thoughts about it; in other words, our thoughts neither create reality nor determine its boundary. Nevertheless, while a reality

exists, existence is neither dependent on observation and sensation nor proven by just them. In this position, critical realism rejects the ontological assumption of both positivism and constructivism. Furthermore, Bhaskar seems these ontological statements on reality as epistemological fallacy since the existence of reality is reduced to what is sensed or what is understood (Bhaskar, 2003; Bhaskar, 2011). Thus, according to critical realism, epistemology and ontology are separate (Collier, 1994; Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2003; Groff, 2004; Bhaskar, 2011). Ontologically, reality itself is stratified; its dimensions are empirical, actual, and real. The real dimension consists of entities or structures with properties that can activate causal mechanisms, affecting other structures. The actual dimension consists of events and the effects that the activation of causal mechanisms has caused. Lastly, in the empirical dimension, the actual events-effects that can be, or have been, observed or experienced (Collier, 1994; Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2003; Groff, 2004; Bhaskar, 2011). Therefore, the events-effects could only be explained in reference to the real dimension in which the unseen causal powers associated with the entities are triggered. Indeed, these entities making up the world could be physical, or non-physical such as ideas; thereby, they could be visible or invisible. In the social world, entities are generally invisible and consequently not directly observable in the empirical dimension of reality (Collier, 1994; Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2003; Groff, 2004; Bhaskar, 2011).

Although entities exist independently of our ability to perceive and conceive, the effects of these entities, in other words, the events activated by mechanisms, could be observable. Hereby, the knowledge about the entities could be constructed. On the other hand, knowledge is transitive and could change regarding the understanding of its constructor. This assumption points out the epistemological relativism in critical realism (Collier, 1994; Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2003; Groff, 2004; Bhaskar, 2011).

In compliance with epistemological relativism, scientific knowledge is relativistic (Collier, 1994; Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2003; Groff, 2004; Bhaskar, 2011). Science is transitive and includes accumulated extant theoretical knowledge. Hence, intransitive mechanisms could only be known through transitive knowledge and materials. Furthermore, science itself changes through conscious actions. In other words, new

paradigms, concepts, theories could emerge as well as the researchers change their cognitive framework to reflect the intransitive layer. It means that being or existing could not be reduced to a science (Collier, 1994; Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2003; Groff, 2004; Bhaskar, 2011).

The last principle of critical realism contextualized in the chapter and applied throughout the research is judgmental rationality which is entirely related to the first two principles. According to Bhaskar, making a choice between the rival theories is a rational process, and the choices are made on the basis of the relative explanatory power of alternative explanations (Bhaskar, 2004; Bhaskar, 2011). In other words, there are rational criteria that make it possible for some theories to be seen as better and more explanatory. It also means that all kinds of knowledge, including scientific knowledge, could be falsified (Collier, 1994; Archer et al., 1998; Bhaskar, 2003; Groff, 2004; Bhaskar, 2011).

In a pragmatic manner, critical realism as the philosophical base of the research gives several opportunities: Through its ontologically stratified reality, critical realism offers a meta-theoretical framing of the interaction between the entities and mechanisms that unfold over time (Frederiksen & Kringelum, 2021). Thereby, critical realism brings out the role of the researcher in developing knowledge. Furthermore, it enables the researcher to delineate the inquired phenomenon without the generalization anxiety contrary to Hume's empiricism (Van Ingen, 2017). To make it clear, while focusing on a contemporary rarely studied case, working with the probabilities and using correlation could not be that much possible or even adequate as in Large-N cases (Blatter, 2012; Beach & Petersen, 2013). Therefore, at the single within case studies, the deterministic understanding of causality is applied chiefly to understand causal mechanisms and the interaction among them; therefore, the minimum sufficient explanation for the inquired outcome with the possibility of 1 or 0 might be set appropriately off (Mahoney, 2008). The deterministic character of critical realism ontology, the single within the case study, and causal process tracing together are used to well-organized research. It also leads a field to the researcher for self-improvement. In addition to these, it could be stated that emancipatory objectives are a significant part of critical realism. Hereby, critical realism

considers that improvement of society is possible, and critical research could focus on what to do.

Case study as a research strategy is also preferred to examine contemporary events which need special attention (Rowley, 2002). Thereby, according to Yin, doing a case study could be useful if a how or why the question is being asked to inquiry a contemporary event or set of events, and only if a researcher has little or no control over them (Yin, 2018). Case studies could be in different forms regarding their variety of purposes (Eckstein, 2000). One of the significant reasons for selecting a single case study as a research strategy is when the phenomenon is simply less amenable to more superficial measures and tests. Furthermore, the inquired phenomenon might be irreducibly subjective to be understood through co-variational or comparative strategies (Willes, 2014). The specific reason, which concentrates on subjectiveness, up to dateness, and less researched unit or units of the phenomenon, allows a single within case study to become an adequate strategy to apply for causal process tracing (Blatter, 2012; Beach & Petersen, 2013).

The concept of process tracing is a catch-all term and originated from psychology studies in the late 1960s and 1970s. One of the first conceptualizations for process tracing in political sciences was made by Alexander L. George in the field of political psychology, 1979. According to George, process tracing is the way of using evidence from within case studies to make inferences about historical explanations (Bennett & Checkel, 2014; Trampusch & Palier, 2016). After that, although the scholars have used the label of process tracing as referring to different aspects, in general, the term employed to drawing causal inferences step by step between the research question and the conclusion (Blatter, 2012). Indeed, the term has been shaped around the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the scholars and sometimes gotten a descriptive name before itself, such as systematic, causal, and so on (Hall, 2008; Blatter, 2012).

In this thesis, Blatter's causal process tracing is employed as the research methodology proper to the within-single case study. Causal process tracing is an analytical methodology and requires selecting a single case that is inquired in-depth. The

main reason for no more than one case criteria is the significance of the outcome. In other words, the causal process tracing is the outcome (Y) centered rather than the cause (X) centered. Furthermore, when the phenomena are new; in other words, less studied and complex at one considerable point of the time, pragmatically single within case methodology is more appropriate than large-N and/or medium-N, comparative case studies (Blatter, 2012; Beach & Petersen, 2013). Therefore, the causal process tracing within the case finds the answers for the question of why. More specifically, through the causal process tracing the prototypical questions; “Which conditions make this kind of outcome possible?” and “Which underlying mechanisms effectively make the cause creating the outcome?” are tried to answer, and at the end, the causal pathways are tried to shed light on by social mechanisms happened and interacted within the process. Hereby the process is the object of the research rather than just temporal sequences (Blatter, 2012; Blatter & Haverland, 2014). The simplistic explanation for the causal mechanisms made by Waldner (2012) is that if the first event triggers a mechanism, the mechanism emits causal influence, and in a way, it produces a second event. Thereby, without the causal mechanisms, a chain or sequence of events might just be historical narration.

Indeed, causal process tracing depends on configurational thinking in accordance with which: social outcomes are the result of a combination of social mechanisms; there are various pathways that equate similar outcomes; the effects of the same mechanisms could be divergent regarding the distinctive contexts and combinations (Blatter, 2012; Blatter & Haverland, 2014). The configurational thinking also implies that while the causal process tracing is applying, the causal conditionality (individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions) is a matter of examination instead of variables like in co-variational approaches. Consequently, it means that the findings by casual process tracing within a case could not be generalized to a population of similar cases. Additionally, the findings would be deterministic rather than probabilistic due to this feature of the causal process tracing (Blatter, 2012).

Lastly, although it is possible to implement iterative or cyclic phases in many types of process tracing such as inductive, deductive, inductive, or vice versa, regarding

the ideal-typical causal process tracing the data and the empirical information is inductively taken up in detail (Collier 2011; Bench & Petersen, 2013; Blatter, 2012).

In the research, the causal process tracing within-single case is chosen as analytical methodology thanks to the following rationales: the ELN case is currently observable and less studied; additionally, the reasons for the insurgency expansion during the peace era could not be wholly conceptualized in a theoretical frame thereby, the single case study as a research strategy and the causal process tracing within case outlined by Blatter is embarked on. Furthermore, causal process tracing offers a rigorous approach to assessing causal change regarding qualitative research design with the potential for examining causality. From this point of view, the causal process tracing provides minimum sufficient causal explanations via more appropriate qualified scientific research instead of historical explanations for the less studied case.

Data is the raw material collected to obtain information and knowledge that make observation and analysis possible. The primary data includes statistics, laws, regulations, as well as reports and messages from public authorities. As seen, some of the data are treated as primary data in research since they are first-hand. In other words, these were not collected from the other research. The reinterpreted secondary data, which outweigh the primary data in this research, came out of credible, academic, and official sources. While searching and gathering the most relevant and accurate sources to collect primary and secondary data, online library databases became an effective tool. Other than online databases, official websites, journals, prominent newsletters of Colombia, conflict tracker programs were frequently applied.

As mentioned above, regarding causal process tracing, the outcome is produced at a specific point of time when various causal mechanisms triggered the events over time (Blatter, 2012; Blatter & Haverland, 2014). Moreover, causal process tracing studies build their data analysis on the causal-process observations that ideally complement each other to found causal inferences. Blatter (2012) makes two different definitions for the causal process observations. The first one is that causal process observation is a piece of row data providing information about the mechanisms and confirming correlation-based

inference in qualitative research. The other one is that causal process observation is a cluster of empirical information either used to determine the temporal order of causal factors producing the outcome or to determine the status of these factors as necessary or sufficient for producing the outcome; hence the causal process observations as the empirical information distinguish and lay down the social mechanisms at the center of mechanism-based explanations. Even though multiple causal observation types are mentioned in the relevant literature, throughout the research, the specific three types of observations are applied (Hall, 2008; Bennett 2010; Collier 2011; Mahoney, 2012; Bench & Petersen, 2013).

The first type of causal-process observation is the comprehensive storyline which includes the sequences of the process leading to the outcome over time. It has two particular functions in the analysis; describing the essential structural causal conditions and circumstances with influence on the outcome, and identifying the sequences separated by critical moments; in other words, turning points in the overall process (Blatter, 2012; Blatter & Haverland, 2014).

The second type of causal process tracing observations is smoking guns. Smoking guns have three particular functions in the analysis. Firstly, smoking guns is linked with the other observations implied in the research, and together with other observations, inductively makes possible the well-established causal claims. Secondly, smoking guns are actor-centered observations through which the acts of individual or corporative actors could be evinced at a critical moment in a certain point of time. Finally, smoking guns is used for just observation, not testing (Blatter, 2012; Blatter & Haverland, 2014).

The last type of causal process tracing observation is confessions, which are deeper insights providing information on the perceptions, motivations, and anticipations of an individual or corporative actors (Blatter, 2012; Blatter & Haverland, 2014). As similar to smoking guns, the confession is also actor-centered observation contrarily the confession observation has function as revealing the driving motivation of the actors (Blatter, 2012; Blatter & Haverland, 2014).

While applying causal process tracing as a research method, there are two sorts of levels to work on the deductive theoretical level and inductive empirical level. It could be work either inductively or deductively or both. The pre-theorized hypotheses from previous correlation studies in the relevant literature are gathered and tested at the deductive theoretical level. On the other hand, in the inductive empirical level, since the outcome of sequence events is known and the causal mechanisms triggering the events are not known, the investigation starts with the known about the case (Blatter, 2012; Blatter & Haverland, 2014). These levels could be followed iteratively or circularly. Indeed, one of the most appropriate analogies to envisage how causal process tracing works is Sherlock Holmes, as expressed by Collier (2011).

In this thesis, due to the significance of the case regarding observability, less studied context the theory testing or theory-building process tracing is not trivially possible. Thereby, causal process tracing will inductively apply to reach a minimum sufficient explanation of mechanisms lead by the outcomes, which is the expansion of the ELN across and beyond Colombia despite the Peace Agreement. Since the generalization of the findings could not be possible at this primary stage; moreover, the scope of the research is intentionally constricted with the preadmission of other influential causal mechanisms, the focused ones are accepted as jointly sufficient at the beginning of the analysis. Because of that, the counterfactual test for individually necessary conditions will not apply.

Consequently, with the objectives of reaching minimum sufficient explanations for the expansion of the ELN across and beyond Colombia despite the Peace Agreement, each proposition which I set for the causal mechanisms will be tested through the storylines, smoking guns, and confession throughout the analysis. In the table below, the process tracing analysis steps of the research are illustrated.

Table 3.1 Implementation of Causal-Process Tracing (CPT)

Case and the known outcome (Y)	Colombia case and the expansion of the ELN (Since it is the case and outcome-oriented research, the aim is to identify X, in other words, the cause or the causes)
The research question	Why does the ELN expand despite the Peace Agreement?
Data generation	The propositions as causal mechanisms are observed throughout the research: 1. Ideology (Particularly Liberation Theology) 2. Strategy (Particularly, Resource and Ally Strategy) 3. Popular Support Each of these proposed causal mechanisms triggers the following one within causal relations. Once ideology affects the strategies and the selected and applied strategies effects the popular support. The proposed causal mechanisms together sufficiently determine the outcome. The obtained data originated by the observations is stated through a comprehensive storyline at the beginning of each chapter; hereby, it prepares the evidence for the analysis.

Data analysis	• Smoking guns Through it, the collected specific events and incidents with their main actors were examined as evidence. • Confessions Since it is more actor-based observation than others, the primary sources are applied for evidence, which are announcements, declarations, programs.
Discussion and conclusion	Discussion Identification of causal mechanisms that are together sufficient for the outcome (Y) Conclusion The final inferences and comments are made for the case and the further research

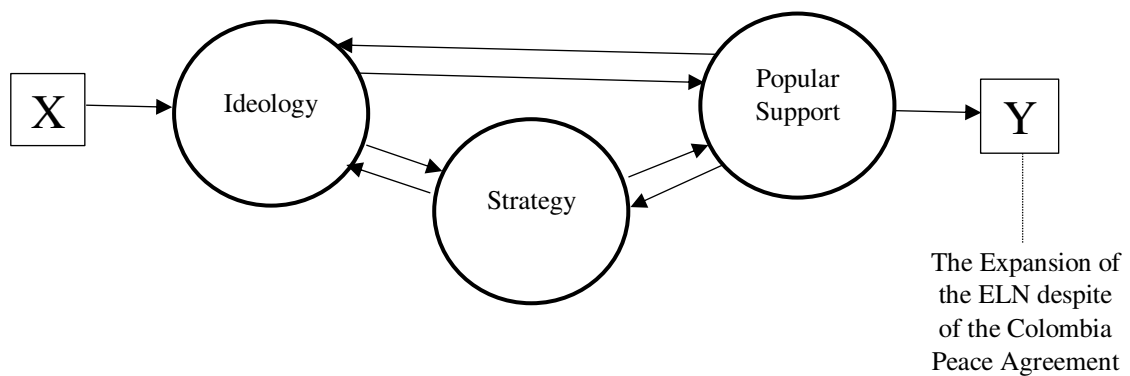


Figure 3.1 The Proposed Causal Relation

There are numerous limitations to the research made within the scope of this thesis. First, given that the research is proceeding as a within-case study, it is unable to generalize findings to other likewise cases. Second, data collection is challengeable in several aspects. Due to the circumstances under the pandemic, the field studies have been slow down and reaching primary data through at least interviews on the current civil war in Colombia after the peace agreement became double-time arduous. Furthermore, since most of the primary sources are Spanish, the language barrier made interfering with the data incredibly difficult. Third, due to time constraints and lack of reached evidence, there should be cutting down on numerous explanations even though process tracing as a method enables the longitudinal, more comparative alternative explanations.



CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

IDEOLOGY

The term of ideology has varied conceptualizations regarding the disciplines where it comes up. However, in this research, the definition of ideology is accepted as a set of systematic ideas that describe a group's identity, the challenges confronted by the group, the objectives to be pursued, and a program of action to be taken. (Sanin & Wood, 2014; Maynard, 2015). While the degree of implicit dissemination of the ideology through recruitment, socialization, and indoctrination is increasing, the saturation of the ideology into the life of members transforms and aligns the values and beliefs accepted and applied by the group (Schubiger & Matthew, 2017). Thus, the manifestation of ideology often penetrates the everyday lives of group members, continually connecting individual experiences to the group's objectives.

One significant potential of ideology in the social realm is that ideology might triggers, fosters, and sustains collective action (Schubiger & Matthew, 2017). Although the prescription of collective action alters within the aspects of liberal or conservative literature, it could be comprehensively defined as a group member together engage in action any time to represent the group itself for improving the conditions of the group or responding the collective disadvantages as a whole (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Therefore, much more associated with the liberal aspects, ideology has the power to progressively organize a group, which pursues the ideological objectives and strategies. In other words, ideology leads to political attitudes and behaviors at both the individual and the group levels (Mikolajczak & Becker, 2019). One of the best examples of the collective action in Colombian political history took place during "*la Violancia*" (1948-1954). The outstanding goal of collective action observed in the period of "*la Violancia*" was diminishing social inequalities and gaining social, economic liberation (Daly, 2014;

Restrepo, 2004; Picker 2013). Furthermore, the collective action in that time led to other consequences like more organized armed groups as an insurgent, in other words, insurgency organizations (Sanin, 2004; Sanchez et al., 2005; Osorio et al., 2019). Thereby, promoting collective action relies on ideology and the embeddedness of ideology into organizations that thrive the armed movements (Sanin & Wood, 2014). From this point of view, ideology is endogenous to many processes that occur during and prior to the outbreak of armed conflict and to the strategies and preferences of actors themselves. Hence, ideology plays a more complicated role than just being a fundamental independent variable (Sanin & Wood, 2014). Ideology as a causal mechanism interacts with the sequential other mechanisms such as strategies of the insurgency organizations as well as popular support for the insurgency organizations themselves.

In this part of the analysis chapter, firstly, the content of liberation theology as a significant element of the ELN's ideology is summed up, and the rise of liberation theology in Colombia is emphasized. Then, the adaptation of Latin American Marxism and liberation theology is explained. Following that, the impact of Camilo Torres and the formation of "*ser Elena*" as an identity of the new man manifested by the ELN is addressed. Finally, the transformation of liberation theology within the ELN's ideology is tried to be exposed. After all that, the specific events and the actor-based statements associated with the ELN's ideology as a causal mechanism are observed and inquired.

Although the 20th century is recognized by momentous political and cultural transformations worldwide, the Catholic Church remained practically static until the 1960s when the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the II General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate took place in Medellin, Colombia, which is better known as the Medellin Episcopal Conference (1968). These two incidents were the Church's first attempts to update itself on issues ranging from the liturgy and the celebration of rites to the role of the priest in society and linking parishioners to a strengthened community of faith. During this period of the transformation of the Catholic Church, liberation theology emerged as a critical religious trend for Latin American history because it proposed a new way of taking action against inequality and poverty. The Second Vatican Council meetings as so-called reformation in Catholic Church was fostering the diffusion of

liberation theology between 1965 and 1973 (Tarazona & Diaz, 2012). The liberation theology makes an analogy between Jesus with the first believers, and the modern Catholic church is set on impoverished people whom a tyrant sinfully oppresses. Therefore, the interest of intellectual Catholic priests in adopting revolutionism was to concentrate on conducting a Marxist-style class analysis of the cultural divide between the oppressors and oppressed and identifying the injustices and exploitation within the society. Along with that, while liberation theology continued to religious discourses and support to the faith of society, it developed reformist discourse on the new secular and non-hierarchical church (Celis, 2016).

During the emergence of liberation theology, each Latin American country tackled new ideas regarding its inner circumstances. The clerics, prominently Richard Shaull, Camilo Torres, and Rafael Avila, served in Colombia relatively slowly and developed various approaches to defeating social injustice. Indeed, there were individual attempts for reform, especially the Church hierarchy and the new mission of social equality, but some of these priests came together as formal groups and acted collectively. The most known of them in Colombia was “*Grupo de Golconda*” (Tarazona & Diaz, 2012; Prieto, 2016).

The first missionary service of Richard Shaull was in Colombia between 1942-1950 and mostly worked with young adults and students. Although his most particular works on liberation theology were shaped after the years in Colombia, and even his studies concentrated on theology education, he contributed to the theology of revolution (Santiago-Vendrell, 2010; Prieto, 2016). Indeed, he was one of the theologians who discuss the use of violence as acceptable means for social transformation (Santiago-Vendrell, 2010). The works of Richard Shaull are crucial; in the literature, the emphasis on no such attempts was raised in Colombia as in the rest of Latin America. Contrary to the general literature, Colombia became one of the first places where reformist ideas occurred (Prieto, 2016). Camilo Torres is one of the most well-known and unusual prominent priests of liberation theology and not just in Colombia but also in Latin America. He also criticized the highly hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, especially in his country Colombia, and the privileges of the church, same as Richard

Shaul. He also believed in the immediate need for social change. The criticism of the Colombian Catholic Church and call for urgent social action were common to “*the Grupo de Golconda*” formed by fifty Catholic priests in the Latin American Episcopal Conference, Medellin (Prieto, 2016). On the other hand, Camilo Torres distinguished through his idea on Marxism and its engagement with Catholicism (Drekonja, 1971).

Camilo Torres was the colleague and classmate of Gutierre Gutierrez, the so-called founder of liberation theology, and authored a book titled “Theology of Liberation,” which is considered a code book of action by the followers of reformist ideas. Both had roots in the upper-middle class, were educated in Belgium (Klaiber, 2013). After Camilo Torres returned to Colombia, he cofounded the sociology department at the Universidad Nacional and the “*Frente Unido*,” joined the ELN in 1966 and died in combat on February 14, 1967. His theological reflections and his decision to join the insurgents significantly influenced the ideology and identity formation of ELN as well as the Colombian religious society. His life has been a reference point in the dynamics of social and armed conflict in Colombia and for those who aim to defeat poverty and social inequality, whether armed or not (Celis, 2016). How did he achieve to set such strong ideas, which is still partly valid today despite the contradictory origins of his thought, Marxism, and Theology? The answer to this question requires a deeply theoretical discussion, yet this research tries to show political and social changes as some pieces of the puzzle for understanding the certain ideology of the ELN. These political and social changes could be summarized as developmentalism, and its critics, the Cuban Revolution. In addition, however, the individual experiences of Torres in the Colombian Catholic Church might be decisive on his contribution to the ideology of ELN. In his initial works, before addressing the broader aspects, Camilo Torres indicated a peaceful revolution regarding the Christian obligations as being charitable and loving. Indeed, he did not see any contradiction between Marxism and the Catholic faith; he believed in a coalition. Camilo Torres stated that even there is a probable violent revolution for social change, through the love of Christian, the hate of Marxists could be appeased (Drekonja, 1971). Nevertheless, owing to his radical position in the Church, he was defrocked. After that, Camilo Torres left the idea of a peaceful revolution, joined the ELN. At that turning point, he began to set his discourse on war for social change (Drekonja, 1971).

To comprehend the impact of developmentalism on liberation theology intertwining with Marxism, consideration of poverty by the theologians at that time has critical importance. However, in Marxist literature, various intellectuals also reembraced the Cristian faith, especially anti-authoritarian primitive Christianity such as Rose Luxemburg, Ernst Bloch, Lucien Goldmann (Löwy, 1985). According to the new generation of theologians, God lives and confers self-revelation in the life poor and their struggles for liberation such same in the first Christian community and the struggle of them by the leadership of Jesus. Jesus was born poor, chose to live with and for the poor during his entire life. Furthermore, the essential message of Jesus for true Christians is to establish the kingdom of God to bring justice to the poor and the oppressed in society. Therefore, the poor, characterized by the lack of goods in this world, including misery and destitution, have privileges regarding the new interpretation (Muskus, 1992). Therefore, the theologians embarked on the new mission, eradication of poverty and liberation of the poor (Löwy, 1985; Muskus, 1992). In reference to the founders of liberation theology, the economic and the political structures of Capitalism were responsible for the injustice and extreme poverty, particularly in Latin America. This discussion was shaped around a dialectical analysis of social classes. Thereby, liberation theology borrowed social analysis to Marxism as its methodology and, together with its findings, built a new understanding of the Bible and consequently identified the contemporary situations in Latin America (Löwy, 1985; Boff, 1988; Puntarigvivat, 2014). By the Marxist social analysis, the liberation theologians called social injustice as “institutional robbery,” structural poverty as “structural sin,” private accumulation of wealth as “sin of selfishness” (Miranda, 1971; Löwy, 1985).

In that point, liberation theologians also constitute counterarguments for the Western idea of “development” by the well-known dependency theory. According to the dependency theory, underdevelopment in the Third World was caused by the development of the First World through dominating and exploiting the Third World countries worldwide under transnational capitalist neocolonialism. In other words, the rich nations exploit the poor nations with regards to their natural resources and their

poorly paid labor and transform the entire national economies into dependency economies, particularly in Latin America (Puntarigvivat, 2014). Alongside that, the providing subsidies to be developed Latin American countries by the First World even worsened the inequalities among those countries. The subsidies for development led to people losing their jobs, lands without possibilities of good education, political participation, and people being under the risks in daily life marginalized (Fitzgerald & Thorp, 2005). Hereby, the liberation theologians in Latin America stressed that advocating for human rights is not simplistic; it needs specificity on the societal majority, in other words, the poor whose rights were continually violated by the oppressive Capitalist structures (Muskus, 1992).

The Cuba Revolution became the primary inspiration for ruling out the structural sin by revolution, in other words, regime change. After that, the liberation theologians focused on how the conditions could be created for the revolution as the ultimate way of struggling and overcoming the oppressive Capitalist structures, which is the cardinal sin of the era beyond (McGeorch, 2020). Although the Cuba Revolution was not directly related to human rights or democracy as well as not having virtually theological linkage between Christianity and the revolution even the ruler Communist Party of Cuba was officially atheist, the Cuban priests began to make positive interpretations on the revolution and to constitute theoretical collaboration among revolutionary collective action and Christian theology (Puntarigvivat, 2014). Furthermore, the prominent liberation theologians like Gutierrez and Torres identified themselves with the political struggle of the people. (Muskus, 1992). Through the inspired by the Cuban success story, the atmosphere surrounding Latin America led the collective actions and the rural revolutionary movements arising in initially Venezuela, Guatemala, Peru, Colombia, and some other ones (Muskus, 1992; Puntarigvivat, 2014).

Consequently, Camilo Torres, one of the first and celebrated liberation theologians, and his successors in the ELN added insight into the ELN's ideology regarding morality, faith, and the love of God on the oppressed poor, which is unobserved for the other leftist insurgency organizations. In fact, the only way to reach the hypostasis goal, in other words, to defeat the Capitalist order, is the transformation of the individual

into a collective identity. Thus, by messianic belief in its mission, the ELN formulated the identity of “*ser Elena/o*,” which is noted as one of the significant reasons for resiling for more than half-century despite decreasing popularity of Marxism and Leninism after the Cold War. Camilo Torres dead just four months after joining the ELN; he became a celebrated martyr across Colombia and mythic image of “*ser Elena/o*” in English “the new man” (Gruber & Pospisil, 2015). Thereby, the ELN did not target the great size in number unlike the FARC; it aims “*poder popular*” in English “people’s power” built upon human dignity and solidarity, which would lead to tranquility, welfare, and happiness. Thus, the strategies of the ELN have been developed with regards to being “*ser Elena/o*” and the aim of “*poder popular*” (Hernandez, 1998; Gruber & Pospisil, 2015). Indeed, “*poder popular*” is a particular contribution to the ELN ideology made by Camilo Torres. Today the ELN’s expression on the popular democracy rather than the Leninist communist regime is a credit to primarily Camilo Torres and his successor Manuel Perez as one of the extensive leaders of the ELN. The evidence could be followed through the speech of Torres and some of the critical organizational documents such as “*Rojo y Negro: Una aproximación a la Historia del ELN*” written by the commander Milton Hernandez.

In the end, liberation theology is where the ELN differs significantly from FARC or any other armed groups and becomes the unique one in Colombia. Furthermore, liberation theology is a spiritual component and a puissant element of the ELN’s ideological framework. Otherwise, the base of ELN’s ideology and identity formation would have been solely a Marxist-based revolution. Thanks to these distinctive ideological features, even today, the ELN benefits from some societal opportunities. Primarily, the religious nature of most Colombians, in which Catholicism is endemic among the population. Especially in the dispersed agricultural, rural areas, the Catholic Church as a focal point holds sway in many matters that could be seen as one of the reasons for ELN’s resilience and, perhaps, its continued existence. (Celis, 2016).

Since liberation, theology is one of the unique characteristics and the transformative force of the ELN’s ideology, the analysis specifically focused on it. Hence the main argument is that Marxism, particularly liberation theology as one of the causal

mechanisms, drives the strategies of the ELN, which are also distinguishable from the other insurgency organizations have.

Smoking Guns

In accordance with the article published by the Inter Press Service News Agency (IPS), The people coming from various parts of the country made the pilgrimage to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of Camilo Torres. The masses gathered in the place Camilo Torres dead (1966), where is a jungle area known as Patio Cemento in the municipality of El Carmen de Chucuri in the northeastern department of Santander.

The peasants, trade unionists, students, academics and religious workers, pastorals memorialized Camilo Torres and his ideas on liberation. There was also the security blockage by the force of the national anti-riot police, a team of judicial police against any possible provocation (Vieira, 2016).

With reference to the article published by Reuters, on 14 February 2016, the anniversary of Camilo Torres's death, the ELN declared the 72 hours lockdown in its presence and called all Elonas/os to be ready for the 72 hours armed strike. Indeed, the ELN still condemns the Colombian government for the death of Camilo Torres, who was a celebrated Colombian pioneer of liberation theology in the 1960s (Reuters, 2016).

Confession

The articles explicitly published under the headlines “*Voz Elena*” and “*Memoria Colectiva*” in English “Voice of Elena the New Man” and “Collective Memories” by the ELN itself through its official website, eln-voces.net/, the story of Camilo Torres is narrated by the words of the ELN top commanders. Furthermore, the ideas of Camilo Torres are particularly emphasized in these articles. The English version of the famous statement owned to the Camilo Torres allowed for in one of the articles is following as:

“ Why do we as Catholics fight with communists, with whom we can say that we have more antagonisms about whether the soul is mortal or immortal, instead of agreeing that hunger is mortal? This platform (the United Front of the ELN) should not be linked to a

name but principles. It is important that every day we depersonalize. The leaders must emerge, new leaders, dedicated, trained, ready to struggle. Our first task, let it be clear, is to create popular unity around common goals.” (Camilo Torres, 1965).

STRATEGY

As mentioned in the previous chapters, one of the critical matters while taking up the ELN is comprehensively considering it as an organization and understanding its structure. Briefly, in this thesis, an organization refers to a social phenomenon. Moreover, an organization is defined as a collectivity with a relatively identifiable boundary, a normative order, authority ranks, communications, and membership coordination. This collectivity exists on an ongoing basis in an environment and carries out activities that are generally connected to goals and a set of strategies (Hall & Saias, 1980; Tolbert and Hall, 2016).

The main goal of the ELN is social justice. In other words, the ELN's organizational goal is constructing national identity in all its parts for a just society, hence the power of the people (Hernandez, 1998; Gruber & Pospisil, 2015). The ELN does not propose socialism; rather than it stresses the people's democracy to succeed in the organizational goal. Additionally, the ELN developed its characteristic organizational structures and strategies during the following decades to reach this goal. It is worth noting that blow-expressed strategies of ELN are generally valid even today (Gruber & Pospisil, 2015).

- Marxism, with the essence of liberation theology as the main ideology,
- Central democracy as the internal decision-making process and decentralized organizational branches across the presence,
- Strong cooperation with the population guided by Christian norms,
- Strong collective identity, being “ser Elena/o” with high human dignity and disapproval of execution as punishment.

From this point of view, in this part of the analysis chapter, the strategies applied by the ELN during its existence, the resource, fundamental human resource, and financial resource, and the ally strategies are explained.

The ELN's primary revenue source has changed and varied throughout the decades regarding the organizational strategies Shaped by the ideology alongside the organizational goals. Not surprisingly, there are always dilemmas for the insurgency organizations, including the ELN, which might be summarized as action versus secrecy, expansion versus control, recruitment versus retention, success versus longevity, resources versus audience reference to Frisch (2011). Consequently, the ELN has been experienced these dilemmas, yet the resources versus audience dilemma might be the most crucial one regarding its Catholic Marxist ideology. Below, the transformation of ELN's revenue resources are reviewed per decade:

The Formation Years in the 1960s: the ELN got not only military supports via weapons and training but also financial support from Cuba (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

In the 1970s: Through the affiliation from the other armed groups, the ELN began collecting revenue by kidnapping ransoms and the protection payments, mainly during the rebuilding period after turnout defeat in 1973.

In the 1980s: According to Colombia's Center for Historical Memory, the ELN kidnapped about 574 people, which was higher than the FARC did with 489 people (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). Alongside increasing kidnapping ransoms, the ELN began profiting from oil contractors in the late 1980s(Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

In the 1990s: The ELN began extorting oil company managers and top employees through which the ELN's brought in \$225 million in 1998 alone, and the extortion became

the primary revenue resource of the ELN. The late 1990s is also displayed as a turning point of taxing coca and marijuana farmers by many sources (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

In the 2000s: Drug trafficking was the red line of the ELN for a long due to its ideological priorities (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). In accordance with the 2nd Congress of the ELN in 1989, drug trafficking and the members' involvement in its illicit business was unequivocally prohibited. However, this situation started to change in the 2000s. During the 4th Congress of the ELN, tax collection from coca and cocaine producers was officially allowed. It is important to note that the new top commander of the ELN, "*Antonio Garcia*," expressed the four ways to finance the operations; donations, produce sales, voluntary contributions, and taxation (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

In the 2010s: There have been momentous differences in the 2010s regarding the revenue due to expanding the ELN further into Venezuela. Indeed, the Venezuela regions held by the ELN have grown at an increasingly faster rate since 2017. ELN has increased its revenue by illegally mining gold throughout Venezuela. In 2018, it was revealed that the ELN gained about sixty percent of its total income from illegal gold mining in Colombia and Venezuela (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

Lastly, it seems essential to mention the strategic differences between the war fronts. In Eastern War Front in Arauca, under control by the youngest top leader, "*Pablito*," the prohibition is continued on coca cultivation and illicit drug trade. Contrarily, in the Northeastern War Front, specifically in Catatumbo, it was reported that the ELN has participated in coca production and transshipment (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). Furthermore, the ELN reveals through its official website (2021) that definite demarcation is maintained against the phenomenon of drug trafficking. In

accordance with the ELN's letter inscribing for Ruth Dreifuss, the president of the Global Commission on Drug Policy, it is stated that unlike the accusation by the government of Colombia and the USA, The ELN has nothing to do with drug trafficking or with any phase of its business. It is added that the ELN does not have any crops, laboratories, kitchens, tracks, routes, or cocaine exports as well as the only relevant policy with the drug trade is tax collection (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

As stated previously, the member of the ELN compose of students, Marxist Catholic priests, and members of the Catholic church, peasants, educated urban dwellers, in other words, "*Urbanos*." Indeed, the ELN already has a war front for the urban spheres named the National Urban War Front (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). This characteristic is somewhat distinct from the FARC, which had members in the remote villages by a majority (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). With regards to human resources, in other words, membership of the ELN, it is crucial to be stressed that even though being a member of the ELN with high lifetime risks does not provide significant material benefits or opportunities for financial gains, the ELN has high member retention rate than other armed groups in Colombia thanks to its strong identity formation and adamant disciplined execution (Gruber & Pospisil, 2015). Additionally, although the combatants must obey the rules and prohibitions of the organization, they also have certain rights such as making proposals and dispensing justice, having annual holidays. However, some of these rights vary from the positions or the rank of the organization (Gruber & Pospisil, 2015).

Recently, some sources indicated that the ELN has difficulties engaging new members from the cities because of the decreasing impact of liberation theology in society, specifically among the educated youths (Phelan, 2021). On the other hand, it is argued that the ELN has paid a small portion for the professional revolutionaries in the cities to increase the retention of them in contrast with its local grassroots fighters (Sanin, 2004).

Although some members of the ELN maintain military encampments in rural and wilderness areas, they do not wear uniforms, operate in small numbers, and do not carry identifiable weapons most of the time. Moreover, many of its members are mixed in with the population in the cities. These operational tactics of the ELN and its membership composition also ease to adapt to changes allow them to respond to offensives by the government and paramilitary groups (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). Furthermore, because counting the exact number of its members is nearly impossible, the numbers change from one source to another (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

In the mid-1960s, in other words, in the formation years, the majority of the ELN's members were male adults. However, this situation rapidly changed after the internal purge commanded by the top leader "*Castaño*." As a result, the ELN starts to recruit minors, volunteer youth peoples, and females to increase numbers (Sanin, 2010).

In 1999 and 2013, 766 children were reported as former combatants of the ELN. Between 2017 and 2019, the ELN employed about 182 children in accordance with the Observatory for Protection of Child Rights and Welfare (OPROB) (Acosta, 2020). Among all armed groups in Colombia, the ELN has been one of the major recruiters of the children as combatants.

Lastly, in the 2010s, the ELN has started to recruit refugees and displaced people fleeing from the internal Venezuelan conflict and poor indigenous populations around the border; hence, it increased its workforce for illicit mining (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

The ELN has had mixed relationships with several groups. The ELN has been both rivals and ally's other insurgency organizations prominently with FARC. Between 1987 and 1992, the ELN participated in the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinating Board (CGSB), an umbrella organization for the leading insurgents in Colombia (CICAS, 2019).

Starting in 2008 and until the Peace Agreement and disarmament of the FARC, the ELN frequently cooperated with the FARC. The fundamental reason for the collaboration between the ELN and the is that the two groups had the same enemies, the Colombian government and the paramilitaries supported by the government. The collaboration with the FARC dissidents also frequently continued after the Peace Agreement despite there is conflict among the fronts of ELN and the dissidents in some of the ELN's presence (CICAS, 2019).

Cuba has supported the ELN both financially and politically since its existence. In the early years of the ELN, Cuba supported the group by providing armory and military training to ELN militants (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). On the other hand, starting in the 1990s, Cuba canceled to provide both armory and training to the ELN. However, Cuba has supported the ELN in the political sphere of Latin America (CICAS, 2019). Most recently, Cuba hosted peace talks and became one of the guarantor states between the ELN and the Colombian government from 2017-2019. Since June 2019, Cuba has protected the ELN's peace delegation and not extradited them to Colombia (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

Ecuador was also another guarantor state, which has supported peace talks between the ELN and the Colombian government. Moreover, Ecuador was the hosting state for peace talks in 2017 (CICAS, 2019; Ellis, 2021). On the other hand, the Ecuadorian government stopped being a guarantor and hosting the peace talks starting with 2018 because of the security concerns across the borders of Colombia and the ELN's political and armed activities (Ellis, 2021).

Additionally, the ELN has an alliance with the Venezuelan government, which dates back decades. During the peace talks in the 2000s, the ELN was politically supported by Venezuela. While the ELN was labeled a terrorist organization, in January 2008, the former President of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, publicly recognized the ELN as

an insurgency organization and declared it has political protection against labeling. More recently, the ELN promised to protect Maduro's government and the unity in the case of possible intervention by the primarily the United States. However, there is also increasing concern the ally of the ELN and the Venezuelan armed forces, the Bolivarian National Guard (GNB), due to the conflict of interest, same in it just occurred in 2018 (CICAS, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2020).

Although each strategy constituted with the essence of ideology and collective identity and embraced by the ELN has importance to set broad understanding of the causal relation, the financial policies, precisely the ELN's position towards the drug trade and trafficking is again the distinctive elements of the ELN's organizational strategies to reach the aim of "poder popular" in English "people's power."

Smoking Guns

In accordance with the news published by the ELN on its website (2021), recently, the communities and organized people in the department of Arauca made the free and voluntary decision on eradicating coca plants. The inhabitants of Arauca also began the cultivation of other crops as well as they decided to raise livestock within the framework of true popular sovereignty. In this news, the ELN also stated that the government is applying double standards. Although the government oppresses the peasants by not cultivating coca, it supports the paramilitary groups and cartels for drug trafficking. Since the department of Arauca is one of the ELN's presence, it promises support for the peasants living there.

Indeed, the ELN emphasized two critical things. The first one of them is that the ELN tries to display how it deals with illicit drug cultivation and trading regarding its strategies. The other one is that the ELN also tries to display how it embraces civil participation for both the decision-making process and the execution process, which is the crucial element of local governance, in other words, the way of getting popular support.

Confession

There are two important documents involving the testimony of the ELN in terms of the tax collection from coca and cocaine producers as one of the significant financial resource strategies, which seems controversial due to the other regulations forbidding any activities regarding drug trafficking. The first one is that the official declaration of the ELN's 4th Congress was a turning point. The second and most recent one is the ELN's letter for President of the Global Commission on Drug Policy.

In the open letter, the ELN's state:

“The ELN has nothing to do with drug trafficking or with any phase of its chain: we do not have crops, laboratories, kitchens, tracks, routes, or cocaine exports; we also have nothing to do with chemical precursor businesses. This is the strategy defined democratically in all the National Congresses of the ELN throughout the ELN's history. As a part of our strategy, in the presence we exercise territorial control, we collect tax from the business profiting from the drug trade. We also collect taxes on different economic activities, as the governments do to fund themselves”(The ELN, 2021).

POPULAR SUPPORT

The recent empirical studies show that insurgencies last approximately ten years, and over the ten years, the governments might have a chance to defeat insurgencies. However, long-running insurgencies with low-level military strength have a chance to win against the governments. Indeed, the military strongness of insurgencies might set off the security forces of the governments; hence the strategy of insurgencies via military strength backfire in a short period of time with long-lasting recovery costs (Connable & Libicki, 2010). Thereby, the answer for what else might considerably contribute to the victory of insurgencies is public, in other words, popular support. Thus, even though the first thing coming into mind is the government when it is discussed about popular support, the reason for insurgencies need popular support is underlying the characteristics of the

insurgency itself. In reference to the guide prepared by the US. Government (2012), although the insurgency organizations vary, the several characteristics might be observed almost each one of them which are:

- Insurgency organizations aim to displace the legitimacy of governments through political and military struggle.
- Insurgency organizations aim to gain control on a particular territory with its population through occupying or capturing.

Therefore, once insurgencies took control over a territory, they seek for:

- Providing public services such as prominently security, justice, and utilities.
- Obtaining popular support via a will or coercion.
- Continuing to undermine the government's attempt, whether the attempts are politically or militarily.
- Looking for allies in order to be recognized as just.

The previous chapter tried to explain the ELN ideology, specifically liberation theology and organizational strategies, precisely resource strategy, and ally strategy. In this chapter, as a proposition for the sequential interacted causal mechanism at the end of the chain, popular support of the ELN is inquired. By setting a framework for easing the observation and data collection, the critical aspects of the insurgency governance, in other words, governance without a government as opposed to a state-centric approach, are briefly addressed. After that, the organizational structure of the ELN is discussed through the framework.

In the literature, with regard to the recently developing field of non-state governance, conceptualization studies are rare. One of the latest and prominent studies is "Understanding Governance by Insurgent Non-State Actors: A Multi-Dimensional Typology, Civil Wars," made by Furlan (2020). The below-mentioned aspects of the insurgency organization were compiled in Furlan's study:

Security: Insurgents tend to prioritize the security of the territory because it is an essential condition to engage in territory governance. In fact, providing security as an

ultimate public service is the most immediate way to gain civilian support. In general, insurgencies follow the two directions regarding the current security issues; firstly, if there is a constant security issue already for the captured territory, insurgency organizations will have to channel most of the resources in security precaution. Otherwise, if the insurgency organizations already have a well-set military force, and the security threats are relatively low, the insurgency organizations channel a good number of resources in other governance activities.

Taxation and Public Goods-Service: The most government-like activity for insurgency organizations is taxation, in other words, collecting taxes from the population. Taxation is an important activity for both generations of the financial resource which is needed to sustain the governance effort such as providing public goods and services including the provision of electricity; the construction of roads; the provision of healthcare and education; the management of a telecommunication system; the distribution of food; the provision of potable water; the collection of garbage; the introduction of a transportation system. Furthermore, taxation is an essential act of governance to the extent that it is a measure of predictability and accountability; hence the insurgency organizations might be accepted, legitimate rulers. Additionally, taxation could be related to the insurgency ideology, as seen in the ELN. However, providing public goods and services is challenging since it requires a greater number of financial resources, a larger pool of experienced personnel, and a more stable presence over the territory. Indeed, due to the constraints of collecting taxes and providing public goods and services, many insurgency organizations allow the current governments, primarily local, to do their governmental activities under custody. This version of governance is also common in some departments and municipalities captured by the ELN. The main reason for that the ELN has not owned complete control over some of the territories and opened to conflict with other armed groups. Moreover, the ELN has benefitted from the political allies regarding costs and effectiveness gap of governance.

Regulation: Most insurgency organizations have seemed prone to engage in the regulation of behavior. Regulations refer to the sanction and subsidy of certain businesses, the prohibition of the sale of certain products, the imposition or the prohibition of certain

religious practices, the regulation of inter-gender relations, the regulation of women's freedom in the public sphere, the regulation of the dress code. Regulation is also crucial to provide justice. As seen, regulation might be considered as a way of establishing a new social contract.

Civilian Participation: Specifically, civilian participation is observed when rebels induce civilians to participate, either through coercion or through the encouragement of voluntary involvement. Civilian participation happens in two forms, power-sharing, and inclusiveness. Furthermore, once insurgency organizations define who their citizens are, they also have to define with whom they share their power and whom the insurgency governance includes as well as the risks. To provide inclusiveness, the insurgency organizations have two options coercion or non-coercion, in other words, willingness. The coercion is mostly applied for employing the civilian population for economic purposes like illicit mining production in the ELN case. On the other hand, willingness or consent is applied for employing the civilian population for social purposes. One of the significant examples for employing civilians for social purposes is the 1988 political mass movement organized by dedicated a vast effort of the ELN to mobilizing and preparing the participation of 120,000 peasants from different parts of the departments participated, marching toward the departmental capitals Bucaramanga and Cucuta (Rudqvist, 2006).

It does not mean that each one of the aspects is equally observable within any insurgency case. Instead, the framework contributes to the understanding of popular support for an insurgency, not broad examination.

One of the turning points to understand the ELN's position in the governance of its territory is that the decentralization of Colombia during the 1980s was characterized by weak social and economic democracy. Moreover, during this period, the army lost its monopoly of force, and the justice system got severe damages by illicit activities. In the end, local governments had a low capacity to govern the territories because of their weak fiscal base, low margin of political maneuverability, and slow progress regards social

indicators (Sánchez & Del Mar Palau, 2006). This period is also remarkable since the ELN healed and gained power during which.

To accurately explicate the governance capability of the ELN and its popular support, the organizational structure is significant to start point. The ELN's structure is not based on strictly hierarchical and robust command systems; on the contrary, the ELN has a horizontal structure for strategic decisions, with various command chains (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). Because of this organizational characteristic, the ELN is named an "armed NGO" in several sources (Colombia Peace, 2020). Indeed, the ELN takes political and strategic decisions according to a consensus model, in which just one leader's disagreement can easily cause palsy. Therefore, making crucial decisions requires complicated negotiations among the ELN's leaders (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020). In fact, it is observed that the top leaders of the ELN sometimes do not appear to have advanced knowledge of bold military actions taken by its subunits (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

Although the fronts or subunits have a high degree of autonomy, the political decision-making is proceeded by the ELN's highest level of leadership "*Comando Central*" (COCE), in English Central Command and "*Dirección Nacional*" (DINAL), in English the National Directorate, which was created in 1982. While the COCE with its five commanders superintends the ELN's political, military, financial, and international operations, the DINAL, with the 23 representatives for the international and urban warfare fronts, as well as financial and logistical matters, executes the top decisions (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

In reference to the documentation prepared by the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CICAS) (2019), the members of the COCE:

- Nicolás Rodríguez Bautista, alias “*Gabino*,” the commander in chief until 2020 he has stayed in Cuba after the failure of the peace process in 2019. Recently he has retired due to his health issues (Insight Crime, 2021).
- Israel Ramírez Pineda, alias “*Pablo Beltrán*,” is the political leader and the chief negotiator during the peace talks with the government in 2019. he has also stayed in Cuba after the failure of the peace process in 2019.
- Rafael Sierra Granados, alias “*Ramiro Vargas*,” is responsible for international relations.
- Eliécer Chamorro Acosta, alias “*Antonio Garcia*,” previously was the military leader. After the retirement of “*Gabino*,” he became the commander in chief, in other words, the top commander of the ELN (Insight Crime, 2021).
- Gustavo Anibal Giraldo, alias “*Pablito*,” although he has been a member of the COCE since 2015, seems like the youngest and the most powerful of all ELN leaders because he commands the ELN’s Eastern War Front, which is the largest war front and serves as a liaison between the COCE and other war fronts.

The geographic presence of ELN is based on the stateless regions as claimed by the ELN itself; in other words, it is based on the areas which do not receive government attention or assistance. Consequently, the ELN actively operates in seven war fronts, which are shortly noted below (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020):

- The Northeastern War Front is in the department of Norte de Santander.
- The Northern War Front is in the departments of La Guajira, Cesar, Magdalena y Atlántico.
- The Eastern War Front is in the departments of Arauca, Boyacá y Casanar, including a large presence on the Venezuelan side of the border. The Eastern War Front is the largest front, and it is estimated that more than half of all the ELN’s combatants were in The Eastern War Front.
- The Jesús Dario Ramirez Castro War Front is in the departments of Antioquia and Sur de Bolivar and was overwhelmed just after the establishment of the ELN. It is observed to be the weakest of the ELN’s regional fronts.

- The Western War Front is in the departments of Chocó and Risaralda. Its commander, alias “*Fabián*,” is thought to be close to “*Pablito*,” who is the commander of the FGO and a member of the COCE.
- The Southwestern War Front is in the departments of Nariño and Cauca.
- The National Urban War Front is a presence in the urban area of the Colombia such as Medellín, Barranquilla, Bogotá, Popayán, Neiva, Cúcuta, Villa del Rosario, Bucaramanga, Barrancabermeja, Ibagué and Cali.

Especially just after the recent top commander change, one thing became more crucial that both the new top commander “*Antonio Garcia*” and the most powerful as well youngest leader “*Pablito*” highly oppose drug trafficking. Both seem like just approving the taxation on coca cultivation and drug trade. As a consequence of this clear tendency in the ELN and across its controlled areas, the ELN might gain more support from the local public in the near future (Refworld, 2018; Insight Crime, 2021).

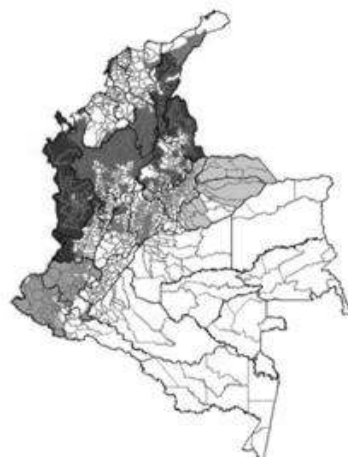


Figure 4.1 The War Fronts of the ELN in Colombia

Source: Indepaz, 2020 retrieved from

<http://www.indepaz.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/INFORME-ELN-2020-corregido-L-cgp.pdf>

The mentioned seven war fronts are divided into smaller units with more localized and decentralized powers. In numbers, it is observed that The ELN currently operates in

at least 16 of Colombia's 32 departments as well as in 136 of Colombia's 1,100 municipalities (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

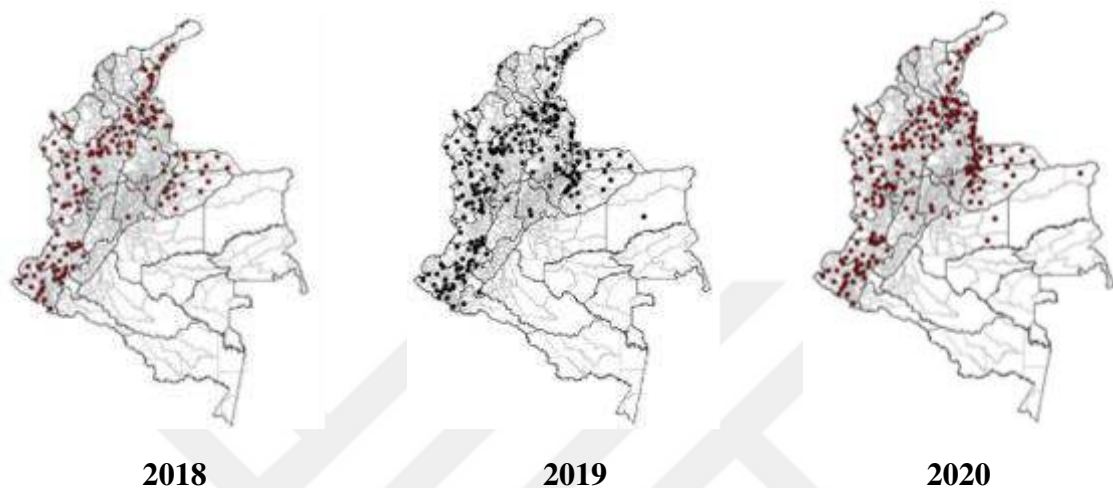


Figure 4.2 The Municipalities where the ELN is Active

Source: Indepaz, 2020 reviewed from

<http://www.indepaz.org.co/wpcontent/uploads/2021/02/INFORME-ELN-2020-corregido-L-cgp.pdf>

In regard to the organizational structure, the ELN is quite distinct from the FARC. The FARC had a rigidly hierarchical structure within which the decisions were directly made by the top leaders and equally enforced by the rest of the command chain. Furthermore, in regard to the presence, the FARC kept remote villages, jungle bases that are far from the urban areas (Refworld, 2018; Colombia Reports, 2019; CICAS, 2019; NACLA, 2019; Insight Crime, 2020; Colombia Peace, 2020).

Smoking Guns

Regarding the recent incidents about the governance of the ELN in its controlled areas, the most significant factors stepping forward are security and regulations. Indeed, both factors are almost equal with the public goods, despite the fact that the executor is an insurgency organization instead of the government.

According to the report of Human Rights Watch (2020), the ELN in some locations provides security against the cartels, paramilitaries, and other armed groups, which are posing a threat to the local people. The threat became greater due to the migration crisis, mostly from Venezuela. The reports show that there is an increased number of rape, threats, extortion, recruitment of minors by armed groups. Although the Colombia police forces intervened in urban areas, in rural areas, the ELN acted like police force even government and executed its regulations such as prohibiting rape, robbery, and murder; obligating people to work one day a month on a community task, and most critically enforcing sanctions and punishments for severe crimes. Hence, the local people stated that they prefer the ELN rather than armed criminal groups, mafias, cartels, and paramilitaries.

Most recently, Human Rights Watch (2020) reported that under the threaten of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ELN informed local people about the pandemic, imposed rules to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus through lockdowns, restrictions on transportations and acts of people, limits on days even hours for shopping as well as banning access of foreigners to the cities and towns controlled by the ELN.

Confession

Since the subject of popular support is people who lived in areas where the ELN makes its presence, the confession analysis is based on the interviews of those people. Since the current conditions of COVID-19 and the ongoing social unrest in Colombia, it has been challenging to reach current interviews with the people living under the control of the ELN, if there are any. Below, in reference to the report prepared by the Conciliation Resources (2015), the statement of an interviewer about living under the rule of the ELN are addressed:

“The ELN has played a central role in every day of our life. They helped to build the paths and the road, the health center, and schools with their own resource. They also defended the local population from the paramilitary, which would have been worse without their protection”(Interviewer, 2010).

In Accordance with the report, the main argument interfered through the interviews is based on the distinct characteristics of the ELN. The local people perseveringly stressed that the actions of the ELN were independent and different from any other armed groups in the region, especially the paramilitaries, and significantly supported by the Church (Conciliation Resources, 2015).



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The research question of this thesis is:

Why does the ELN expand despite the Peace Agreement?

The below question is crucial since that:

Although Colombia signed the Peace Agreement with the largest insurgency organization, the FARC, it mired down in the first four years of the peace. Alongside the low performance of the government related to the Peace Agreement implementation, the social leaders continue to be killed, ex-combatant restarted to organized individually or under the other armed groups, paramilitary groups continue to violence and announce war on the insurgencies, drug trafficking considerably continues, and the needs of the peasant are still there. Furthermore, the last leftist insurgency organization, the ELN, continues to expand in Colombia and throughout the borders of both Venezuela and Ecuador. On the other hand, there is a lack of research on these issues that happened in Colombia in the literature. One of the reasons for that the incidents are relatively new or recent, and the other reason is that the ELN got less attention from the literature since its less violent characteristic and small size in number. Therefore, this thesis aims to answer the research question fundamentally, fill the gap in the literature, and provide a broader understanding of the phenomena.

Throughout this thesis, within the scope of research methodology, causal process tracing framing by Blatter, each proposed causal mechanisms to reach minimum sufficient explanations for the expansion of the ELN in Colombia as well across borders despite the Peace Agreement; the ideology of the ELN, the organizational strategies of the ELN and finally the popular support for the ELN are inquired through the comprehensive storylines, smoking guns, and confessions. While using the

comprehensive storyline as modus, the obtained data originated by the observations is provided into the well-organized narrative in each chapter. After that, regarding the focused causal mechanism, smoking guns and confessions are sequentially applied. By smoking guns, it is aimed that the most relevant evidence with the research question originated from specific events is illustrated. Furthermore, the confessions as actor-based modus are applied for the evidence that shows the exact statements and intentions associated with the inquired causal mechanism.

The analysis applied by the causal process tracing via the comprehensive storylines, smoking guns, and confessions modus immediately shows that the proposed causal mechanisms; the ideology of ELN, the organizational strategies during its existence, and popular support for the ELN implicitly interact with each other and *ceteris paribus* sufficiently caused the expansion of the ELN even though the signed Peace Agreement and its four-year implementation.

The *ceteris paribus* clause was deliberately chosen at that point. The Latin phrase *ceteris paribus* refers “other things being equal”, and it is used when a process of comparing like with like when affirming a causal relationship or the effect of one variable on another (Lewis-Beck, et al., 2004). Although this phrase is preferred mostly in economic research and/or statistical analysis in social science, it is also explanatory for this thesis. In details, the scope of the research is intentionally constricted with the preadmission of other influential causal mechanisms.

First of all, it is observed that the government of Colombia has not been successful to implement the Peace Agreement. Even though there have been severe challenges for the government, it has been reported the lack of political will to fully enforce the articles of the Peace Agreement (Kroc Institute of Peace, 2021). Therefore, the political circumstances could play a role in the ELN’s expanding especially when the ELN consider as an insurgency organization with its surrounding environment.

Secondly, as mentioned in previous chapters, it could be denoted that disarmament of the FARC could affect the expansion of the ELN since the ELN took control where the

FARC left with the ex-member of the FARC who did not demilitarize. In regard to the territorial expansion of the ELN, demilitarization of the FARC could have a significant impact. On the other hand, the member size expansion could not be explained just by the number of ex-FARC members who are still active and do not accept to lay down their weapon. The recently published reports show that the FARC dissident groups have mainly formed by themselves, mainly in the Southern not under the ELN camps, yet they sometimes allied with the ELN and sometimes did not. (The Ideas for Peace Foundation, 2020; Idepaz, 2020).

Briefly, this research does not focus on the necessary conditions and does not apply the counterfactual test for individually necessary conditions. This research approaches the ELN as insurgency organization and discusses its inherent organizational characteristics which have been least stressed in causal research of the relevant literature. Due to the initial position of this research in the literature and the scope of it, the focused casual mechanisms are accepted as jointly sufficient at the first stage. From this point of view, the findings on each proposed causal mechanism by the analysis are summarized following as:

It could be observed that starting with the peace talks in the 1980s, some of the social and political strategies adopted by the ELN with the direction of its constant ideology decisively shifted; hereby, the changes have extended from the 1990s to nowadays, which could be summarized as; from seizing power to the people's power, from being revolutionary avant-garde to being for people, from achieving communism through just revolution to achieving social justice and the people's democracy through a combination of various methods. The main reason for the strategic shift could be indicated as decreasing popularity of Marxism and Leninism after the Cold War alongside increasing attention on human rights and popular democracy all around the globe. However, the changes in the social and political strategies of the ELN do not mean the changes in ideology or the identity of "*ser Elena/o*," instead, almost every document or declaration published by the ELN still stresses Marxism-Leninism as well as liberation theology. Indeed, these are the essence of the ELN regarding the dialectic analysis of social and economic structures and the moral consensus on acts of the ELN; moreover,

the ideology of the ELN continues to be propagated into the organization and outside of it.

On the other hand, there is one critical change in the resource strategy of the ELN, which could affect the popular support for the ELN mainly in its presence. Even though the ELN has irreversibly forbidden the drug trafficking and the members' involvement in its illicit business by the 2nd Congress in 1989, after the 4th Congress of the ELN tax collection from coca and cocaine producers was officially allowed, in other words, the financial resources of the ELN are now mentioned as donations, produce sales, voluntary contributions, and taxation. However, almost as a rival strategy implementation against the Peace Agreement, the ELN announced that in the Arauca department of Colombia, the cultivation of alternative crops as a new way of business and income-earning had been verified. Despite the questionable accuracy of the news, this announcement shows that to gain further popular support, the ELN missioned acting as quasi-government. In reference to the interviews with people from the presence of the ELN, people seen the ELN as a security guard against the paramilitary groups and the other armed groups involved in drug trafficking. Under the conditions of the migration crisis, particularly across the border of Venezuela, some of Venezuelans who fled to their region as well as some of Colombians in the rural indicated that the ELN supplies jobs for them into mostly the mines alongside providing basic aids as it could be seen that all those operations of the ELN addressed the possible success story of insurgency governance regarding security, taxation, and providing public goods. Due to its decentralized governance, these stories could differ from the controlled areas. Nevertheless, the decentralized governance of the ELN could succeed the good local governance promised by the previous reform packages and the Peace Agreement; yet it is not possible to examine the good local governance provided by the ELN owing to its horizontal, participatory structure through the observed evidence mentioned above chapters.

To sum up, the ideology and associated collective identity as “ser Elena/o” is evidently the essence of the ELN as an insurgency organization and primarily determines its resource strategies, social and political strategies, as well as military maneuvers. Apart from preserving these essences, Marxism, and liberation theology, the ELN transforms

them into discourse via its media apparatus and strategic plans via its inner decision mechanisms. Since the implementation of strategies in practices is highly associated with the governance of the insurgency organizations and their presences, the relationship with the public is mutually established at that point. Thereby, if the ELN well manages its strategies throughout its presence, the popular support would equally increase. From this point of view, the analysis results illustrate that the ELN gets relatively popular supports while the degree of which varies from the presence. On the contrary, as seen in the analysis, the regulation strategies of the ELN, such as over punishment towards minor crimes, seem to have a negative impact on popular support. In both ways, the strategy implementations, which is coherent to the Marxism focusing on social injustice, and structural inequalities alongside the liberation theology focusing on morality and dignity, cause popular support for the ELN at least some of the presences. Ultimately, *ceteris paribus*, the ideology of the ELN, the organizational strategies of the ELN, and finally the popular support for the ELN are the causal mechanisms, which provide jointly sufficient explanation for the expansion of the ELN in Colombia as well across the borders of both Venezuela and Ecuador despite the Peace Agreement. Nevertheless, the following research built upon the same or the similar research question should consider the restricted data source and bear down further methods for the data collection.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In recent Colombia, the social unrest and the protests that began on 28 April have been uprising in Cali, the third-largest city of Colombia. Just in days, the protests spread in the capital city Bogotá, other large cities as well as the rural parts of the country. In fact, the protests observed between April to present is not the only one since the Peace Agreement. At the end of 2019, it was also witnessed that the demonstrations were organized by mainly students and unions demanding social support, access to education, and employment opportunities. The initials trigger for the protests are failure at the national struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing taxes alongside the failed performance of the Peace Agreement. However, after the immediate protests, the discourse and attitude of the conservative government towards the protesters, as well as the violent police response, has escalated the riot around Colombia (Amnesty International, 2021; Crisis Group, 2021; Hege, 2021). Indeed, the peaceful atmosphere observed just after the Peace Agreement in 2016 seems to be upside down within several aspects. Firstly, even though the Peace Agreement promises social and economic development in the rural via gradual reforms, the least of these reforms could be implied successfully in four years. In fact, the essential factor behind the social unrest is deepening economic disparity fueled by massive inequality. The government's tax reform, which has not been publicly supported, was a spark plug for the protests (Crisis Group, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2021). Secondly, during the peaceful protest, it is reported that human rights were violated by the police force. The Advocacy for Human Rights in Americas (WOLA) stated that a total of 4,285 cases of police violence the total registered cases of police violence between the morning of April 28 and the afternoon of June 16 is 4,285, in the 1,468 cases, the polices abused the victims physically. There are reported 70 victims of eye injuries, 215 cases of police shooting firearms, 28 victims of sexual violence by the police, and 41 cases of persons suffering from respiratory problems due to the use of tear gas. There are also 43 cases of homicides, 21 of which are in the process

of being verified (Sánchez-Garzoli; 2021). The most severe violence took place against the FARC dissidents, indigenous participants, + LGBT members and women, human rights advocates, medical professions. Although some of the reports indicate that since the government authorities stigmatized these groups, police as well as right-wing paramilitaries are encouraged. All these violent incidents are opposite to the promises of the Peace Agreement, which would guarantee nonviolent social movements and take action for the reform of the police's disciplinary system (Jaramillo-Jassir, 2020; WOLA, 2021). Finally, as mentioned in the previous chapters, one of the significant innovations applied during the peace talks with the FARC was the substantial participation of grassroots representatives such as women, indigenous people, human rights advocates. However, during the recent riot, these groups are targeted by both the government authorities, the police force, and some right-wing armed groups (Herbolzheimer, 2016; Jaramillo-Jassir, 2020; WOLA, 2021).

The positions of both the ELN and the current government, and the president of Colombia are crucial for possible peace negotiations. Indeed, to consider the positions, the interviews, statements on the press, official declarations were looked over. Through the frequency and formality of gathered information, the positions of the ELN and the government could be explained following as:

The government has repeatedly claimed that the ELN affects the protest in two ways. Firstly, the government authorities have indicated that the ELN provokes the masses to participate in the armed national riot. Second, the government, particularly Defence Minister Diego Molano, has claimed that the ELN infiltrated the protests to attack the police force and escalate the violence. None of these claims have been officially verified (Crisis Group, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2021). On the other hand, despite the accusations towards the ELN as well other armed groups like the FARC dissidents, the possibility of reelection for the president Duque is getting a drop. According to the recent poll results, only sixteen percentages of Colombian voters approve of the leadership of the president Duque, who is now in the last year of his presidency (Hege, 2021).

In contrast to the government of Colombia, the ELN seems like turning social unrest into an advantage for forcing the government to the peace talks. Without sufficient data collected by interviews or questionnaires of the protesters, it is not easy to understand whether the popular support for the ELN is increasing. Nevertheless, the news and declarations shared through the ELN's official website, "eln-voces.net," and its journal of Insurrection emphasized the incompetency of the government and accused the government of being an instigator of homicide social leaders. Additionally, the ELN frequently addressed the protests for peace negotiations with the aim of social justice (The ELN, 2021). It is also known that after the delusive pamphlets, including a call of the ELN for an armed strike, circulated on social media, the ELN prepared and circulated a real one, which stressed the support for peaceful popular mobilization through its official accounts (Crisis Group, 2021).

Consequently, in the light of the recent social incidents observed in Colombia, it might be noted that there are still two possibilities as conflict escalation and reopening phase of peace talks with the ELN. However, the second option does not seem possible due to the politics of the current conservative government, which is now in its last year before the ordinary presidency election. Furthermore, if the popular support for the ELN continues to increase, the demands of the ELN would become stricter and binder for the peace in Colombia. On the other hand, if the conditions are not sufficient to restart peace talks with the ELN as expanding the last insurgency organization, there would be a new, complicated phase of conflict escalation, leading to more damage on civilians, social and economic life in Colombia. From this point of view, despite the methodological constraint such as lack of primary data sources, even lack of prior studies in the literature, this thesis provides a broader understanding of the ELN as the last leftist insurgency organization in Colombia thorough examination of its ideology, its organizational strategies and as a result, popular support for it as implicit interacting causal mechanisms. Additionally, although the finding of the thesis can be supported by further data collection and analysis, a sufficient explanation for the expansion of the ELN despite the Peace Agreement is explained.

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APPENDIX

A. THE POLITICAL MAP OF COLOMBIA



Figure A.1 The Political Map of Colombia

Source: Mapsopensource, 2021 retrieved from

<https://emapsworld.com/colombia-political-map-black-and-white.html>

B. THE TIMELINE OF COLOMBIA POLITICAL HISTORY

1525

Spanish Crown began the conquest of Colombia

1717

Bogotá became the capital of the Spanish vice-royalty of Nueva Granada.

1808

Napoleon defeated Spanish King Ferdinand VII.

1819

Simón Bolívar defeated the Spanish army at Boyacá and founded the Republic of Gran Colombia.

1830

Gran Colombia split into Colombia (including modern-day Panama), Ecuador and Venezuela.

1849

Conservative and Liberal parties were founded.

1880

Colombia elected Dr. Rafael Núñez, who eased tension between the state and the church.

1899

The Thousand Days War between Liberals and Conservatives started and spread around Colombia.

1903

Panama seceded from Colombia.

1948

The liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán was murdered, which led to the bloody riots later on defined as “*la Violencia*.”

1964

The Colombian military bombed the guerrilla-held area via napalm, which accelerated the rise of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC); the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) as well as M-19.

1974

The National Front ended, and the first comprehensive counterinsurgency plan was started to enforce by newly elected President Alfonso López Michelsen.

1982

Pablo Escobar is elected to the Colombian Congress.

1984

Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla was assassinated for his supporting of the extradition treaty with the US.

1990

The armed group M-19 demilitarized.

2000

Colombia and the USA agreed on the subsidy amount of Plan Colombia to cut coca cultivation by 2005.

2002

The conservative party leader Álvaro Uribe was elected thanks to his anti-FARC counter-policy program.

2006

Although up to 20,000 combatants of right-wing AUC paramilitary groups were disarmed, however, the lenient sentences for their massacres and human rights abuses became a global debate.

2008

The founder of FARC, Manuel Marulanda, died at the age of 78 from a heart attack.

2010

Colombia shattered a tourism record with 1.4 million foreign visitors. Juan Manuel Santos was elected as the president of Colombia.

2011

Alfonso Cano, leader of the, was killed in a bombing. Additionally, The free trade deal with Colombia was approved by the United States Congress after years of delay.

2012

Peace negotiations between the Colombian government and the FARC began in Havana, Cuba.

2014

Juan Manuel Santos won a second term as president with the Colombian Liberal Party, got 51% of the votes. Furthermore, the FARC declared an indefinite ceasefire after two years of peace negotiations in Cuba.

2016

The Colombian people unvoted the controversial peace agreement with the FARC during a national referendum. Additionally, The Colombian Congress accepted a

modified version of the peace agreement with the FARC without going for a second referendum.

2017

Pope Francis visits Colombia and appeals to Colombians to foster peace. Just after the visit of Pope Francis, the ELN declared a ceasefire, and the peace talks between the new conservative government and the ELN were officially started in Ecuador.



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October 2018/ present - The Social Sciences University of Ankara, Peace and Conflict Studies Graduate Program 95, 75/100

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PRESENTATIONS

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