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**NAVAL  
POSTGRADUATE  
SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**WHEN DO GOVERNMENTS CONCEDE  
TO TERRORISTS?**

by

Nolan O. Lasiter

June 2014

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Michael Freeman  
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<b>REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE</b>			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
<b>1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)</b>		<b>2. REPORT DATE</b> June 2014	<b>3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED</b> Master's Thesis	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> WHEN DO GOVERNMENTS CONCEDE TO TERRORISTS?			<b>5. FUNDING NUMBERS</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Nolan O. Lasiter				
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A			<b>10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB protocol number ___N/A___.				
<b>12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			<b>12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE</b> A	
<b>13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)</b>  This study addresses the question of whether violence leads to governments making concessions. There were four hypotheses proposed that support the research on this question. The first proposed that there was no correlation between levels of violence and concessions. The second proposed that concessions increase as violence increases. The third proposed that concessions decrease as violence decreases. The final hypothesis proposed that there would be no concessions until a certain level of violence was reached, which was designated as a tipping point.  The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) served as the sample case study of this analysis. The findings indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between levels of violence and the Colombian government making concessions to the FARC. Regardless of the amount of violence that the FARC perpetuates each year, the Colombian government does not make concessions. Further analysis suggests that there may be a relationship between presidential parties, elections cycles, and governments making concessions.				
<b>14. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Government, concessions, violence, Colombia			<b>15. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 63	
			<b>16. PRICE CODE</b>	
<b>17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT</b> Unclassified	<b>18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE</b> Unclassified	<b>19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT</b> Unclassified	<b>20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> UU	

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**WHEN DO GOVERNMENTS CONCEDE TO TERRORISTS?**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This study addresses the question of whether violence leads to governments making concessions. There were four hypotheses proposed that support the research on this question. The first proposed that there was no correlation between levels of violence and concessions. The second proposed that concessions increase as violence increases. The third proposed that concessions decrease as violence decreases. The final hypothesis proposed that there would be no concessions until a certain level of violence was reached, which was designated as a tipping point.

The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) served as the sample case study of this analysis. The findings indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between levels of violence and the Colombian government making concessions to the FARC. Regardless of the amount of violence that the FARC perpetuates each year, the Colombian government does not make concessions. Further analysis suggests that there may be a relationship between presidential parties, elections cycles, and governments making concessions.



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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to thank my family members for making my lifelong goal of the pursuit of education possible. With their support, I am able to accomplish many things. For my wife, she is the light that guides me in the dark. I would also like to thank God, for through him all things are possible. Finally, to my professors and advisors at NPS, thank you for an outstanding year of education and experience. I learned much at this university, and it will stick with me throughout my career.



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# I. DO GOVERNMENTS CONCEDE?

## A. INTRODUCTION

When do governments concede to terrorism? Very few studies address whether there is an empirical relationship between terrorist violence and governments making concessions. Some studies propose that levels of terrorist violence increase following a government concession (Bueno de Mesquita, 2005). There are also studies that propose that levels of violence have no effect on government concessions (Abrahms, 2012). The premise behind this study is that terrorist violence coerces governments to make concessions, and furthermore that terrorist violence and government concessions are inter-related; that is, as violence increases, concessions also increase. The argument here is that there is a relationship between these two factors. What is problematic with many of the studies in the literature is that they do not test for this relationship (Abrahms, 2012; Tucker, 1998). To fully understand the dynamic of when terrorist violence can coerce governments to concede, one must understand when governments *do* and *do not* make concessions to terrorists.

## B. WHEN GOVERNMENTS MAKE CONCESSIONS

According to relevant literature within the field, governments do make concessions with terrorists. Lichbach (2005) posits that when states are presented with the terrorist dilemma, they have two choices: 1) attack the terrorists and their supporters or 2) make concessions. Some studies have argued that terrorism does work and does coerce a government to make concessions (Crenshaw, 1998; Pape, 2003; Pillar, 2001; Thomas, 2014). In these cases, the use of terrorist violence increases the likelihood that governments will make concessions.

Bombings and the threat of bombings are tactics used by terrorists to elicit concessions from the government. An example is the 1983 Beirut bombings, where Hezbollah successfully bombed U.S. Marine Corps and French Paratroop barracks in an attempt to force U.S. and international forces out of Lebanon (Pillar, 2001). In another example, the attacks on 9/11 were an attempt by Al Qaeda to force the United States'

hand on the situation in Saudi Arabia. Although the United States did not pull all troops out of Saudi Arabia, it did withdraw more than 90% of its troops, leaving only a small contingent to train Saudi forces (Pillar, p. 40). In many ways, this was a concession by the United States that was in some fashion related to the bombings. This suggests that there is a relationship between the terrorist violence as a result of bombings and the concessions that followed.

Similarly, hostage-taking is known to force governments to make concessions to terrorists: it is a form of coercive bargaining in which the terrorist is trying to impose some cost on the government to meet terrorist demands (Crenshaw, 1998). The act of taking hostages presents a dilemma for the government. On the one hand, the government can ignore the terrorists by not bargaining and instead seek a military resolution to the crisis, but, according to Crenshaw (1998), this could pose serious challenges to the credibility of the government. If the government chooses to pay a ransom for a hostage, it could lose credibility if the ransom payment becomes public. There are many examples of governments paying ransom for hostages. France paid an estimated \$3 million (U.S.) for the release of a French family being held by the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram (BBC News, 2013). Similarly, Germany paid an estimated \$6.7 million (U.S.) to a terrorist group in Iraq for the release of Sussane Osthoff, a German archaeologist (Rosenthal, 2007). The fact remains, however, that the use of hostage taking can be a successful use of terrorist violence to coerce the government into making concessions, such as paying ransoms.

The use of suicide bombers is another tactic used by terrorists to coerce governments. The logic, according to Pape (2003), is that suicide bombers have a strategic target in mind when planning suicide attacks and the attacks are meant as a means of coercing the government to make concessions. The intent by the terrorist group is to inflict as much damage as possible, which raises the overall level of violence while simultaneously generating support for their cause. Pape calls this *destructive terrorism* (p. 345). In most cases, the terrorist is trying to raise the ante by increasing the violence within a particular territory so much that the government is compelled to make a concession by withdrawing its forces or face a revolt by the population within that territory (p. 346).

Thomas (2014) also argues that using terrorism to extract concessions from the government can be effective. The premise is that governments generally do not enter into negotiations with terrorist groups. However, Thomas found that terrorists using their ability to cause violence and harm can in some cases force the government to the negotiating table (p. 3). Through the use of violence, the terrorists erode the government's credibility to protect the civilian population, which in turn can make some citizens support the terrorist cause (p. 4). It is this loss in credibility and the increased use of terrorist violence to erode this credibility that forces governments to negotiate with terrorists. This suggests that negotiations are a form of concessions by governments. Thomas' findings indicated that when there were low to no successful terror attacks there was only a 20% chance that the government would negotiate with terrorists (p. 10). However, when terrorist attacks were high, the government was more than 88% likely to negotiate with terrorists (p. 10). This suggests that as terrorists increased their violent means, there was a greater chance for negotiations by the government, thus indicating a concession to the terrorist groups. Thomas' case study involved terrorist groups in Africa.

All of these studies present a situation in which terrorists used violence to achieve their goal of coercing the government into concessions. The terrorists' main goals of addressing grievances may not have been achieved, but the fact is governments do make concessions to terrorist violence. These concessions can be in the form of ransoms, negotiations, or removal of troops from a contested region. This suggests a relationship between terrorist violence and governments making concessions.

### **C. WHEN GOVERNMENTS DO NOT MAKE CONCESSIONS**

Abrams (2012) found that governments sometimes do not make concessions in response to terrorism and that terrorism in many cases caused the state to "dig in their political heels" (p. 382). In the 1996 Japanese embassy hostage crisis, 146 people were taken hostage by the terrorist group Tupac Amaru (MRTA) at the Japanese Embassy in Peru. Six of those were American citizens who were freed early on. It is speculated that MRTA recognized the U.S. stance on paying ransoms and released the American citizens

first knowing that the United States did not make concessions to terrorists (Pillar, p. 40). The remaining hostages were later rescued by Peruvian military forces in a siege that saw only one hostage and two soldiers die. This indicates that even when the number of captured or killed is high, the government will still not offer concessions.

Many terrorist groups have discovered that targeting civilians in order to coerce governments into concessions is “unprofitable” because many states resisted this tactic when their citizens were the center of terrorist attacks (Abrahms, 2012, p. 367). Similarly, Tucker (1998) found that “conceding to terrorists” does not necessarily result in fewer terrorist attacks. Both authors point out that conceding to terrorist demands do not necessarily decrease or increase terrorist attacks, but simply has no effect. This suggests that there may not be a relationship between levels of violence and governments making concessions.

#### **D. TIPPING POINTS**

Gladwell (2000) posits that a *tipping point* is the point at which epidemics can continue to spread and increase until a certain point is reached and comes to a complete stop (p. 9). Regardless of what the epidemic was doing before the tipping point or after, there is a point that all epidemics reach that tips it into a different stasis. This study posits that *tipping points* are when levels of terrorist violence continue to increase day after day, month after month, year after year, and at some point a certain level of terrorist violence is reached that the government will make a concession. This study seeks to address if there is a *tipping point* at which time governments will make concessions to terrorists.

#### **E. MEASURING LEVELS OF VIOLENCE**

The studies discussed so far have failed to address what the levels of violence are and how to measure them. The relevant literature suggests that levels of terrorist violence are predicated on terrorist attacks. Based on this assumption, this study defines levels of violence as the number of terrorist attacks. The single criterion for terrorist attacks is adopted from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and is coded as total attacks (*Tattacks*) (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to

Terrorism (START), 2013). *Tattacks* is the total number of terrorist attacks within a given time frame. This study will not change these criteria, and they will remain the same throughout this study.

This study will measure levels of violence by terrorist attacks over a given year. This is a superior measurement to the singular isolated terrorist incident or number of deaths resulting from a terrorist attack as a level of violence measurement within a given country. For instance, on 9/11, more than 3,000 people were killed in a series of connected terrorist attacks, beginning with the World Trade Center's bombings (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004). This is one isolated incident of terrorism within the United States for the year 2001 and only accounts for those 3,000 deaths. Before this, the United States had a relatively low level of terrorist violence. Contrast this with Colombia, which has been facing violence for almost 50 years, fighting different terrorist groups and factions. In 1997 alone, Colombia had more than 598 terrorist incidents with more than 1,230 people killed and 246 wounded.<sup>1</sup> The central argument here is that levels of violence cannot be measured by one incident of violence or against the number of deaths alone but by multiple incidents within one-year spans. The advantage of using this measure as a metric for levels of violence is that it accounts for all incidents within a given year and does not solely look at number of people killed resulting from one terrorist attack.

Using this as a measurement, this study looks at Colombia and levels of violence spanning 50 years, beginning with inception of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 1964. This study addresses whether there is a relationship between the levels of violence perpetuated by the FARC and the Colombian government making concessions.

## **F. HYPOTHESES**

The cases studied so far have addressed when governments do and do not make concessions. These studies do not discuss if there is a relationship between levels of violence and government concessions. This study seeks to fill the gap by addressing if

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for more data on Colombia.

there is an empirical relationship between levels of violence and government concessions. This study also seeks to understand if levels of violence will continue to increase to a certain point at which the government will stop the escalation and make a concession, suggesting the *tipping point* posited by Gladwell.

This presents the central argument to this study. There may be a relationship between levels of violence and governments making concessions. The relationship may be linear and positively or negatively correlated. There is also a *tipping point* at which violence exceeds a certain point, and the government makes concessions once violence reaches this point. From these ideas, I present the following hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis 1:** There is no correlation between levels of violence and governments making concessions.
- **Hypothesis 2:** There is a positive linear correlation between levels of violence and government concessions. Concessions increase as violence increases.
- **Hypothesis 3:** There is a negative linear correlation between levels of violence and government concessions. Concessions decrease as violence increases.
- **Hypothesis 4:** There is a tipping point relationship where there are no concessions until a certain level of violence is reached.

## G. METHODOLOGY

This is a focused single case study of the FARC in Colombia supported by data from the GTD. The factors for this study are levels of violence, which is the independent variable, and government concessions, which is the dependent variable. Determining levels of government concessions for each year was done by a strict coding scheme using specific criteria.<sup>2</sup> Level of violence was determined by the criterion of total attacks (*Tattacks*) of the FARC terrorist group from the GTD. The unit of analysis for this study was by year and the single terrorist group the FARC.

This study uses regression analysis to test for a relationship between levels of violence and government concessions within Colombia. Colombia was chosen as the

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<sup>2</sup> See Table 1 for concessional coding scheme and Appendix A for the concessional coded table for Colombia.

case study due to the duration of the conflict between government forces and the FARC as well as the availability of data on the FARC. Findings from this study will determine if there is a relationship between levels of violence and when governments make concessions.



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## **II. OVERVIEW OF THE CASE: FARC IN COLOMBIA**

### **A. HISTORY**

Since 1964, Colombia has been in a state of constant conflict with terrorists, paramilitary commandos, and drug dealers, the most notable being the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). There are many factors that contributed to the conflict within Colombia, the primary one being social inequality between the locals and the government. Another factor is the drug dealers' desire to continue to profit from the coca farms within the country. Adding to this chaos is the FARC's efforts to overthrow the government through violent means for the past 50 years (BBC News, 2012). All of these factors contribute to a certain level of violence in Colombia. The government has two options at its disposal to tackle these tough issues: it can either attack the terrorists or it can seek peace through negotiations and concessions.

Periods of violence in Colombia fall into two clearly definable periods: 1930–1964 and 1964 to present (Dudley, 2004). The 1930–1964 period is characterized by the civil war *La Violencia* between land owners backed by the government (conservatives) versus the peasants (communists) and guerillas (liberals). This period set the stage for the following period, 1964 to present. This period is characterized by the ongoing drug war between the FARC and the Colombian government. However, just as there are periods of violence, there are also definable periods of concessions: 1982–1987, 1991–1992, 1998–2002, and 2012–present. These are the only four periods spanning the 50-year span of the Colombian conflict that the government has entered into negotiations with the FARC. This thesis chapter will look at the periods of violence followed by the periods of concessions.

### **B. THE FIRST PERIOD OF VIOLENCE: LA VIOLENCIA**

Through its long history, the Colombian government has faced one conflict or another—starting with *La Violencia*, which started out as a civil war and has continued

until today's conflict that involves terrorists, drug cartels, and self-defense groups. What is interesting is that during each period, the government has used different strategies to address the violent struggles within Colombia.

The conflict started in the 1930s between wealthy land owners and the local farmers. The wealthy land owners wanted to subsidize the land in order to compete in the global coffee market, whereas the peasant farmers resisted this change and wanted their lands to remain unsubsidized (Dudley, 2004). The government backed the land owners in their drive to subsidize the land for profit. The local farmers sought help from the liberal party in Colombia to protect them from the wealthy land owners and the government that backed them.

A very important figure emerged from this party by the name of Jorge Eliecer Gaitan (p. 5). Gaitan was educated and came from the conservative party, so he was well aware of the land owner's greed as well as their methods. His rallying cry to the peasant farmers was simple: "Protect the weak from the strong (p. 5)." This rallying cry set the theme for this period of violence. *La Violencia* is one of the most brutal periods (1930–1964) in Colombian history, with more than 200,000 people dead as both sides jockeyed for position to win a conflict that turned from a land struggle to a party struggle between liberals, conservatives, and communists (p. 6).

The land owners (conservatives) supported by the government attacked the peasants with such tenacity that many peasant villages were wiped out. The peasant farmers, siding with the communist party, seeing their lands being ravaged, began to form their own self-defense groups in response to the violence. The liberals began using guerillas as a counter to the government and the self-defense groups. This period set the stage for today's current struggle in Colombia, in which the government attacks the FARC and farmers using self-defense groups (e.g., Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia [AUC]) to protect their farms.

### **C. THE SECOND PERIOD OF VIOLENCE: 1964–PRESENT**

The period of 1964 to the present has been an ongoing struggle for power between the government and terrorist groups (FARC), drug cartels, and paramilitary self-defense

groups (AUC). It is similar to *La Violencia* of the 1940s, but the government has taken a different approach over the past 50 years. This includes negotiating with the resistance, making concessions, and in some periods attacking the threats posed to the government. For each year that the government has been in conflict with these threats, levels of violence have risen and fallen with subtle changes, but overall the violence has always been a constant.

Of these groups, this study looks at two principal actors: the FARC and the government forces. The actors and their associated actions play a role in the level of violence and the government's willingness to make concessions.

#### **D. THE BIRTH OF FARC**

FARC fighters originally started out as a small group fighting in *La Violencia*, the civil war between leftist guerrillas and the government (Johnson & Jonsson, 2013). Shortly after that war, the group reorganized under the name FARC in 1966. In 1966, one of the FARC's declared intentions was to overthrow the government (FARC-EP, 2009). The peasants, during the *La Violencia* period, felt that the government was not defending their agrarian rights. Adding fuel to the fire was the government's handling of the insurgency, which led to more atrocities against the local populace of Colombia, therefore increasing the FARC's ranks and creating a picture of the FARC as "freedom fighters" fighting for the "rural poor" (p. 69).

The birth of the FARC originated with its first leader, Pedro Marin, oftentimes called by his alias *Tirofijo*, which means "sureshot," a name he earned for his shooting ability (p. 68). His nom de guerre was Manuel Marulanda. Marulanda earned his claim to fame, when, in 1964, Colombian troops tried to establish control of contested regions held by his forces (p. 69). Marulanda and his small contingent of fighters were able to successfully repel the larger government forces and later reassemble in the mountains (p. 69). His actions set the stage for the growth of the FARC as a small band of "freedom fighters" fighting the larger government forces. These conditions set up a model in which the FARC would protect the rural farmers from the Colombian government's push for land acquisition, which would then garner more support from the locals. This then

became a reinforcing model in how Colombia would push its military powers forward, which in turn the FARC would resist, causing more locals to support the cause.

The fighting between the FARC and government forces has continued for years, and each step of the way the FARC's recruitment numbers were reinforced by widespread support. According to the *CRS Reports for Congress Foreign Terrorist Organizations* (2004), the FARC had around 17,000 active members in 2004 (p. 2). This number is probably half that number today, but that the FARC had grown to such a substantial number illustrates the influence and backing that it enjoyed in Colombia and to some degree still enjoys today.

Although the FARC's growth has declined substantially, it is not yet defeated. The FARC still possesses the ability to attack and cause substantial amounts of violence. In 2013, 19 Colombian soldiers were killed by FARC members in one incident (Reuters, 2013). This underscores the FARC's ongoing ability to cause significant damage to government forces and keep levels of violence at a premium. Accentuating the growth and the FARC's ability to cause violence is the government's ability to use tools to control it. One of the tools the government uses is concessions.

#### **E. COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT FORCES: PERIODS OF CONCESSIONS**

*La Violencia* is not characterized by many concessions. The government's strategy was simple: overwhelm the opposition through violent means. After this period, the government began to change its strategies. This was not evident, however, until around the 1980s when we see the first major set of concessions and recognition by the government that terrorist groups were becoming a problem. In order to address this problem, the government began making concessions. To do this was to enter into negotiations with the terrorist groups. For the purposes of this study, negotiations are considered as concessions by the government. There are four distinct periods that the Colombian government entered into negotiations with the FARC: 1) 1982–1987, 2) 1991–1992, c) 1998–2002, and 4) 2012–present. Each of these distinct periods is marked by a different president using different strategies.

## **1. 1982–1987**

Despite continued attrition of the FARC in the jungle, Colombian President Belisario Betancur feared that if something was not done, the guerillas would continue to grow exponentially (Dudley, 2004, p. 17). Under this presumption and despite protests from his military and contrary to military tactics advocated by the United States, Betancur sought to end the conflict through negotiated peaceful means. One of his campaign promises was to create a “democratic opening” in seeking peace with the terrorist groups in Colombia (p. 17). The vehicle to begin the process was the opening of negotiations with the FARC. This was the first attempt made by a Colombian president to negotiate with terrorists. The previous administration under President Cesar Turbay had sought to crush the rebellion in the Colombian countryside through the use of military force (p. 32).

Turbay’s policy had been simple: give the military a full range of power to deal with the threat. The Colombian military was ruthless with this power: they killed, tortured, incarcerated, and otherwise eliminated suspected guerillas indiscriminately. This of course led to numerous human rights violations, that in the end, Betancur felt was strengthening terrorist backing and support (p. 32).

Betancur’s policy was less aggressive than Turbay’s: seek peace through negotiations. Betancur’s strategy during this period is marked by the Uribe Accords and the creation of the Union Patriótica (UP) (p. 20). The Uribe Accords were a means to give the FARC a political party that would represent them and hopefully encourage them to lay down their arms in favor of a political approach to address their issues.

Betancur made major concessions to the FARC during 1982–1987. First, he granted amnesty to all guerrillas being held in Colombian prisons. Second, he entered into secret negotiations with the FARC in the jungle in 1982, which led to an agreement with the FARC and creating the political party (UP) (p. 20). Then, Betancur created a 40-member peace committee to address all grievances cited by the FARC (Posso, 2004). Fourth, he created a demilitarized zone (DMZ) in the area of Uribe in which the FARC

and the peace commission could meet. Finally, he signed and put in effect the Uribe Accords, which were designed to address many of the FARC's grievances.

Betancur, in an effort to get the FARC to the peace table and as a show of good will, sent a peace delegation to the jungles to begin secret negotiations with FARC (Dudley, 2004, p. 20). These initial negotiations were set up as a precursor for larger, more elaborate meetings between the FARC and the 40-member Colombian peace commission. The negotiations discussed grievances such as agrarian reform, education, and housing.

The second major concession was granting amnesty to all guerilla prisoners. This created a problem for many in Betancur's administration, such as General Fernando Landazabal. He felt that the government was successfully crushing the rebellion, but releasing the prisoners was a travesty to the hard work of the Colombian military. Furthermore, Landazabal, much like his army, felt that this was a "betrayal" by their president (p. 33).

The third major concession was authorization to create a political party to represent the FARC, the UP (Posso, 2004, p. 47). As a product of the Communist party and FARC, UP's goals were to create a voice within the Colombian government (Dudley, 2004, p. 10). This voice would represent the goals and agendas of FARC by serving as the political wing to the military wing in the jungles. A large portion of the citizens did not favor the UP and the prevalence of self-defense groups saw the UP targeted through a systematic assassination of the party. Within 10 years, the UP was all but killed off and did not have any party members left to represent them.

The final major action by the Betancur administration was the creation of the Uribe Accords (Posso, 2004, p. 46). These accords were set up to address the grievances of the FARC and other guerillas in the country. Unfortunately, the accords fell on deaf ears as the congress and government officials only half-heartedly backed them, which in the end meant that the Accords were never fully realized.

## **2. 1991–1992**

Colombian President Gaviria's administration took an aggressive approach, but was still seeking to reach a negotiated settlement with the FARC. The only concession made during this period was the government entering into negotiations with the FARC, the National Liberation Army, and The People's Liberation Army (EPL). This period is distinct in that there was a ceasefire in effect between the terrorist groups and the Colombian government.

Gaviria sought to have the terrorists disarm and then give them a voice in the government with their own political party. The National Liberation Army laid down its arms and joined the political process (Chalk & Rabasa, 2001). The FARC and the National Liberation Army did not accept this offer, but formed the Simon Bolivar Guerilla Coordinating Body, which represented the interests of both guerrilla groups. The aims of the group were different because it was not considered a political party (p. 72). The Simón Bolívar Guerilla Coordinating Body was created in large part as a way to reflect the group's collective aims and goals to the Colombian government.

The negotiations lasted less than two years and were punctuated by attacks from both sides. The first round of talks in Caracas was called off when the FARC attacked one of the members of the Colombian congress. The talks resumed in 1992, but again were interrupted and later called off completely when the FARC accused the government of detaining and killing one of its negotiating team, Daniel Garcia (Posso, 2004, p. 48). This led to a series of recriminations from both sides, which resulted in Gaviria's administration declaring all-out war on the FARC and seeking a more aggressive strategy to eliminate it (p. 48).

## **3. 1998–2002**

President Andres Pastrana's administration took a dual approach by seeking to reach a negotiated end to the Colombian conflict with FARC, while simultaneously preparing his troops for further escalation of the conflict. Negotiations during this period only served as a smokescreen for both sides, as each side pursued its own agendas in preparing to defeat the other side. In this case, the FARC was recruiting, training, and



refining its drug operations. Meanwhile, the Colombian government was eliciting aid from the United States as it prepared for a more aggressive stance against the FARC.

This period begins the classic cat-and-mouse strategy between both the FARC and the Colombian government. The government would enter into negotiations under the guise of seeking peace, while simultaneously still preparing its military for action. The FARC similarly would continue its efforts in preparing for conflict. Neither side, one can argue, was really seeking peace, but only peaceful gains so long as it advanced its own agendas and allowed the opportunity to gain the advantage. Each side was practicing “Colombian tradition,” preaching peace on the one hand and preparing for war on the other (Dudley, 2004, p. 56).

Pastrana’s approach did include major concessions, however. His term is marked by the highest level of concessions for any period during this study. Pastrana’s administration sought a dialogue with the FARC to end the conflict in Colombia. He did this through a series of concessions: establishing a DMZ and removing all troops, entering into negotiations, and releasing of political prisoners.

The first concession Pastrana’s government made was to enter into negotiations with the FARC. A DMZ was set up in Caguan that covered five different municipalities (Chalk & Rabasa, 2001, p. 73). The municipalities were established as a place for the FARC and the government to meet and negotiate conditions for a peaceful resolution. The real problem with this arrangement was that neither side was seeking peace, but rather it was a pause so that both sides could regroup to gain an advantage over the other. The FARC used this time to recruit, train, and cultivate their drug trade (Johnson & Jonsson, 2013, p. 71). The FARC and the government also agreed on making the “negotiations” public and invited more than 25,000 delegates from different sectors of Colombia to participate (Posso, 2004, p. 49). The negotiations were viewed on national television, so everyone could see what was really happening and have a vote on the discussions. In the end though, this just became a distraction to what both sides were really doing: preparing for further intense conflict.

The second concession was the removal of troops from the DMZ. In 1998, Pastrana authorized the creation of the DMZ called “*zona de despeje*” which consisted of five different regions in Southern Colombia (Chalk & Rabasa, 2001, p. 73). Pastrana had done this largely as a concession to get the FARC to the negotiating table. To prove his seriousness about negotiations with the FARC, Pastrana himself even traveled to the DMZ to start the negotiations in 1999 (Posso, 2004, p. 49).

Another major concession that Pastrana’s administration authorized was the release of FARC prisoners in exchange for government troops (“The Sentinel Project for Genocide Prevention”, 2013). In June 2001, the government released 14 FARC rebels in exchange for 359 government police and troops (“The Sentinel Project for Genocide Prevention”, 2013). This concession was made by the government following up on an agreement made between the FARC and the government signed in June (Posso, 2004, p. 49).

#### **4. 2012–Present**

This period is marked by again an approach more restrained than that of Pastrana’s, with a slightly more aggressive approach to the FARC. President Manuel Santos’s administration has taken a more serious tone with the FARC, feeling that it was close to defeating the FARC. The FARC, on the other hand, felt the conflict had reached a stalemate. This is the fourth and final period during which major concessions were made by the Colombian government. This period is marked by three major concessions: 1) entering into negotiations, 2) agreement to land reforms, and 3) agreeing to allow the FARC to integrate into the political process.

The first major concession was the Colombian government agreeing to enter into negotiations with the FARC. Many would argue that there was no need for the government to make the first concession, seeing as how the FARC has been militarily defeated to a point that it could not possibly overthrow the government (Melo, 2013). Additionally, the FARC has lost a considerable amount of its base support from the peasants, which greatly affected its ability to grow into a force capable of challenging the government.

The second major concession was the agreement by the Santos administration on policies of land reform (p. 2). The FARC started out as a resistance force opposing the land reform principles that Colombia had enforced in the 1960s. This inequality of land distribution is what led to the FARC being created to fight the government in the first place. There were two major actions being taken by the government within this concession. The government has agreed to allow non-land-owning peasants access to land. The second concession was to create a fund to ensure the equitable distribution of free land to peasants across Colombia (p. 2). There is still some consternation and disagreement about this for fear that the lands will be used to cultivate coca for the illegal drug trade.

The third concession is the agreement on political processes. Santos's administration has agreed to allow the FARC to integrate into the political process within the Colombian government (BBC News, 2004). This includes creating political parties to run for office. This is a major concession in that FARC members will now be able to affect Colombian laws and citizens' way of life. One source of tension is the issue of FARC members running for office that have documented cases of human rights violations (BBC News, 2004).

Colombia has had many violent periods of unrest during the past 50 years. The next section will discuss how to code concessions made by the government to the FARC during these violent periods.

### **III. CODING OF VARIABLES**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The first step to determining whether there is a relationship between levels of violence and concessions is to establish a coding scheme for coding concessions by year. This chapter discusses how this coding scheme is created and the factors that determine if a given year has concessions and what level of concessions they are. This scheme can then be used to code each year of the Colombian conflict from 1964 (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia [FARC]'s inception) to 2012. Levels of violence in Colombia can then be measured against the levels of concessions using this coding scheme.

#### **B. CONCESSIONAL CODING**

Government concessions are rated on a scale from 0 to 10, with 10 representing complete concession and 0 representing no concessions. Government concessions are characterized by six criteria: 1) removing troops from contested land, 2) releasing political prisoners, 3) paying ransom, 4) granting reforms (land, social, political), 5) agreeing to open negotiations, and 6) granting political autonomy. These concessions are qualitative and this chapter establishes how concessions are coded for this study. Government concessions can either be strategic or nonstrategic concessions. Strategic concessions for the purposes of this study are those that result in changing the political climate of the state affected by terrorism. A strategic concession generally results in the terrorists gaining something that matches up with their demands. A hypothetical example of this would be the withdrawal of all British troops from Northern Ireland in order to appease the Irish Republican Army (IRA) at the outset of the Northern Ireland conflict. Table 1 illustrates how each criterion is scored.

<b>Government Concessions:</b>	<b>0-10</b>
-Removing troops from contested land:	0-2
-Releasing political prisoners:	0-1
-Paying ransom:	0-1
-Granting reforms (land, social, political):	0-2
-Agreeing to open negotiations:	0-1
-Granting political autonomy:	0-3

Table 1. Concessional Criteria

The following paragraphs describe how each criterion is scored relative to the overall level of concessions.

### 1. Removing Troops from Contested Land: 0-2

In many cases, terrorists use violence as a means to coerce the government to withdraw troops from contested lands. This criterion establishes how concessions are scored when they remove troops from these contested lands.

- **0-** Zero to one-third of all troops are removed from the contested area or region. For example, in the case of the IRA and Britain, British troops rotated into and out of Northern Ireland on a regular basis (Richardson, 2007).
- **1-** Some troops are removed from the contested area or region. “Some troops” is defined as one-third to three-quarters of all troops within a region. For example, Al Qaeda wanted the United States to withdraw all troops from Saudi Arabia. The United States withdrew all forces except a small contingent of troops (about one-third of what was there) as part of a training mission to advise and assist Saudi military forces (Time, 2003).
- **2-** Three-quarters to 100% of all troops removed from the region. The withdrawal of all Colombian troops within five different municipalities in Colombia is an example of a concession to the FARC (Chalk & Rabasa, 2001).

## **2. Releasing Political Prisoners: 0-1**

Most governments do not make concessions to terrorists, much less release prisoners of political value or no political value. This criterion establishes how concessions are scored when the government releases prisoners of both political value and no political value.

- **0-** Zero to one-third of prisoners the terrorists are demanding are released. As an example, if terrorists demand 30 prisoners to be released and the government releases 10, then the concession are coded a 0.
- **1-** One-third to 100% of all prisoners that the terrorists are demanding is released. The prisoners are released as a strategic concession to terrorism. An example of this is the case involving U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, Charles Elbrick (U.S. Department of State, 2009). Elbrick was held by the terrorist group MR8 and was subsequently released following the release of fifteen political prisoners being detained by Brazil. The Brazilian government recognized the strategic impact that a U.S. Ambassador had within its country and quickly sought a way to defuse the situation by releasing the political prisoners. If the government releases terrorists that have some strategic value, such as Osama Bin Laden or Raul Reyes, a major FARC leader, then it is coded as a 1.

## **3. Paying Ransom: 0-1**

Concessions in this criterion are scored from 0 to 1. Most governments will not release information on ransom payments made to terrorists because it can damage their credibility. When governments do pay ransom for hostages, this criterion establishes how this concession is scored.

- **0-** Zero ransom is paid for the release of kidnapped hostages. If ransom is paid, it is not paid by the government, but by private parties (civilians); thus, it does not count as a concession.
- **1-** Regardless of the amount, the government makes a concession and pays ransom for the release a hostage. For this study, any ransom paid is coded as a concession. Granted, most governments have strong resistance to paying ransoms, and this fact gives credence that if the government does pay ransom, it is a concession. As an example, France paid 3 million USD for the release of a French family being held by Boko Haram, an Islamic militant group in Africa (BBC News, 2013).

#### **4. Granting Reforms (Land, Social, Political): 0-2**

This criterion discusses how concessions are scored when governments make concessions by granting reforms of land, social and political. Land reforms are defined as giving terrorists safe havens from which to operate. Social reforms are defined as giving terrorists the right to create their own laws or policies within a region. Political reforms are similar to social reforms, but focus more on allowing the terrorists to participate in the political process of creating laws.

- **0-** Zero reforms are granted by the government as concession to the terrorists.
- **1-** Reforms given are greater than 0 but less than full reforms and do not significantly impact the government operating in the country. Allowing the terrorists to participate in local elections would be an example of political reform. Allowing terrorists to practice sharia law would be an example of social reform. The Colombian government providing alternative funds for the agricultural cultivation of land for the FARC to deter drug trade in Colombia is an example of land reform.
- **2-** Full reforms are given to the country as a whole. This amounts to the government complying with all of the terrorists demands of reforms (land, social, political). If the government complied with all demands established in category two, this would equate to full reform.

#### **5. Agreeing to Open Negotiations: 0-1**

The opening of negotiations does not always result in a preferred outcome for either the terrorist or government, but that the government is willing to enter into negotiations can be seen as a concession. Although entering into negotiations is a concession, it is not a strategic concession; therefore, it does not score the same as removing troops from contested land or granting political autonomy.

- **0-** No negotiations have started or been entered into.
- **1-** The government enters into or attempts to enter into negotiations in response to the terrorist activities. An example of this is the IRA hunger strikes of 1981 in which 10 hunger strikers died, most notably Bobby Sands who was elected to parliament while in prison. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher refused to grant political prisoner status to the prisoners, which resulted in 10 of the prisoners dying. In recently released papers, however, Thatcher had indeed sent secret messages to the IRA discussing opening negotiations. The negotiations never occurred;

however, that Britain was seeking a resolution to the crisis through negotiations could be seen as a concession (BBC News, 2011).

## **6. Granting Political Autonomy: 0-3**

Political autonomy is a concession in which the government grants a terrorist group some control over their political space; this includes creating political parties to represent them, such as the Union Patriótica and its representation of the FARC (Posso, 2004).

- **0-** The government does not grant any political autonomy to the terrorists.
- **1-** The government grants a level of political autonomy to the terrorist group that allows them to create a political party and represent them within their own political space. The creation of the Union Patriótica is an example of this.
- **2-** The government grants a level of political autonomy that interferes with government policies, and is a strategic concession for the terrorists. In most cases, this will impact but not change the political climate of the country. An example of this is Spain granting political autonomy to the Basque Separatist movement in 1978 (Goodman, 2002). The Basque country was granted some limited rights such as right to control education and some low-level governmental policies within Spain such as security. However, the area still fell under Spanish rule, so did not have complete autonomy.
- **3-** The government grants full autonomy to the terrorists within a region or country. In this case, the recognition of political autonomy of the terrorist group is so great that it changes the political climate of the government. An example of this is the election of Antonio Navarro Wolff, a former MI-19 terrorist leader that was elected to President Cesar Gavira's cabinet (Chalk & Rabasa, 2001). Not only was MI-19 incorporated into the political process, but it was allowed to create a political party and have one of its leaders elected to the Colombian government.
- The next section will discuss how this coding scheme is used to code data on the case study of the FARC in Colombia.





## IV. DATA ANALYSIS

### A. METHODS

This was a two-phase focused case study analysis of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. The first phase consisted of gathering data on Colombia specific to the FARC. The data were then coded using the coding scheme created in Chapter 3 of this study. Once the coding was complete, the data were then ready for statistical analysis. The second phase of this study involved using regression analysis to determine if there was a relationship between levels of violence and government concessions in Colombia. The data were further scanned for emergent themes that might explain why the Colombian government made concessions to the FARC. The results will be discussed in the subsequent chapter.

### B. DATA SET

Data are derived from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). There are two variables in this study: the independent variable is levels of violence and the dependent variable is government concessions. The unit of analysis was years, with 37 total years being analyzed (There was a 50 year span of data drawn from GTD, only 37 of the years had complete data, please see footnote).<sup>3</sup> Of those years, 17 (45%) were coded with a level of concession between 1 and 5. The remaining years reflect a period of no concessions regardless of the levels of violence.

#### 1. Levels of Violence

The independent variable level of violence is based on total attacks (*Tattacks*) per year within the country of Colombia. The total attacks for this study account for only those attacks by the FARC. Other terrorist groups' incidents and attacks are not factored into this study.

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<sup>3</sup> There was a 50-year (1964–2014) period of data drawn from the GTD, only 37 years (1975-2012) had valid and complete data. The other 13 years of data were not used as it was incomplete.

Figure 1 reflects levels of violence within Colombia perpetrated by the FARC. Attacks by other terrorist groups in Colombia are not included in this study.

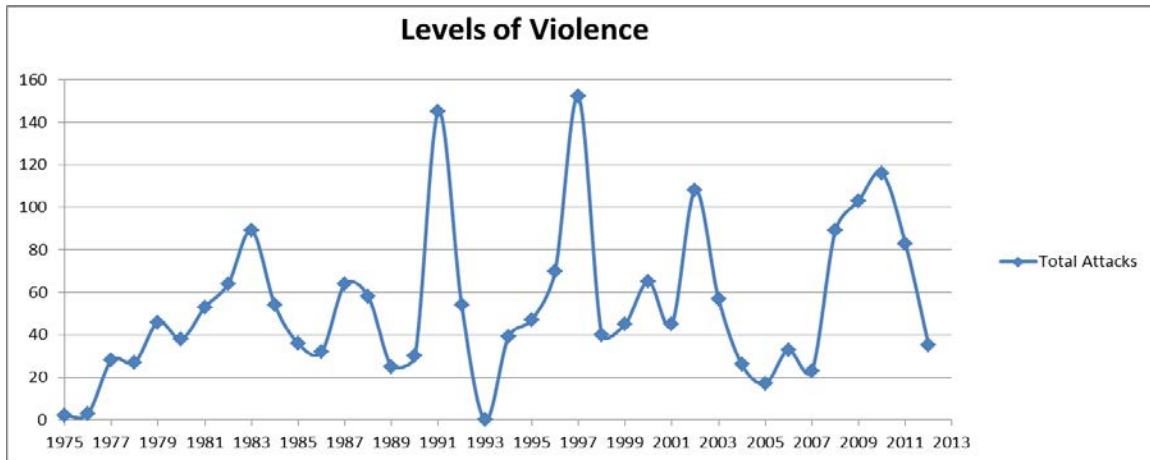


Figure 1. Levels of Violence 1975–2012 (after START, 2014)

Analyzing the graph, there appears to be a cyclical pattern of violence. In 1983, the FARC peaked at a total of 89 attacks and then began to steadily decline until 1986, where they began to increase again. This was five years after entering into negotiations with the Colombian government for the first time in Colombian history. Each year after that, attacks decreased as reflected in the figure. Toward the end of negotiations in 1987, attacks began to steadily increase to 64 attacks and then began the cyclic decrease in attacks until 1991 when negotiations began again for the second time. In 1991, attacks reached their peak at 145 attacks by the FARC. This was at the start of negotiations between the FARC and the Colombian government. Entering into the second year of negotiations in 1992, attacks dropped to 54 for that year. Following the failed negotiations in 1992, attacks steadily climbed to a high of 152 attacks in 1997. The following year in 1998, the Colombian government entered into negotiations with the FARC, where attacks plummeted to a low of 40 attacks. Levels of violence remained steady throughout this concessional period until 2002 when the FARC and the Colombian government broke off negotiations, and attacks climbed to 108 attacks for that year.

The increase and decrease of terrorist violence throughout these periods suggests that there may be a relationship between violence and concessional periods. What is

interesting to note is levels of violence were high at the start of the concessional period but quickly tapered off during the concessional period. This tapering off, however, was followed by skyrocketing activity at the conclusion of each concessional period. Figure 2 reflects these levels of violence in relation to the four concessional periods with the Colombian government.

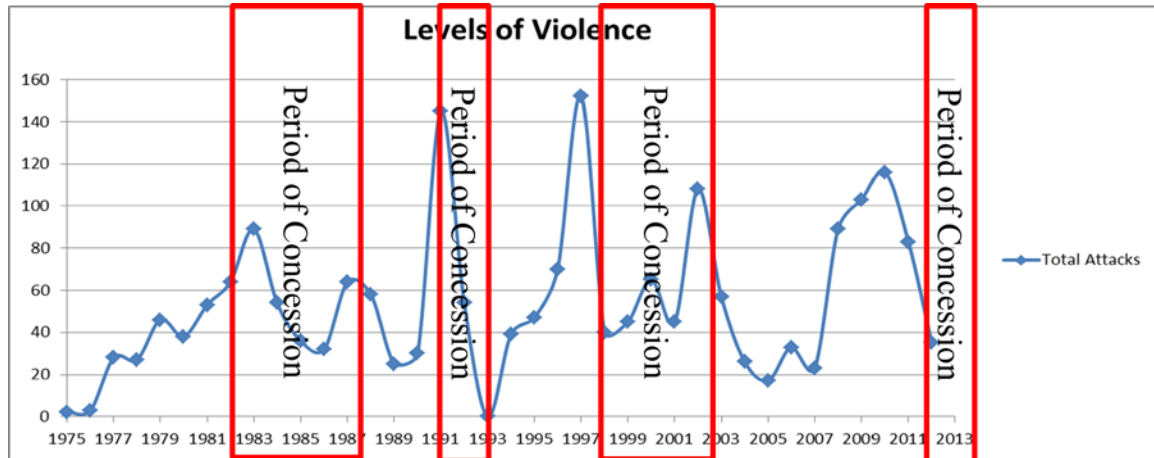


Figure 2. Levels of Violence 1975-2012 Overlaid by Concessional Periods (after START, 2014)

## 2. Concessions

The dependent variable for this study is concessions. Granted, in some studies concessions are the independent variable, but for this study, it is the dependent variable. Concessions consist of an aggregate of six concessional criteria that are given different weights based on terrorist preferences. The overall level of concession for each year is determined by the sum of all six concessional criterions. The following sections discuss how each criterion was coded based on research and data drawn from GTD. Figure 3 reflects levels of concessions from 1975 to 2012. The takeaway from this graph is that concessions fall into four clearly defined periods: 1982–1987, 1991–1992, 1998–2002, and 2012–present. Each of these periods is distinct in that these are the only periods that the Colombian government entered into negotiations with the FARC. The remaining years had concessions, but none of these years is as clearly defined by negotiations between the FARC and Colombian government.

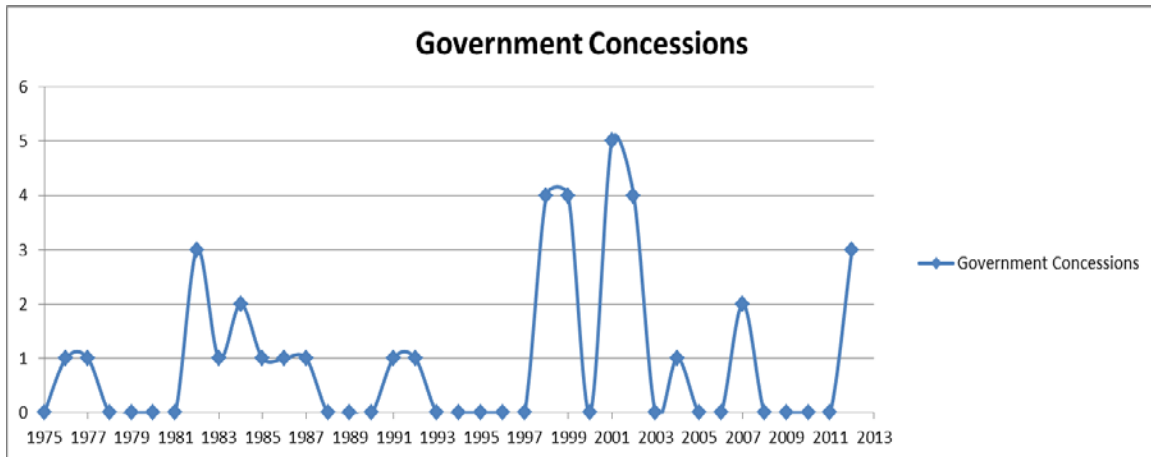


Figure 3. Government Concessions 1975–2012

**a. Removing Troops from Contested Land**

There is only one four-year period that the Colombian government removed all troops from a region within Colombia: 1998–2002. Each year from 1998 to 2002, the Colombian government, under Pastrana’s rule, withdrew all troops from five different areas within Colombia and set up a demilitarized zone to begin discussions with the FARC (Chalk & Rabasa, 2001). This period was coded a 2 for the years 1998, 1999, 2001, and 2002. In the year 2000, the FARC attacked and executed a delegate of the Colombian peace commission, Diego Turbay, which caused the Colombian government to recall the demilitarized zone (DMZ) and threaten to push troops back into the DMZ (p. 74). Later, under this threat, talks resumed in 2001–2002; both of these years received a coding of 2. What is important during this period is that the Colombian government withdrew all troops; thus, this period is coded the highest weight of 2.

**b. Releasing Political Prisoners**

There are four instances in which the Colombian government released political prisoners as a concession to the FARC. Each instance was coded a 1 because it met all the criteria for being considered a concession.

The first instance came in 1982 under the administration of Colombian President Belisario Betancur. Betancur authorized the release of 60 rebels and granted amnesty to

dozens of other terrorists (BBC News, 2014). This concession to terrorists was coded as a 1 because it met all of the criteria.

The second instance came in 2001 when the Colombian government released 14 FARC rebels in exchange for 359 Colombian police and military members (“The Sentinel Project for Genocide Prevention”, 2013). The exchange was seen as a way forward in the peace talks between the FARC and the Pastrana administration. Because this met all of the criteria for a concession, this year was coded a 1.

The third instance came in 2004 under Colombian President Alvaro Uribe’s administration. Seen as a hardliner against the terrorists, Uribe had no intention of making concessions. Up until this point, his administration had always maintained an aggressive posture of attacking and neutralizing terrorist groups within Colombia, especially the FARC. Under intense public pressure to find a resolution to the hostage dilemma, Uribe’s administration released 23 FARC prisoners with the hopes that the FARC would release some of the 1,600 hostages that it held. The initial request was 59 FARC rebels in exchange for 50 hostages, but this was rejected by the FARC (BBC News, 2004). Although final totals have not been released, the government did make concessions in the hopes of securing hostages as part of the deal. The resultant coding for this year was a 1 because it met all of the criteria.

The fourth and final documented release of prisoners came in 2007 when the hardline administration of President Uribe authorized the release of hundreds of FARC rebels in the hopes of securing the release of political prisoners being held by the FARC, most notably Ingrid Betancourt, a former presidential candidate for Colombia (Moloney, 2007). The FARC rejected the exchange, but the result of the Colombian government’s willingness to make a concession to the terrorists codes this concession as a 1.

### *c. Paying Ransom*

According to the GTD dataset, there are only three documented cases of ransoms paid to FARC terrorists (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2013). In 1976, Gustavo Curtis, a Beatrice Food manager, was kidnapped by the FARC. In 1977, German industrialist Dieter Montuar was kidnapped by the

FARC, and, in 1982, Julio Gomez Alzate, a Colombian cattleman was also kidnapped by the FARC (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2013).<sup>4</sup> Because there is not enough information to dispute or refute ransoms being paid by governments or private contract firms, each instance was coded a 1 because it met the basic criteria established in Chapter 2.

*d. Granting Reforms (Land, Social, Political)*

There are two distinct periods in which land reforms have been granted to the FARC. Each of these instances was coded a 1. The first period, 1998-2002, land the size of Switzerland was set aside by the Colombian government and designated as a DMZ in which all Colombian troops were removed (“PBS News, 2011). This DMZ was designated as *Zona de Despeje* and was set aside as a place for the FARC and the Colombian government to meet to discuss negotiations (Chalk & Rabasa, 2001, p. 73). It was also seen as a concession by the government to the FARC. This zone remained intact from 1998 to 2002. There was one period in 2000 in which the zone was no longer considered a DMZ because of an attack by the FARC that resulted in the execution of a Colombian peace delegate. This resulted in the year 2000 being coded as a 0 because the Colombian government had canceled the DMZ. Shortly after, however, both the FARC and the Colombian government renewed discussions in 2001, at which point the DMZ was redesignated and extended through 2002. Both of these years are coded a 1 because the DMZ remained intact.

The second period of land reform came in 2012 under President Manuel Santos. The government has so far conceded to the terrorist’s demands of agrarian reform, which results in this year being coded a 1 (Brodzinsky, 2010). The negotiations are ongoing and there is speculation that more reforms are on the way as the government attempts to balance inequality between the peasant farmers and the rural populace.

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<sup>4</sup> Most governments do not acknowledge ransoms paid for hostages to avoid losing credibility. For additional information, also see <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/IncidentSummary.aspx?gtidid=197609280001>.

*e. Agreeing to Open Negotiations*

There are 14 instances in which the government made concessions with the terrorists by agreeing to negotiate terms to ending the conflict. The instances can be grouped into five periods.

The first period of negotiations occurs from 1982 to 1987. The Colombian government under the direction of Betancur sought to curb the violence that was racking the civilian community in Colombia. During this period, negotiations were ongoing with no breaks or interruptions. This period was marked by Betancur's substantial Uribe Accords policy toward terrorists (Posso, 2004). These were coded as a 1 for each year of the negotiations.

The second period is from 1990 to 1991 and is under the administration of President Cesar Gaviria. The Colombian government opened negotiations with the FARC in an effort to curb violent extremism. The Simon Bolivar Guerilla Coordination Body, as previously mentioned, was created by the terrorists, including the FARC, to develop a common agenda among the guerrilla groups based on their needs (p. 48). Negotiations were ongoing until 1992, when a FARC emissary was killed by government forces; this resulted in all negotiations being called off. Each of these years was coded as a 1 because it met all of the criteria established in Chapter 2.

The third period is from 1998 to 2002. As discussed previously, the Colombian government sought to negotiate an end to the conflict. Each of these years is a coded a 1 except for 2000 because of the assassination of a high-level Colombian diplomat. The assassination led to the Colombian government and the FARC breaking off negotiations for that year.

The fourth period is 2007, in which Uribe's hardline administration began negotiations to attain the release of political prisoners, most notably Ingrid Betancourt. The Uribe administration also released many FARC prisoners as a sign of good will in the hopes that the FARC would follow suit. This never occurred; however, that the government did enter negotiations, codes this year as a 1.



The fifth and final period is 2012 and is ongoing as the FARC and the Colombian government negotiates over ceasefire conditions. That both sides are negotiating codes this year as a 1, for it meets all of the previous established criteria.

*f. Granting of Political Autonomy*

There are two periods in which political autonomy was granted; 1984 and 2012. In 1984, the Uribe Accords were signed by Betancur as a way to address the FARC's many grievances (p. 46). One of the ways that Betancur sought to bring the FARC into the political sphere as part of the Accords was the establishment of Union Patriótica (UP) (p. 47). The UP was the political wing of the FARC and had the authority to participate in politics within the Colombian government. In 1991, the UP movement had died off, largely from assassinations and lack of support from the Colombian government. Notwithstanding, this year was coded as a 1 because of the UP's creation.

The second period is 2012, which is when the FARC and the Colombian government entered into negotiations. The Colombian government has agreed to allow the FARC to have a political party within the Colombian government (BBC News, 2014). This results in a coding of 1 for this year.

## V. FINDINGS

### A. STATISTICAL FINDINGS

This study did not yield any statistically significant results, but further qualitative analysis did provide some interesting findings.

#### 1. No Correlation

Hypothesis 1 proposed in Chapter 1 that there is *no* correlation between levels of violence and governments making concessions. This hypothesis was proven true. With a confidence level set at  $\alpha$  (.05) and a sample size of 37 (years), the results suggest that there is not a statistically significant ( $p = .894$ ) correlation ( $r = .022$ ) between levels of violence and governments making concessions.

#### 2. No Negative or Positive Linear Correlation

Hypotheses 2 and 3 proposed that there is either a positive or negative linear correlation between levels of violence and governments making concessions. These hypotheses were proven not to be true. With a confidence level set at  $\alpha$  (.05) and a sample size of 37 (years), the results suggests that there is not a statistically significant ( $p = .894$ ) correlation ( $r = .022$ ) between levels of violence and governments making concessions.

#### 3. Tipping Points

Hypothesis 4 proposed that there is a tipping point relationship where levels of violence increase to a point that governments will make concessions. Using logistic regression, the data was looked at by year and by conducting a running average to the point a concession was made. With a confidence level set at  $\alpha$  (.05) and a sample size of 37 (years), the results suggests that there is not a statistically significant ( $p = .83$ ) correlation ( $r = -.03$ ) between levels of violence and governments making concessions. The results suggested a negative relationship, which suggests that as levels of violence increase concessions decrease.

#### 4. Further Analysis

The data did not suggest any statistically significant correlation between levels of violence and governments making concessions. Further analysis suggests there are two different groups of years: years with concessions and years without concessions. If one were to average these years out with concessions, one would find that *Tattacks* averaged over time are greater in years with concessions than without concessions. Based on further analysis of the data three additional hypotheses are proposed:

- **Hypothesis 5:** There is a positive relationship between levels of violence and time.
- **Hypothesis 6:** There is a positive relationship between average yearly levels of violence and government concessions.
- **Hypothesis 7:** There is a significant relationship between government concessions and political parties.

These hypotheses were chosen based on the qualitative analysis of the literature and the data presented.

- **Hypothesis 5:** Relationship between levels of Violence and Time

The independent variable in this hypothesis is time and the dependent variable was levels of violence. The hypothesis posits that there is a relationship between levels of violence and time. The time variable consisted of all 37 years measured against the levels of violence for each year. This test was run to see if time explains the change in levels of violence.

With a confidence level set at  $\alpha$  (.05) and a sample size of 37 (years), the results were statistically significant ( $p = .05$ ) correlation ( $r = .09$ ) between levels of violence and time. This is a weak correlation ( $r = .09$ ) explaining only a small percentage of the change in the levels of violence over time. This suggests that there are other factors that might explain the change in levels of violence in Colombia.

- **Hypothesis 6:** Positive Relationship between Average Yearly Levels of Violence and Concessions

The independent variable in this hypothesis is levels of violence (averaged yearly) and the dependent variable was concessions. This hypothesis posits that as total terrorist attacks (averaged yearly) increase, concessions will also increase. This test is different

from hypothesis<sub>1</sub>, which focused only on attacks for each year independently. Average yearly attacks were calculated by adding the previous year(s) attacks plus current year attacks and generating a running average. This average was then measured against concessions.

With a confidence level set at  $\alpha$  (.05) and a sample size of 37 (years), the results suggest that there is not a statistically significant ( $p = .24$ ) correlation ( $r = .03$ ) between levels of violence (running average) and government making concessions. This is important in that it suggests that, regardless of the amount of violence perpetuated by the FARC, it did not influence the government to make concessions. This further suggests that levels of violence will continue to increase over time. This idea challenges the assumption that the situation in Colombia is better now than it has been in 50 years, since this idea posits that violence will continue to increase over the long term. This dichotomy is illustrated in Figure 4.

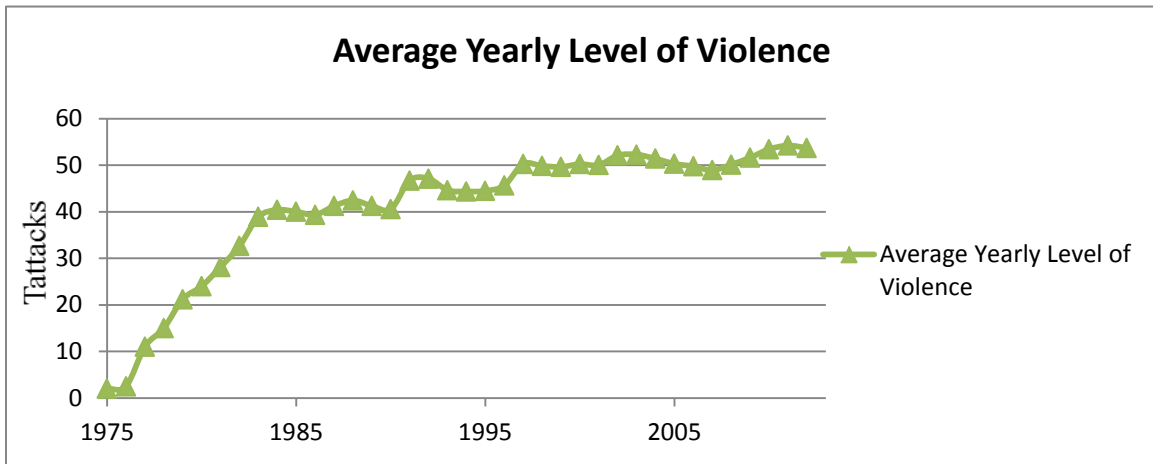


Figure 4. Average Yearly Level of Violence

- **Hypothesis 7:** Significant Relationship between Government Concessions and Political Parties

The independent variable in this hypothesis is political parties and the dependent variable was government concessions. This hypothesis posited that there is a significant relationship between presidential parties and government concessions. The hypothesis

suggests that different presidential parties affect if concessions will be made by the government.

To code for this relationship, each president and their associated political party was added to the concessional coding table found in Appendix A. The sample size consisted of 10 Colombian presidents covering a 37-year span. There were four political parties represented by the 10 presidents and they were coded as follows: Conservative- 1, Liberal- 2, Colombia First-3, and National Unity Party-4. Each of the presidents was then input into the table and coded according to the coding scheme. Once coded, statistical tests were then performed on the data.

With a confidence level set at  $\alpha$  (.05) and a sample size of 37 (years), the results suggests that there is not a statistically significant ( $p = .08$ ) correlation ( $r = .08$ ) between government concessions and political party. However, given that  $p = .08$  and is only .02 from being within tolerance, this suggests that given a larger sample size, the data may indicate a correlation. Running the same test with a confidence level of  $\alpha$  (.10), this would be statistically significant, suggesting that party affiliation does play a role in whether governments do or do not make concessions. This is a weak correlation ( $r = .08$ ) however and suggests that other factors may explain the change in concessions.

## **B. PERIODIC FINDINGS**

My findings indicate there are four periods when the government made concessions with the FARC: 1) 1982–1987, 2) 1991–1992, 3) 1998–2002, and, 4) 2012 to present. Each of these years is marked with different strategies and levels of concessions. Each period is marked by a different president in power with different strategies for dealing with the FARC. They coincide with either the beginning of a new presidential term or the ending of a presidential term, suggesting a correlation between concessions and term limits.

### **1. 1982–1987**

The Betancur administration (1982–1985) sought a more restrained approach to dealing with the FARC. It was not passive but is characterized by the Uribe Accords and

the creation of a FARC political party (Posso, 2004, p. 47). One of Betancur's presidential policies was to address the peace policies that had been established by President Turbay in the previous administration (Justice for Colombia, 2012). Of most importance to Betancur was the commission that Turbay had established to address grievances with regards to an amnesty decree for rebels. Betancur felt that this decree was lacking the political will needed to achieve a long-lasting change. This is in large part what won him his election.

With this strategy in mind, he created a 40-man peace commission that he felt could do what the commission created by Turbay could not, which was to truly address the Colombian populations grievances, and also correct the injustices from the amnesty decree (p. 47). It was this 40 man peace commission that led to some of the concessions occurring during this period. So in large part, the reason that concessions in this period are tied to presidential parties and policies is that Betancur was attempting to out-politick Turbay with his own peace commissions and strategies. This created a political environment ripe for concessions. Towards the end of Betancur's term however, most of the policies and peace commissions had become null, suggesting that there was a strong drive to address the FARC at start of the election cycle, but less so at the end of the presidential term.

## **2. 1991–1992**

The political environment during this period is characterized by the creation of more peace commissions to counter the growing threat of insurgency. Following the lead of President Barco's administration (1986–1989), President Gaviria (1990–1993) sought a more conciliatory approach to the growing terrorist threat (Justice for Colombia, 2012). He created an "Advisory Committee to Public Order" in early 1991 followed by an advisory committee to "reintegration" a few months later to address the FARC and other terrorists operating in Colombia (Justice for Colombia, 2012). It was through these commissions that Gaviria's administration engaged in negotiations with the FARC. Similar to Betancur's administration, concessions during this period can be tied to the presidential strategies of trying to find the right *commission* to deal with the FARC.

The conciliatory approach of the Gaviria administration is characterized by successful negotiations with smaller groups, such as The National Liberation Army, in laying down their arms and joining the political process (Chalk & Rabasa, 2001, p. 72). Using this as a model, the Gaviria administration hoped that the FARC would also lay down its arms to no avail. Broken negotiations led this administration to seeking a more aggressive approach against the FARC at the end of the administration. Similar to Betancur's administration, this suggests that concessions are linked to presidential terms.

### **3. 1998–2002**

The Pastrana administration (1998–2002) had the most conciliatory approach of all the presidents and granted the most concessions to the terrorists. One of Pastrana's campaign promises was to initiate and make peace with the guerillas (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014). Following up with his campaign promise, he initiated secret talks with the FARC to setup the peace negotiations of 1998–2002. It is through his campaign promises and commitment to follow through that lead to the concessions of this period. Towards the end of this period however, similar to the previous presidents, his strategies tapered off and his presidential term is most remembered for failed negotiations.

### **4. 2012 to Present**

The political context of this period was established by President Alvaro Uribe's (2002–2009) aggressive approach to dealing with the Colombian conflict. Uribe's stated goal was full defeat of the FARC and any other guerrillas in the country (Melo, 2013, p. 2). Uribe had garnered praise and support from the population of Colombia and was seen by many as the best president that Colombia had ever had. President Santos (2010–present), following Uribe's example, promised to crack down on the insurgent groups and adopt a policy of security similar to Uribe's (Brodzinsky, 2010). It was these campaign promises that by and large secured his election to presidency with a 69% majority vote (Brodzinsky, 2010). As part of his campaign promises however, he also promised to address the insurgent problem with policies that would unite the country in "harmony" towards a goal of peace (Brodzinsky, 2010). It is through these campaign promises that some of the

concessions during this period have stemmed as President Santos continues to work on disarming terrorist groups and establishing levels of security for all citizens in Colombia.

### **C. FUTURE RESEARCH**

The data presented in this case suggests that there may be correlations between government concessions and two more variables that were not statistically analyzed in this study: 1) election cycles and 2) campaign promises.

The first consideration for future research would be to look at the relationship between election cycles and government concessions. This future study would analyze why concessions would occur at the beginning or the end of a presidential cycle. There may be many reasons for this suggested relationship, maybe external pressure from international partners, such as the United States; only further analysis can yield insight to this variable.

The second and final consideration for future research is the relationship between presidential campaign promises and government concessions. Analyzing this variable would be different than looking at election cycles, the focus on this study would be to test if campaign promises lead to concessions. Presidential candidates campaign and make promises to spur the vote for them at the polling booth. This suggests that candidates may make promises on major issues, such as addressing the FARC problem in Colombia or crippling the drug trade. Candidates recognize that tackling such tough issues can garner more votes and will feel compelled to address these issues once elected president. This may explain why some presidents during their campaigns felt a strong need to follow through with their promises, such as making concessions with terrorists in order to tackle the terrorist problem.

### **D. CONCLUSION**

Although this study did not yield any statistically significant results for a relationship between levels of violence in Colombia and why the government made concessions, it did yield some insights as to the major conflict occurring in Colombia.



The study also suggested that there is a correlation between presidential parties and governments making concessions. More study should be done in this area.

Furthermore, this study also proved that regardless of the level of violence a country faces, most countries will not make concessions based on this variable alone. There may be other variables at play here, such as presidential campaign promises and election cycles that may explain the change in violence throughout the course of Colombia's long and violent history. This only goes to show that when governments are faced with a terrorist dilemma, they have many options to choose from, but one option that all governments generally do not choose is to make concessions with terrorists, regardless of the level of violence.



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