

Talking about Peace

The Role of Language in the Resolution of the Conflict in Colombia

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"Discourses are the product of power by which hegemonic interpretations are seemingly naturalized and internalized, but also resisted and contested, within the social realm" (Dunn and Neumann, 2016, p.13).

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IV

Abstract

How was it possible that Colombian politicians found a solution to the conflict in 2016, but which nevertheless was rejected by the people? In this thesis, I analyse the process which ended in a historical peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – The People’s Army (FARC-EP) in 2016. The ambition is to understand how the national government has moved discursively from fighting a war on ‘terrorism’ to promoting a political solution to an ‘internal armed conflict’. Theoretically, the thesis draws on poststructuralist discourse analysis to uncover how different constructions of identity (Self/Other) has translated into different national frameworks for peace. The basic premise is that actors interpret the world through language, and that language simultaneously creates, transforms and reproduces versions of the world. Discourses can be seen as structures of meaning that inform how we understand materiality and in simple terms, allow us to make sense of the world. In the extension, discourses produce a bandwidth of possible action and thought that we deem natural or unnatural, legitimate or illegitimate upon the confrontation of a problem. In the thesis, I use discourse analysis to uncover how the Colombian government has defined and portrayed the FARC in the conflict from 2002-2016. The data material constitutes official text, such as speeches, policy programs and official declarations, primarily delimited to the words of the presidents. The empirical analysis shows how military violence was accepted as a natural response to an enemy constructed as a radically different Other under the government of Álvaro Uribe. Further, it demonstrates how a transformation in the representation of the Self coincided with the decrease in ‘otherness’ attached to the FARC. Where the former representation presented the negotiation with terrorists as impossible, transformation has been crucial for the successful initiation of the peace negotiations that were concluded by the Santos administration, 52 years after the conflict broke out. The analysis also demonstrates how some representations persist, how actors manoeuvre within the discourse and have created discursive instability as to what is considered the ‘rightful’ solution to the conflict. This has left the country in a challenging transitional period.

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Abbreviations

AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia [the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia]
BACRIM	Bandas Criminales [Criminal gangs]
CDA	Critical discourse analysis
CMH	Centro de Memoria Histórica (Centre of Historical Memory)
CIVETS	Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey and South Africa
DAS	Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad [the Administrative Department of Security, DEA]
DSP	Democratic Security Policy and Defence policy [Política de Defensa y Seguridad Democrática]
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional [the National Liberation Army]
EPL	Ejercito Popular de Liberación [the Popular Liberation Army]
FARC	Las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo [the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army]
GAML	Grupos Armados al Margen de la Ley [Armed Groups at the Margin of the Law]
GoC	The Government of Colombia
GWOT	Global War on Terror
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IR	International Relations
IOM	International Organization for Migrations
M-19	Movimiento 19 de Abril [The 19 th of April Movement]
NOREF	Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre
PDS	Política de Defensa y Seguridad Democrática [Democratic Security and Defense Policy]
UNDCP	United Nations International Drug Control Programme
UP	Unión Patriótica [Patriotic Union]

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1 Introduction

In 2012, shortly after Colombia's president Juan Manuel Santos had announced the initiation of exploratory talks with the largest national guerrilla group, Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (FARC), a Gallup poll took the temperature within the Colombian population. Set to uncover the general attitudes towards the choice to explore a political solution, 77 percent of the respondents expressed their support for the commencing peace negotiations (RCN Radio, 2012; Semana, 2012). On the one hand, this was not a surprising response. More than five decades of internal conflict had pulled the country into a humanitarian crisis, and both national and international protagonists were going to great lengths to push for an end to the pervasive violence. Three series of formal negotiations had been attempted in the past. But for various reasons, no political leader had before succeeded in achieving a viable peace agreement with the FARC.

2016 marked a turning point in history. In September, Santos and the FARC proudly presented their final, signed peace agreement, after four years of demanding negotiations, primarily conducted behind closed doors in Havana.¹ After a successful termination, the FARC gave its sincere apologies to the Colombian people, for the first time in history, and was formally prepared to replace their arms with politics. Everything seemed like a done deal. The dialogues were talked about as an important reference for peace negotiations elsewhere in the world² and singled out as an impressive achievement in the Colombian context. On 2 October, Santos had set in motion a national plebiscite, as a means to securing ownership and inclusion.³ The administration had, however, not prepared for a 'Plan B' in case of failure. When the peace agreement was rejected by 50.24 percent of the votes against 49.76, the world was nonplussed. In the following, many were concerned that the actors might re-commence the war.

Whilst given less attention worldwide, the local campaigns prior to the referendum had revealed a heated debate. Álvaro Uribe, Santos' former party colleague, president and friend, had emerged as the symbol of the opposition, assuming the front seat of an intense movement against the peace agreement. Uribe preserved a rigid representation of the FARC as a 'terrorist

¹ Negotiations which were officially announced in Oslo in 2012, before moving to Havana. Before this, the parties had met at secret preparatory talks in Venezuela.

² Citing a publication by NOREF, 'Colombia is becoming a global reference for identifying political solutions to apparently intractable conflicts' and 'the peace agreement is a major milestone in the process of settling one of the world's most protracted and violent conflicts' (Herbolzheimer, 2016)

³ The question of the plebiscite was formulated as the following: 'Do you support the final agreement to end the conflict and build a stable and lasting peace?' (Presidencia de la República, 2016)

group', and demanded that the FARC served their rightful sentences before they engaged in politics. This was followed by accusations that the current government was giving the country away to the terrorists, who would replace the values of the traditional Colombian family structures with reprehensible values both from the radical left, and from cultures the Colombian people could not identify with. Allegations were rejected by the negotiation teams as false and *absurd*, but the strong debate has persisted in the wake of the plebiscite. The development has left several puzzles: How did Colombia end up here, with a political elite and an electorate deeply polarised in their visions of the FARC and the 'rightful' peace? How was it possible that a historical agreement could not settle the brutal conflict?

1.1 Research question and objective

The motivation for this project follows from a basic observation: Prior to the peace negotiations that was announced in 2012, the Colombian government had changed its articulation of the principal counterpart to the conflict, the FARC. Moving away from representations like 'terrorists' and 'narcotraffickers', new labels residing 'guerrilla movements' started regaining position within the official statements provided by the government. This transformation seems to be a relevant, if not *decisive* for the Colombian government to start relating to the FARC as an actor. Moreover, it has created conditions for the initiation of the progressive negotiations that have worked towards a democratic, political transition to peace. The *Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict, and to Build a Stable and Lasting Peace* was eventually ratified by the Congress in November 2016, terminating more than five decades of war between the FARC and the government.⁴ The following month, December 2016, Colombia's president Juan Manuel Santos received the Nobel Peace Prize for his grand achievements. At the same time, the implementation of the agreement is heading down a rocky road. The victory of the 'NO' in the national plebiscite, was a tangible sign of the deep polarisation that persists within Colombia, and an illustration of the disagreement that revolves around the FARC as a legitimate actor.

This thesis will consequently investigate how Colombia has arrived at this complex situation, where the official discourse has changed considerably in favour of a negotiated peace, but still lacks discursive stability in confrontation with a strong, opposing representations of

⁴ Note that I here refer to the *formal* declaration of peace between two actors: The Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP. Whether Colombia has reached a state of peace as a whole, is a different question.

reality. The strongest criticism against the current administration resides from the ‘Uribistas’, the supporters of the Uribe legacy, where the FARC is articulated as an existential threat to the nation. In this study, I adhere to the poststructuralist principle that identity is not pre-given but is constructed collectively in the process of making sense of the world, its problems and their solutions. In the following, the thesis will contribute to an understanding of how Colombia has perceived the conflict, the enemy and the role of the state, since the beginning of the 21st century, and the leeway this has created for different solutions. Through tracing and mapping the official discourse over 14 years, the study more specifically aims at uncovering how the political administrations of Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2010) and Juan Manuel Santos (2010-) have come to manoeuvre competing representations about the FARC as the Other. This has resulted in different narratives about the conflict, and the way forward, whether this implies the insertion of emergency measures or dialogue and inclusion. My research question is as follows:

What discursive representations have accompanied the peace process and enabled, but also limited the chances for a political solution?

The research question introduces two ambitions. One is to explore how a political solution became possible at this point in history, when it seemed unthinkable six years earlier. For this, the analysis first sets out to trace and analyse how constellations of meanings have been attached to the conflict, how a certain narrative has gained footing, and how the representation(s) of the Other within the official peace discourse have evolved from 2002 to 2016. The second ambition is to investigate how the representation of a political solution has been challenged, and in the end, failed to resonate completely with the audience. Where the official peace discourse has consistently imbued the concept of ‘unity’ along the studied timeframe, this ‘unity’ has been attributed different meanings, eventually nurturing deeper polarisation. Ultimately, resolving the research question requires a proper engagement with a set of sub-questions that are both theoretical and conceptual in nature. These read as following: What identity is ‘the state’ and ‘the FARC’ given with the official representations of the conflict, from 2002-2016? How are the boundaries drawn between the Self and the Other, and what policies follow from the different levels of radicalness, manifested in this relationship? What change permitted a political solution between the FARC and the Colombian government in 2016 and to what extent did the change in the official discourse stabilise around this end?

The research question will be explored through a qualitative, interpretive study of discourse. I use poststructuralist discourse analysis as a theoretical foundation and the empirical

analysis is conducted in an exploratory and inductive form. In poststructuralism, a basic premise is that language is never neutral, rather, it is a social system that explains, gives meaning to and produces the reality around us. Looking at how reality is manifested through language, opens for an alternative approach to understanding the Colombian conflict, and within this, what premises the peaceful solution builds on. This approach will allow for cultural specificity which is needed in order to understand better the complex aspects of identity, that affects the politics of the conflict. Rather than working with a theory with pre-defined entities, this approach allows for a close-up investigation on how meaning has been produced and attached to material factors, henceforth guiding the possibilities and impossibilities for acting in one way or another.

The methodology of discourse analysis allows for the study of a wide range of voices, but this thesis is limited in time and scope. Recognising the power of influence that comes from political mandate, the analysis will consequently focus on the *political elite*, primarily the presidents of the state. While secondary data will add to the contextualisation of the study, the empirical data will include ‘official texts’, such as speeches, official announcements and state documents (e.g. national plans). Such texts, spoken and promoted by political leaders, are considered to consume a prominent role within political discourse. To include a viable arena for making and ‘breaking’ meanings that usually comes with the change of government, the timespan is set to fourteen years, capturing both the administration of Álvaro Uribe and later the administration of Juan Manuel Santos, who holds the presidency through the completion of the peace agreement.

The study of discourses, the collective structures of meaning that organise the Colombian reality, is an overlooked, but an important way of understanding how policy makers explain and interpret the situation they are living. As such, this kind of study should provide an alternative, but useful analysis of the important transitional period. Analysing the basic foundations from where the actors draw their argumentation and legitimacy form, could also provide useful as a reference for the future, where many loose ends still need to be collected, in order to secure the peace.

1.2 Analytical approach and contribution

Colombia has become a centre of attention after its government signed the historical peace agreement with the FARC guerrilla in 2016, ending (on paper) the longest war in the Western hemisphere. This has led to a boom of scholarly research and media commentaries. In 2016, a

NOREF report referred to Colombia as a country which was becoming a ‘global reference for identifying political solutions to apparently intractable conflicts’ (Herbolzheimer, 2016). *Intractable*, in one sense because Colombia seems to carry a complex history of violence, with multiple parties involved in a conflict that has persisted for decades. Since the 70s, its government has engaged in three major attempts to settle the conflict by negotiations. These have been unsuccessful following mutual recriminations and have terminated with severe ramifications for the level and endurance of violence. The last (and fourth) peace talk that the parties undertook from 2012 to 2016 consequently breaks the circle. Several external actors have stated that the parties have managed to draw viable lessons from their past (ibid., Bouvier, 2012; Gomez-Suarez & Newman, 2013). Some explanations have been offered as to why the negotiations were possible and successful in 2016. On one hand, rational calculation of costs and benefits have been highlighted in correlation with changes in material factors (Johnson & Jonsson, 2013). Other scholars discuss the ‘ripeness’ of the conflict, and the alternatives available to the actors on each side of the battle line, this with better or worse prospects for negotiation (see for instance Walch, 2016). However, there is a precondition to these theories which limits the types of questions they can ask. This is so, because neo-utilitarian scholars (see for instance Elster, 1995), work with a set of *pre-defined* entities. In this sense, the origin of the Colombian conflict, and the preconditions for it ending, is based upon a set of ‘timeless’ structures and identities and the interests of pre-established political objects that are in competition. In continuation, such theories are often concerned with explaining *why* something happened (for instance why a certain decision was taken or why a certain strategy was adopted) and work within the boundaries of a pre-given reality, isolating individual, causal variables that account for single outcomes (Tickner & Morales Callejas, 2015). But this may limit what an analysis can tell us about the *culture specific factors* that runs into the establishment of enemy images and identity, as a starting point for political action (see for instance Iver B. Neumann and Patrick T. Jackson's work). They also overlook the possibility that reality is socially constructed. As an alternative proposition, asking *how* or *how possible* questions, can provide an opening to understand the ways in which this reality has been constructed and with which effects, developing the predominant understanding of a policy process.

In my thesis, I am interested in studying how the possibilities for a political solution to the Colombian conflict with the FARC came about, a condition which is often taken for granted by positivist scholars. The aim of the thesis is to say something about the collective views of reality that exist within the political elite in Colombia, and how conflicting representations of

the Self and the Other have continued to challenge the implementation process of the disputed peace agreement. From 2002 to 2016 the government has moved from waging a brutal war against terrorist, to working actively to secure a peace agreement with the guerrillas. In these lines, a transformation in discourse have appeared, but has not mustered sufficient support among the political elite nor in the people. The national plebiscite of 2016 demonstrated that the people are deeply divided in whether to welcome the FARC into politics or not. Discourse theory, although with internal variations, start off with a presumption that our ways of communicating do not neutrally echo the world, its identities and social relations, but rather play a dynamic role in shaping, creating and changing these (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002). In simple terms, a discourse can be described as *'a collection of statements within a particular context, together with written and unwritten rules for what can or cannot be said in the context'* (Bergström & Boréus, 2005, p. 26, my translation). Discourses are social constructions, that are neither static nor extensive, but may work as lenses through which we observe, interpret and act upon our world. In many ways, one can go as far as Dunn and Neumann to say that 'language does not explain the world as much as it produces it'. Discourse analysis then becomes the attempt to comprehend and pinpoint how this process unfolds, with its respective implications (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 2). As discourses create a certain framework for what is meaningful to believe and say within a society, they adopt both a cognitive and normative identity that is articulated through language. This introduces the concept of 'power', a central concern within discourse theory, which appears also with the determined quest to attribute specific meanings within a context.⁵

Holding that the social world is not fixed, but rather constructed and shaped by the individuals that it contains, poststructuralist analysis can offer insight on how the identities are constructed in the Colombian context. It can provide a way to understand how problems are understood and communicated, and how policies are formulated and legitimised or on the contrary delegitimised. The thesis does not aim at understanding and explaining national identity in its cultural sense. Rather, I will use parts of Lene Hansen's (2006) conception of performative and relational identity to understand the construction and legitimisation of policies. This means that I will investigate the government's Self, a flexible identity which is continuously shaped and manoeuvred by the individuals who assume political power and responsibility. In the extension of this, I will place focus on how the *adversary* to the conflict

⁵ This is so, in the sense that discourses make recommendations for action and verbal expression. They may also define *who* have the right to express him/herself in what contexts, such as in matters of indigenous politics.

is constructed throughout the two consecutive administrations of Álvaro Uribe and Juan Manuel Santos, and what bandwidth of action the representation(s) of the Other opens for.

Poststructuralism has developed a theory to investigate and understand how identities are not pre-given or fixed, but dependent upon constitution and construction in language. This does not mean that materiality does not exist or matter, but rather that everything is discursively mediated (Hansen, 2002, p.25). According to Hansen, this is one of the reasons why poststructuralism raise questions that are left unexplored by the rationalist scholarship. Language is seen as both political and social, and while it does not reveal ultimate truths per se, it plays a central role in how material matters are prescribed meaning and attached specific identities. From a poststructuralist perspective, language categorises, defines and installs versions of the reality that surrounds us. One could interpret that it is the construction and establishment of these objects that, together with the constitution of different Selves and Others, feed into the development or termination of a conflict (see Krause and Williams, 1997, p.47). Again, it is vital not to misread this as an assessment of discourse as reduced only to the ideational aspect. On the contrary, discourse is here seen to incorporate also the material, but in the sense that its meaning is established through discourse. As Dunn and Neumann state, ‘the main purpose of discourse analysis is to propose a method that is able to analyse the linguistic and the material holistically’ (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 68).

Poststructuralist discourse analysis as a theory and a method, provides several advantages for a study of this case. First, discourse theory is a fruitful place to start in order to investigate how some particular statements of the war, and representations of the enemy, have been accepted as ‘true’ and become naturalised, in comparison to others. This is interesting since much ‘taken-for-granted’ versions of the world go un-investigated and leave understudied effects. Nonetheless, when there *is* contestation and heated debate, there is still room for more analyses which emphasises the way that meaning is installed on each side of the controversies. Second, it provides an opportunity to understand the evolution of a process, such as how and why the FARC was considered an enemy in Colombia, how warfare became the principal option while other options were excluded, and how this has partly changed. I say partly since the current government of president Santos is now experiencing considerable resistance when it comes to legitimising the peace agreement. This brings me to the third utility of discourse analysis, as it provides for interesting opportunities of examining discourse and representations as elements in the process of transition. While the role of language in the process of transition is recognised by scholars of social research, there are limited empirical examples of how this

plays out. Here I wish to make a contribution. Providing tools to study the competing constellation of meanings that feed into what is perceived as the ‘rightful’ option to deal with the enemy, discourse analysis may also provide knowledge of how constellations of meanings come into play in a crucial transition period, where it is not given (nor agreed upon) what premises the future of the country should build on.

The principal data for discourse analysis is *text*, and the basic idea is that texts may reveal knowledge about actual and concrete relations (Bratberg, 2017, p. 11). The conception of text is however not limited to written documents, but may include symbols, images, design, songs, cartoons and the like, that function as a form of communication. This give way for potentially enormous data to analyse and *delimitation* is known to be one of the central challenges for discourse analysts in the construction of a research design and in the following analyses. As I wish to explore what has turned into a heated debate concerning the Other and the ‘rightful’ solution to the conflict, I consider it reasonable to look at the competing representations within the official ‘peace discourse’ (whether explicitly or implicitly mentioned), headed by top political leaders. This delimitation excludes popular and expert discourses but has been chosen because of the formal authority that political representatives possess, derived from the institutional architecture, but also the privileged *access* to knowledge of the studied issue (Hansen, 2006, p.8). Democratically elected there is also considerable risk linked to the alienation of the popular opinion, as *representativeness* remains crucial. The empirical data is consequently delimited to ‘official discourse’, in Dunn and Neumann’s words: *‘those texts and utterings by agents that society generally imbues with political power and significance’* (2016, p. 12). This gives the analysis an actor-centred direction, and the qualification to say more about the capacity of manoeuvring the discourse from the individual level (agency-centred), at the expense of exploring the discursive structures per se.

While my role as a researcher is based on interpretation, it is not in my assignment to explain the conflict, the actors and the peace process. Neither is the ambition to move inside anyone’s head to see what they really mean, to uncover their hidden agendas, nor to claim something as ‘right’ or ‘truthful’. In contrast, a discourse analyst will build on what has been uttered or written, for the objective of detecting patterns in statements, and track the social effects that follow from the various representations of the world. In this continuation, I leave it up to the actors of the study, those who represent the governmental Self, to ascribe meaning to the internal conflict in Colombia, whether this is constructed as the confrontation of a terrorist threat that seeks to overthrow the government, or as an internal armed conflict between two

legitimate parties. In this process of making sense of the violence and the Other in the conflict, there will necessarily be a set of solutions that are represented as reasonable, while conflicting options are excluded as unreasonable or unthinkable.

Virginia M. Bouvier concludes in a comprehensive volume of contributions about the peacebuilding and war in Colombia, that what is seen in the Colombian context, is a pendulum that ‘*alternates between national efforts to achieve negotiated settlement and effort to win the war*’ (Bouvier, 2009, p. 432). The metaphor of the pendulum seems to be representative for the last decades as well. However, this time the pendulum seems to have stopped in between the alternatives. With the representations offered by President Santos, a negotiated democratic peace has been framed and perceived as a *natural* solution to the conflict, a political move which is continuously delegitimised by the legacy of his predecessor. Consequently, while Santos has managed to place a political peace on the agenda, and opened for a more nuanced debate, he seems to have failed to deliver his message and gain hegemony with his particular ‘worldview’. This analysis does not offer complete answers to why this has happened. However, it does suggest that the investigation of language opens for an alternative approach to understand the Colombian conflict, and within this, the way that the political elite differs in their understandings of the premises that the peace should build on.

1.3 The structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of six chapters. In chapter 2, I present the theoretical foundation for discourse analysis. I elaborate on the poststructuralist tradition, which distinguishes itself from other theoretical approaches by conceptualising everything as *discursively mediated*. Looking to say something about how policies interact with the construction of the Other, I also touch upon the central concept of *identity*. Within this, I use parts of Hansen’s writing of performative and relational identity, to understand the formulation and legitimisation of policies. In the final section of the chapter, I give an explanation of how the Other may be constructed in ‘degrees of otherness’ and how individual actors play a role in shaping these. Borrowing insight from Hulst and Yanow’s framing theory (2016), this opens for a more agency focused analysis.

In chapter 3, I present the research design and give an introduction to *how* the analysis will be conducted. This chapter discusses some of the methodological challenges related to the identification and selection of *text* as data material, delimitation in time and scope, and the procedure of *identifying* variations of identity in text. I bring back Hansen’s theoretical

conception of identity and illustrate how boundaries between the Self and the Other may be drawn and studied along three dimensions: the temporal, spatial and ethical. The chapter rounds off by contemplating the research objectives. In this section I argue that positivist conceptions of validity and reliability are not designed to productively evaluate what counts as a 'good study' in a poststructuralist tradition, but that discourse analysis nevertheless could benefit from more rigid methodological guidelines.

Chapter 4 presents a brief overview of the background to the conflict, in order to contextualise the following study. While this includes a selective reading of the history, the aim is to establish an understanding of how the political discourse around the conflict is set within a larger historical and social setting, where violence and political oppression has somehow become the norm.

In chapter 5, I conduct an empirical analysis within the presented research design. Focusing on a number of key texts from 2002 to 2016, I look at how discursive constructions of identity have translated into different leeway to end the conflict. The analysis runs chronologically from the presidency of Álvaro Uribe Vélez to Juan Manuel Santos, and ends in a contemplation of how two contradicting representations of reality radicalises in confrontation with each other. Different representations of identity have fostered distinct perceptions of responsibility, and in the end, the empirical analysis shows how the political elite remains polarised in the understanding of the 'rightful' agreement with the FARC.

In chapter 6, I conclude the project by summarising some of the main findings. I elaborate swiftly on the limitations and contributions of the research design and include some general thoughts for further research.

2 Discourse analysis: A theoretical framework

This chapter will establish an analytical framework from which the empirical analysis will take form. I use Laclau and Mouffe's poststructuralist discourse theory as a foundation. As a complement I argue that Lene Hansen's theorising of 'relational identity' and 'degrees of otherness' serve as a useful starting point to investigate and uncover how politics and the construction of the Self/Other become products of one another (Hansen, 2006; Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). To the extent that these stabilise, they pave the way for, justify and are reiterated within, national policy focuses (section 2.2). I further argue that the constellations of meanings into identity are naturally in flux, which means that the perception of the Other is not static but may be moderated and changed in parallel to the policies that are suggested. Identity is seen as relational, but not necessarily as binary oppositions. In the extension of this, I explore the fruitfulness of applying Hansen's conception of different 'degrees of otherness', a conceptualisation that may contribute to explaining the declining degrees of radicalness that have been articulated in representations about the FARC since approximately 2011.

In section 2.3, I touch upon the room for manoeuvre that appears for agency, and how individual actors are not bound by the discursive structures but can use 'framing' actively to push the discourse in one direction or another. In this section I will argue that discourse analysis may fruitfully be combined with other agency-centred approaches, in order to conduct a close-up study of how central actors promote and manages different discourses in their way to achieve policy goals. I borrow insights from policy framing approaches, primarily by Hulst and Yanow (2016) to understand how policy formulation and debate can evolve in the hands of two opposing leaders, within the studied period. I argue that such a complementing approach, which more specifically consider how actors strategically manoeuvre, enhances and downplay, the dominant representations, will contribute to a clearer understanding of how the priorities within the official Colombian discourse changes over a relatively short period of time, from security to development.

Whilst the chapter will not go into to a systematic debate about the philosophy of science that often appear with approaches of discourse analysis, A presentation of the ontological and epistemological foundation that poststructuralist discourse analysis runs from, and the conditions this presupposes for the empirical analysis, is useful.

2.1 A poststructuralist reading of politics

Discourse analysis has gained solid ground in the social sciences, after the ‘linguistic turn’ made ingress in the early 1990s. Embedded in the interpretive research tradition, this turn triggered a rejuvenated interest in analysing actors with their interests, intentions and ideas about the world. One of the basic premises of discourse analysis aligns with the social constructivist tradition, where the social world is seen as inherently subjective, and can only be understood and acted upon through the means of *interpretation* (Bratberg, 2017, p. 19). Discourse theory consequently places interpretation at the heart of its science, based on a conviction that this has guiding power for the actions and behaviour of actors (Hay, 2011). Individuals behave as they do, as a result of their subjective and collective understandings and readings of the world. This means that a development such as the Colombian peace process, cannot be treated as a phenomenon, fit for objective measure. The social process, dependent upon accept and recognition, should at least not be *reduced* to the objective assessment of fixed variables, and how these come together. The popular opinion and the willingness to reconcile, is not static, and will be contingent upon how the opposite party and the peace is understood (and/or framed). To understand behaviour and actions, interpretivist analysts may consequently study ideas, beliefs and discourse, not only as they appear per se, but also how they shape and are shaped by action, practices and institutions. Discourse analysis is consequently and fundamentally a contribution to the study of language in use. In contrast to theories whose epistemological baseline accepts that our perceptions mirror the material reality, discourse theory take our perceptions to have a more productive role (Bergström & Boréus, 2005, p. 305). More than slavishly reflecting material factors, our interpretations count upon previous constructions in language, the means which in turn organises the social reality (ibid.). Interpretation will be at the centre of my analysis, seeking to understand the formation of worldviews, and how certain narratives about the Colombian conflict and its rightful end has emerged and evolved through the consolidation of different meanings and perceptions of the Other in the conflict.

In the introduction chapter, I identified discourse analysis as a fruitful way to explore the empirical study. Discourse theory, although with internal variations, start off with a presumption that our ways of communicating do not neutrally echo the world, its identities and social relations, but rather play a dynamic role in shaping, creating and changing these (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002). Phillips and Jørgensen propose a definition of discourse as ‘*a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)*’ (Phillips &

Jørgensen, 2002). It could be conceptualised as ‘the kind of language used within a specific field’ or from a retrospective and explanatory view; ‘a way of speaking which gives meaning to experiences from a particular perspective (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, p.66). Dunn and Neumann propose a rather similar, but slightly different, conception: a discourse can be understood as ‘*representational practices through which meanings are generated*’ (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 2). Together, societies or groups of people ‘*construct and attach meanings and values to the world around us*’ and they do this namely through the development, utilisation and construction of discourses (ibid.). In other words, discourses may translate into the establishment, or temporary attachment of meaning within a specific domain. Often one talks about a set of adjoining and coherent meanings that together come to represent a way of seeing the world. This follows from an acceptance of a principle that knowledge is *not* separated from the social domain, but both a product and a constituency of this (or ‘reality’). The reality does not represent itself in one form (as uniform or objective) but is rather subject to individual and collective interpretations. Discourses are then dynamic and productive, but also constructive of meaning, knowledge and ‘truth’. They provide some kind of a ‘lens’ to assess and understand the world through, and on this basis, leaves some practices logical, possible and legitimate, whereas others will seem unthinkable and illegitimate (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002). The analysis of discourse allows for a reflection of how we come to take simple representations, larger narratives or a certain *reality* for granted. It also enables us to say something about the effects of naturalising one reality over another (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). Combining the structure and function of discourses, Dunn and Neumann propose the following definition: ‘*Discourses are systems of meaning-production that fix meaning, however temporarily, and enable us to make sense of the world and to act within it*’ (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 4). In the following, I will adopt this understanding of the function of discourses, as *structural* and *relational* and *dynamic*.

Poststructuralism departs from structuralism in the sense that everything can be considered a discursive construction and consequently there are no social ‘facts’ per se. In its most radical sense, this may sound like there is *nothing existing outside text*, such as many have alluded in their interpretation of Jacques Derrida⁶. By ‘text’, I refer to the semiotic use of the word, which refer to all significant signs (this be written texts, videos, images and all other products of culture) (Boréus & Bergström, 2012, p. 21). Laclau and Mouffe, as rendered in

⁶ Derrida allegedly claimed that ‘*there is nothing outside of the text*’ (as referenced in Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 44). This has given the discourse analysis a problematic reputation in science, considered an approach that generally allows for *unlimited interpretation* and consequently escapes reality (Bratberg, 2014, p. 49).

Jørgensen and Phillips, however argue that it is not that nothing but talk and text exist, but ‘*on the contrary, that discourse itself is material and that entities such as the economy, the infrastructure and institutions are also parts of discourse*’ (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002, p. 19).⁷ Discourse theory, following the post-structural turn, finds that *all* objects constitute objects of discourse, and their respective meaning depend upon the socially constructed system of rules and radical differences from within they occur (Howarth, Norval, & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 3). In other words: physical objects do exist outside discourse, but that the material world does not possess meaning prior to our interpretation of it. The theory does not question the existence of worldly objects, but rather how we, as social beings, develop perspectives and shape our perceptions about these. Discourse could then rather be seen as a horizon, or platform of meaning-making, from which we reason with and interpret materiality. In this sense, when poststructuralism constitutes all material objects as objects of discourse, it does not engage in a philosophical discussion about whether or not a world external to our thoughts exists. Laclau and Mouffe explain:

‘An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constituted in terms of ‘natural phenomena’ or ‘expressions of wrath of God’, depends upon the structuring of a discursive field. What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive conditions of emergence’ (Laclau & Mouffe, 1987, p. 108).

The rejection of the idea that there are social facts that exist prior to, or autonomous of the discourse constructions that give them meaning, separates poststructuralism from constructivism. The idea that everything is discursively mediated, and that language is a dynamic system, also alludes that meaning never can be fixed permanently (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002, p. 6). Discourse, as a social phenomenon, is then never ‘finished’ or ‘total’ (ibid., p. 24). This changeable, open facet of discourse, opens up for *discursive struggles*, where meanings challenge and compete for prevalence or ‘hegemony’. However, as meaning may always be mediated and changed, discourse can never be completely stable. This is important to bear in mind, as references made to stabilisation throughout this thesis should always be understood with a component of relativity. Discourse analysis’ ontological presumption calls for a world in constant motion, which sets in place certain conditions for studying the political and the social. Whilst it makes no sense to state what the world consists of in itself, such a

⁷ Hence, there is no ‘extra-discursive’ or ‘non-discursive’ realm that exist in parallel to discourse, as scholars of critical discourse analysis take as a basis.

question must be complemented by a specification of how the world came to be as it is, how it is maintained and how it is challenged by alternatives versions. This gives poststructuralism an ‘advantage’ compared to structuralism, which have often been criticised for its lacking ability to account for change. To generalise, traditional structuralist scholars may happen to map structures at one given point and then at another point, to find out that this structure has changed. There are however few specific tools to explain the change in itself. This is the case partly because the object of investigation is the language itself, as an underlying structure, while the practice or the execution of the speech is left out (refer to debate by Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, s.139). If practice is not included, it may be hard to explain where the discursive structure comes from and what may indeed change it. The poststructuralist approach to discourse analysis has managed to steer past this problem to some extent. This approach takes change into account namely in the sense that it presupposes and establishes that structures are never fixed. Meaning is only subject to partly and temporarily establishment, and structures depend on how meaning is established in practice. Common to poststructuralist approaches is that they acknowledge that in any discourse practice it is necessary to draw on earlier productions of meaning to be understood. At the same time, elements can also be combined in new ways and by this, lead to change in the discursive structure. In general, changes in discourse consequently becomes a means through which the social reality changes.

The idea of a discourse as some kind of structure that entails and organises significant signs into social realities, usually runs from the theories of Ferdinand de Saussure (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002, p. 9). De Saussure, as a structuralist linguistic formulated that no words given meaning by virtue of the objective reality that exist, but that language may best be understood as a ‘system of signs’ where each single one is given meaning in relation to others. Signs, in other words, require their specific meaning in the forms of being different from other single signs (ibid., p.10). Furthermore, Jacques Derrida has built theory on the same grounds, arguing that systems of signs are systems of *binary oppositions*, or *juxtapositions* which reflects power in the sense that some signs are considered more valuable or powerful than others (Derrida, 1981). This reiterates the idea that language refrains from being neutral. At the same time as being evaluated and expressed in comparison to other signs, language neither appears in a neutral setting. Looking to study and explain how meaning is established, constellated and communicated, it is consequently imperative to be conscious of the context.

In the empirical case examined in this thesis, it is apparent that Colombia by the beginning of 2002 is deeply coloured by the global context where the US is fighting a war on

terror, after being attacked in 2001. In the following, it is also important to be aware of the local context, where violence, corruption and clientelism have been common practices for decades and do not in themselves constitute anything new. Finally, the focus of the last administration will show that progress in development and prosperity is compared with a counterfactual doomed situation and guided by the arrival at a stage where values and principles are defined by the 'West'. This coincides with the discourse theoretical premise that human beings do not perceive anything on a 'blank sheet' but interpret and view the world based on various social and historical belonging. What we know and what we teach are essentially '(...) *products of historically situated interchanges among people*' (Gergen & Pallak, 1985, p.267). They are historical contingents, but not static, and identities, representations and understandings change over time and in relation to competing worldviews. In order to understand and analyse particular stands, it is however useful (and often necessary) to look at the historical grounds from where they emerged. This, together with framework for perception derived from the contemporary context, feeds on the concept of *intertextuality* in discourse theory, where meaning and interpretation are dependent on contexts and networks prior to and those occurring simultaneously with the meaning production and - reproduction in question. Text refer to other texts, and with this, language is interrelated or *relational*. Production of meaning in language is shaped by prior experiences of knowledge, power or relationships. In terms of analytical research design, this suggests the importance of situating and commenting on the context in which the research question takes place.

2.2 Constructing the FARC as the Other

One of the prerequisites for the initiation of official peace talks and the political solution to the conflict in 2016, was the recognition of the FARC as a political actor with legitimate wants and rights. This recognition moved away from the designation of the group as first and foremost a terrorist organisation, motivated by violence for the existential overthrow of the government. This situates the conception of the *Other* at the heart of the research question. At the same time, it also rests on the self-perception of the Colombian government, possessing certain legitimate characteristics and responsibilities that run from these (whether these being based on authority, order, democracy, liberalism or something else). To explore how the relationship of the Self/Other plays out in the official Colombian discourse on peace, I will use parts of Hansen's theorising of relational identity and policy. My timespan is relatively short compared to longer

genealogies of identity construction (see Hansen, 2006, in her analysis of western representations of the Balkan). Therefore, I will not read as much into the holistic construction of identity as some scholars do (nor will I occupy myself with 'identity politics', see for instance I. B. Neumann, 1999). Instead, I will place more focus on the boundaries between the Self and the Other, and how this links with policies.

The construction and performance of identity exists at the core of the poststructuralist approach in discourse theory, not least in International Relations. Set to break down the structures of meaning and let the participants explain the conflict, and how this should be acted upon, I have found it fruitful to look at how legitimacy and reason run from the perception of the *actors* involved. For this task, Hansen's contributions are useful. In her examination of foreign policy discourses on the Bosnian war, Hansen starts out with a presumption that '*a conceptualization of policy always is dependent upon the articulation of identity, while identity is simultaneously produced and reproduced through the formulation and legitimation of policy*' (2006, p.211, sic.). Furthermore, she articulates that representations of identity are *discursive, political, relational and social* (ibid., p.6). In a poststructuralist ontology, in contrast to what remains the basic premise of constructivism, 'identity' is seen as something which is discursively constructed and performed, not something that is pre-given. In this sense, an identity which is formulated as equivalent to a danger or a threat, such as the activities performed by a narcotrafficker, does not constitute an objective condition. In David Campbell's words, '*it is not a thing which exists independently of those to whom it may become a threat*' (1992, p. 1). This again, does not mean that no real dangers exist, but the way we order, classify and understand these dangers, will be discursively, socially, politically and relationally mediated (and in general, based on interpretation). For instance, how did it happen that the illegal drugs business was articulated as such a profound danger, that the United States issued a 'war on drugs' in response? This, despite the discovery that legal drugs have produced significantly more deaths than those associated with the illegal drugs in the same country (Campbell, 1992, p. 2). The radical, but central point is that *anything* can potentially be articulated a risk, and there is nothing *objectively given* that decides how one material aspect should be considered more dangerous than another.

Along the same lines that identity is never fixed prior to interpretation, identity is also established in relation to 'difference'. The post-structuralist conceptualisation of identity as 'relational' means that identity is expressed and comes into existence through the reference to something it is *not* (Hansen, 2006, p.6). According to Campbell (1992, p.8) this is also a

performatively constituting act⁸. This comes close to Charles Tilly's formulations about how identity develops and becomes more refined in relation to other identities (2002). Articulating something as 'democratic' will imply a simultaneous construction of something 'not democratic', 'civilized' will draw references to something 'uncivilized', 'good' will be defined as different from 'evil' and so on. In this basic outline, identity is seen as constituted through the act of drawing boundaries, which function as a way of demarcating the Self from an Other, 'inside' from 'outside' and 'ally' from 'antagonist'. These constructions are *social*, because they are established through a set of *collectively formulated codes*, and language constitutes the medium through which these identities are established and renegotiated (Tilly, 2002, p. 76). Discourses of foreign policy, as in Hansen's study of the Bosnian war representations (2006), always formulate a national Self and a number of 'others' in their articulations. For instance, 'security discourses' will typically speak about a national, good and fair Self in comparison to a more threatening Other (with a specific identity that separates it from the Self). While the articulation of various 'others' is less prominent, and often less fortunate within national affairs, this pattern is visible in Colombia. Between 2002 and 2010, the government has referred to the recurring attacks it has suffered, from people residing within the nation. In the construction of a threatening Other existing within its territorial boundaries, individuals are then congregated into groups through a process which necessarily implies some practice of exclusion. When one asserts an identity as a Colombian, one separates from a distinct other, be for instance a Cuban or a Venezuelan, or a guerrilla member (as seen in the case where Uribe separates the FARC from the people). Moreover, while discursive formations of the Other are excluded from the Self, internal variations in the Self are usually overlooked and ignored, in comparison to this Other. According to Jørgensen and Philips, this is a move which makes the process *political* (2002, p. 40, see also Howarth et. al. 2000). Identity is also interlinked with politics, in the sense that the construction of both are mutually dependent and constructive of each other. This means that the perception of an Other, whether defined as a threatening guerrilla group or a marginalised political insurgency, will guide what policies are formulated and applied in response to its existence. But these formulations will also run from, and back into, the construction and perception of the Self. To give an example: If the identity of the national government is built upon values of strength, authority and order, groups that challenge its

⁸ Identity as performative is explained by Campbell in the sense that we see identity as having 'no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality' (1992, p.9). For instance, 'gender' is used as an example that is discursively constructed as an 'interior essence' part of the identity of the body, and this construction is required namely for the intention of 'disciplining sexuality' (ibid.).

legitimacy might be met with tough response, either in words or in action. This particular response, whether in military force or diplomatic conversation, will again feed back into the construction of the government's identity. The fundamental is, according to poststructuralism, that this perception of identity (both of the Self and the Other) becomes an interpretive lens through which policy is formulated.

In my empirical study, I seek to explain a change in the national policies that has been dedicated to establishing peace in Colombia. Seeing that the FARC has been identified as the main adversary in the conflict, but also one which finally contributed to a project for peace, I will place attention to the construction and reproduction 'relational identities' and 'difference' throughout the analysis. This may invoke associations to 'enemy images' but should not be mistaken for with these. In contrast to what is usually (but far from always) the case in foreign policy, where the state will often construct the Other as *radically* different to maximise national support, I avoid interpreting identity in the logic of something static and dichotomous. This contrary would be problematic, as identity is not necessarily constructed upon radical difference, nor may difference always lead to 'otherness' (Rumelili, 2004).⁹ Opening for more flexible and dynamic studies, Hansen has added to an elaboration on how 'degrees of otherness' are assumed in the conception of identity. In the following, I will stick to Hansen's methodology of studying these, as a good way to investigate a transformation in the degrees of difference, attached to the FARC between 2002-2016. An elaboration on this will follow in chapter 3.2., discussing methods and procedure.

Hansen theorises the variation of difference as constituted through processes of linking and differentiating: 'meaning and identity are constructed through a series of signs that are linked to each other to constitute relations of sameness as well as through differentiation to another series of juxtaposed signs' (2006, p. 42). This offers a framework for understanding how discourses constantly attempt to stabilise, but often will be challenged by other representations. This latter may lead to destabilisation of discourse.¹⁰ The flexibility of Hansen's conceptualisation of identity, and its layered nature of demarcation, is well illustrated in the example that the Other need not be a state, nor any politically identified group. As I will

⁹ For work that study how 'radicalness' and 'fear' are formulated as an integral part of the Other, serving to legitimise the Self, see David Campbell 1992, p. 55-56 for an example. In this section, identity in IR is spoken about in the following: 'a world in which state identity is secured through discourses of danger (...)' (ibid). To be fair with Campbell, however, he does not outright reject the possibility of constructing identity through less than radical forms of differences.

¹⁰ In continuation, Hansen asserts that identities found within (foreign) policy discourses may be conceptualised and examined along the articulation of three different boundaries; spatial, temporal and ethical (ibid.). These too, will be explained in the following chapter on method (3.2)

explain in chapter 3.2, boundaries of difference may be drawn not only *spatially* and *ethically*, but also in time. This introduction of temporality, means that the Other can come to constitute *a situation of the past*. As Ole Wæver explains, a government might actually construct its identity around a contemporary and modern Self, demarcated from the fear of returning to its brutal past (constituted as the Other) (Wæver, 1996). This construction of identity is important in the Colombian case, where the 21st century political administrations are legitimised in their departure from the past, and the failing efforts to end the war. In other words, this indicates that Hansen's dynamic conception of the Other is useful to examine the links between variations in identity and policies, constellated within the internal conflict in Colombia. Whilst I will not be able to account for all variations in identity, nor the different 'others' in play¹¹, the point is that I accept an ontology of identity that is flexible, that speaks to the variations in policy and that allows for the study of change.

2.3 Discourse, agency and policy formulation

Policies are often formulated upon the representation and perception of a threat, problem or crisis. Whether this be national or international, may invoke different policy responses, but so will also the conception an other's identity as 'radically different' or 'less different' from the self. While the architecture of language proposes clear opposites, the construction of 'otherness' in comparison to the Self must not necessarily take the most radical form, as explained in the previous section. This is important, as the binary relation of the Self as demarcated from the Other as direct opposites has been a point of criticism, curbing the analytical chances to capture nuances and dynamic representations. The variations within the discursive classification of 'otherness', appearing as more or less stable within in a discourse, rather attract and provoke different levels of acute policy action. Readdressing the construction of the Other as a *threat*, this may be exemplified in the ways that this too may take on different forms of severity. As Ole Wæver articulates (in Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998), to construct someone as a threat to security, means to *securitise* a subject or a phenomenon. To represent it as an *existential* threat, means that it becomes a severe problem that, in the case of not being address, may deliver catastrophic consequences. These latter representations should naturally be given priority and

¹¹ Whereas I will focus on the discursive construction of the FARC, it is clear that internal conflict may deal with not only shifting degrees of difference manifested in the construction of the other, but also a multitude of others. In other words, the Other in study may be placed within a 'web of identities', where both external actors and groups of society are distinguished from the 'self' proclaimed by the government (ibid.).

may, due to its level of classification, attract emergency responses. This has often been seen in responses to planned terrorist attacks or in the defence of war or natural disasters.

It is reasonable to assume that a construction of identity continues to exist, as long as it is repeatedly articulated *and* practiced, and avoids being challenged by competing discourses or single representations. In continuation, I also assume that identity needs to be reproduced and confirmed *over some time*, in order to stabilise, naturalise and inform what policy options are considered appropriate in situations when a government is faced with a threat.¹² This postulation introduces some methodological considerations for the research project. Following the delimitation of the empirical analysis into a time span of 14 years, I find that the temporal aspect does not provide a satisfactory framework for tracing the genealogy of identity.¹³ Rather than investigating the long processes of ‘normalisation’ of some truths, my research project is concerned with the examination of discursive *instability* and *change*. Seeing that 2016 was characterised by dissent in the Colombian political elite on how to reach a ‘rightful’ peace with the FARC, I will dedicate to pinpointing the appearance and manoeuvring of some central representations within a shorter, but an important period of time. Within this shorter timeframe, it should be possible to investigate how the identity of the Other is perceived and manoeuvred with varying degrees of radicalness and with which implications for policy. This brings me to the role of *political agency*.

In the empirical study, I investigate the discourse that revolves around the Colombian state's mission to reinsert peace and security, and within this, to deal with the violent guerrilla groups in the country. According to the political and social structure of Colombia (explained in chapter 4), the course of this latter process rests first and foremost in the hands of the political elite. While these actors necessarily wear discursive ‘lenses’ for interpretation that are somehow collectively formed¹⁴, they need not be completely unaware of the discursive structures that

¹² As Campbell explains, identity should be understood as delicately constituted in time, through a certain repetition of acts, i.e. a ‘regulated process of repetition’ (1992, p.9).

¹³ Since identity in Hansen’s poststructuralist conception does not constitute a ‘pre-given’, but rather something produced in time, which may take on different forms and meanings, this has become an invigorated task (often with references to the theories of Michel Foucault). While this would have provided curious opportunities for tracing how specific representations have emerged and gained importance through history, stipulating the question of whether nodal points we see in the contemporary discourse in Colombia have newly emerged or rather *re-emerged*, it would also have been the product of a different research question. The undertaken of a genealogy may uncover the discursive struggles that have led to the superiority, and eventually the *normalisation* of some ‘truths’, and add to an explanation of how the present is consequently both shaped and restricted by a historical past. At the same time, this approach has been criticised for being prone to (over-)stress the appearance of continuity, at the expense of examining *instability* and *change*.

¹⁴ I have earlier introduced ‘discourse’ as a structure of meaning that shapes actors’ preferences and provides a way of interpreting the world. Dominating discourses establish meaning, they inform interpretations and create a room

exists, nor of the possibilities to ‘frame’ material aspects in one way or another¹⁵. On the contrary, discourse may be seen as intrinsically *political*, as actors may play an active role in ascribing meaning and producing rivalry, draw political frontiers between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ etc (Howarth et al., 2000). In the empirical case, particularly during the campaigns that played up to the national plebiscite in 2016, persuasion and framing of problems became arts of communication that were difficult to ignore, as actors aimed to strategically alter the popular preferences and modify dominant, collective meanings. Playing selectively on (or albeit less aware of) representations within discourse, actors may consequently trigger social, cultural or political change, and with this, generate a transformation in discourse. As a result, I will briefly explore the actors’ power and how it shapes perceptions and gains support for their formal positions in my analysis.

Finding that persuasive communication remains important for how collective perceptions are formed. To do so, I will borrow from Hulst and Yanow’s elaboration of *framing theory* (2016). This theory builds on the classic work of Donald Schön and Martin Rein (on ‘frames’, well-established in public policy research) and makes a profitable way of conceptualising how individuals enter into, and actively influence the discourse. The general presumption in the theory is that actors, in practice, may construct and moderate certain ‘frames’ to resonate with the audience. This may not be an active choice, nor may an actor have the opportunity to make everyone change their references. Nevertheless, it is assumed that key persons hold some power to promote norms and manipulate discourses strategically to achieve their goals (see also Payne, 2001, p. 37). Roger Payne refers to the relevance of *persuasion*. This is viewed as a central mechanism for constructing and reconstructing social facts. One way building persuasive messages, is to link new meaning to already established structures. This may be done, in the form of pointing to existing values and perceptions in the mass, to common experiences, identities or interests at stake. Actors who are referred to as successful ‘norm entrepreneurs’ manage to produce normative identities and definitions of materiality, and place

for what is thinkable, and unthinkable, possible or impossible (strictly formulated). Actors are seen to ascribe to these structures through spoken language and actions.

¹⁵ The matter of influence is, in other words, not a one-way mechanism. Rather, the mutually constitutive relationship between actors and structure is important to have in mind when researching and trying to understand the political process that continues to impact on the course of the conflict and its resolution in Colombia. While the presidents, as central actors have extraordinary mandates to receive and deliver information and communicate messages, none start off on a blank sheet, unaffected by previous interpretations. Neither will one have free hands to pursue or influence an audience, given the established platforms of meaning, narratives and perceptions that are already ‘out there’ and need to be considered.

these within a specific discourse, thus resonating with a selected audience. Communication, in the form of persuasive and compelling messages, acts as decisive tools to change actors' preferences, challenge the persistent or create new collective perceptions (ibid., p. 38).¹⁶

In Hulst and Yanow's work (2016), the concept of 'frames' does not reside too far from the logics of 'discourse' but pays more attention to individual and strategic components.¹⁷ 'Framing' is in turn the 'interactive, intersubjective process through which frame are constructed' and with added elaboration of the authors, also how 'relations among framers' are framed (ibid., p. 93). Contemplating how problems are constructed, Hulst and Yanow (with reference to Rein and Schön) explain what the process of framing implies: 1) highlighting *specific* features of a situation (or, alternatively an identity), 2) selecting out or actively ignoring *other* features, and 3) binding the extracted features together into an intelligible, tangible and coherent *pattern* (ibid., p. 96). While I may not refer actively to 'frames', these elements will appear in the study of the Colombian government's representations of the Other, and through the process of 'sense-making' of the situation. The latter aspect of binding the selected (and 'named') aspects into a 'pattern' (or a process of storytelling), will include in what I loosely understand as constructing 'narratives'. Depicting the world in a sensible way, narratives will typically imply that an actor (or a group of actors) refers to the past, the present and the future, in narrating to an audience with reference to a defined 'problem', what *has* been going on, what *is* happening at the moment, and what consequently needs to be done (ibid., p.100). Actors do, in other words, hold some power to introduce new meanings and representations that correlate (or not) with material phenomena. Whether new incentives are accepted or not, naturally depends on the context in which they are received, and how they are delivered. The normative aspect of the latter is usually reinforced when the speaker is able to draw on communicative means from the school of rhetoric, such as credibility, emotions and logic (ethos, pathos and logos, respectively). In total, these discursive resources will (potentially) let the individual actors push the discourse in one way or another by reinstating certain representations. This makes it possible to investigate how the Colombian elite draws on distinct narrative and practices, to create and maintain discursive hegemony, but also to rationalise, legitimise and normalise an action (R. Jackson, 2005)

¹⁶ Note that rhetorical resources such as ethos, pathos and logos are just as relevant here (see for instance Finlayson, 2007; Augoustinos *et al.*, 2001; Bratberg, 2017).

¹⁷ Building on Erving Goffman, the scholars at one point explain 'frames' as what guide the ways 'situational participants perceive their social realities and (re)present these to themselves and to others; a frame reflects actors' organising principles that structure those perception; and the frame's "basic" components are capable of being itemized' (p.46, sic.).

Briefly summarised, the process-oriented approach suggested by framing theory, leaves more focus on the speaker (the *agent*), who manoeuvres within the discourse. It provides tools to discover the power invested in actors, to persuade and convince an audience of a given worldview, and how the political elite draws on different narratives and practices to create and maintain discursive hegemony. In the continuation, I find that this is a good supplement to poststructuralist discourse analysis, seeking to investigate discursive domination and change within a relatively short time period. I do not give any rigid answer to what has been strategically and deliberately planned, but the study touches upon how Santos and Uribe, partly as individual actors, have stood in the forefront of a *mismatch* between official representations.

3 Methodology and research design

In this chapter, I take a leap from the theoretical basis established in the former and elaborate on *how* the discourse analysis will be conducted. With this, I do not intend to draw a strict line between theory and method, holding that these are closely interlinked in poststructuralism. However, I support the affirmation that fairly rigid methodological guidelines are advisable, also in abductive social studies that rely on interpretation (see for instance Hansen, 2006; Neumann, 2001, 2008). The following chapter is dedicated to the presentation of the research design, to choices of delimitation and the composition of methodological guidelines. The chapter ends with a short reflection on research validity and epistemological concerns that follows from a poststructuralist position.

There exist very few methodological guidelines that capture the varieties of discourse analyses in a clear and precise ‘how to go about’ sample. The interlink to theory offers some instructions on how to study the empirical material, but a ‘one size fits all’ approach is, to my knowledge, missing. This is natural, as discourse analysts may be set to discover very distinctive aspects, be this the *continuity*, *change* or *rupture* within discourse, and different tools may thus be given different priority (see Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 104). Parts of this chapter will consequently discuss the more practical selection and delimitation of data material, and the analytical procedure for identifying and reading representations. My research design is primarily built with reference to Lene Hansen’s (2006) discourse analytical framework. With this, I have delimited the study along four dimensions: 1) in intertextual models, 2) the number of selves, 3) the temporal perspective, and 4) number of events (see figure 1). These choices have been made after a preliminary and wider reading of texts and concretised in line with the research question¹⁸. In the next step I identify what Hansen refers to as *key texts* through a wider reading within the established space.¹⁹ This allow me to return to a detailed study of the representations of identity and policy, the relation between Self/Other and the formulations of spatial, temporal and ethical identity, as explained in section 3.2. In general terms, the practical mission was to analyse what has been spoken or written, in order to identify patterns of

¹⁸ Comparing with Neumann's three steps, this process includes the choice and delimitation of text/discourse (2001)

¹⁹ Compare with Dunn and Neumann 2006 on *monuments* or *canonical texts* that appear as anchor points or crossroads, usually to identify also through citations in secondary literature.

representation within and across text, and their social consequences (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2002, p. 21).

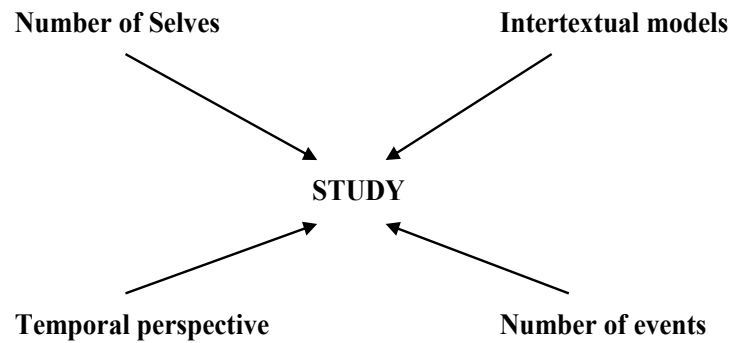


Figure 1: Replication of Lene Hansen's figure 5.1 'Research design for discourse analysis' (Hansen, 2006, p. 75).

The ontological principles of discourse theory are consistent with a *monist* perception of the relationship between the scientist and knowledge. This means that the scientist cannot completely distance herself from the world that is studied, and the production of knowledge cannot translate into an objective description of any pre-established, fixed objects (P. T. Jackson, 2016, p. 126). Rather, the inferences drawn will appear as interpretations or abstractions, and the process of undertaking science itself also makes a constructing and constituting practice. This means that the scientific ideal of objectivity cannot be complied with.²⁰

Objectivity is not set out as an ambition per se within the interpretive tradition, but the role of the researcher is worth reflecting upon. According to Iver Neumann (2001, p. 178), contemplating the situating of the researcher and how this affects the analysis, indeed becomes a virtue. Neumann has put considerable effort into advocating the role of *cultural competence*, which allows for a better use of the discourse analytical tools, and ability to illustrate variations in representations and meanings (I. B. Neumann, 2008). The study at hand is partly a product of this. I have lived and studied in Medellín, travelled in the region and as part of this thesis,

²⁰ The researcher, just as the subjects that are studied, is a *thinking being* that is able to shape its surroundings, simultaneously as it is being shaped by these in return (see Hans Skjervheim in Bratberg, 2014, s.16). In continuation, the role of interpretation introduces a basic element of subjectivity, as the scientist advances actively to detect and understand how meaning is constellated within dynamic settings and time.

conducted a shorter fieldwork in Bogotá.²¹ I speak the language at an intermediate/advanced level.²² While my first stay exposed me to the culture and the popular opinion, often articulating a certain distance to the political elite, my fieldwork connected me with intellectuals and ‘experts’. I conducted seven semi-structured interviews, resembling ‘guided conversations’, and had two meetings (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). While the interviews do not include in the primary data material (henceforth not elaborated on as a method in this chapter), they have been used to increase my personal understanding of the situation and my ability to understand and extract the ways meaning are constellated within the selected text material.²³ In general, this added insight into official articulations of peace and conflict, the priorities of the current and the former political administrations, and the difference/similarities in the state leaders, has to some extent complimented the analysis.²⁴

3.1 Data and delimitation

In discourse analysis, several choices must be made about delimitation. First, one must decide on which discourse to study, and whether to include several discourses or only one. Second, if one should concentrate on one Self or one Other, or multiple of these. Third, one might have to define the studied time span, whether a long historical one or a central moment in time. Finally, one might question which material to use. This section will explain the choices in delimitation and give a detailed account of what is regarded as empirical material for the analysis. Seeking to establish transparency, I will also be candid on how I proceed and what I look for when selecting material for closer examination.

²¹ I lived, studied and travelled around from Medellín for five months in 2015. At the University (EAFIT) I studied Latin American politics and language. The recent fieldwork was undertaken from 17 January to 2 February 2018.

²² Furthermore, I have learnt and experienced how Colombian Spanish is rich in linguistic culture and ‘rhetoric’. This is also how my interviewees R4 and Nubia Rojas represented the language. The description includes the undertaking of linguistic ‘detours’ when explaining, stating or coming to a conclusion (Nubia Rojas, 29.01.18). This naturally presents some challenges for the analysis and the translation.

²³ These are all audio recorded and with transcripts available upon request. A list of interviewees is found in Appendix 1. Some participants were contacted on beforehand, others were chosen upon snowball sampling. The fieldwork was informed to and accepted by the Data Protection Official for Research at the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). Participants have signed formal consent to participate, all personal data (whilst few) are protected under the NSD standard and two interviewees were anonymised from the beginning.

²⁴ While some degree of cultural competence is considered an asset, easing the detection and management of source material, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002, p.21) make good arguments for why an analyst should also be able to *distance* herself. As discourse analysts may study the discourses that they themselves are part of, much of the taken-for-granted understandings and normalized perceptions may be hard to detect. Studying a culture, and a language, that is not my own, has eased this process of this distancing. While there is always a danger that my sources of information (and informants) may add a bias to my analysis, I have tried to be aware of this possibility.

As poststructuralist discourse analysis relies on the basic assumption that we can only access, interpret and communicate reality through language. The method, as previously described, translates into a commitment to study *text*. Thus, the methodology of reading should be of central concern. The basic ontological commitment to text introduces some challenges for the management of source material. As analysts are not only committed to text, but potentially *all* types of text, the scope of an empirical analysis is hypothetically limitless. Discourses are not only comprised to what is explicitly spoken or written, but can draw on a combination of language, practices and knowledge. Political discourses are in this relation not limited to speeches, pamphlets and debates, may also involve symbols, flags, emblems, laws, institutional structures, myths, marches, boycotts and policies (R. Jackson, 2005, p. 19). In principle, *everything* can be investigated as discursive representations, and constellations of meaning will always refer to other constellations. Therefore, in the process of establishing a research design, demarcation and the definition of data material becomes key. This may be easier said than done, as priorities also have costs. How much text should, for instance, be considered sufficient to answer the research question? Where is it reasonable to draw the line for further reading? And what are the consequences of giving priority to some texts over others? Some scholars, like Ted Hopf, advocate the principle of ‘the more, the merrier’ and emphasise the need to study multiple texts (Bratberg, 2017, p. 64; Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 91). This claim is reasonable in the sense that it is difficult to make a statement about discourse as something social and collective, based upon a few expressions of meanings. On the other hand, national policy debates are naturally organised through individual contributions (whether written or spoken), and these texts do, to some extent, converge around common themes and identities (Hansen, 2006, p. 51).²⁵ Unlike Hopf, Hansen opens up for the study of the *essence* of a discourse, by examining central texts. These will often be found close to the elite; to central actors near the policy making, studying the official discourse.

In this thesis, I have delimited the focus to text. Exclusively texts produced by *top representatives of the government*, i. e. the political leaders with official authority to sanction and carry out policies, who forms a part of the national *official discourse*²⁶. I dedicate my analysis to a scrutiny of the official political debate in Colombia, to uncover the main representations that both absorb and contribute to a particular collective understanding of the

²⁵ Particularly as these articulate a series of (what is perceived as) valuable, accepted and meaningful policies.

²⁶ In an ideal world, I would dedicate my analysis to several discourses, such as the elite discourse, the expert discourse, the media discourse, and the popular discourse (Neumann, 2001, 2008). However, this was found impracticable considering the time span, the focus and structural limitations of the thesis.

FARC and the conflict, within (and possibly beyond) a defined time span. In line with epistemological concerns of discourse analysis, I have given analytical priority to primary sources, such as presidential speeches, statements, policy programs and debates, where possible.²⁷ The thesis assumes a focus that places it in the intersection of what Hansen names ‘model 1’ (‘official discourse’) and ‘model 2’ (the ‘wider policy debate’), but with a larger focus on the former (Hansen, 2006, p. 64, see appendix 2).²⁸ This choice is made, in order to investigate responses and texts produced by the opposition, where this opposition takes prominence. Maintaining focus on important political leaders or spokespersons, this has made it possible to explore both how the official discourse has developed and enabled a political solution to the internal conflict, but also how the official discourse stabilises or destabilises correspondingly with the level of contestation within an opposition. Where alternative representations of identity exist, this may complicate the process of implementing important policies, such as those related to conflict termination, and may undermine the legitimacy of political administrations. The choice of delimiting to ‘top representatives’ does not come without implications, and there is always risk that the project might miss out on nuances within the discourse, as well as the extent to which it is shared by the administration and/or the broader society it represents. On the other hand, some have gone to the extent of suggesting a ‘bias’ towards the study of important political actors (Wæver, 2002). Ole Wæver argues that this will *decrease* the risk that the researcher misses out on dominant visions and positions. This, because politicians, such as Uribe and Santos, are situated within a larger sphere of public and private actors, that they interact with in the process of acquiring information.²⁹ The crucial position of these politicians has to do with their particular access to information, but also their mandate to speak back to the Colombian public and influence what is perceived as central representations (Hansen, 2006, p. 7). Although the top leaders hold unique power and authority to reproduce and communicate selective representations to the people which need not be outright popular, they cannot completely ignore the collective understandings that are already in place, within the public and in the government.³⁰

²⁷ Secondary sources have appeared as complimentary material, where necessary and informative.

²⁸ This means that I leave out 'Model 3A and model 3B, 'cultural representations' and 'marginal political discourses' (see Appendix 2).

²⁹ They are not capable of maintaining absolute knowledge about an aspect and will have to rely on representations derived from individuals and institutions, such as advisors, scholars and media. This will feed into the reproduction or the establishment of new representational framings of an issue, and the policies that should follow.

³⁰ Speaking in a language that does not exist within the masses is not only unlikely to happen but would also put popularity and success at risk, at least in a democratic system where policies need some kind of legitimacy and support. At the same time, this does not suggest complete congruence between official discourse and representations adopted from informers, as politicians will rarely reproduce interpretation from advisors, media

As the empirical study is centred on the Colombian conflict and how the government has directed conflicting policies to deal with it, the research design unfolds as a study of *one* Self. This Self entails the Colombian government, and its struggle to stabilise representations of identity, through political discourse. The Self should, however, not be viewed as ‘single’ as it might sound, since the process of constructing and performing identity is inherently dynamic, unstable and subject to contestation (see Hansen, 2006, p.77). Not least does this happen in reference to competing interpretations of the Other. I consider the political body of the government to have had (and continues to have) significant influence, eloquence and power to construct the enemy and pursue policies thereon. While administrations change, I analyse the response to the same policy issue, namely the internal conflict (however this is defined by the different actors at different periods in time).

Having explained delimitation in intertextual models and the number of selves, the next step includes a delimitation in temporality and the number of events. As alluded in the opening chapters, my research includes a temporal scope of ten years (from 2006-2016), which translates into a temporal perspective where I concentrate a smaller number of moments. The time frame is chosen to fit the scope of this thesis and to best answer the research question. Secondly, incorporating multiple events instead of one, means that I understand the Colombian conflict as a *longer process*, which has required recurring, but different, urgent and unconventional political action. Looking at several events it is possible to illustrate how the discourse is maintained in some periods, but also amended and reconstructed in other. Linked to the analytical choice to study a smaller set of moments, the *number of events* is similarly *multiple* (refer to Hansen’s model, *figure 1*). However, these multiple events are all connected by *one* central issue or theme, namely the Colombian conflict. More specific, they revolve around the designated policy response to the conflict with FARC, along three and a half consecutive administrations. Despite the timespan of the empirical study is compressed into a relatively intensive development (probably closer in time than the norm suggests), I find the time span analytically sufficient in that it serves to illustrate nuances of repetition, contestation and change within a decisive time in history, that the transition period is.

By studying the official political constructions of the Self within the referenced intertextual model, temporal aspect and linked by the same event, it is possible to find

and other politicians mechanically. Nor will the audience be tied to comply with the official representations in public, at least not in a functioning democracy.

contestation and transformation. The number of choices I have made for the research design may be summed up in the following figure (*figure 2*).

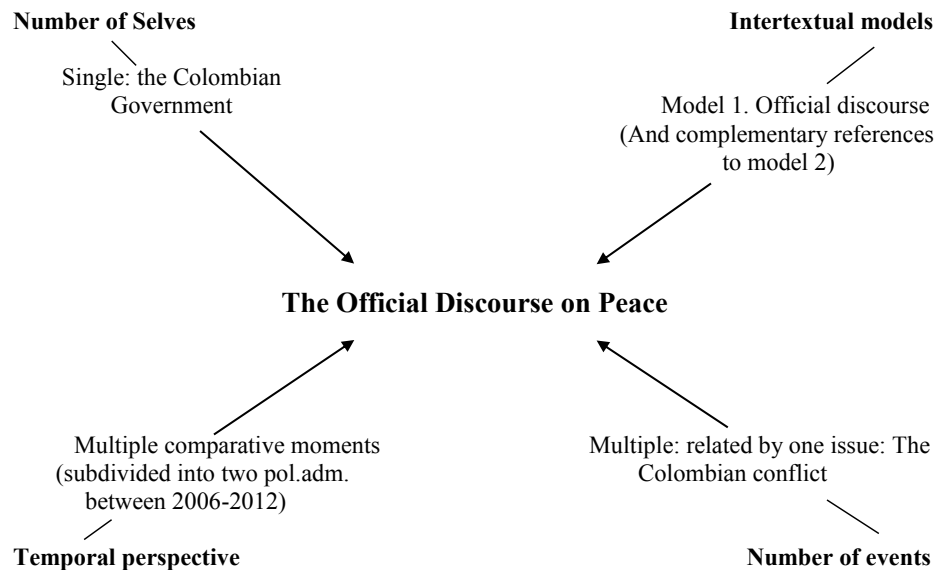


Figure 2: Illustration of my research design drawing upon Lene Hansen's figure 5.2 'Elaborated research design for discourse analysis' (Hansen, 2006, p.81)

3.2 Identifying and mapping representations of the Self and the Other

Commenting on the formation of my research design in the previous section, this will explain how I went about methodically, moving from single signs in text, to identifying a discourse (and vice versa). In the initial process, I conducted a *preliminary study* of texts involved in the Colombian peace debate. Then, I submitted texts to a closer reading, with an eye focused on the different representations of identity, linked to the FARC and the Colombian government. With this, I was able to delineate the discourse and identify a set of relevant *basic representations*, as ideal-typical analytical constructions that demonstrated points of contestation and relations within the official discourse. The sequence of reading in these two steps involved, methodologically speaking, a double reading (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 109). Where the initial descriptive reading allowed me to identify, map and delimit the discursive

terrain, with its hierarchical organisation around main representations, the next permitted an in-depth study (a ‘dialogical reading’ of the representations), to discover how texts try to fix meaning and close off alternative possibilities (ibid.).

I will now turn to a closer elaboration of the process. As there is no single way of interpreting discourses, I have chosen to adapt procedural lessons from the collaboration of Dunn and Neumann (2016), combined with methodological tools for categorising constructions of identity, proposed by Hansen (2006). As I deal with *one* discourse which I seek to map and explore, I concentrate on variations of representations *within* the discourse, rather than between multiple discourses of society. This means that my formulations of methodology will diverge somehow from that expressed by the mentioned scholars, but the principle and logic of the tools will nevertheless be the same.

Discourse analysis involves extensive reading. While it is first useful to get a grip of the situation by reading a series of secondary sources, I have combined these with original sources in order to identify a discourse. This discourse that I have identified, is the official political discourse that revolve around the existence of some kind of conflict in Colombia that needs to be dealt with in order to establish *peace*. Henceforth I call this a ‘peace discourse’, while its meaning will depend upon different representation). To find a reasonable group of texts to submit to a closer reading, I have identified a number of key texts. These are located around (heated) debates, central events and turning points, as relevant discursive spaces where constructions and conflict in meaning appear. As Dunn and Neumann (2016, pp.92-93) have noted, searching for some kind of conflict may be useful, as this often means that something new or modified is entering the stage and becomes subject to investigation and contestation by competing views. Drawing out a meaningful selection of texts, I have however had some criteria in mind, wishing to say something about the visibility, relevance and impact of the representations. Three criteria are taken from Hansen (2006, p.83) and implies that the texts, submitted to closer reading, should be 1) clear articulations of identity and policy, 2) widely read and attended to, and 3) carrying formal political authority.³¹ Following these criteria, it is certainly legitimate to question the extent to which individual texts contain solely individual representations, or forms part of a larger, shared realities. In the response, it is argued that while national policy debates are naturally organised through individual contributions (whether written or spoken), these texts converge around common themes and common identities, that

³¹ Whereas the second and the third criteria is usually in place when studying an official political discourse per se, Hansen formulates that those who do *not* entail ‘clearly formulated’ representations may be coupled with additional, linked texts.

must carry some form of ‘acceptance’ with them. This should particularly be the case in democracies when presenting a series of policies perceived as valuable and meaningful.

I will place my main focus in what Dunn and Neumann (2016) refer to as mapping discourses³². This means that I will deconstruct the identified discourse, in order to investigate what representations of identity it articulates, and to what degree the discourse could be seen as relatively stable or instable in the studied time. In Dunn and Neumann stress that a researcher should ‘examine the degree to which representations continue, change or challenge existing discourses’ (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 118). For instance, if the discourse is characterised by upholding only *one* representation, it should be considered as ‘closed’ (in a relative sense). On the other hand, the discursive field can be viewed as ‘open’ if there exist two or more representations, and neither are clearly dominating (ibid.). Such findings will indicate relative stability or instability. In general terms, the investigated signs or single representations should reveal meaning beyond its appearance in the single text. Often this implies investigating normalised expressions or expressions that refer to something ‘grander’. This is not a simple task. Because of their argumentative nature, policy debates normally comprise of several small discourses and representations. It may be virtually impossible to cover the variations, constantly in flux. This makes it useful to identify some *basic elements*. These may be referred to as basic representations or *nodal points*, as central representations that other concepts are defined from (Dunn and Neumann, 2016; Bratberg, 2017, p.56).³³ While these basic representations are somehow empirically present, they need not be the most dominating in every debate. Nevertheless, they should (in plural) indicate the focal positions that make up the political debate in question. The identification of such ‘ideal types’ or analytical constructions follows from the limited scope of the thesis, but I also found simplification is key, in order to make a good analytical point. Where the goal is to pinpoint representations that articulate dissimilar constructions of the government, the FARC and policies that follow from these, drawing out the most basic elements of a representation will provide ways of mapping contestation and consequently disagreement over a political roadmap. Bearing in mind that these are ideal-typical constructions, meaning that the texts referred to in these constructions may not be consistent (nor in complete concordance) with the construction drawn. This relates to the dynamic nature of discourse and meaning, and variations within the discourse will naturally persist. These basic representations will normally represent different ‘others’, different ‘degrees

³² This methodological step builds on Iver’s chapter ‘Discourse Analysis’, in Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash, eds., *Qualitative Methods in International Relations* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan).

³³ This basic representation is usually ambiguous and its meaning changes between different views of reality.

of otherness', and boundaries drawn in spatiality, temporality and ethics.³⁴ Finally, when these come together and establish links between identity and politics, different policy frameworks will usually be proposed.

To summarise, I focus on the construction of the FARC in the conflict, the self and the interlinked formulation of policy. As elaborated in section 2.2, the conception of the relative identity of the Self and the Other may be theorised as a twofold process of linking and differentiating. Methodologically speaking, one may initially proceed by recognising the central representations that indicate an evident stipulation of an Other. This may constitute terms, or descriptive adjective with positive or negative connotations, such as 'evil', 'enemy', 'lawless' or 'murderer', or contrary expressions referring to the Self, such as 'good', 'fair' and 'democratic'. To examine the construction of identity, it is however not sufficient to identify single representations of the Self or the Other. Hansen rather suggests that one should be able to locate these within a larger system of signs (2006, p.42):

'Analytically, the construction of identity should therefore be situated inside a careful investigation of which signs are articulated by a particular discourse or text, how they are coupled to achieve discursive stability, where instabilities and slips between these constructions might occur, and how competing discourses construct the same sign to different effects' (ibid.)

Hansen explains that instability in the discourse (or the representation of identity) may appear if the Other is constructed as radically different, but still a part of the Self (2006, p.45). While she reiterates that discourses would normally avoid representing such contradictions, this is interesting to examine in the empirical study of the national conflict in Colombia, where adversaries are linked together by some commonalities. The same applies to the investigation of *temporal*, *spatial* and *ethical* constructions of identity. Briefly mentioned in the theory chapter, these reflect boundaries in space, time and responsibility that a political party adopt in relation to an Other. When identity is constructed in *spatial* terms, this means that '*identity is relationally constituted and always involves the construction of boundaries and thereby the delineation of space*' (Hansen, 2006, p. 47). Traditionally in IR, spatially constructions of identity have been produced with reference to territorial boundaries with other states or regions. These latter do often consist of more complex identities, but may nevertheless referred to as one, such as 'the Orient', 'Europe', 'the West', 'Latin America' and so on. On the other hand,

³⁴ Whereas Hansen apply these analytical concepts of identity in her procedure to identify *basic discourses*, I apply these as a means to study the different boundaries between the self and the other, articulated within the official discourse.

these identities may also take form as more abstract political entities, groups or subjects, such as ‘savages’, ‘criminals’, ‘terrorists’, ‘narcotraffickers’ and ‘latinos’, where the references to space and boundaries are more abstract. Finally, with globalisation and the increasing development of transnational bonds, these boundaries may also be constructed with reference to the ‘international community’, as an identity in itself, holding specific values that make it what it is (or more correctly, what it is perceived to be, usually as liberal democratic, modern, wise, exclusive but solidary). A classic example of an integrated value of this ‘international community’ is the value of human rights (a universal principle). When this constitutes part of the Self, the Other would be those who in turn *violate* these rights. *Temporal* identities are explained as references made to development, continuity, change, repetition and the like. These may include representations of ‘different times’ reflected in religion, politics and the civilizational, where boundaries between the Self and the Other are constructed based on visions of relative *progress* or for instance *stubbornness* (ibid., p.48).³⁵ The final boundary Lene Hansen mentions, refers to an *ethical aspect* (ibid., p.50). This might be best understood as the way identity is constituted through a designation of (more or less) *responsibility*. Often, national policy discourses construct a form of responsibility to the government to take care of the citizens, safeguard rights and protect the nationals against any threat. But this, I argue, must not exclusively constitute an *external* threat, as long as it is linked to the clear construction of an Other that implicates negatively on one or several selves. The responsibility to protect interests, and act on behalf of a recognised group, devotes power to designated political leaders to make authoritative, controversial and comprehensive decisions.³⁶ Therefore, this identity includes a moral aspect, that may be represented as the urgent need to act in one way or another.

Although simplified, these analytical constructions provide a fruitful, not least *dynamic*, way of investigating the different manners in which identities are constructed and constituted within an identified discourse. Identity is not seen as static, nor dichotomous or one-dimensional, but contextual and interlinked with policy formulation. As Hansen indicates, it might be useful to ask questions like the following: ‘*Which Selves and Others are constituted in (foreign) policy discourse? How radical is the difference between them? And how is difference constituted through the articulation of spatial, temporal, and ethical identity?*’ (2006, p. 51). One should never expect these forms of identity to appear through obvious and explicit signs. Rather, it could be more useful to relate to spatiality, temporality and ethicality as

³⁵ In other words, how the temporality of the Other is constructed vice versa the temporality of the Self.

³⁶ Note that to the contrary, constructions may also legitimise non-action and non-responsibility.

‘analytical lenses’ through which one can detect the important political aspects of identity construction. In addition, as I will apply these as tools to uncover links between identity construction, policies and the management of these (refer back to the framing theory). The empirical study which will follow in chapter 5 is not able to capture the whole dynamic of the process wherein the discourse *changes* or becomes more *ambiguous* after the introduction of a new narrative. Nevertheless, we should be able to get a rather good idea of some of the aspects, including how representations are moderated and/or radicalized as the discourse evolves and what effects this brings. In general, this will elucidate how the introduction of a new narrative presents new opportunities, but also how these may be constrained by already established representations within the discursive terrain.

3.3 Research objectives

As I have initially argued, discourse analysis could benefit from a more rigid methodology. But this does not translate into an aspiration of adopting the same criteria for scientific evaluation, as the generalised positivist study (See Jackson, 2016). Discourse analysis does not deal with fixed and predefined entities, and poststructuralist ontology (unlike that of critical discourse analysis) makes it pointless to draw any boundaries between discourse and non-discourse (or discourse and *action*). This alludes that it is unproductive to evaluate discourse analysis, interpretive at heart, by the same stringent standards that are formulated for and by positivist science (see for instance King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994). However, this does not mean that there are no guidelines for how to evaluate the quality and validity of discourse analysis. To increase the reliability of inferences drawn in a discourse analytical research design, it is imperative that the researcher draws out the contours of the research design. This includes the classification of source material and an elaboration of *how* and with what tools this should be analysed (Bratberg, 2017). In the previous sections I explained what material amounts to my analysis and how I relate to it.

3.3.1 The ‘problem’ of causality

Discourse theory directs a focus to the machinery of how we, as social beings, construct, reproduce and challenge central representations of reality. This makes discourse analysis less prone, but also less fit, to map and quantify causal inferences, as it tends to focus more on how

discourses enable, and in turn is constituted by the performance of, policies.³⁷ Instead, it is more normal to endorse a '*logic of interpretation*' which recognises the irrationality of calculating and stipulating real and direct causes (Campbell, 1993, p. 8; Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 61)³⁸. In the following, it is often central to consider 'the manifest political consequences of adopting one mode of representation over another' (Campbell, 1993, p. 8). As Dunn and Neumann find, 'discourses, as structures of knowledge, establish preconditions and parameters for the possibility of action, rather than explaining why certain choices are made' (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 61). In other words, it then becomes possible to tell something about the *preconditions* for why the peace process ended up in a particular place, and how a political solution became a feasible option (alternatively, *how* shifting representations of the FARC enabled some practices of dealing with the conflict, while excluding others). On the other hand, I will not be able to claim direct causality or explanation to why an actor made a precise decision, why the war started or why, in my concern, why the conflict between the Colombian government and the FARC terminated in with political solution.³⁹

The most general theoretical objective of this thesis, committing to poststructuralism, is to demonstrate that discourse matters. The challenge will however be to demonstrate *how much* it matters. In this relation, discourse analysis will not tell us everything there is to know about the conflict and the transition towards a peace, but it may uncover interesting patterns, constellations of meanings which have rendered certain policies possible and natural, while rendering others illegitimate and unnatural. The analysis is centred around a more complimentary aspect of what a causal analysis would detect, as I am set out to understand reasoning, worldviews and meanings, rather than the mere appearance and sequencing of material factors. In understanding the conflict and how resolution efforts developed, I am also engaging in how the government, or a society, understand the Other party to the conflict, which simultaneously affects its understanding of the Self. Or in contrary, how the understanding of the Self is related and implicates on the understanding of the Other.

³⁷ However, there does exist some epistemological divide between poststructuralist discourse analysis and *critical* discourse analysis. Where the latter is more susceptible of debating the possibilities of causality, due to the perception of an 'extra-discursive' realm where *practice* is placed³⁷, poststructuralists contradict this divide, incorporating practice in (and as) discourse.

³⁸ This as opposed to the positivist conception of the '*logic of explanation*' (Hempel & Oppenheim, 1948)

³⁹ If I were to deem what *caused* the peaceful solution, I should be able to analyse the outcome as a simple execution of pre-established objectives or be able to explain how to restart or prevent such a process, or even replicate it. While a description of the process might include causal reasoning, the dependent variables detected would unlikely be able to stand alone but would rather be subject to understanding within a larger and a more complex historical and contemporary context. On this background, it is usually more constructive to speak about *interpretive descriptions* (Wide, 2017).

4 Background to the conflict

The empirical material should be addressed in relation to its historical and current context. In this chapter, I situate the analysis, based upon a strategic reading of the Colombian history rendered and reproduced in secondary sources. This should serve as an adequate point of departure for the analysis of the more recent political development. Referring the poststructuralist principles enshrined in the thesis, this contextualisation is inevitably a constructed one as no narratives are free of subjectivity, nor of intertextuality.⁴⁰ Due to the complexity of the Colombian conflict, I have made some severe delimitations to accommodate the scope of this thesis.⁴¹ The chapter starts by outlining the outbreak of the civil war of the 20th century. This battle ended in a power sharing agreement between the liberal and the conservative party, an excluding arrangement which sparked the formation of the FARC⁴². In the following, the chapter briefly discusses how missing attempts of state building have resulted in a weak central government, unable to deal with the protracted violence. Finally, I render the former attempts to negotiate peace with the FARC, contemplating also the humanitarian consequences that has followed (partly) from the failure to secure any agreement.

4.1 The Violence and the National Front

Colombia became a republic in 1819 when Simón Bolívar defeated the Spanish invaders and contributed to the formation of *Gran Colombia*, a state built up of what is today considered Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and Ecuador. This union was split after a decade, when Panama and Colombia had to form a new state, the Nueva Granada. By the end of the nineteenth century and in the early beginning of the twentieth (1899-1902), a fatal civil war later known as the ‘the

⁴⁰ For instance, it is interesting to see how Colombia has been studied in relation to its somewhat defining ‘history of violence’.

⁴¹ Including in this, I have found little space to discuss the evolution of the paramilitary (an important agent in the Colombian conflict and related in complex ways to state agencies), the formation of the multiple guerrilla groups (most prominently the ELN and the M-19) and the growing impact of the narcotics trade, an industry which has been linked to both the guerrilla and the paramilitaries and has earned as a profitable funding mechanism for various groups of society. These factors are left out, as they have been given less space in the empirical analysis as well, despite their impact on policy formation and identity linking. Unfortunately, no analysis will be able to cover *everything*.

⁴² Note that the conflict is multiparty. I will however focus on the FARC, respectful of the scope and thematic of the thesis.

Thousand Days War' ('Guerra de los Mil Días') raged between liberals and conservatives left around 120.000 people dead. Panama then separated as a sovereign state (Pécaut, 2008).

Tensions between liberal and conservative elite fractions continued into the 20th century, largely excluding other political forces. From 1948-1957 a ten years de facto civil war broke out, known as "La Violencia" (The Violence). This outbreak between paramilitary associations of the national Liberal Party and the Conservative Party was sparked off after the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a famous presidential candidate for the liberal party, and ended a violence where 250,000 – 300,000 people were killed (Segura & Mechoulan, 2017). In an effort to end the conflict, the two parties joined in a bipartisan pact and formed the coalition party National Front (*Front Nacional*). This was a model of power sharing where the presidency alternated between the two parties, and bureaucracy and government posts were split. However, the agreement led to the effective exclusion of all other third parties from participating for around 16 following years (Thoumi, 2005, p.16; Segura & Mechoulan, 2017). Arenas for opposition were also restricted. Some of the members of the armed groups did not demobilise and surrender to the new government. One of these was Tirofijo (alias for Manuel Marulanda Vélez), who transformed his ideology as a liberal to support the communist section, eventually forming the left-leaning group *Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia* (FARC-EP). During the years following the ruling of the National Front, other central insurgent groups formed, such as the ELN (Ejército Nacional de Liberación), the M-19 (Movimiento 19 de Abril) and the EPL (Ejército Popular de Liberación) (Livingstone, 2003).

The war known as 'La Violencia' had also been triggered by an inefficient and failing land reform passed in the 1930s (Gruszczynski and Jaramillo, 2002). The government had with regularity sold off big areas of public land, to be able to pay for external debts. Although 'Law 200' passed in 1935 was aimed at redistributing land and protect tenants, it rather displaced leaseholders, following efforts of increased productivity and modernisation of practices by the land owners (ibid.)⁴³. This resulted in a very centralised system of landholding and ownership, and in 1960, 0.2 percent of all farms owned 30 percent of all agricultural land in the country (Flores, 2013). 'Political exclusion', 'failing agrarian reforms' and 'severe poverty' have been referenced as strong stimuluses for uprising which came to characterise Colombian internal affairs (Livingstone, 2003, p.71). The lack of successful attempts to ease the insurgency led to the conflict evolving in magnitude and proportions over the years. During the Cold War, the

⁴³ Productivity increased following an established minimum standard of production and prevented the expropriation of land.

dimension shifted towards a low-intensity, asymmetrical warfare, most prominently fought between communist insurgent groups and the government. In the 1980s, the conflict developed yet, and the armed platform became an arena for numerous of groups, including actors from the illegal drugs industry, paramilitary movements and other rebels. This led to a multidimensionality of targets, means and objectives (World Bank, 2014). From the 1990s, the level of the violent conflict highly intensified. Benefiting from weak border controls, challenging terrain and increasing revenues from drugs related activities and tactics such as extortion, kidnapping and robbery, the FARC reached its peak by the 2000s (Bagley & Rosen, 2015). At this point, in 1999, a majority of Colombians believed that the FARC could be able to take control over the government by force (DeShazo, Mendelson Forman, & McLean, 2009).

4.2 The evolution of the FARC

The FARC-EP, *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo*, was established in the 1960s in the aftermath of La Violencia, as a self-defence response to the reoccurring operations against peasant communities. At the time when the FARC was formed (officially given name in 1966), various armed groups had been born, some with higher political aspirations than others (Pécaut, 2008).⁴⁴ The FARC started out as a peasant organisation and has kept this foundational close to its ideological centre. While its political ideology resembles Marxism, born in the context of the Cold War where the world order demanded support on either of the two ideological sides, the organisation has also been influenced by Colombian liberalism (Chernick, 2009). Developing in complex and shifting conditions, the group has interchangeably been interpreted as a self-defence group and a guerrilla movement fighting over land issues. Between the 1960s and the 1990s, the group was however primarily linked to the Colombian Communist Party, guided and motivated by a communist, but also a pragmatic philosophy.⁴⁵ In 1973, the organisation created a secretariat (the highest decision-making body) and five military fronts.

⁴⁴ Useful to note, it is argued that the notion 'guerrilla' bears a different connotation in the Colombian context than in other parts of Latin America (ibid.). During La Violencia, guerrilla related activities were commonly adopted by main political parties, to secure or disrupt power. When the battle between the liberals and the conservatives was settled, social and political oppositions continued with a certain 'normality' to resort to local guerrilla mechanisms (ibid, p. 24). This, however, is not to say that FARC emerged as a direct effect of this.

⁴⁵ Some authors claim that FARC is better understood as an anti-imperial and radical agrarian group, with local or national, rather than global visions (see Livingstone, 2003, p.72).

The FARC has earned support where state presence has been missing, particularly in colonised regions like eastern Meta, Caquetá, Guaviare and parts of Magdalena Valley (Livingstone, 2003). Setting up informal institutions, including courts, health and educational services, the organisation was able to maintain order, where property disputes and attacks had been frequent. The group would also prevent property speculators to buy up all the land (Livingstone, 2003). Representing a viable alternative to the central authority, these functions may have contributed to the FARC's survival and expansion in the 1970s. To secure financing for its organisation and strengthening of its troops, the FARC began to exploit new sources of income from the 1980s. Extortion, kidnapping and taxation of illegal narcotics crops eventually generated large revenues⁴⁶. The size of its military fronts increased from five in the 1960s, to an estimated 48 by the end of the 1980s (Segura & Mechoulan, 2017). In the 1990s, the its military corpus was additionally strengthened under Manuel Marulanda Vélez, alias 'Tirofijo', and the FARC expanded into key areas. By the 21st century, the guerrilla organisation reached its peak in terms of size and power, and controlled an estimated 40 percent of the Colombian land (Beittel, 2015). While FARC has experienced shifts in its relative military power, the group has demonstrated an impressive ability to adapt to situations and re-emerge after tough encounters. This, partly due its capability to operate in challenging terrain and its multidimensional techniques of recruiting members and attaining resources.⁴⁷

4.3 State building and the liberal/conservative divide

Colombia has always been a fragmented country. Its geographical outline is vast and diverse, something that has contributed to a strong regional division, and the development of several independent urban centres. To a large extent, these regions have become economically self-sufficient,⁴⁸ and have in their own manner been able to undertake important projects in industry and infrastructure. Instead of developing as a strong national centre, Bogotá has consequently competed with regional, at the time, same-size centres, such as Medellín, Popayán, and Socorro.

⁴⁶ By the mid-90s, the illegal drugs business became the main source of income, counting for 50 percent in 2003 and as much as 60-70 percent from 2003-2007 (according to a report by the Minister of Defence cited in Pécaut, 2008, p.90). It is however important to note that these sources of income have been common among many actors, including paramilitary groups, but also linked to state officials. This places the narcotics industry also at the heart of the conflict.

⁴⁷ From 2002 until 2010, FARC has however experienced a significant reduction in its organisation, decreasing from 20.000 members to 8.000 (Johnson & Jonsson, 2013)⁴⁷.

⁴⁸ Export and links to the external market also happened with direct links to the regional power hubs, rather than going through the capital centre.

The polycentric geography has been accompanied by a strong consensus among the regional elites to follow a *laissez-faire* economic policy. Individual initiatives, combined with market incentives, have been considered the major route to development, leaving the intervention of central authority limited. Large geographical distances have also made it more appealing to contribute with tax to the closest centre, rather than a distanced capital, and order and progress have been pursued at a local and regional level, rather than at the national. Hillel David Soifer (2015) highlights the interrelatedness between this geographical development and the evolution of Colombia's *weak* central state (see also Gray, 2014). Strong regional elites have placed their effort with regional projects, and development has been pursued by mechanisms of dismantling, rather than building the state (Soifer, 2015, p. 5). In other words, the elites in the country never decided to insert any sufficient and resilient measures to strengthen and building the nation as *one*. The upsurge of La Violencia shows that these elites have not been able to agree on *who* should be rewarded the government power nor what the tasks of the central government should consist of *if* empowered. These aspects, according to Soifer, are why the state has been ineffective throughout Colombia's modern history, and unable to unite the people in dedications to larger state projects.

Colombia is a country which traditionally suffered from high levels of inequality⁴⁹, and the elites maintain significant power even today. However, reflecting the nation as a whole, the elites remain fragmented and divided, most prominently into urban elites (residing in the capital) and regional elites (centred for instance in Medellín). While the interests of these elites have varied, they have traditionally been united around a common tenet, namely that the central state should insert efforts to generate progress and development within its borders. In this common conviction, conservatives have mostly come to accept liberal economic ideas (Soifer, 2015, p. 47). In regards of the relationship between the church and the state, the two have departed.

⁴⁹ This is evident even today. While the Colombian economy by GDP (PPP) has been growing rather steadily (World Bank, n.d.) and HDI values have been increasing by 22.9 per cent between 1990 and 2015 (UNDP, 2016), *equality* levels have been declining. In measurements of HDI adjusted by or *discounted* for inequalities (IHDI), Colombia loses 24.6 per cent of its score (ibid.). And compared to Latin America, a region suffering from some of the highest levels of inequality in the world, Colombia exceeds the average. According to an Oxfam report published in 2016, 0.4 per cent of Colombian farmers hold more than 67 per cent of the productive land, making Colombia the worst in its region in terms of unequal land distribution (Guereña, 2016). In 2010 USAID also reported that in rural areas less than *one* per cent of the population remain in power of more than 50 per cent of the best land (USAID, 2010).

In the 19th century, liberalism emerged as the most dominating political elite in Colombia, and the constitution of 1865 has represented as the most advanced liberal project in the region, in the contemporary time (ibid., p. 53). With the new constitution of 1886 however, the tone shift in favour of the country's conservatives. Strong institutions such as the church, the state and the family were given increased focus as a means to control the growing violence and insert order in the territory. The church has maintained strong ties to the conservative political sector and has on occasions threatened to exclude anyone not voting for the conservative party (Gray, 2014). Nevertheless, concerted state action would remain extremely low, a factor which planted the seed for the later increase in private self-defence armies and paramilitary movements, acting to replace the state force where this was considered absent or generally too weak.

The conservatives dominated most of the elections at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. With this political trend, the state assumed more presence than earlier, complimented and guided by a stronger social conservatism. However, violence and fragmentation remained high. In the beginning of the 1900s, the liberals and conservatives, as mentioned, would engage in several battles. In the end, the political elites would come to an understanding that both political sections would have to be incorporated into the political sphere, in a joint effort to maintain order. From this point, violence developed largely in the hands of the guerrillas, the paramilitaries and the criminal drug cartels⁵⁰.

4.4 Earlier attempts to negotiate peace

There have been various attempts to reform and bring about peace in Colombia, either through peaceful or military means. Most of the initiatives of the 1980s were however met with resistance, as allies within the narcotics trade, together with other powerful actors, in general supported the contemporary order. Lack of political will has also, partly, prevented social and political change. The FARC have nevertheless engaged in three significant peace attempts since the 1980s.

⁵⁰ Colombia has become the world's largest producer and trafficker of cocaine (since the 1990s) (USAID, 2010). According to the referred report, this business has generated the main income for left-wing guerrilla groups and right-wing paramilitaries, earning names as 'narco-terrorists'. These groups are not the only ones that have benefitted from the growing industry. As an example, President Samper was accused for having his presidential campaign financed by cocaine money, but many sectors of society have collected the fruits of the prosperous industry (ibid.).

The first peace initiatives, 'of Uribe' (after the municipality in the Meta region where the dialogues were undertaken), were set in motion between 1982 and 1985 under President Belisario Betancur (1982-1986). Betancur initiated negotiations with FARC and encouraged the guerrilla to form a political party in 1984. The FARC consequently established the Patriotic Union ('la Unión Patriótica', UP) and accepted the pressure for a ceasefire (Walch, 2016). The agreement failed to gather essential support from important Congress members, the military, and key actors in the economic sector. In the elections of 1986, the UP presidential candidate nevertheless managed to get four percent of the votes, and members of the UP entered into Congress and assumed various local mandates throughout the country (Gray, 2014). At the same time, the FARC was facing huge repression by right-wing paramilitaries, and few security mechanisms had been set up to safeguard the process and ensure protection for those who had disarmed and entered politics. This spurred the violent assassination of between 1500-3000 members of the UP party (depending on the distinction between members/non-members), a result of the contested legalisation of guerrilla fighters as party affiliates⁵¹. Among the assassinated were 13 Congress members, 11 mayors and seven members of the municipal councils (ibid).⁵² FARC then reassumed to its guerrilla movement, in claimed self-defence (Gomez-Suarez & Newman, 2013). This planted a strong negative precedence for peace, as guarantees for security were considered weak and enforcement credibility low.

Some significant advances later came about under the administration of the subsequent president Virgilio Barco Vargas (1986-1990), whom also pursued political reforms and administrative decentralisation. While struggling with increasing problems of paramilitary violence and drug cartels (such as the Medellín cartel), Barco Vargas managed a demobilisation of the ruthless guerrilla group, M-19 (*Movimiento 19 de Abril*) by 1990, who put down their guns and transformed into a political party (Segura & Mechoulan, 2017).⁵³ This agreement also

⁵¹ When the UP was formed in 1985, many of those who joined were not FARC members or communists. The agreement had not set up mechanisms to monitor who participated in politics, from the FARC's side, resulting in a biased protection by the state. Perpetrators justified their atrocities against UP members with a statement that the FARC was leading an 'armed political strategy'. This informed perceptions of a 'violent democratisation' (Gomez-Suarez & Newman, 2013)(Gomez-Suarez & Newman, 2013).

⁵² This continued and comprehensive assassination has later been recognised (with increased frequency) as a 'genocide' (Gomez-Suarez & Newman, 2013). This continued and comprehensive assassination has later been recognised (with increased frequency) as a 'genocide' (Gomez-Suarez & Newman, 2013).

⁵³ Some dissident from FARC and a populist movement which had lost elections in 1970 due to an alleged government fraud (*Alianza Nacional Popular – Anapo*), formed the guerrilla group *Movimiento Diecinueve de Abril* (M-19). The M-19, named after the date of the presidential elections, was a national movement which adopted a series of brutal attacks on the government, leaving a vicious trace in the multifarious conflict. The most remembered act is the group's dramatic occupation of the Colombian Supreme Court in 1985 (DeShazo, Mendelson Forman, & McLean, 2009). The M-19 eventually put down their weapons, after reaching an *amnesty agreement* with the government.

converted into accelerated talks with other rebel groups. In 1991 dialogues were initiated in Tlaxcala (Mexico) and Caracas (Venezuela), with the FARC (the second effort), the ELN and the EPL. While these were inconclusive and were disrupted by continued atrocities, they resulted in a deal with the EPL and some smaller groups, managed by President Gaviria.

In 1998, President Pastrana attempted a third round of official peace negotiations with the FARC. This was part of the president's electoral pledge to introduce a new and comprehensive peace process in the country. This was widely welcomed by the people, as levels of insecurity were extremely high, and the FARC was increasingly seizing new land and power. For the process to take form, a large area of land in El Caguán (comparable to the size of Switzerland) was demilitarised on part of the government, committing to and establishing a neutral basis for the dialogues. The official peace negotiations started in 1999 but were suspended and resumed on an interchangeable basis by the FARC. While some advances were undertaken, the peace talks were in general unstable, and Pastrana consequently joined in a cooperation with a third party, the United States, launching the parallel initiative of '*Plan Colombia*'. This was a plan set to deal with aspects of the crisis, first and foremost the severe narcotics trafficking, but eventually also human rights abuses and the continued spread of insurgent groups and paramilitaries. The plan granted massive aid directed to military resources, originally to targeting narcotics production and trafficking, but was increasingly applied in the battle against FARC (Chernick, 2015).

4.5 A humanitarian crisis

Colombia seems to live up to a certain *double exceptionalism*. This is evident in the sense that the country proudly counts on more than one hundred years of formal democracy, almost without exemptions. This makes it unique in its regional setting⁵⁴. At the same time, the country has simultaneously experienced unprecedented *levels* and *endurance* of violence, since its day of independence (Deas, 2015). With more than fifty years in consistent low-intensity conflict, a substantial part of this violence has been generated by the government itself or from its controversial allies (Gutiérrez, 2014, p. 11). According to Vanessa Joan Gray (2014, p. 155), national security forces have recurrently, from the establishment of the republic, applied

⁵⁴ Colombia is practically the only democracy in *Latin America* that has not been interrupted by dictatorships and maintains a good record of periodic free elections. The country has however been plagued by severe political violence in some sub periods.

extensive lethal violence to suppress opposition groups and party members have eliminated their opponents. Moreover, in the environment of insecurity, land owners have hired protection from private forces and used assassins to defend and expand their assets. Paradoxically (or at least disproportionately), it is the brutalities associated with the infamous *guerrilla movements* that have made it to the headlines of the national and international news. This, together with their alleged links to the illegal drugs business, placing Colombia on the map as one of the largest manufacturers of illicit narcotics in the world⁵⁵ (UNODC, 2017). As alluded, the geographical outline of Colombia has made both the guerrilla organisations and the drugs industry hard to control. As mentioned in the previous section, state presence has historically been low or even *absent* in several regions, and the infrastructure is poorly developed in many areas, due to the wild landscape and challenging terrain. Weak institutions have in turn led to limited enforcement credibility on what concerns law and order. Unequal distribution of economic resources and income has fostered the development of a strong and powerful elite, separated from the general society. Citizens are equal before the law, but in practice there are significant inequalities in the *access* to enforce social, political and economic rights, and clientelism remains high (Osterling, 1989). A lack of confidence in the institutions and the imbalanced favouring of the wealthy, has encouraged circumvention of the democratic system in order to obtain *individual* needs and interests before collective needs (*ibid.*). This has contributed to a deep popular resentment with the government and the influential elites, playing into the boil up of many internal conflicts.

The violence in Colombia has had huge ramifications for civilian life and security. Registro Único de Víctimas, the official register of victims, lists a total of 8.250.270 victims of the internal armed conflict (Unidad Víctimas, 2017). Among these, 7.305.936 are registered as victims of displacement, the largest number in the world, after Syria. A famous report, *¡Basta Ya! (Enough Already!)*, claims that among the killed (267,286), 19 percent are combatants, while 81 percent civilians (GMH, 2013). In the victims' report, 371.835 people are listed as 'wounded' by the conflict, 36.349 victims of kidnapping, 11.199 victims of antipersonnel mines or explosive devices, and 168.253 people affected by enforced disappearance. According to the World Bank (2014, part 1, p.3), 6.421 children have been recruited to violent insurgent groups, while the victims' statistics reports even higher numbers (Unidad Víctimas, 2017).

⁵⁵ And the number one exporter of cocaine to the United States. According to UNODC, 90 percent of the cocaine transferred to the United States in 2015, originated from Colombia (UNODC, 2017). According to the same source, Colombia has re-emerged as the main supplier also to Europe.

5 Empirical analysis

In the discourse analysis that follows in this chapter, I investigate the representations that have dominated the official discourse on peace from 2002, until the political solution to the Colombian conflict was finally concluded in 2016. My research question suggests an inconsistency in the discourse. To analyse how this inconsistency has played out for the termination of the conflict, the analysis takes a systematic look at the political debate and initiatives that since the 21st century has dominated official political scene in Colombia. My research design, presented in chapter 3, explained how I track down variations in identity, to uncover how discursive constructions of the Self and the Other have transpired from the government's communication and manifested articulations of the 'rightful' end to the conflict. The theoretical chapter suggested that identity is constructive of, interlinked and reinforced with policy, and henceforth an important relationship to study if the objective is to understand how some policies are considered legitimate, while others are denied as irrational.

The selection of text was explained in chapter 3. In the process of identifying relevant material, I conducted a wider reading of the official statements and plans that were proposed between 2002 and 2016, with a designated focus on texts that concerns the FARC, the conflict and the role of the government. Key texts were identified, appearing principally around central happenings and declarations, upheaval and heated debates.⁵⁶ For texts issued by the Uribe government, most of the official documents have been consulted through the official website of Álvaro Uribe Vélez⁵⁷, the historical archive of the Presidential Chamber⁵⁸, official websites of ministries. For Santos term, texts have been consulted primarily through the current, official website of the Presidential Chamber⁵⁹, and likewise from ministries. Where texts have been removed or unable to track down on official platforms, texts have been referred to in Colombian news media⁶⁰. This latter platform, including social media, is also consulted to refer to response in the political scene. Where the material is available in English, I will refer to these⁶¹. Otherwise, the original sources will be in Spanish with citations translated into English by me

⁵⁶ Some of these key texts articulate more radical happenings than others, but they are all seen to fulfil the criteria of having 1) clear articulations of identity and policy, 2) being widely read and/or attended to and 3) carrying formal political authority (primarily from being uttered by the president or members of the government).

⁵⁷ <http://www.alvarouribevelez.com.co/>

⁵⁸ <http://historico.presidencia.gov.co/>

⁵⁹ <http://es.presidencia.gov.co/>

⁶⁰ Where official speeches and quotes are rendered, I have quality tested and doubled checked with several sources.

⁶¹ These have been compared with official Spanish versions, as deviation in translation appears frequently.

(unless otherwise stated). When longer excerpts are highlighted from key texts, original quotations are listed in Appendix 3.

The chapter starts with an analysis of the representations that appears within the official discourse of the Uribe government. Key texts that have been submitted to a wider reading revolves around Uribe's election campaign, the inauguration to presidency, the reaction to the bombing of Club El Nogal, the launching of the Democratic Security agenda, declarations to the UN Assembly, the installation of the new Air Force Commander, speeches in Community Councils, to Congress and finally, declarations following the infamous False Positives scandal and the successful Operation Jaque. This part of the analysis demonstrates how basic constructions of the Self and the Other manifest in the discourse, and how discursive resources are applied in the framing of the most appropriate response to the conflict.

In the following of the chapter, the analysis centres on the change in political administration, investigating continuation and transformation in official representations. Key texts that are studied revolve around Santos' campaign and inauguration to presidency, the launching of the Democratic Prosperity agenda, the Victims' Law, the announcement of the official talks with the FARC, declarations in the National Conference on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and the re-election campaign and introduction to a second term in presidency. In this part of the analysis, I examine how president Santos moves to promote a new direction for the country, following the altered representations of the state responsibilities and the Other. As a last part, the analysis investigates how the dominant representations confront, challenge and respond to each other, throughout the political debate leading up to the plebiscite on the peace agreement in 2016. The analysis shows that the transformation in the articulation of 'otherness' has been decisive for the initiation and development of talks with the FARC. At the same time, the analysis also demonstrates how Santos has not been able to sufficiently install a mediated version of the discourse within the political elite.

In addition to the research question, the analysis has been aided by some sub-questions, as listed in the introduction: What identity is 'the state' and 'the FARC' given with the official representations of the conflict, from 2002-2016? How are the boundaries drawn between the self and the other, and what policies follow from the different levels of radicalness manifested in this relationship? And finally, what change permitted a political solution between the FARC and the Colombian government in 2016 and to what extent did the change in the official discourse stabilise around this end?

5.1 Restarting from zero: The emergence of ‘Uribismo’

In 2002 the Colombian people voted for ‘change’. A series of demanding peace negotiations with the FARC had eventually ceased under president Pastrana, and the popular support for negotiations had reached an all-time low. Álvaro Uribe Vélez, a former governor of Antioquia, had emerged as an independent candidate, after failing to guarantee party backing within the Liberal Party. Until this time, the traditional parties of liberals and conservatives had been ruling together for decades in government. Uribe’s missing name recognition (in comparison to his fellow candidates) and missing party affiliation, appeared as a bad starting point. But Uribe arrived with a strong message and was elected as president of Colombia in May 2002 with 53.4 percent of the votes (Uribe & Rincón, 2015, p. 27)⁶². Gaining majority in the first round, this was an extremely unusual result in the history of presidential elections.⁶³ Upon winning, Uribe set together a coalition of supporters in Congress, consisting of dissident liberals, conservatives and members of newly formed parties (Gray, 2014, p. 174). His message, as alluded in the quotations, was signalling a radical transformation in the official response to the conflict, which had earlier been marked by a recurring trend of (failing) negotiations with the armed groups. It was defined in clear, simple and concise lines what problems the country suffered from, *the violence and the corruption*, and how to meaningfully resolve these. In this sense, from the first day in government, the discourse started constructing a new identity, temporally divided from the ‘before’, the Other lines of governments that had not been capable of dealing with the problematic guerrilla groups. In the next sequences I examine on what this change implied, and how Uribe’s administration proceeded to represent itself in a particular manner, along with the opponent faced in the conflict.

In his election campaign, the former governor had launched his visions for the country in a ‘democratic manifesto’, a document with 100 points which he promised to implement if elected (A. Uribe Vélez, 2002). In the document, Uribe describes his dream of a better Colombia. In this, he represents a country where everybody can live in peace, protected by a state which enjoys legitimate authority and issues zero power to the violent (ibid.). The

⁶² This equvalated 5 862 655 votes, reflecting a low turn-out in a country of more than 40 million people at the time.

⁶³ While public resentment had increased with the negative development in the peace negotiations, the support for Uribe’s strong turn was nevertheless impressive. Just a few years earlier, the peace agenda of previous president Pastrana had been supported by large popular mobilisations, and 10 million votes in favour of the Mandate for Peace in 1997, obligating the government to pursue a peace policy (González Posso, 2004).

document launches two important ideas. One is the concept of the ‘Community State’ (el Estado Comunitario). This implies the construction of a state which will dedicate its resources to eradicating misery, establishing social equity and providing security. All this, most importantly, with an enlarged focus on *citizen participation*. A second concept that is brought to the fore, is the introduction of the ‘Democratic Security’ (la Seguridad Democrática). This was framework of a national plan that would later become key to the political project referred to as the ‘Uribismo’⁶⁴. The naming of the Democratic Security was followed by the consecutive vision:

Quotation 1: 26. ‘[A] Colombia without guerrillas and without paramilitaries. The legitimate authority of the state protects the citizens and deters the violent. It is the guarantee of citizen’s security during the conflict and after reaching peace’.

In this assertion, Uribe reinstates the authority of the state and the ensuing need to practice it. Where peace is the goal, as a decisive way of ensuring national order and security comes from the ability of the state to earn and practice authority. This authority, however, does not only link to political decision making. Increasingly, it is referred to the basic idea of *state monopoly of violence*, and the subsequent need to establish a stronger public force. In the sequel, the role of the soldier and the police, as an extension of the state, is commended:

Quotation 2: 28. ‘I will praise the profession of the soldier and the police. That the community values and respects them. Let them strive to deserve respect and admiration. (...) With more police and soldiers our public force will suffer fewer casualties, will be more respected and the town will live more calmly’.

In this statement, Uribe places significant faith in the security forces, but also expectations for their role in the society. They are seen as a crucial body of the state, that will depend upon popular support and *cooperation*. With this, he unites the man on the street with the police officer in a conjoint project to establish security and tranquillity⁶⁵:

Quotation 3: ‘We will all support the public force, basically with information. We will start with a million citizens. With local security fronts in neighbourhoods and in business. Surveillance networks on roads and in fields. All coordinated by the public force that, with this help, will be more effective and totally transparent. A million good citizens, lovers of tranquillity and promoters of coexistence’.

⁶⁴ In Colombia, the term ‘uribismo’ is often referring to the government coalition that was formed around the policies and political programs of ex-president Álvaro Uribe Vélez, and consecutively the popular support to these.

⁶⁵ The word ‘tranquilidad’ in Spanish (here translated to tranquillity) is a common word in Latin America and often links to *peace*, an untroubled state of mind.

The 'good citizens' are entrenched in Uribe's idea of a Community State, a new formulation of the boundaries between the state and the citizens. This idea is based on more participation of the people into the government's work, in the formulation of public tasks, the execution of these and in their monitoring. This concept of people's participation, which I will later analyse in more detail, is explained as a guarantee that resources arrive with the people, and do not get entangled in what Uribe repeatedly refers to as 'politicking'. In this sense, the authority of the state will not go unchecked, but is rather legitimised by the fact that the government commits to close dialogue with the people. Politicking, also understood as the excesses of legislative and executive powers, would be confronted by improving the efficiency of the state, and implementing austerity by for instance reducing the size of the Congress, from 266 members to 150, government benefits and salaries in the political sphere (C. E. El Tiempo, 2002).

In Uribe's campaign, the enhanced focus on state order and authority was represented as fair (even as desired by the people), and a natural and indispensable implication that followed from the contemporary Colombian scenario. This scenario was moulded by insecurity, violence and disorder, caused by a group of unlawful, whose existence was perceived as a challenge the democratic institutions. It is important to remember that Uribe, at this time, was speaking from a specific context where a third effort of official peace negotiations between the FARC and the Colombian government had broken down in January 2002, after various complications and FARC's brutal hijacking of an airplane, that left the government with little choice (González Posso, 2004). In addition, the scenario was also coloured by a peculiar international context. Following the monumental 9/11 attacks in the United States, Colombia's donor country and ally had considerably altered their foreign policy discourse and launched a 'global war on terrorism' (R. Jackson, 2005). In this context, the United States had also named the FARC as the most dangerous *terrorist group* in the Southern region, tapping on a new problem that went beyond their concern with the illegal drugs industry⁶⁶. While this time lap is not my object of analysis, it is reasonable to assume that this context expanded the space for critical interpretations of the adversary, whose reputation was no longer kept between the boundaries of the Colombian state.

With the new state formula proposed by Uribe, dialogue with violent groups would only follow from the abandonment of terrorism and the ceasing of hostilities⁶⁷. Drawing a figurative

⁶⁶ Refer to the information about 'Plan Colombia', included in the background section.

⁶⁷ During the previous negotiations lead by president Pastrana, a peace agreement had been searched amidst the continuation of violence, hostilities and lacking focus on disarmament, an action plan that received increasing dissatisfaction (González Posso, 2004)(González Posso, 2004).

line between the future and the past Colombian reality, it was stated that dialogue would *not* be welcomed if these were ultimately utilised by violent groups to upgrade and rearm: ‘I will ask for international mediation to seek dialogue with violent groups, provided that it begins with the abandonment of terrorism and cessation of hostilities’. In the search for peace, Uribe identifies *urgency* as required for the termination of hostilities, while *patience* is key for the elaboration of final agreements. Democracy was restated as the overall value to ensure protection and rights for all (that is, the ‘good citizen’).

With this, Uribe defines the priorities of the state, based on a logic that peace will follow from the elimination of hostilities. In the following, Uribe entrenches the role of *order* into the concept of democracy: ‘*The President will direct public order as appropriate in a democratic society were the public force respects the governors that have been popularly elected*’. This characteristic is justified, as the contemporary time has witnessed a transformation of violence, where political violence and terrorism has become identical. In the continuation, terrorism is identified as ‘*any act of violence for political or ideological reasons*’ and what the country needs, is an anti-terrorist statute that effectively can facilitate arrests, captures and raiding. This marked the start of an important change in government focus. Alluding to a security situation which was inherently critical, Uribe signalled the need for ‘public support’ in a project that would deter and battle those who threaten society.

5.2 Order and authority: Re-constructing the Self

Álvaro Uribe Vélez emerged with a promise to rule with a strong hand, and a big heart (‘*mano firme, corazón grande*’). In his address to the country, the newly elected president pledges to fight violence, drugs and corruption, yet reminding that the government cannot perform miracles over the next four years (but is determined to work tirelessly⁶⁸) (Á. Uribe Vélez, 2002). Uribe emphasises the origins of the republic, manifested by two important leaders. Through this, he sets the tone for the coming years:

Quotation 4: ‘Bolívar and Santander stand for the essence of our political identity as a nation. The first embodies the idea of order and authority: order, as an unavoidable premise of freedom; and authority, to make equality of opportunity possible. The second represents the rule of law which guarantees security and freedoms. Order, to gain freedom through the democratic authority of the law: This is the ethical and

⁶⁸ During the first years, one of Uribe's slogans was 'trabajar, trabajar, trabajar'.

political combination which sustains the historical continuity of our nation, and gives meaning to our institutions!’

With this, Uribe draws on the national heroes of the early nineteenth century, in his definition of the subjectivity of the nation and the most basic values it is founded upon. In the order of the subsequent sections, also visible in the quotation, it is given priority to Bolivar, with the elements of *authority* and *order*. Santander with the values of *law*, *freedom* and *peace* follow, but after the elementary establishment of the former.

These characteristics that are articulated into the representation of the most fundamental identity of the state, are also described as going through a moment of crisis. The country is allegedly plagued by low trust and solidarity, both between the citizens, and between the citizens and the state. People are less concerned with the fate of the community and continue to pursue their own interests at the expense of the common good, it is uttered in the text. This ‘decay’ of the state and the society is explained by a particular cause. Rather than being born ‘out of the nature of being a Colombian, which is both ‘civic-minded’ and humanitarian’, the reason is *solely* attributed to the evil and devastation brought by *violence*, political chicanery and corruption. Political chicanery and corruption signal a weakness inherent in the previous governments, the phenomenon of ‘violence’ is represented as an external problem which the state has not been able to put up with. It is a violence pursued by ‘violent organisations’ that feeds on the international business of ‘illegal drugs’, an industry that is maintained because of international demands, and which requires the international community to assume the responsibility it should. Otherwise, the conflict brought by drugs and violence will exceed the borders of Colombia and challenge the stabilisation of the whole region. While the national borders will be open to honest and good people, they will be closed for criminals. In this setting, the Colombian state, and the people, is considered a victim of something evil that does not belong to the Colombian society. Uribe’s response is simple. The Colombian state must depart from its recently weak past and restore *order* and *authority*:

Quotation 5: ‘So that the Liberator may rest in peace, let us restore order. Let unity return to the old New Granada, today fragmented into de facto republics of violent organizations. (...) May that Man of the Law inspire us to be a nation which obeys the law, and free us from the slavery of violence’

This order will also please the regional neighbours, as Colombia will take responsibility to prevent the situation from worsening. One condition for this order and authority to be able establish security, is that Colombians manage to cooperate under the law and find *unity*:

Quotation 6: ‘In obedience to the oath which I have just taken, which commits all my efforts and the very life which the Creator has given to me, I call on all the men and women of this country to seek again our common bond of unity, the law, democratic authority, of freedom and social justice, which we have lost in a moment of weakness in our history.’

Entering presidency, Uribe is thus constructing a clear problem, which is *violence*. While he cites ‘violent organisations’, ‘criminals’ and later defines what should be seen as ‘terrorism’, the Other that the good, honest Colombians differs from, is left without name. Nevertheless, the situation is represented in a way that it requires urgent, strict and unconventional measures. Starting to construct the state as a fair, democratic one that will transform itself into a Community State, but also efficient and authoritative, any act against it will be considered *terrorism*⁶⁹. With this, it starts to transpire who the Self is, and how this Self will extend its protection and services to the good citizen. On the other side, a strict line is starting to grow between the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’, and the state warns of severe consequences should you be detected on the ‘wrong side’. In this early construction, the identity of the Self and the Other appears as simple, binary oppositions, that are refined in relation to each other (see Tilly, 2002).

The election of Uribe and his hard-line offensive was met with a critical response by the FARC, who had tried to target the candidate during the election period, and launched a massive attack with exploding gas cylinders during the inauguration ceremony the 2 August 2002 (Bagley & Rosen, 2015; Forero, 2002a)⁷⁰. In return, the new president condemned the attack and four days after, announced a *state of unrest* (Decree 1837/2002) (Echavarría, 2013). This decree included the release of emergency measures and the legitimate, but exceptional, widening of the government’s powers. Among these were the issuing of additional taxes aimed to finance military build-up, the power to make arrests without warrants and authority to control radio and television lines if necessary (Forero, 2002b). It also included the establishment of special geographical zones, ‘Rehabilitation and Consolidation Zones’, where the military leaders enjoyed specific police and judicial powers, exceeding those of elected government officials (Jason Hagen, 2003). These areas allowed the military to put restrictions on movement, not least by foreigners and journalists. Most importantly, the ‘emergency state’ allowed Uribe,

⁶⁹ ‘When a democratic State provides effective guarantees, even if it comes to do so gradually, any violence against it is terrorism. We do not accept violence as a means of attack on the government, nor as a means to defend it. Both are terrorism.’

⁷⁰ The attack is indecisively referred to as one with mortal shells and gas cylinders transformed into bombs. See also covering of the event by various news sources, for instance:

<http://edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/americas/08/07/colombia.inauguration/>

as president of the state, the supreme commander and ‘first soldier of the nation’, to govern with increased authority and political leeway. This, in order to establish state command in the Colombian territory at long last.

5.3 War on terror: the construction of a ‘radical Other’

7. February 2003, six months after the presidential inauguration, the representation of a terrorist threat manifested with the material happening in Club El Nogal, where 36 persons were killed, and hundreds wounded. On this night, a car loaded with more than 200 kilos of explosives detonated in the third floor of the club’s parking centre, located in one of the most central and exclusive areas of Bogotá. Reading the publications by *El Colombiano* (Colombian daily newspaper), this was referred to as a ‘moment of truth’, which demonstrated that the FARC (assumed to be responsible, whilst not proven guilty), was capable of launching assaults *anywhere* (Marulanda, 2018).⁷¹ This time, it was the high society, the elite, that had been targeted, an event which was followed by widespread media attention, along with popular protests.

The following day, president Uribe condoled emotionally with the victims in a public declaration. Providing at the same time the official interpretation of the happening, Uribe referred to the dreadful attack that once again had been committed by those who were now exclusively referred to as *terrorists* (Á. Uribe Vélez, 2003). At this point, the FARC, in other words, assumes a clear role as the Other. Constructing the illogic linked to the phenomenon of terrorism, the president elaborated on the political decision that the government must take:

Quotation 7: ‘When terrorism is tolerated, the terrorism simply has strategic ups and downs, but it never disappears. The decision that Colombia has to take, is to defeat terrorism. Tonight, I again call on the Public Force and the DA’s Office to do a grand job and redouble their efforts.’

In the following, the president asserts that they, the government, will redouble their forces to capture not just a few, but *all* of the terrorists. In this effort, it was asked again that the

⁷¹ While the FARC was directly accused of standing behind the attack, these did not, nor anyone else, assume responsibility for the bombing in the aftermath (see for instance (Semana, 2003b). In 2017, however, the FARC has issued a public apology, after the case was treated in the Truth Commission (Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz, 2017; S. D. E. M. C. D. L. FARC-EP, 2017). While the FARC was directly accused of standing behind the attack, these did not, nor anyone else, assume responsibility for the bombing in the aftermath (see for instance (Semana, 2003b). In 2017, however, the FARC has issued a public apology, after the case was treated in the Truth Commission (Comisión Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz, 2017; S. D. E. M. C. D. L. FARC-EP, 2017).

Colombian people help and collaborate with the public forces, in ways of being outmost attentive and positioned to receive and *provide* information (ibid.). With this event, the official discourse was presenting the situation based on the existence of a *radical* Other, an existential *enemy* that could no longer be accepted:

Quotation 8: 'The country continues to be beaten by these groups. Today, more than ever, we should reiterate that one cannot play with terrorism. With terrorism, one cannot contemplate. Of the arrogance, the blindness of the terrorism, one cannot be considerate.'

In the excerpt, the identity of the other is constructed as irrational, dangerous and as something that requires unusual measures to be dealt with, common representations in the contemporary discourse on terrorism that has been seen in the United States (see for instance the study undertaken by Jackson, 2005). This link is reiterated when Uribe compares the responsible for the bombing of Club el Nogal with Iraqi terrorists, stating that the democratic world must also come to Colombia's rescue, with their superior technology, financial resources and transportation systems (ibid.). With this pledge, the government falls back on the role as a victim, but of a particular type of threat that could potentially hurt the strongest of the states. However, it also draws a boundary between Colombia and its international (democratic) counterparts, who leaves Colombia with a responsibility to deal with a problem that is partly produced by other countries' respective citizens. The international community, according to Uribe, has actually facilitated the terror, by receiving the illegal actors in their countries, keeping communication channels open and recognising the constructed enemy as legitimate interlocutors. At the same time, citizens have helped finance the illegal drugs business and institutions have facilitated with saving the black money in banks. Naming the disaster as a tragedy born out of the mixture of drugs and violence, the world should once and for all take up measures and grant real assistance to Colombia: '*Please: no more tolerance, no more complicity, no more softness with terrorism, what we need is to defeat it*' (ibid). In the aftermath, the terrorist attack has become an important reference for the government, representing the Other, the 'illogic' it operates with and what harm it is capable of doing. In a speech to the UN assembly the year after, the president represents the FARC with reference to this happening and their kidnapping practices, with intertextual references to the Holocaust: '*This group keeps hundreds of Colombians and some foreigners in captivity, most of them in concentration camps reminiscent of the Nazis*' (A. Uribe Vélez, 2004).

The bombing of Club El Nogal turned into an event that materialised the previous notion of terrorism and re-generated strong emotions within the public. These emotions were recognised and reiterated by the government. Through the character of Uribe, it was asked that despite the momentous pain, Colombians would refrain from giving in to the terrorism, represented inherently as diabolical. Instead, the government called for a strengthening of the 'moral resilience' that exists naturally within the Colombian society, and the increased determination to get rid of every single one of these evil actors that were the recipe for sorrow. While the use of 'terrorism' is nothing new, the ascription of this identity to the insurgency in Colombia, should be seen as a radical and political act (political, as any discursive construction of the Other would be within the official discourse). With this construction, comes also consequences for policy formulation and what is seen as possible and legitimate on one hand, and impossible and destructive on the other. For one, the contemporary conception of terrorism links to a certain 'state of emergency' that is often characterised by some sort of collective fear. The terrorist is represented as someone that is willing to and capable of potentially destroying everything that the people holds dear, including, in the Colombian situation, the national pride of the long democratic system. This existential threat further involves a state of exception, a legitimate escape from conventional means, if this is necessary in the fight back on the terror. In the end, however, it is narrated that the 'good' will conquer:

Quotation 9: 'We have been marked by terrorists for years, they have just done this great harm to us, but if we persist in the determination, if we persist in the action, if we persist despite the pain and bewilderment, it will have to be repeated what always happens for the good of the people: the crime does a lot of damage, but it does not triumph, the triumph will finally be that of the democracy, of the legal order of the good people. (...) To my compatriots, in the midst of the pain, a voice of encouragement. Colombia is at the only ideal moment to defeat terrorism (...) Let us take the definitive path of defeating terrorism.'

As discussed in theory section 2.2., this representation is based upon a construction of 'good' and 'evil' as binary oppositions, anchor points of the official discourse that started evolving. The government separates strictly between the 'good', the desired citizen, and the 'bad', who is inherently disturbing the order and the equilibrium of the society. In the battle against terrorism, it is distinguished strictly between 'terrorists' and 'those who are not'. This very simplistic dualism leaves no space for finding oneself between these categories, as those who are not with the government, is considered a potential ally of the 'bad' given the delicate security situation. (well-intentioned vs those who are not). The representations, as illustrated in the quotation, are furthered included in a common narrative that the 'good' will eventually, and

inevitably, conquer the ‘bad’ if people have faith in the counter-measures. In addition, Uribe cleverly argues that the country is now fit to take up the struggle, but that this will require an ‘all or nothing’ strategy, and that once bordered, it will be ‘no way back’. While this makes exceptional policy turns reasonable and rational in the confrontation with the enemy, it is inherently dependent upon a significant degree of consensus among the political and popular audience, in their perception of the enemy. As Jackson (2005, p.1) states, ‘*for a government to commit enormous amounts of public resources and risk the lives of its citizens in a military conflict, it must persuade society that such an undertaking is necessary, desirable and achievable*’. This process is, as explained the previous chapters, inherently based in language. What is important to remember in the Colombian situation, is that Álvaro Uribe was elected president on his hard-line agenda, with an impressive backing in the electorate. According to measures of popular support gathered by the Gallup polls, Uribe’s popularity counted as much as 69 percent in the initiation as president, and increased to 79 percent at the end of his first term, in 2006 (Gómez-Giraldo, 2013, p. 16; J. I. B. Vélez, 2015b, p. 28). In the following years, it was measured 66 percent again in 2006, 85 percent in 2008 after a big military operation and ending on 75 percent in 2010 (ibid). While it is not in my stated task to analyse the discourses reflected in the wider audience, it is reasonable to assume that Uribe’s representation of the conflict enjoyed a noteworthy level of support and acceptance. This allowed the government to start introducing exceptional measures, including ‘exceptions’ from the democratic foundational norms (although implicitly introduced). After the attack on Club El Nogal, Uribe stated that he would financially support the common fund established by the minister of defence and the mayor of Bogotá, for the support of those who provide useful information.

In 2003, in a national speech during the possession of a new Air Force commander, he stated what should be seen as a nodal point in the discourse: ‘*This is not a war. This is not a conflict. This is a democracy ‘garantista’⁷² at the service of 44 million citizens, which is challenged by some rich terrorists*’ (Semana, 2003a).⁷³

⁷² While the meaning of this is diffuse, it most likely refers to a rights-based democracy, a system of guarantees and protection.

⁷³ According to one of my interviewees (R1 anonymised, the Truth Commission), Uribe managed to install a way of viewing the conflict, which had not existed before, saying that: there is no conflict. In the following the respondent noted: ‘Uribe managed to erase other actors that were also part of the conflict, and everything was about the FARC. Paramilitaries turned into being a logic response, an obligated response, in the fight against terrorism. They passed as heroes’ (my translation, transcript available upon request).

5.4 Formulating policy response: ‘Democratic Security’

Shortly after his assignment to the presidency, Uribe launched his project *Democratic Security Policy and Defence policy* (‘Política de Defensa y Seguridad Democrática’, referred to by its short name ‘Democratic Security’ or ‘DSP’). This political project was linked directly to the security concerns in the country and was set up to establish guarantees for safety. Reacting to the limitations of the former government and the re-defined violence, this text can be seen as a ‘monument’⁷⁴ that informed the course of the government over eight years. Explained and integrated in the National Plan for Development (‘Towards a Community State’), the democratic security is a product of defence, designed to protect democracy from the immense threat posed by ‘internal insecurity’ (Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2003, 2007). *Security* is represented as a democratic value and peace further depends on its preservation (Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2007, p. 19-21). The democratic security is a political project that commit to the *destruction* of the violent. It is a policy set to recover popular freedom, and an instrument to generate confidence in the government.

The DSP issues an aim to re-insert internal control and order, to ensure the protection of the people against terrorists and perpetrators of violence (within a framework of the ‘rule of law’). In general, the platform sets to establish a political and legal framework that makes it *too costly* and *painful* for the guerrilla groups, like the FARC, to continue fighting. Ultimately, the goal was consequently to *force* the groups into negotiations. Within this agenda, Uribe reinstated and formalised the idea that *security* would be followed by *peace and freedom*. The concept of ‘democratic security’ also worked as a political means to legitimise a security policy where the state maintains integrity and legitimacy to adopt harsh measures to deal with the Other, the evil terrorists, those exercising violence and those (usually the same) involved in the illegal narco-trafficking. The main strategic objectives of the plan, formally released as a policy document in June 2003, were 1) the consolidation of state control throughout Colombia, 2) the protection of the population, 3) the elimination of the illegal drugs trade in Colombia, 4) the maintenance of a deterrent capability, and 5) transparent and efficient management of resources (Ministerio de Defensa & Presidencia de la República, 2003).

⁷⁴ ‘Monuments’ are used by Dunn and Neumann (2016, p. 93) as central texts, appearing as anchor points in the discourse, or text presented at a crossroads. These texts are often mentioned in secondary literature, making them easier to identify.

The preface of DSP includes an address to the country, written by Álvaro Uribe Vélez and Minister of Defence, Marta Lucía Ramírez de Rincón. These texts are good representations of the general discourse adopted in the government plan. In his opening letter, Uribe starts with the following: '*Recover order and security - a cardinal requirement for the effective exercise of freedoms and human rights - is a central concern of this Government*' (Ministerio de Defensa & Presidencia de la República, 2003). Allegedly, the Democratic Security is what is needed in order to guarantee for the protection of the citizens and the motive for the presentations is to communicate the contents of the plan so that the citizens know, but also *cooperate* and *participate* in implementing it. In the statement, *terrorism* is mentioned continuously as the main threat, and the direct opposite of the democratic politics:

Quotation 10: 'The antipode of democratic politics is terrorism, which seeks to impose its will on others by the means of violence, at the cost of the lives of thousands of civilians. This is what we have seen in the attacks of the Clun El Nogal in Bogotá and Neiva (...). There can only be one answer to terrorism: defeat it. Those who persist using this criminal practice will bear the full weight of the law.'

In these phrases, the Other is clearly represented as a radical enemy, which must be conquered. Since it is considered such an existential threat, no other options to deal with terrorism exist, and extermination by force is the only viable response. In the following phrases, this is elaborated on:

Quotation 11: The Colombians will not give in to that threat. We are going to defeat it with the collaboration of all citizens. The key concept here is solidarity. Solidarity among citizens and solidarity with the Public Force. This principle, essential in the text of our Constitution, is fundamental for coexistence, for the growing consolidation in the deep integration of the Colombian people. The massive response of the population to cooperation within the institutional framework has demonstrated the determination of the Colombian people to end terrorism.

With this, Uribe constructs the terrorist threat as a concern and responsibility of *all*, that is the good citizens, the authorities, the public forces and the law, to deal with. *The (good) people* must assume an active part in the project to establish security, a state that is fundamental for democracy to flourish. As Minister of Defence, Marta Lucía Ramírez de Rincón, argues in the policy paper, this marks a radical change from the past, when the matter of security has been considered the problem and the responsibility of the military forces and the national police. In this new context, security is not achieved only with the admired effort done by the public force, but requires the mobilisation of the entire state, being that of all the Colombians. According to Uribe, the panacea is a strong state structure, supported by the solidarity of the citizen, which

will guarantee the rule of law and respect for freedom and rights. Ultimately, Uribe demands an army of the Colombian, good people, to fight together against a common threat, which is the evil of terrorism. In this fight, solidarity, such as patriotic sentiment, is key to uphold unity. In the representations of the threatening Other as someone who inherently endanger the nation, the government takes on a firm (and exceptional) strategy to attend to the concern, simultaneously reproducing its own role as the *protector* of the people. Since terrorism is acknowledged as *the* threat to society and its democratic institutions, the mere strengthening of the armed forces will not be sufficient. Instead, devotion and dedication are required by all those who are considered a part of the democratic state. Extending the fight against terrorism to the society, the government consequently calls for greater collaboration between the citizenry and the military. With this, the ‘us’ against ‘the terrorism’ is also expanded and reiterated, a discursive and powerful act which obligates the citizens to be aware of its position, being either ‘with us or against us’ (i.e. the government).

In the Democratic Security, the public force is considered a fundamental part of, and to some extent equated with, the democratic security. In the extension, the people are expected to play along on this team, as the contrary act will form an expression of sympathy with the terrorists, and ultimately be dangerous for the security of the individual: *‘I have said it repeatedly: whoever makes the decision to harbour terrorism ends up being a victim of terrorism’* (Ministerio de Defensa & Presidencia de la República, 2003, p. 6). Again, this terrorism is not seen as a fundamental part of Colombia, but rather a *global problem*, as articulated in the American ‘war on terror’ discourse: *‘To defeat terrorism there is no sovereignty of nations, but rather democratic sovereignty. The fight is one for the sovereignty of states and democratic nations, against the sovereignty of terrorism. The fight is everyone’s, against terrorism’*. In this speech, not only the nation, but the world, is essentially divided into two groups; the moral and respectable ones that pursue the good intentions and the basic interests of the society, and the depraved and immoral ones, who are ultimately terrorists if they oppose the state legitimacy with violence. The latter group is written out of society, as an unlawful deviant case. The former group is included the broader conception of the Self, but this representation does mutually include an aspect of insecurity, as being part of the ‘in-group’ relies on dedicated cooperation with the government. In the next step, Uribe is reiterating the link between the terrorists and the narco-traffickers, implicitly engaging the Plan Colombia, the massive U.S. aid program established to deal with the illegal drugs industry, which for long has trafficked to the United States.

In DSP, the Uribe administration manages to redefine the government and the nation, with an eye to the divide between the Self and the Other (or the ‘us’ versus ‘the other’). The self is expanded to include not only good citizens, but also ‘good nations’, being those united in a common principle of democracy. Along with the arguments to commit to a military solution, the government also offers the violent actors the option to surrender and to bend before law. In this case, the government will generously welcome those who agree to demobilise (and pursue their rightful sentenced), back into society and guarantee protection and rights as long that this is deserved. Particularly, this speaks to the young people, the peasants, that allegedly have been forced and alternatively *tricked into* joining the violent groups. In this case, Uribe seems to distinguish between the young Colombians that have either not been able to defend themselves or have not known their own good, and the epicentre of the terrorism groups, the leaders, who have committed to abuse to strengthen their army. Further, Uribe reiterates that those who maintain viable political ideas that they need to defend, should reject the path of violence and in return, move quickly to take the opportunity for a peace agreement that later will guarantee rights to participate in democracy (ibid., p. 7). On the contrary (while presenting this chance to surrender and come back to society), this alludes that those who do not take this opportunity, are *not* considered to be worthy actors, nor holders of moral and worthy political ideas. In the end of the opening letter, Uribe reminds that this threat constructs a dangerous and endless fight, but one that needs to be fought out: ‘*We will not rest until we make the Democratic Security a reality for all Colombians*’ (ibid.). With this plan, Uribe a specific perception of the conflict was formalised, and so-forth the policy and security measures that would rightly follow.

In the official discourse manoeuvred by Uribe, the variations in the Self vs the Other is constituted through relations of sameness and differentness. These processes of linking and differentiating may be summarised in simplified manner, as ‘Figure 3’ shows:

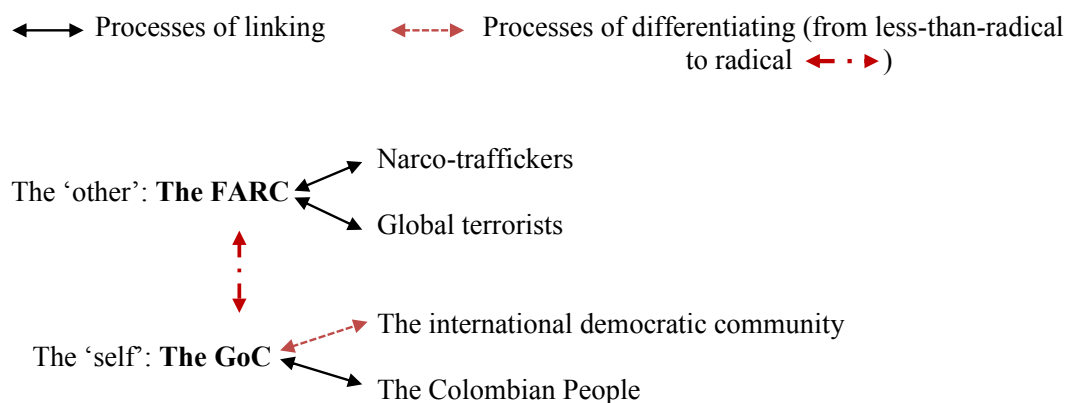


Figure 3: Linking and differentiating identities in the official discourse of 2003

In the formulation of these binary identities of the Self and the Other, the latter is represented as non-democratic, outsiders, immoral, inhumane, violent, barbarous and criminal, linked with identities of narco-traffickers and global terrorists. The self is on the other hand represented as the democratic, fair, lawful, altruistic, honest, respectable, orderly and solidary, linked and extended to the Colombian people (those who conform with these identities), and *partly* the international community. In the construction of the Other, Uribe equals the 'FARC subject' with transnational terrorist organisations, constructing difference in spatiality. Linking the national threat to a global concern of terrorism, with the logic that 'terrorism has no borders', he also attaches responsibility to the international arena, the democratic fellows, to come Colombia to rescue. It is also important to note that Uribe plays on the similar identity of democracy, while he simultaneously differentiates between Colombia and the developed countries in the international community. In this sense, the discourse constructs the democratic counterparts as linked to the self, but nevertheless also differentiated as some kind of an Other. For one, the Uribe administration blames these states for not taking responsibility to fight the *common* threat of terrorism. Within this, it is formulated that Colombia, *inferior to its counterparts*, needs the developed equipment that these other states possess, in order to deal efficiently with the problem. Second, Uribe partly blames the international community for the terrorist problem that is threatening to destroy the Colombian values. This is argued, as the world community contributes to maintaining the illegal drugs business, allowing terrorists to travel, to build networks and facilitating the banking and laundering of their money. In this representation of the Self, some differentiation is articulated in both temporality and space.

While Uribe considers Colombia a part of the democratic ‘league’, he also represents Colombia as less equipped with resources to fight the war. This, however, does not translate into unwillingness to act, and Colombia is rather represented as *more* dutiful and benevolent than its counterpart, dedicating as much efforts as possible to the problem. While the international society fails to live up to its duties, the ethical responsibility of the democratic community as a whole is nevertheless represented as equal, and the FARC transcends borders and constitute part of a ‘global threat’.

In the representation of the Self, ‘the good force in the battle against the evil’, the extension of the responsibilities to the public comes with some implications. While the people are urged to play along with the government as a united force, the representation of civilians as non-political and innocent partly vanishes, as these are forced to take an active political choice to conform with the government’s vision or not. In the case of not complying, these subjects are automatically transferred into the group of ‘otherness’ and no longer eligible for protection by the government. This link is important, as a means to unify the people in the common struggle and limit social protest. At the same time, the government’s self is not completely equated with the people, as the authorities maintain a strict, commanding function, dedicated to enforcing laws. The government is represented as a paternalistic decision-maker, but fair and legitimate, following the construction of the Community State. In the event that the constructed threat is accepted within the audience and the official political space (which was much the case in the contemporary society under Uribe), this invest significant *power* in the body that seeks to address the concern and undertake immediate actions. As Hansen notes, it also invests significant *responsibility* to do so, as mobilisations of power and responsibility are profoundly linked: ‘the construction of something as so threatening as to warrant decisive action is followed by responsibility for answering those threats’ (Hansen, 2006, p. 35). Further, this may turn into a lock-in effect of the discourse, where it becomes hard for the politicians to turn their backs on the represented threat, which inherently plays with the security of the nation once this has been placed on the agenda. In the former case, this would require an official re-articulation of the situation, to one where the threat was no longer a danger of security.

5.5 Dealing with the consequences of a ‘radical other’

As others have stated, one of the very real material consequences of the DSP, was the suspension of law in the name of sovereignty (Echavarría, 2013, p. 126; Londoño Mora, 2012).

While discretely wrapped in the texts, the declaration of an impending threat to the freedom of democracy was something that required unconventional, imaginative and spontaneous actions (values reflected in the presidential inauguration speech by Uribe, 2002). As a consequence, the Uribe administration pushed for a reorganisation of the armed forces. New battle units were formed, advanced technology requested and adopted, and in total, the government increased the personnel in the armed forces with 30,000 and the police by 10,000 (Gray, 2014, p. 176).⁷⁵ These types of actions would also have implications. In the DSP, Uribe touch upon press freedom and states the following:

Quotation 12: ‘Colombia has always been an example in Latin America for the press freedom. It has never occurred to this government to restrict this right through imposition of exceptional or permanent regulations. We only ask that journalists, like all citizens, act responsibly when it comes to disclosing information that may endanger security of all’

Drawing an honourable picture of the democratic rights that Colombia for century has provided, distinguishing it from most of its regional neighbours, this last request still leaves some uncertainty on what constitutes the meaning of ‘acting responsibly’ when releasing information that may potentially put security, or the state project, at risk. In the following, the president elaborates that the public force plays a crucial role in the maintenance of protection, and that it cannot in any way be equated with the violent groups which it battles on behalf of the Colombian society. In this, it is key that this force is left with space to fulfil its tasks: ‘*The legitimacy of our institutions depends on our determination to fight against any organization, group or person that threatens the security of citizens, institutions and democracy*’ (Ministerio de Defensa & Presidencia de la República, 2003, p. 6). This implicit link brings to the fore the problem of issuing critique that may potentially hurt the institutions or hinder them in their work.

Since the launch of the democratic security, these necessary restrictions have had important consequences. Making the boundary between the good and the evil excluding, in the sense that any non-compliance and non-cooperation with the state would be considered a step in the ‘wrong’ direction, this also introduces an element of insecurity. As we have seen, the construction of a radical enemy creates a space of insecurity, which opens for the possibility of undertaking immediate emergency responses. This leaves the politicians in an unusual position, where they are permitted to go beyond quotidian norms (suspending for instance transparency,

⁷⁵ At the time, Colombia's military grew to become the largest in the region, after Brazil (Gray, 2014).

freedom of speech, civil rights) and make decisions without consulting (as would be too time consuming in an emergency setting). To step beyond what is considered ‘responsible’ and good behaviour of citizens is dangerous, if one risks being linked with the enemy who is designated a death sentence. The adoption of exceptional means has been communicated and defended on various occasions. In November 2003, Uribe expressed the following in a speech to the UN assembly: *‘At present, we are processing a Constitutional amendment to allow the public force to proceed with specialized personnel, in cases of terrorism, to capture, search and make interceptions’*.

Following the success of the strong discourse of the democratic security discipline, the Uribe administration (mostly Uribe himself) were given authority to define not only what was terrorism, but also what or whom were ‘good’ or ‘bad’. This created categories such as ‘civil terrorists’, ‘enemies of the motherland’, and ‘leaders of the intellectual block’ of the FARC, stamps which were often attached to those making an appearance in the public, but with the ‘wrong’ motivations (Sierra, 2015). In other words, the officials would turn to discrediting those who did not comply with the state narrative. One example is the critique of the government from human rights organisations, particularly one report which was generated with the support of 80 social organisations and NGOs (Plataforma Colombiana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo, 2003). In response, Uribe went hard out on the organisation, expressing the dejection that every time Colombia would pass a policy of security to break down the terrorism, the terrorists send their messengers to speak about human rights (Sierra, 2015, p. 85). This was also reiterated in Uribe’s participation in the installation of the new air force commander, where he stated: *‘I also observe the writers and the politically motivated that ultimately serve terrorism and that hides cowardly behind the banners of human rights’* (Semana, 2003a). From this, the president continues:

Quotation 13: ‘Our public force never has even the least inclination to equate with terrorists in their contempt for the human rights. For this reason, while the FARC and the terrorism that accompanies the group, while the terrorist organization every day violates the human rights, the politically motivated sector of human rights goes out to defend the FARC under the pretext of defending human rights.’

When Uribe refers to the nation, he presents a chance to be part of a society and a state that will win the fight against the terrorism. On the contrary, the previous articulations also suggest how the turn down of the dismissal of this opportunity will be interpreted. Alluding that any scholar or journalist who hurts the national institutions by denouncing or publishing disagreements with the actions taken by the state, is essentially lying. The same goes for those who doubts the role

of the public forces in the fight against terrorism. Through the articulation of the strong divide between the good and the evil, the danger is that anyone who does not comply with how one should live in the society, turns into an enemy of the state. In other words, less space is left for questioning and disconformity, actions which would disturb the fight against the terrorism.

Some claim that Uribe, in effect, played a central role in the darkest of events that happened during his presidency. These allegations range from being involved in the mafia's infiltration in the political apparatus, problems of corruption, cooperating with the paramilitary groups, and conducting violations of human rights, the last which has been discussed in the International Criminal Court (Binetti, 2016). When civil society or human rights organisations made allegations of authoritative practices by the state, the president, as we have seen, responded by accusing by name, or in general terms, these groups of conspiring with terrorism. These accusations were often issued through radio or television, reaching a big audience. In the following, many of those targeted by the government would report threats and attacks, and some even ended up killed⁷⁶. It is not my task to investigate these many allegations, it is still interesting to study the official representations of the unprecedented situation, and the represented threat of anyone who could potentially reside on the same side as the enemy. For one, the official naming and framing of specific individuals as 'traitors' or 'guerrilla members' puts them in a vulnerable position, prone to targeting by those who follows Uribe, even if such actions are not 'ordered' by the president himself. Secondly, the discourse creates a certain space for the state to issue these declarations, and actions of 'emergency', which would not be subject to the same investigation or transparency as in the 'status quo' democracy. Rather, the resilience of the terrorist representation seems to empower the authority and shield from certain types of criticism. By constructing a clear enemy and applying a narrow concept of national identity, the government is able to enforce unity and marginalise protest. This dynamic translates into a certain discursive *hegemony*, partly established through powerful and accepted representations, but also maintained through indirect enforcement of cooperation and support.

The way the Uribe administration managed the media, effectively manipulating their way of distributing information to the citizens, and practising 'soft censorship'⁷⁷ has affected the discursive landscape. While private news channels were vulnerable to financial regulations

⁷⁶During Uribe's term as president, the organisation Human Rights First reported and documented 32 cases of what was deemed 'unfounded prosecutions' of human rights defenders (Hudson, 2009).

⁷⁷ This refers to practices where the government use financial capital to manipulate the news covering. It may also include the boycotting of the government, of those channels that are reoccurring critical of the political administration, or paying journalists to cover one case in a biased way. The general effect is usually that the government manages to neutralise whatever type of critical expression.

and inducements by the government⁷⁸, the president made unusual presence through the radio, one of the principal mediums of communication and information in Colombia⁷⁹. This became the government's favourite means to approach the citizens, in real time, and much of the radio interviews were ordered by the government, rather than requested by the individual radio journalists (J. I. B. Vélez, 2015b). However, the general effect was that the government seemed available, close to the people and hard-working, as Uribe would address the country both early in the morning and late in the evening.

5.5.1 Accommodating US aid in the battle against the FARC

'Plan Colombia' was signed into law in year 2000. Set to counter the narcotics production in the country, this initiative directed billions of dollars in aid from Washington DC to Bogotá in what was conventionally called a 'war on drugs'. This bilateral cooperation followed from the deep problems that had emerged from the expansion of coca cultivation in the 1970s, which later put Colombia on the map for being the primary producer of this illegal drug (Bagley & Rosen, 2015, p. ix). When the Al-Qaeda terrorist attack struck the United States in September 2001 and the US foreign policy was altered under the launching of the 'global war on terrorism' however, opportunities arose for tapping yet another 'common problem'. 'Terrorism' had emerged as an established threat in the international discursive terrain and allowed for linking, to the extent that it even facilitated the subordination of the 'war on drugs' under the 'war on terrorism' (in some, but not all instance). In extension, Uribe started using the label of 'narco-terrorism' to describe the FARC, which was instantly linked to the illegal drugs production (Rosen, 2014).⁸⁰ According to Bruce and Rosen (2015), this discourse arrived in Washington and started altering their policies towards Colombia, as illustrated by the cited declaration of Thomas Shannon, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State:

'U.S. recognition of such factors as the moribund nature of Colombia's peace process, the emergence of the revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) as a narco-terrorist organization, the clear rejection

⁷⁸ Or owned by urban elites, such as El Tiempo that was owned by the Santos family also when Juan Manuel Santos served as defence minister under Uribe.

⁷⁹ The popularity of the radio is linked with its availability and the fact that it is free, an essential precondition for the massive poor areas of the country.

⁸⁰ Many has however criticised and disputed the links of the FARC to the illegal drugs cultivation and production, claiming that the group was primarily taken on an authoritative role of taxing coca, or in many instances, not even involved in this, but on the contrary advocating for its eradication (see for instance statements by the UNDCP in Villar & Cottle, 2014, p. 94).

of the FARC by the Colombian people (...) prompted a “fundamental shift” in U.S. policy towards Colombia’ (p.xi).

Together with the official discourse articulated by the Uribe administration, Plan Colombia was also partaker in reducing the conflict to a problem of terrorism. Through official articulations the plan reiterated the problem that a group of *extremist terrorists* presented (the FARC primarily, according to the Colombian government). This way of naming the problem and selecting *one* narrative, worked to obscure the historically contingent development, and the political, social and economic motivations behind the insurgency formations. Rather than stating the contrafactual, for instance the history of inequality, exclusion and forceful securing of political and financial power, problem solving mechanisms were developed to cut off the criminal production of drugs and the violence produced by terrorism. In both instances this involved, mostly, policies of *elimination*.⁸¹

5.6 Uribe’s successful communication with the audience: Towards a Community State

Arguing that President Uribe managed to define the official discourse through clever discursive entrepreneurship, I find it relevant to dwell with the character of Uribe, assuming the role as president. During the presidential campaign, Uribe entered the debate with a dedication to do away with political chicanery, corruption and violence, and instead invest significantly in society. The former was expressed repeatedly in the campaign, identifying a problem that, from how it was represented, belonged to the *modus operandi* of the past governments. While the concern with corruption and distrust is nothing new in a Colombian presidential campaign, Uribe’s focus on the inherently immoral aspect of political chicanery appeared this time in a different outfit. Much of this can be seen to run from what Uribe represents as his personal ties to the mountains, the countryside, the horse breeding industry and the church, traditional features that run close to many Colombians’ hearts. Representing something different than the urban, educated and industrial elite, traditionally seen in the presidential ruling lines, Uribe has

⁸¹ Counter-measures to terrorism is in itself normally perceived as legitimate and necessary. Terrorism is a means of war that goes against International humanitarian law (IHL), partly because it usually targets civilian people (ICRC, n.d.). The problem however emerges as the Colombian state military, and its para-sections, also have committed to similar tactics (like in the false positives). Reframing the conflict as a ‘war on terror’ therefore becomes problematic, as the history of violence by the state is somehow erased in comparison to the illegitimate tactics of the guerrillas, even when these are common on both sides of the conflict.

managed to establish himself as an honest leader, far from a product of clientelism, as he has climbed the ladder based on popular elections⁸². In his inauguration speech, he rounds off by reiterating his bonds to the motherland (*la patria*, repeatedly referred to during his speeches), the people and the religious figures, who ultimately have a finger in the play: *'I come from a mountain which taught me to love it intensely, so that I could love all Colombia in the same way. My friends up there, most of them farmers, want me to keep my eyes on Colombia'* and *'may our love for our country be the flame of our Lord and the Virgin to guide me on the right course to steer. To overcome human vanity, and to set wrongs right'*. Through various representations, Uribe managed to establish a direct link to the 'ordinary' and traditional people of Colombia, set to represent a democratic government with authority, but also one that is not separated from the public. Drawing continuous references to the family, the father figure (as the state) and the church, the state is presented as the strict, but fair adult that knows the needs of the people and is authorised (and equipped) to safeguard their rights and their security: *'The father of a family who sets a bad example, spreads authority over his children in a barren desert. To control the violent ones, the State has to set an example, to defeat the politicking and the corruption'* (A. Uribe Vélez, 2002). In the end, he is represented as *hardworking*, an important feature that was later identified as one of Uribe's main characteristics, and a powerful tool playing into the credibility of the persona (note the rhetorical *ethos*). But Uribe also presents himself as a fighter: *'In the presidency, I will be the first soldier of the nation, dedicated day and night to recover the tranquillity of all Colombians'* (ibid.).

These personal traits are not insignificant. For one, in the sense that they include in the discursive resources that an agent applies in the effort to alter the discourse in one direction or another. But at the same time, these representations of the state leader are also important as they are often equated with representations of the government or the state. Uribe represented himself as efficient, hard-working and with authority. He also managed to paint a picture of the Colombian nation as one founded in loyalty, and united against *traitors*, the terrorists, that had captured the liberty of the citizens. As I will explain later, this is evident during Uribe's presidency, both because his way of seeing the world is manifested to an extent that it gains *discursive hegemony*, but also because this way to hegemony is facilitated by clever framing of the situation, which opens up for the execution of some forms of censorship. In the discourse, Uribe represents security as a fundamental part of democracy, and henceforth the demand for security as something which is passed by the society as a whole. In response, Uribe manifests

⁸² Whether this representation builds rightly on what has been the case or not, is not in my task to establish.

himself as a patron, a benefactor, who in line with public want and need, will guarantee tranquillity and order:

Quotation 14: ‘A whole nation is crying out for respite and security. No crime can be justified, directly or otherwise. No kidnap can be explained away by political doctrine. I understand the grief of the mother, the orphan and the displaced. As I wake every morning, I will search my soul to make sure that the acts of authority which I undertake will arise from the purest of intentions and will be performed in the noblest of ways. I will support and sympathise with the forces of law and order, and we will encourage our millions of civilians to join us in assisting them.’

Along with the hard-line military strategy of Uribe, one of the most mentioned features of this government is the dedication to the community councils (‘los Consejos Comunales’). These were set in motion the same day that Uribe got to power, the 7. August 2002, and through his two terms, president Uribe organised 276 councils, all over the country (Binetti, 2016; J. I. B. Vélez, 2015b, p. 38). The program sought to generate spaces of interaction and permanent dialogue between the citizens and the national government, with the objective of working actively to resolve problems, needs and enquiries. This, at the same time of increasing transparency and participation, according to government’s descriptions (J. I. B. Vélez, 2015b). The initiative was allegedly developed with the motive of working *for* the people, but above all, *with* the people⁸³. Moreover, the practice may be seen as one of the prime communications strategies that was used, in the effort to build legitimacy, relations with the people and transmit the important messages of the state. The president was able to show his many facets, those being the professor, the expert, the politician, the entertainer and the citizen. Maintaining impressive skills of communicating in a language close to the people, Uribe transmitted his messages in a simple and pedagogical tone. This set him apart from the traditionally ‘distanced’, elitist president that many had been accustomed to. Different from the norm, Uribe gave the appearance of enjoying mingling with the people, and often appeared dressed as a countryside fellow, speaking with an ‘everyday language’. With this, he constructed the image of being a ‘friendly’ leader, that could indeed ‘be touched’. As Binetti notes, this, including the community councils, turned out to be a valuable tool and indeed *indispensable* for the high popularity of the government (and the state leader) over the two consecutive terms.

The committed practice of ex-president Uribe’s community councils constitutes an interesting feature that has not before been instituted a viable element in the Colombian political

⁸³ ‘The Community State has one objective: ‘that the resources of the state serve the interest of the community, through equity. And it has a means: that the community participates extensively in the undertaking, execution and supervision of the state’s decisions, to guarantee transparency’ (Página Oficial de Álvaro Uribe Vélez, n.d.)

scene. This effort and mission to directly include the communities, respond to problems and issue solutions in person, has transmitted perceptions of responsiveness and effectiveness. On the other hand, the discursive practice has also articulated a specific relation to the people and a type of democracy, that signals less distance between the elite and the public, which has been the status quo in history. Committed to *dialogue* with the Colombian public, this practice formed part of the stated definition of the government as an ‘Estado Comunitario’ (a ‘community state’), which allegedly based much of its decisions on popular participation.

While Uribe’s presidential character deviated from that of the previous presidents, mostly representing the urban elite, his policies did not destroy the old order of exclusion, polarisation and different types of inequalities. His government kept following the old order, but this time with a renewed ‘politics of contact’, which made the administration more visible, more intimate and more human, playing on strong emotions (J. I. B. Vélez, 2015b). The grand reforms, however, were left in silence. The capability to connect with the people and reason in plenum, however invested important power to win battles in the name of the common want and need. At the same time, the government was able to articulate fears, uncertainties and expectations of broad sectors directly to the people and gain social consent under an overarching interrogation alluding ‘on what side do find yourself on? In many ways, Uribe has then managed to *simplify* the problems of the country, by repeating principle themes and omitting others. The face-to-face tactic has proven exceptionally efficient.

5.7 Peace by military force

In 2005, the official discourse was persistent in its representation of the terrorist threat as the most damaging for the society and the nation. This, whether the root of problems in the Amazonas, for tourism, investment, agriculture, public order and so forth, it is evident in all Community Council speeches, rendered in the official archival site for presidential speeches (Presidencia de la República, 2005). Persistently, the idea of the problem which guides the policy prospects, is that peace and prosperity will rightly follow from military assurance of order and security. Putting security first, democracy will be consolidated with the help of the people, and God. In a council in Chocó, the president refers to the local ‘difficulties in public order’ and assures that ‘*with the help of God, the difficulties will fortify our will to beat the violent*’ (Á. Uribe Vélez, 2005). Again, the boundary is drawn between the past and the present Self, expressing that for forty years, the political *will* to get rid of the terrorism was not present

in the country, and terrorism was left part of the society. On the contrary, this does not represent the current government, which will, for the good of Colombia, relieve the Colombian people from the ‘nightmare’ of terrorism (ibid.). In the following it is reasoned:

Quotation 15: ‘All these groups have been offered the possibility of a dialogue starting from the cessation of hostilities. Paramilitary groups, those who comply with the cessation of hostilities are respected, but the order has been very simple in the private and in the public: Those who do not comply, are put in jail or removed. There is no hesitation, that’s how clear it is. The paramilitary group that is committing crimes here, it must end with the same military aggressiveness with which the ELN and the FARC must end. That is why there cannot be a centimetre of permissiveness with any of these terrorist groups. This will have to be done with full strength and what we need, is to build more public confidence in the public force, so that everyone cooperates with the public force.’

With elections coming up in 2006, the symbolic extension of the state to the people was even more apparent, and with frequency, the president reiterated the imperative of winning the war, together.

5.8 Peace in sight? Seeing the termination of the enemy from a DSP perspective

Uribe enjoyed significant support while in office. In 2005 re-election was allowed after a positive referendum had permitted a change in the Constitution. In four years, much had changed. Polls investigating the popular opinion of the country’s direction prior to 2002 registered a 90 percent of respondents expressing that things were running down a bad road. After 2002, 44 percent of the respondents felt that things were getting better (J. I. B. Vélez, 2015b, p. 27). In 2003, the popularity of President Uribe had increased to 78 percent (ibid.) and in 2006 he was elected in to a second term in office. In the possession speech to the second term in presidency, Uribe reiterated the value of democratic security, as an *intrinsic* part of democracy. And while security as such was still lacking, the progress and the nature of the (good) practice of the security program functioned to confirm its democratic identity. In all, the idea of the democratic security was presented as an irreversible step towards peace, a goal that was close in sight (Á. Uribe Vélez, n.d.).

From 2006 to 2009, Juan Manuel Santos served as Minister of Defence in Uribe’s government. Within this period, along with the expectations issued under the Democratic Security agenda, Santos shared the representation of the ‘strong fist’ (‘la mano dura’) against

the guerrillas in the country (Dießelmann & Hetzer, 2015). Santos' term as defence minister is marked particularly by two events. One is the rescue operation of Ingrid Betancourt, a previous presidential candidate that had been kidnapped by FARC, along with 14 other hostages. The second is the scandal known as 'los falsos positivos', an event that has become a central, but ambiguous reference in the representation of the conflict. Throughout his mandate, Santos presents loyal to the official discourse, but nevertheless introduce some distinctiveness. While he could well be considered as a 'minister of war', following his supervising of the successful operations as Defence Minister, he could also be hinting towards a ministry of *peace*, as this is one of the words that is repeated the most in his speeches. As María Fernanda Gonzáles Binetti finds, during his term as Defence Minister, Santos repeats the word 'peace' 105 times in 35 speeches (Binetti, 2016, p. 175).

Operation Jaque (from the Spanish word 'check' in Chess), Betancourt, three US citizens and eleven members of the Colombian public force were rescued, was completed 2 July 2008. This operation was one of the most remarkable achievement of the military, under the lead of Santos and Uribe. The operation secured Uribe a massive support, and was allegedly made possible with the help of American technology and the collaboration between the Colombian military and the military forces of the United States (Roche, 2014, p. 203). This demonstrated the strength of the state (while criticised for some of the applied tactics⁸⁴) and the logic of the official discourse. In a speech to the congress the same month, president Uribe explains (Á. Uribe Vélez, 2008):

Quotation 16: 'Every victory over terrorism, is a victory of freedom. Today, Colombia can look at the world with its head held high and say: here we advance against the violent and we taste the freedom that they wanted to take away from us, but which has nevertheless not declined in the government's action to defeat them (...)'

The operation works as a good example of how policies were developed and resonated, on the basis of the perception of the other, as the enemy. While the action was prepared as a humanitarian interchange of hostages, the Colombian government tricked the FARC and ended as the unilateral winner. Before the European Parliament four years earlier, Uribe had debated the demands for negotiations with strong preferences *against* dialogue with the terrorists, unless violence had ceased (Á. Uribe Vélez, 2004). In his official address, the president explained that

⁸⁴ The operation has been criticised in the aftermath for the allegation of misusing the Red Cross emblem: <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/americas/07/15/colombia.red.cross/index.html>, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7510423.stm>

the government could never release terrorist guerrillas from jail, without effective guarantees that these will never return to commit crimes. The opposite would be of disrespect for the sacrifices made by the security forces and would indispensably discourage their further actions and the respect for the law: *'We would be opening the door to constant extortion against the state and society'* (ibid.), a common justification for refraining from negotiation with terrorists (Donohue, 2009). One of his sequences is quoted as follows:

'We must bear in mind that on the one hand there are respectable citizens kidnapped by terrorists, while on the other, there are terrorists who are in jail. We must bear in mind that war is one thing, but terrorism is quite another. In war, there are parties whose legitimacy is legitimised for the purposes of humanitarian agreements, while with terrorism, there is a murderer and a victim which is society, the rights and welfare of which we must protect through institutional arms' (official translation by the EP)

This logic bears true to the principles entrenched in the 'war against terrorism' and finds that *'no negotiation can be allowed to strengthen the murderer'* (ibid.). The government of Uribe would consistently evaluate its officials on results, and this time, the strategy had demonstrated a successful, effective and morally right outcome. However, in the consecutive reporting to the state, Minister of Defence Santos does not mention the word 'terrorism', as usually referred to by the government. Instead, like his president, he calls on the new leaders of the FARC to lay down their weapons, to not sacrifice their men, and mobilise, and in the following: *'The Government reiterates that if they want to enter into a negotiation in serious and good faith, we offer them a dignified peace.'* (Santos, 2008). In the statements to the media however, and during the opening of a conference on anti-terrorism, the Minister of Defence spoke with a different tone: *'The beast is wounded, and we have to maintain the initiative to give it the final thrust that brings it to a point of no return'* (El Mundo, 2009). This signalled a large military address that would soon be the end of the FARC. The same perception has been issued by General Commander of the military forces, Padilla de León, which alluded that Colombia was now on the right track: *'This is the moment of truth, of effectiveness, forcefulness and transparency'* (Secretaría de Prensa, 2009) and *'we are at the end of the end, we are on the road to victory, the consolidation advances in territory'*, a famous phrase that signalled the final stage of the conflict.⁸⁵

In contrast to the great success that followed from the rescue operation in 2008, the scandal known as the 'false positives' ('los falsos positivos') represents a point of reference

⁸⁵ The original source of this declaration has been deleted, but various secondary sources have rendered the quote (Semana, 2010; Tiempo, 2006).

that materialised under Uribe's government and, to different extents, hurt the stable narrative of the straight division between the 'good' and the 'evil'. From this point, an alternative representation of the military, frequently praised by the president, would complicate the practice of shielding the group from any type of criticism. This is an important turn, as loyalty and solidarity with the public forces has been one of the key principles of Uribe. Up until the demobilisation process of large paramilitary groups, where the grave abuse and targeting of civilians had consequently diminished, the responsibility of providing security had been redirected back to the public forces, a decisive and applauded development. Restoring faith in the military, this was an important aspect of Uribe's discourse, which illustrated results. However, motivation of some military officials would soon be set to question, and the constant demand for results within the Democratic Security policy exhibited a different side of the coin. Happening over a long period, the false positives scandal included the systematic and grand extrajudicial killings of civilians, mostly farm workers, who would be dressed up by the military as *guerrilla members* killed in combat. As various reports would later find, military personnel did not only target random, young men, but also collaborated with contractors who recruited workers as 'planned targets'. These would be transported to different parts of the country, where simulated battles were set in stage (Haugaard, 2015). The various forms of killings were motivated by a system commission, monetary or as 'days off', based on body counts.⁸⁶ While this event was somehow silenced and has withered with long process of justice, it has become a point of reference for many, particularly for those critical of the Democratic Security.

In the aftermath of the reported happenings, president Uribe publicly denied the demonstrated scope of the atrocities (ibid.). In one of the most known cases, where several young boys disappeared from Soacha, Uribe would explain that 'they did not go to collect coffee, they went for criminal purposes and did not die the day after their disappearance, but a month later' (El Espectador, 2008). These explanations alluded that the military personnel were not completely guilty, as the targeted by some means had provoked the happening. In the following, he has been accused for ignoring the many reports by human rights organisations, which investigated and pointed to the widespread practice and nature of the false positives between 2002 and 2008 (FIDH, 2016). From 2007 to 2008, his administration his administration would have to answer to increasing pressure from the UN, and in the end, 27 high-ranking military officials were dismissed. As Minister of Defence, Santos has also been

⁸⁶ One human rights group, CCEEUU, documented 3.515 cases of extrajudicial killings between 2002-2010, carried out in 31 (out of 32) provinces (Haugaard, 2015, pp. 266-267).

criticised, but reportedly reacted swiftly and ordered that those involved from the military would be judged in civilian courts to secure impartiality. In addition, directives and agreements with the Attorney General's office were signed, to prevent further similar happenings.

5.9 'Santouribismo'

The analysis of the foregoing texts should serve as a basis for understanding the basic perception of the national 'problem' of the time, running from the official representation of the Other. The construction of the problem as a 'terrorist threat' that is extensively repeated in statements by the government (most represented by the president) marks a shift away from the efforts to negotiate, to a focus on a strong military solution. This implementation of a 'strong fist' is not seen as undemocratic by the state. Rather, in efforts to *protect* democracy, the state is ascribed with specific responsibilities that go along with its roots of identity, being a strong, just and principle-based authority. This construction, increasingly promoted by the Uribe administration, takes use of the discursive representation of a previously 'weak' state, in order to justify the unconventional military means. Increasingly, this has also legitimised the desired involvement by the US, primarily with means to abolish the illegal drugs production, but increasingly also the threat of terrorism. Assuming the role of the authoritative, protective 'father' of the good citizens, the 'children of the state', the government under president Uribe simply cannot yield to the demands of terrorist actors, a principle which permeates in the policies. The policies that were drafted were consequently entrenched in a security program where one of the objectives were to eradicate the problem of narco-terrorism through unconventional military means, to prevent further escalation. In general, this has included in a narrative where the 'good' must conquer the 'evil', a construction which generates emotions of hatred and fear. The FARC as the Other is constructed as an enemy, as irrational actors, which produces destruction and loss in lives. Triggering the deepest emotions in a people where the majority are themselves victims or knows of someone who is, this construction of the other's evilness is hard to reverse. As I have touched upon, the prevailing necessity to defend the principles under the democratic security has nurtured the domination of *one* representation of the self and the other, consequently 'closing' off the official discourse. From the government's point of view, this discursive stability would be imperative to maintain, as the amending of the constructed identities would set the legitimacy of the practices at risk. At the other hand, the

construction of the successful, strong state has also been challenged in its inscription of meaning to some central events. Some of these, as mentioned, include the practice of extrajudicial killings, most notably the scandal of the ‘False Positives’, but also illegal surveillance, as in a DAS scandal). Human rights discourses have been silenced to the extent possible within the legitimate framework of the Democratic Security, but the narrative that there was only *one* bad group, would from this point (from slightly to radically, depending on the audience) diminish.

The Uribe administration made a proposal to hold a second referendum, to amend the Constitution to permit three terms in presidency. This pledge was however rejected by the Colombian Constitutional Court. During the election campaign, Juan Manuel Santos was consequently promoted as the heir of the ‘Uribismo’ and promised that voting for him would be equivalent of voting for his former chief (León, 2010): ‘*Uribe leaves us a magnificent legacy upon which we must build*’ (La Nacion, 2010). Santos promoted an agenda for better economy, security and national welfare, elements that drew on agenda of the previous president. Among these, hard-line policies against the FARC and the groups controlling the illegal narcotics business was promised to continue in line with the Democratic Security. In an extraordinary assembly meeting in the Party of the U, he expresses: ‘*The FARC has been weakened, we have beaten them like never before, but like president Uribe says, the snake is still alive*’ (ibid.). This common metaphor that hints to the enmity and slyness of the FARC, suggests that there is still some way to go before the ‘monster’ was defeated.

In his presidential campaign, Santos shows signs of alterations, while not outstanding. In his official proposal for the next period, he introduces a leap from the Democratic Security to the Democratic *Prosperity*, where infrastructure, labour, education and security receive primary focus. This transition is brought up repeatedly and sets its mark on the new term. In a metaphor that illustrates the stage towards development and modernity, pointing to the economic ‘locomotives’ that are later introduced, Santos presents himself as right for the job of the presidency: ‘*I know that I can lead our country, drive it in the right direction, so that we advance from Democratic Security towards Democratic Prosperity*’ (Santos, 2010a). In this ‘Good Governance for the Democratic Prosperity and 109 initiatives to achieve it’, Santos introduces the program with several references to world competition. Towards the end of the long paper, the presidential candidate turns to security and *peace*, a much-referenced word in his campaign. In point number 96, which is named ‘democratic security for the achievement of the peace’, he speaks in line with Uribe, but uses the word *conflict*, and distinguished deliberately between the different violent groups:

Quotation 17: ‘We will defeat terrorism, we will terminate the conflict and we will construct peace. We will maintain an incessant pressure on the violent, organised in criminal gangs, guerrilla groups or as terrorists. We will not leave them any other option than to surrender (...). We will maintain the successful policy of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez, who combined the outstretched hand and the steady pulse’.

In the final phrase, Santos reiterates the willingness of the government to welcome the violent groups back into the society. While his presidential campaign resembled the vision of Álvaro Uribe, some nuances like the former, made their way to the presidential rally. In the end, Juan Manuel Santos was elected president in 2010, supported by 69 percent in the presidential run-off voting in June. This was a so-called *landslide*, as Santos won with the highest support in the presidential history (Hernández-Mora, 2010).

5.10 The evolution of ‘Santismo’⁸⁷: Reframing the reality

While Santos was elected as the rightful successor of the Uribismo, his administration did not slavishly reproduce the articulations of a terror threat which inherently sought to exterminate the Colombian society. Rather, the discourse started modifying slightly after Santos took the oath of presidency. In his inauguration speech 7 August 2010, Santos played an unexpected card. With ex-president Uribe invited to sit behind him in his speech, unconventional in etiquette, but a sign of respect for the significant leader who had paved the way for Santos, the new president states that dialogue with the enemy is not implausible: ‘I want to reiterate what I have said in the past: The door to the dialogue is not locked with key’ (Santos, 2010b). This, referring to the violent groups, was a declaration which surprised many, emerging from a logic that one could never negotiate with terrorists. To the contrary, with Santos, this *key to peace* would manifest as an important and repeated metaphor.

In the opening of his inauguration speech, Santos starts by paying a tribute to the indigenous society and their importance for the country. This as a firm recognition by his new government. Next, he refers to the traditional forefathers of the country, Bolívar and Santander, figures whom were repeatedly brought up by Uribe, as symbols of authority and order, law and freedom. Differing from Uribe's use of the representation, Santos believes that these, looking over him today, would be disappointed with the failed efforts to reach ‘social justice’

⁸⁷ In similar lines as with the ‘uribismo’, I will refer to ‘santismo’ as the government formed around the policies and political programs of president Juan Manuel Santos, and consecutively the popular support to these. While this reference is used in the media, it is not properly established as an expression.

and ‘consolidation of peace’. These ideas are referred to as the *‘foundations of true freedom, and the one for which they [Bolívar and Santander] lived and died’* (ibid.). With this representation, other values are given priority than those signalled by Uribe in his inauguration speech eight years earlier, principles which would form the basis of his national project. In the next phrase, Santos continues: *‘If we want to achieve full economic and social development, we have to build unity among us, heirs to this heroic deed for freedom’*. This is an interesting turn. Linking economic and social development to peace and freedom, rather than security and order, which are the central nodal points of the established official discourse under Uribe, Santos introduces an alternative view of peace. This conception does not seem radical in the moment, but will follow Santos in the next years, as the way to ‘peace’, as a commonly desired end, is not reduced to policies of military force and emergency measures to secure order, but rather is seen to follow from fundamental *development* policies. The vision of peace, is in other words, accompanied by a vision of how the Colombian nation should be, a modern, prosperous and more equal nation that can compare with the good league of democracies in the world.

As a means to reach this goal, Santos proposes something radical. In Santos’ words, the narco-trafficking, terrorism and violence, phenomena which the country has suffered from, have led to a reality where a good part of the best land has ended up in the hands of so-called ‘agents of violence’ (ibid.). In Santos’ term, this will be reversed. As a response, the administration will present to Congress a bill, ‘Law of the Land’ (‘Ley de Tierras’), and with this, the government will accelerate the mechanisms that will ensure that the land seized by the Government in the overthrow of criminal actors, will go back into the hands of the peasants. Back to those who truly work with aspiration and sweat. With safer lands and fields, the state will consequently promote the return to land, something which is already happening with the accompany of the state, for those who have been displaced and become victims of the violence. This priority of the state, emphasizes a renewed focus on the *victims* and their rights to be compensated for the injustice they have suffered⁸⁸. In the end, the new president sets out to transform the country, so that citizens of the same nation will be able to overcome the ‘senseless hatred’ and leave all sterile confrontations behind: *‘I aspire, throughout my government, to plan the basis of a true reconciliation among Colombians’* (ibid.). And in the following, Santos explains: *‘it is true that those who do not learn from the history is bound to repeat it’* (ibid.). This reference to the

⁸⁸ This matter was raised with the ratification of the Peace and Justice Law, a legal framework initiated under Uribe’s term. This law however, was set to facilitate the demobilisation of paramilitaries, and eventually guerrilla groups, rather than benefiting the victims of their violence.

history is unelaborated on but presents an interesting question of what this ‘history’ for Santos involves.

Santos reifies his commitment to peace, by transferring the plan of peace-building and reconciliation means is transferred also to the neighbouring countries. Where the diplomatic ties between Colombia and two countries Venezuela and Ecuador had erupted several times, the Uribe administration had ended on a bad note, not least with Venezuela was represented as interlinked with the hostile values of the leftist terrorist groups. Firm in his assertion about peace-oriented policies, Santos addresses the concerning external relations with the following: ‘*The word war is not in my dictionary when I think about the relations of Colombia with its neighbour or whatever other nation on the planet*’. Before recognising the great pain of sending soldiers to *war*, ‘to combat terrorism’, as he himself has felt, he has also become familiar with the practice of *diplomacy*: ‘*before a soldier, I was a diplomat*’. In this context, he says, ‘*one of my fundamental drives as president, will be to rebuild relations with Venezuela and Ecuador, re-establish confidence and privilege diplomacy and prudence*’. This gesture is problematic for the resilience of Uribe’s representation of the political left as a dangerous development, would it gain significant power. Recognising Hugo Chávez as a team player means that versions of socialism are no longer exclusively rejected, but rather accepted as an alternative project.

Like Uribe, president Santos calls for the imperative of national *unity* for the successful development of the state. Rather than assigning the exclusive responsibilities to the government, the leaders propose the involvement of *everyone* in the proposed state project, whether this constitutes the establishment of ‘security’ or generating incentives for ‘prosperity’. As explained earlier, this is a way of extending or linking the government’s Self to the people, extending at the same time the common responsibilities in dealing with the constructed Other. However, it is important to note that some differences start to appear in this conception of ‘unity’. In the official discourse from 2002 to 2010, under the program of Democratic Security, this ‘us’ is seen to involve only those who comply with the general vision of the state Self, where the extreme left is perceived as inherently dangerous to the national, democratic identity. Those who are not ‘with’ the state, are consequently considered ‘against’ it, in light of the extraordinary situation which resembles a ‘win or lose’ project.⁸⁹ With Santos, this ‘unity’ is ascribed a different meaning. In his inauguration address to the country, Santos speaks firmly and explicitly of the value of *diversity*, as an integral part of democracy:

⁸⁹ As seen with the discourse under Uribe, the opposition was respected under law and democracy, but in reality, many restrictions applied. This was legitimised under the necessity to undertake exceptional measures and with the precedence of security (before liberty, as a prerequisite for this value).

Quotation 18: ‘I am and will be the President of National Unity!’⁹⁰ But make no mistake: I do not want a country without political parties or ideological controversy. Colombia needs solid, serious parties with permanent vocation, with different positions regarding society and the state’.

In this announcement, Santos makes an active move to recognize political plurality, as a valuable means for generating good and representative policies. At one point, it is even reiterated that the presence of this opposition is vital for the strengthening of democracy, for political control and supervision. This wish for diversity is not reduced to the political sphere, and in the very opening of the address, Santos also illustrates his recognition of cultural and ethnic diversity. This is a fragile theme in Colombia, where indigenous people have been subject to continuous repression. In the presidential address, he however embraces *unity in difference* and reifies the important role that these communities are playing, in the overseeing of the country.

Throughout the address to the country, Santos resembles both the established official discourse, with repeated representations of the people, of security, of God and the motherland, but throughout, he also looks towards a new platform. This new, with an overwhelming focus, is the international scene. In one passage it is stated:

Quotation 19: ‘Colombians: I invite you to share the construction of a new dawn. In this dawn we will have the historical opportunity to transform Colombia and assume a positive protagonist figure on the international stage’

In these phrases, it is pointed towards a new vision, a new standard and a specific transformation that will not only seek to establish stronger relations within the country, but also with the *external world*.

5.11 Building a modern and prosperous Self

The Democratic Security policy of Uribe did not vanish with the change of presidency. Santos assumed the new leadership position with many references to his former chief. The transition to Santos’ agenda ‘Democratic Prosperity’ (‘Prosperidad Democrática’) however indicated that

⁹⁰ This *also* refers to his party, 'Partido de la Unidad Nacional', the National Unity Party. This political party was established in 2005 by a group of Congress members, including Santos, to back Uribe in his presidency. In the later years, it seems like this 'national unity' has changed meaning.

the new government had, partly, reformulated the political course of the country. The new plan which received increasing attention, was the government's development plan, named 'Prosperity for All' ('Prosperidad para Todos'). This plan indicates a slight transformation in the formal attitude on what regards national development, but also cooperation with external actors, including in matters of *peace building*. This latter has been dedicated a chapter on its own in the national plan, reading the 'Consolidation of the Peace' ('Consolidación de la Paz') (Gobierno de Colombia, 2010). In general, the plan reflects an optimism towards prosperity, which separates it slightly from the former government, where the main focus was *security*. In one way, this new agenda may be interpreted as a natural succession of the former, which somehow has been successful in increasing the power of the state and *decreasing* that of the 'enemy'. As the report highlights, between 2003 and 2009 the number of kidnapping for ransom was reduced by almost 90 percent and terrorist actions decreased by over 80 percent. However, by international standards the numbers are still high, and the nature of the violent threat has mutated in various forms (ibid., p. 390). In the follow-up, the plan proposes a strong emphasis on human rights as the ultimate objective of any agenda. The reports highlights a need for a strategy to enhance the respect for the right to life, the right to freedom and personal integrity. Finally, the plan includes the imperative of waging a battle against discrimination and promote altered respect for different identities, much in line with a transformed vision of unity.

The promotion of human rights, as well as policies which ensures the reparations after atrocities, is not seen as the exclusive responsibility of the political administration, but one that should be pursued by all national entities. Again, accountability is extended to the population. This, to ensure that Colombia does not fall back in time: '*policies of reparation are fundamental to avoid falling back into conflicts and disputes of the past*' (ibid., p. 391). With this, the distance between the troubled past and the more responsible present is maintained, with boundaries drawn in temporality between the old and the new Self. More than just avoiding the return to a more violent and inhumane situation, the maintenance of human rights is also drafted as a precondition to enable institutional strengthening, economic development and social welfare. In other words, it is represented as the *foundation* of a larger construction work.

In a diagnostic summary of the current security situation, the document commends the advances and the political will that has marked the success of the previous government (ibid., p.392). The Colombian state is constructed increasingly as a 'successful case'. In the continuation it is stated:

Quotation 20: ‘As a result of these efforts, the state has for the citizens, recovered most parts of the national territory that was under the violent influence of Armed Groups at the Margin of the Law (GAML), which includes the FARC, the ELN and the Criminal Gangs (BACRIM)’ [emphasis added].

The document reinsures that the FARC has been considerably weakened, to a point of reaching a historical low.

Nevertheless, this has made the group return to guerrilla warfare in its most basic sense. This is characterised of being able to sporadically and uncoordinatedly attack the government forces and frighten the citizens. According to the plan, terrorism may potentially become the *last resort* of the group, in order to survive (ibid., p.502). The articulations consequently state that the group has not disappeared but will keep on transforming and adapting according to the circumstances. The new designation of the FARC is notable. The articulations in ‘Democratic Prosperity’ does not directly represent the FARC as a ‘terrorist group’, but rather acknowledge that the group might commit to terror actions in the lack of other alternatives. This justifies the presence of a national security force and the maintenance of a military offensive powerful enough to crush the insurgency’s will to fight, provoke demobilisation and finally, reintegration, but on the other side, the government recognise the group’s resilience.

In the Democratic Prosperity program, security is then still considered a vital aspect. The responsibility to deal with the problem of insecurity is not to lie with rest with the public forces but must be dealt with by a synergy of ‘inter-institutional cooperation’ and must be understood as more than just territorial control. With this, Santos reflects the former policies, but introduces a ‘next level’, natural with the representation of a successful advancement. In the following, the ties to Democratic Security is reified in that *justice* is seen to surpass all of the former. This is considered the most important, together with the limitation of impunity. When explaining the necessity of a solid judicial system, it is however noticeable that the Santos administration gives priority to democracy, before contra-violence measures: ‘*An independent judicial system is fundamental for the consolidation of democracy, the social progress and the reduction of violence, and its different impacts on gender*’ (ibid., p.405). Justice is also reiterated as essential for the promotion of investment and economic growth (even in the chapters that do not contain this matter), just as security is important for the facilitation of the ‘five locomotives’ of development.

In the new national plan, Santos’ expectations for the country resemble what he stated in the inauguration address: ‘*It is time to demand more of us as a society, to demand more of us as a country*’ (Santos, 2010b). On the whole, the new prospects revolve around the modern,

prosperous and developed future, measured by common international standards. The new government has a vision for the country, one which will grant it access to the playing fields of the important actors of the world. In the introduction to the plan, the government addresses the problems that still persist, but finds that the country has been able to surpass those barriers that seemed impossible to surpass, and that the road towards prosperity is clearer than ever. In the following, it is stated:

Quotation 21: 'The historical context that marks this National Plan for Development is different than that of other administrations. We are facing an authentic optimism regarding our future, an incomparable confidence in the country's potentials and an image abroad which is clearly positive. From being perceived in the world as a failed state, we are transforming into an emerging economy, attractive for investment and for tourism.' (Gobierno de Colombia, 2010, p.21).

In the continuation, Santos repeats that Colombia has just become part of a selected group of nations, the CIVETS, perceived by the world to constitute economies with great expectations for growth in the coming decades. In addition, the government has confirmed a process to enter into the OECD, something which was perceived impossible a few years ago. With this, Santos represents Colombia as a rightful member of the international community, one which will receive recognition and admiration once it fulfils the basic task he has drawn out. In this relation, concepts such as 'Good Governance' are frequently brought to the fore, big words that means little to the general Colombian, but much for the representation of the governmental Self. Whereby the previous government presented the problems caused by the terrorist Other, the new plan concentrates on identifying opportunities for development. In short, as explained by the authors, the current dream is to become a country with prosperity for all: more employment, less poverty and more security. By adhering to the National Development Plan, the country will experience prosperity for all: higher employment rate, less poverty and more security.

'Security' and 'order' were the bearing principles of the official discourse from 2002-2010, including in the basic responsibilities of the state Self. With the Democratic Prosperity, new principles have started replacing these. The situation is no longer articulated as one of unprecedented emergency, where the first priority must be to restore order and authority with the government. This is explained partly as security has been re-established to a significant extent. At the same time, Santos starts measuring national development by international standards. In contrast to Uribe who differentiated Colombia from the external world by criticising this, Santos appears to take a different approach. As reiterated in the inauguration speech:

Quotation 22: ‘In this new dawn we will develop the potential of our people, our land, our regions, to conquer the global opportunities of the next 50 years (...) In this new dawn, we will achieve that Colombia, in less than a decade, will be recognized internationally for its high quality of human capital, for its social equity, a world-class economy, business and technological capacity’

The year after the announcement of the national plan, Santos maintained a firm view of security and a significant distance to the FARC. Reiterating that the country had been tricked in the past and would not fall back on the same mistakes, talks about peace negotiations were swiftly washed away. While the door to dialogue was still not impossible to open, this would have to happen under the right circumstances and the demonstrated commitment of the adversary. In a much-referenced announcement in the closing of the 67th Andi assembly in Cartagena, the day after activists had sent a message to the FARC asking them to initiate dialogue, Santos continues: ‘*Meanwhile, that door is locked, it’s locked and the key is in my pocket*’ (El Universal, 2011; Semana, 2011; Vanguardia, 2011). With this, the president alludes that he knows the solution to the conflict, but only he, maintains the power to open the door.

5.12 An ‘internal armed conflict’: Allocating responsibility and remembering the past

In 2011, Santos presented an initiative that turned out to challenge the former understanding of peace, but also the official perception of the FARC, which had exclusively been represented as violent, inhumane and irrational, guided by an anti-democratic leftist agenda. The initiative was ratified and implemented as Law 1448 of 2011, ‘the Victims’ Law and for the Restitution of Land’ (‘Ley de Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras’, from here on referred to as ‘the Victims’ Law’).⁹¹ This law was set up as a framework to strengthen and compliment the attention to the victims of the protracted violence in the country and would guide several policy formulations in the continuation of the Santos administration. In addition to recognising the rights to reparation and compensation for the many victims, the law also addresses the issue that the violence resides from complex mechanisms, beyond the mere terrorist actions of some specific

⁹¹ The Victims’ Law was authored by Senator Juan Fernando Cristo, considered a victim himself, with his father being murdered by the ELN. The law covers people who have been internally displaced, kidnapped, tortured, killed or massacred, ‘forcefully disappeared’ and the like, and both victims harmed by state and non-state actors. It includes the family of the victim (also gay partners) and third parties (except members of illegal armed groups, unless of minor age at the time of a demobilisation).

groups. In the presentation of the initiative, Santos addresses the irreversible suffering that the long, violent period in Colombia has caused, and asserts that this suffering must now be understood and recognised, not least remembered: ‘*We are committed to the truth and to the memory, not only not to repeat the history, but to pay a just homage to so many compatriots who died or suffered because of the conflict.*’ (Santos, 2011). For this, the president explains that the final objective of every Colombian is *peace*, and that the initiative marks the initiation of a distinct effort, in the historical context: ‘*(...) we are not only speaking about peace, we are constructing the conditions for peace!*’ (ibid.). Those who do not understand this, particularly referring to the ‘illegal armed groups’, ‘will have lost forever the train of history’ (ibid.). With this, the president alludes a chance for *all* to join the historical development that Colombia is undertaking. The most important assertion however, is made when Santos explains that there has been developed a definition of ‘victim’ that is not discriminating, nor taking into account, *who* the victimiser is. He states:

Quotation 23: ‘In accordance with this, all persons who individually or collectively have suffered damages resulting from violations of the International Humanitarian Law or violations of human rights, which has occurred during the internal armed conflict, will benefit from this law.’

In these phrases, the new government also presents a representation of the history which has not been present in the official discourse, since 2002. The declaration that Colombia is dealing with an *internal armed conflict*, rather than a *terrorist threat*, is intriguing and a radical statement in the contemporary time. Accepting some kind of shared responsibility, or at least part taking in the violence which has occurred. At the same time, this representation of the conflict includes a distinct representation of the Other, as a recognised ‘party to the conflict’, and one which possess a command structure and an organised armed force, if guided by the ICRC conceptions (ICRC, 2008). This diversion from the established discourse would plant the seed for a profound disagreement, among those who support the conception of the Other as an illegitimate terrorist group that needs to be eliminated, and those who agree with a more complex distribution of guilt and causes. In response to the formulation, Uribe sent an open letter to Santos, requesting that the president changed the offending phrase from ‘victims of internal armed conflict’ to ‘victims of armed groups outside the law’ (Stone, 2011). Whereas Santos declined to change the designation, Uribe responded with harsh critique issued by Twitter, where he writes: ‘#Democratic security: There is no legal reason to link victim reparations with terrorist recognition’ (Á. U. Vélez, 2011), and followed by his ally in Congress,

Iván Doque: *‘Those who threaten the life, the honour and the assets of the civilian population are not in conflict with the state. They are a criminal threat’* (Duque, 2011).

In addition to compensating victims with economic and symbolic reparations, the initiative aims to address the complicated matter of land distribution. This has been a key concern of the FARC and signals that the government is determined on undertaking a social reform, aligned with Santos’ policy agenda of ensuring *prosperity for all*.⁹² Despite the altered take on the situation, introduced with the development of the new law, this turn does not constitute any definite shift. In the presentation of the law, Santos maintains a firm attitude towards the violent groups and reiterates the following:

Quotation 24: ‘And let no one be deceived: the recognition of the conflict that we have suffered for almost half a century does not imply – as the law itself clarify – a political recognition of the illegal armed groups, which we will continue to fight as narco-terrorists while they continue to commit outrage against the peace and the security of the Colombians.’

The perception that the responsibility for the history of violence does not exclusively rest with the FARC would increasingly take precedence in the official discourse from 2011. While this transformed the official attitude towards the FARC, the understanding seemed to resonate with the public audience. In a national survey developed by the Andes University, the International Organization for Migrations, Centre for Historical Memory (CMH), 315 surveys to affected people, along with 1528 surveys to non-affected people, asked the question: ‘Who is responsible for the violence that occurred in the country?’ (Rettberg, 2015). The investigation, named ‘What does the Colombians think after seven years of justice and peace’ (referring to the Peace and Justice Law introduced by Álvaro Uribe), showed that 35 percent of the general population (the total of the two groups) believed the responsibility belonged first and foremost to the guerrillas. In second place, however, 29 percent mean that this belonged to ‘All of us, the Colombian people’ (ibid).

While victims of violence have been recognised and acknowledged within all administrations, the nature of the violations, the rights of the victims and the policies issued in response to this recognition, have varied. During Uribe’s term, some initiatives were taken, including the Project Law for Alternative Criminal Procedures, the Law for Justice and Peace,

⁹² The government has also recognised the advantage of addressing the rural development and reform, as this would delimit the legitimacy of the guerrilla’s incentives. Particularly the FARC has long nurtured on the state’s lacking willingness to deal with the unresolved rural problems (International Crisis Group, 2012, p.28).

and the Unit for Justice and Peace. Some of these were rejected, others were approved, but usually with little practical effects. With the presidential term of Santos, the recognition of the victims' rights, both to truth, recognition and reparation have appeared high on the agenda. This stands in contrast to what has been the norm in the previous presidency, where the focus has rested with judicial mechanism, demobilisation and attention to the criminals.

The Victims' Law and the appraised initiatives by Santos did not appear in a vacuum. In 2013, Centro Nacional de Memoria Historica (the Colombian centre for historical memory) finalised the large and open report "Basta Ya!" (Enough Now!) constructed as a dedication first and foremost in the memory of the victims of the long conflict (GMH, 2013). Together with past initiatives, this demonstrated a significant contrast to the past, in the sense that victims have been largely invisible in negotiations and political debates (Rettberg, 2015)⁹³. Following Santos' positive approach to the thematic, discursive space has however widened for likeminded initiatives and actors, not been limited by 'soft censorship'. On this platform, Grupo de Memoria Histórica is one the actors which has emerged, working independently with a mission to discover truths about the violence. This body has produced multiple reports and collected exclusive data through for instance participatory approaches. These have been organised and integrated into a comprehensive dataset, which has later benefited institutions such as the later developed Truth Commission.

In general, the 'Victim's Law' can be seen as a landmark law and has caused considerable attention both from supporters and critics. Whereby Santos, upon his entrance as Defence Minister promoted a conception of peace that was inherently interlinked with justice, an expected definition under the security discourse of Uribe, this changed with his promotion to presidency. With the introduction of the victims' law, a conception of peace that is not only linked to justice, but also the concern with social transformation, is starting to show. In line with the government's national plan, the articulations of peace are increasingly complimented with the rights to reconciliation (understood with an economic counterpart), and development. More than just being guilty of issuing violence, the criminal actors are seen to be partly responsible for robbing Colombians (and the nation as a whole) of opportunities. Victims are consequently given a voice, the right to truth, and are included in the state's commitment to modernise the country, to catch up with the world. For president Santos, peace is partly established through the attention to the victims, their reparation, the restitution and

⁹³ NB: "Shift in public attention to the plight of millions of Colombians" (the role of victims and the state/society responsibilities).

redistribution of land, and a project that will alleviate the burdens of the poor, so that the country can develop to a different standard.

The development of the Victims' Law was followed by the Judicial Framework for Peace (Acto Legislativo para un Marco Jurídico para la Paz) in 2012, a bill for constitutional reform introduced to establish a foundation for the expected demobilisation of the FARC. This initiative included a framework for politics and legal affairs, and builds on lessons from earlier mechanisms and failures. This also included mechanisms for extrajudicial settlements upon clarifications of truth, an important aspect in the design of victims' rights (Ministerio de Justicia y del Derecho, 2015). In addition, the bill calls for the creation of a truth commission.

5.13 Peace by political means

The ambition of finding a way to establish peace, presented with the initiation of Santos' presidency, did not evaporate. In September 2012, official peace talks with the FARC were announced, after rounds of secret, informal dialogue had been kept in motion since 2010 (Segura & Mechoulam, 2017). From the Presidential Palace in Bogotá, Santos gave the announcement: *'We have initiated a General Agreement for the termination of the conflict in Colombia, so that the children of the same nation do not kill each other'* (Santos, 2012a). In the declaration, the agreement is presented as different from all the previous agreements, since the forthcoming is centralised around a *realistic agenda*, consisting of five central points: rural development; guarantees for political opposition and citizens participation; the ceasing of the armed conflict, the renunciation of arms and the reintegration of the FARC into civil life; the combating of narcotics trafficking; and finally, the rights of the victims, but also of every Colombian to know who were responsible for the violence (Tuteve ATV, 2012). This agenda set into negotiation without the initiation of a bilateral ceasefire. Whilst explaining that the government and the FARC had already accomplished the first phase of the process for peace, Santos maintains positive and confident that the final goal, to *'terminate, once and for all, this war'*, will be fulfilled. This, he asserts that both Colombia and the world has changed, and that Colombia is finally growing and opening to the world. The country's economy is becoming one of the most prosperous one in the region, and like other countries in the region, violence is no longer tolerated as a means to reach political goals. Placing this trend firmly in the past, the president references that rulers in other country have left the armed struggle behind and opted for the rightful path, namely the democratic one. Once again, this suggests that Colombia is on

the road to modernity and that it should no longer be associated with the irrational and backwards trends of the past. From this point in history, the government will no longer fight to fight, but fight to achieve peace, as ‘the construction of a stable and sustainable peace’ (Santos, 2012a). For Santos, the country cannot proceed having one of the largest internal conflicts on the planet. In the following he expresses an impatience to moving *forward*:

Quotation 25: ‘There is no doubt that it is time to turn the page (...) if we put an end to the conflict, Colombians will be faced with a world full of opportunities. If we end the conflict, our full potential will be unleashed, and Colombia will not be stopped by anyone. WE MUST UNITE’

In October the same year, the official commencement of the peace talks was declared, in a conjoint press conference in Hurdal, Norway. Facilitated by Norway, Cuba and Venezuela, the official negotiations would proceed in Havana, Cuba for the next four years.

The announcement of the dialogues was met with ambiguity. Many sectors reacted to the announcement with significant support, but others issues severe scepticism (Olave & Narvaja de Arnoux, 2016, p. 47). The legacy of the Democratic Security, which had established its policies on the bad experiences from the Caguán process in the beginning of the 21st century, was still in the air and had manifested in the discourse under Uribe, as a conception that peace with the FARC had expired. Playing on the misuse of trust that had happened, Uribe had given the expression that the terrorists would only be welcomed to society if these submitted to the rules of the government and surrendered their arms before any other agreement. The roots of the conflict were however left undiscussed, as these were less relevant in the confrontation of a terrorist threat. With Santos’ radical move, the domination of this previous representation starts shaking. The representation of the Other as radically different and dangerous is somehow challenged, and the government is touching upon the possibility of seeing the FARC as a political party with which the government can have dialogue and reason with. However, the government remained cautious. In response to the harshest critique, Santos maintained a strong position calling for Colombians to unite against terrorism yet refrain from using terrorism as a means to achieve this goal: ‘*Any initiative of any group to support our Public Force against terrorism is welcome, but what is not acceptable under any aspect or under any point of view, is that terrorism be used as a political cause, as an electoral cause. We reject it outright*’ (El Espectador, 2012).

5.14 Human rights, development and international prestige

The formal peace negotiations between the government and the FARC were conducted behind closed doors in Havana. Separated from the mainland to limit the chances for spoilers, little information reached the Colombian society during the complicated four years. The broader thematic of peace nevertheless remained an important reference for the president. But this reference seldom appeared by itself. Most often, it was linked with modernity, development and global values, as inseparable concepts. In a speech to the National Conference of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law in 2012, Santos speaks about the formal termination of the conflict, which he articulates as just *'one of the drawers in the cupboard of peace'* (Santos, 2012b). In the following, he explains how the government approached the FARC, and how the two parties sat down to discuss about how the conflict could end. Resultingly, two issues were put on the agenda: the matter of (and access to) land; and rural development (ibid.). The acceptance to bring these issues before discussion, was grounded in a conviction that the government too needed to make concessions, and that key issues for the FARC must be addressed in order for the group to permanently leave their armed struggle behind and pursue their goals by political means:

Quotation 26: 'And why do we accept to introduce this issue to the negotiation? Because the negotiation was basically to end the conflict and give all the guarantees, so that tomorrow (...), by means of votes, they can vindicate their policies'

And in the following, Santos represents the agrarian issue as an unproblematic matter:

Quotation 27: 'We agreed to include the agrarian issue because here is the origin of the conflict. And the politics that we are putting forth, not only when one makes a comparison with what we have done through all these failed negotiation processes before, was a policy that did not make a big difference. And that policy is being discussed in Cuba right now.'

In contrast to the former administration, Santos' government has recognized the FARC's potential to become a political actor, with legitimate political ideals. While this does not mean that the administration agrees with the ideology of the leftist groups, this will not get in way for political collaboration if the guerrilla group opted to follow through on the peace process and lay down its arms. In addition, the Santos administration has recognized some of the presented root causes for the conflict. This has discursive implications. For one, as discovered, the new

administration breaks significantly with the official representations that dominated from 2002. It introduces a re-reading of history, where responsibility for violence is distributed among other actors than just the FARC, including the government. As Santos has repeated, those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it. For the president, this introduces the imperative of writing up a truth, but one which does not leave the armed forces of the state completely innocent. In this continuation, Santos does not avoid the false positives scandal in his addresses. In the national human rights conference (ibid.), he recognizes the tragedy for the country and the armed forces. Dedicated to the humanitarian agenda, he explains how the UN applauded his swift and appropriate response, once aware of the problem. Neither these types of crimes should be pardoned, and the president assures that the government is highly interested in eradicating the reasons for this ‘deficit of rights’. In general, the president asserts: *‘be assure that we will be vigilant, because we want this sad episode to go down in history, but go down well in history’*.

Second, the recognition of the origins to the conflict with the FARC, rooted partly in unfair land policies, implies that the guerrilla is no longer represented as someone merging with an irrational agenda of terror. This leaves the conception of the Other as potentially less-than-radical, a new representation that deeply destabilizes the official discourse that was formed with the previous government. When this latter happens, the ethical dimension is transformed, and the government Self assumes responsibility to listen to the violent, marginalised Other, as a political force that has been undermined for decades. Seeing that structural factors were once the cause of the protracted conflict, structural changes will also be needed for the implementation of a ‘sustainable and lasting peace’. Where Santos has tried to maintain a strong position in the battle field, promising not to initiate a bilateral ceasefire while the negotiation proceeds, the government’s spending on the armed forces, together with the US received aid, has gone down since 2010 (Gray, 2014, p. 176).

The FARC is not the only actor which the Santos administration has included in its peace agenda. As reiterated from day one, Santos finds that Colombia cannot prosper without establishing peace with its neighbour countries. Included in his project to modernise the country, Santos has consequently moved far to break the tension with Venezuela and Ecuador. Part of this agenda has been explained with the need for a better and more united approach to the severe problem of coca production and trafficking (Herbolzheimer, 2016). Santos has met with Hugo Chávez on several occasions to discuss the benefits of a good relation, as a contrast to the status quo under Uribe who proved sceptical of the neighbour with its leftist leaning, and alleged connection with the guerrilla. Venezuela has in the aftermath assumed an important role

as facilitator in the negotiation between the FARC and the government (Smilde and Pantoulas, 2016, p. 4). The role of the country has proven efficient and important. On one hand, the Venezuela has given credentials and protection for the guerrilla. On the other, the ‘Chavismo’ has somehow degenerated the differentness of the Other, by partly legitimising its ideological foundation. Earlier recognised as a democratic state, this assertion is valuable to some extent:

Quotation 28: I think that for the good of Venezuela, for the good of Colombia. And I have to recognize President Chávez who has also been a key person in this rapprochement and in this peace process that we are advancing with the FARC.

Finally, the text revives a central aspect of the representation of the self, often referred to in the official discourse since 2010. In the vision drawn out for the country, Santos is recurrently looking *outwards*, measuring the progress or limitations of the state by ‘international’ standards, rather than comparing with performance in a local context. As he reassures, he has accepted every request for appointments, issued by NGOs, during his first 27 months in government.⁹⁴ Within this, it becomes important to represent the nation as one that deserves to join the ranks of the successful, democratic elites. This is articulated first when he speaks about the reforms that the government has undertaken as part of a ‘good governance’ agenda, and the renewed focus on human rights:

Quotation 29: ‘Some international analysts have said that they have been some of the boldest and most progressive reforms in history of the country, or in the recent history of the country (...) and I am very proud when I listen to international analysts and many of the people who have accompanied me, from Colombia and the exterior – here we created a series of commissions with ambassadors, with representatives of international organisations – when they say that the development of the Public Force in terms of human rights, perhaps has no comparison with any other armed forces in the world.’

In the following, Santos states that the reparation to the victims, prepared and implemented when the conflict was running, is something that ‘no other country has done in the history of humanity’. However, when the government set this in motion, it did so with motivations to reconcile: ‘*from the first day (...) we said that we will construct and enter the terrain of peace. For this the social politics, for this the permanent fight to better the poverty rates*’.

From 2010, the official discourse pays attention to the people, aiming to unite Colombia in a reconciliation project, but increasingly starts speaking and referring to an *international* audience. By solving domestic issues, Colombia will be able to extend its power and recognition

⁹⁴ 'Having been 26, 27 months in government, every NGO that has asked for an appointment has received it, nationally or internationally. When I have been asked for, there I have been.' (ibid.).

outwards, a transformation which is seen to give new possibilities, both in prosperity and human rights. Santos' dedication and recognition of the international community is prominent. In his reference to Colombia's discussed entrance into the OECD, he represents this as the 'access to a club of countries with the best practices of the world in every sense (...) a group of countries which in a certain way is searching permanently for excellence' (Santos, 2013c). In the following he asserts that joining these, would be a privilege. Colombia has the potential to align with the developed countries, and want to become and behave as a 'developed country, a responsible country and a country with the best practices' (ibid.). Where the variations in the Self was constituted by a strong link between the government and the ('good') Colombian people within the discourse from 2002-2010, this link is less apparent with Santos. In contrast, the 'sameness' between Colombia (represented by the government) and the international democratic community is considerably enhanced, although articulated in a normative vision. The FARC is in turn still seen as different, but not represented as a 'radical other' which you cannot speak or reason with. More actors are identified under the label of narco-traffickers (particularly the para-military groups), and the fight against terrorism is not mentioned in conjunction with the FARC, in neither of the studied texts. In the discourse presented by Santos, the articulation of the Other is more diffuse, and the president evades articulating any radical difference. Simplified, and harder to interpret than the former, the processes of linking and differentiating that happens increasingly from 2010, may be indicated as 'Figure 4' shows:

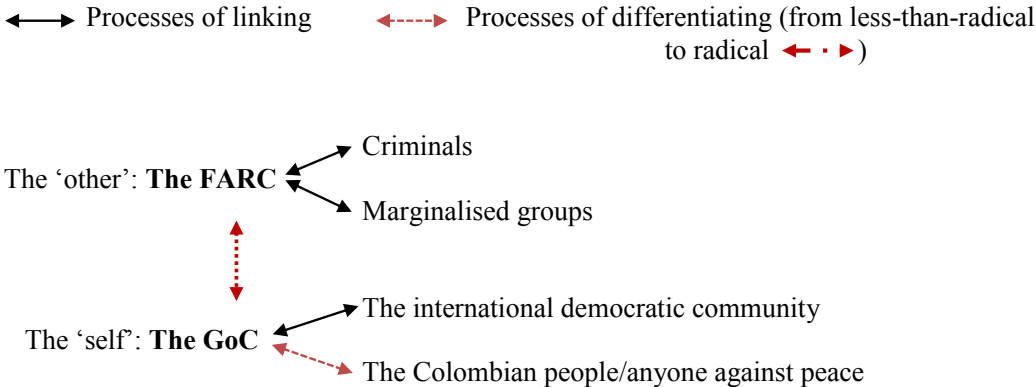


Figure 4: Linking and differentiating identities in the official discourse of 2012-2014

While the FARC still represents the Other, this group is no longer referred to as terrorists. This would be inherently problematic, as cooperation and concession-making with terrorists is constructed as deeply problematic, or even *impossible*, by the dominant, international discourse on terrorism (Donohue, 2009; R. Jackson, 2005). Such action would undermine the authority, the democratic principles and the strength of the central state, while terrorist groups would receive increased power and respect. Instead, the recognition of the underlying causes of the conflict, the problematic actions by the state and the general lack of political inclusion, places the FARC in the conception of a difficult, but politically excluded group at the verge of the law. This exclusion has forced the group to resort to violent means, but once provided with a chance to be represented in the political sphere, there is nothing inherent in the identity of the Other that implies that the actor will continue issuing violence. The move away from the label of narcoterrorism is also significant. In addition to easing the link between the FARC and this industry, Santos has also adopted an increasingly radical approach to the illegal drugs business. Whereas the development plan reiterates the need for coordinated control on various levels of the production and trafficking, Santos has continuously supported a re-oriented talk about the matter of illegality linked to the drugs consumption. In an interview to *El Tiempo*, the president reiterated a need to *'not criminalize consumption and not send addicts to jail, but give them an adequate treatment focused on human rights'* (Valero, 2016). Increasingly, the current administration has moved towards a larger decriminalisation and emphasised the bad effects of the 'war on drugs' (Begg, 2010; Semana, 2017; Youngers & Rosen, 2015). This stands in stark contrast to the former administration, which invited for enhanced involvement of the US and the increase in aerial spraying of crops. This has been supported by the FARC, calling among other issues, for the end to the criminalisation of coca farmers (Youngers & Rosen, 2015).

With Santos' linking with the international community, and representation of the Self as part of the world's 'club of democracies', some specific responsibilities follow (and re-constitute the Self). One of these is the principle of human rights, a consensus norm among liberal democracies, and a basic principle that needs to be upheld by the state and any actors who reside within it.⁹⁵ In the official discourse promoted by Santos, the peace is represented as fundamental for this. Everyone is consequently given a chance to submit to and henceforth enjoy these freedoms and rights, but in return, the Other becomes those who inhabit and violate them.

⁹⁵ The link between liberal democracies and human rights propose a matter for investigation itself, but will not be elaborated on in this thesis. Rather, the link is taken as it appears in the discourse and aligns with the principles laid out by international organisations, such as the UN.

In addition, peace is seen an essential building block for prosperity, modernity and the absolute exploitation of possibilities that arise, once Colombia opens up to the world. The indiscriminate invitation to join the better future, where the government promises greater respect for the human rights, resembles Santos' earlier metaphor of the departing train that is set towards development. In both cases, the Other is represented as the one that does not accept the invitation to board the one-way project for peace and modernity, and will consequently be left behind.

5.15 Emerging as a 'peace president': Santos' communication with the audience

Juan Manuel Santos represents a different sector of society than Uribe. Where Uribe comes from an important Antioquian land-owner family, Santos is the heir of a powerful, urban Bogotá elite. The Santos family is known for its relevance in the media sector and is the founder El Tiempo, one of the largest newspapers in the country. Whereas Uribe went to a public university in Colombia (before attending Harvard Law School), Santos attended a private and finished three university degrees abroad.⁹⁶ His international experience is prominent, and Santos has held important positions, such as chief executive of the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia (Ray, n.d.).⁹⁷ Whereas the former president, Álvaro Uribe, has climbed the ranks following various elections, Santos presented to his *first* popular election in 2010, when running for presidency (Gray, 2014, p. 176). These factors are not insignificant in the discursive context. Yet, the perception of the character is seen impact on the president's power to frame problems and manoeuvre in the discourse. In the school of rhetoric, this links to the *ethos* of the speaker, the ability to enshrine credibility, empathy and identify with the audience (Augoustinos, Lecouteur, & Soyland, 2002, p. 14).

⁹⁶ Santos finished his bachelor at the University of Kansas and later his two masters at London School of Economics and Harvard University.

⁹⁷ He has been deputy director of El Tiempo president of the Freedom of Expression Commission for the Inter American Press Association and vice chair of the Inter-American Dialogue. Santos has also served as Minister of Trade from 1991, under president César Gaviria Trujillo, Minister of Treasure and Public Credit from 2002-2002 under president Andrés Pastrana, and Minister of Defense from 2006-2009 under president Álvaro Uribe.

Santos represents the world somehow differently than Uribe. He has spent much time in Europe and claims to be a supporter of the ‘third way’⁹⁸. He resides from the intellectual elite and has expressed aspirations to position Colombia at the centre of international relations. This means that most initiatives are considered in line with international projects, such as those proposed in education and infrastructure. Where Uribe signalled a break with the traditional ruling elite, emerging without ties to the media or a traditional governing family, Santos has in many ways reintroduced the conventional presidential figure. Leaving behind the close and intimate contact with the people, the government has terminated the community councils and reassumed a more ‘distanced’ identity, despite his effort to enhance participation and applaud diversity. This signals an important change. Uribe’s early introduction of the community councils was a successful tenet which worked to build a relation with the people, working with local leaders ‘on the ground’, showing emotions, presence and friendliness. Santos’ decision to end the councils has been explained by a turn to more advanced technology, which will maintain (or even increase) the participation, but which nevertheless omitted the face-to-face communication.

Where Uribe dedicated to the people of Colombia, the *motherland*, demonstrating less interests with international affairs, Santos has shown a commitment to the international society. In all of the included speeches, Santos has made references to the international community; whether to human rights, international cooperation, aid and expectations or calls for recognition. Humanitarian organisations have been welcomed to monitor and involve in the conflicts, just as investors have been invited to discover the assets of the ‘ever friendly country’. In regard to this latter, Santos has exploited a narrative of successful security advancement, to attract external investors and position Colombia well on the international scene. Again, this may have come at the expense of investing in local confidence. According to Marc Chernick (2015), Santos has personally aimed to become a historical president, which implies going beyond the security agenda. Santos’ declaration of the peace talks with the FARC has issued response from cautious optimism to overwhelming support, seen for instance with the endorsement from the Pope, several international organisations and the United States. But on the other hand, the peace mission has not been unitarily supported. Operating in the wake of the grand military strategy that he himself partly developed and justified, the decision to engage in dialogues with the FARC has also been problematic. For one, the break with the former

⁹⁸ The political ‘third way’ can be seen as an alternative between the political left and right. While subject to different meanings, it is most known for its British definition as an alternative to social democracy and neoliberalism, set in a context of globalization (“Third Way,” 2018)

representations of the FARC has proven difficult to manifest within a relatively short period of time, as representations of terrorism are hard to reverse. Second, the surprising break with his former leader has been interpreted as an act of betrayal.⁹⁹ Santos was chosen as Uribe's successor, winning the elections on an agenda to bring the Democratic Security (the *Uribismo*) forward, and his new policy programs has consequently been criticised for denying his 'father' and working to make him invisible (González, 2015). Santos has further been described as lacking charisma, communication skills and empathy (Dávila, 2018). While he managed to speak to the victims, to minorities in the society, his technocratic way of speaking has created a distance between him and the 'typical' Colombian. An although his liberal affiliations has opened up for debate and contestation, social reform and platforms to oppose the government, Santos has been portrayed as weak when extending this right to the former enemy.

As interviewee R4 explained, Uribe and Santos have come to represent the profound tension exists between the conservative and the liberal well. Where Uribe represents conservative voices (despite his party background), with demonstrated ties to the church, the traditional family and promotes stronger state control, Santos represents the liberal, the space for a political right *and* a left, and has intended to implement social reforms. The latter projects are challenging, since the country in general conforms with the former tradition. With this, Santos has so far struggled to implement the 'Santismo' as an ideological movement for future generations (Dávila, 2018).

5.16 Unity in diversity, unity for peace

Re-election campaign/election speech 2014 (15. June 2014).

In 2013, Santos announced his aspirations for re-election as president in 2014:

Quotation 30: 'I do it because I am convinced that we have made enough progress and that - finally - it is possible to reach that future of prosperity and peace that all Colombians deserve (...) I do it because when you see the light at the end of the tunnel, you do not back down.' (Santos in *El Espectador*, 2013).

In line with Santos' pronounced motives and ambitions for a new term in presidency, the election campaign was characterised by a debate that crystallised the dichotomy of 'war' versus

⁹⁹ This is a reiterated impression. According to one of my interviewees, Nubia Rojas, Santos has been considered a traitor, 'even among those who does not support Uribe'. The president was not open with his peace agenda. In continuation, 'Santos' political manoeuvring has been seen (only) as a strategy to get to power' (Rojas, 29.01.18)

‘peace’. In a 2013 Governors Summit in Medellín, the president expresses the following: *‘There is nothing more important than the peace. Nothing should summon more the will of the Colombians. There does not exist (...) a task more urgent than this’* (Santos, 2013b). Becoming a common representation, Santos repeats the need to end the conflict between the ‘children of the same nation’ and get rid of the hatred (ibid). With this, the boundaries between the articulated Self and the Other are being washed away and the government no longer separates between the ‘good’ Colombians and an ‘evil’ adversary. In the summit, prominent speakers were invited to communicate their experiences from conflicts in Central America and Northern Ireland. From these, the president draws a conclusion that *‘peace is not imposed by weapons’*. In the following, the president reveals an intriguing reflection, referring to his successful mandate as Minister of Defence:

Quotation 31: ‘I know how to make war, and I obtained results in this task. More – forgive the lack of modesty – I obtained the best results against the guerrillas that have been obtained in the history of these two guerrillas¹⁰⁰. And I realised that it is easier, more of an impact, more ‘sellable’, to demonstrate to the frightened population the bloody head of the enemy’.

In the continuation, he explains that the search for peace, to the contrary, is not so spectacular. It requires prudence, stealth, patience and strong determination to preserve when the end is near.

Santos won his second popular election with 51 percent of the votes. With this, he defeated his major opponent Óscar Iván Zuluaga, a candidate for the Uribismo. Prior to the vote, Zuluaga had expressed that he would stop the peace talks unless the FARC would cease all their hostilities, a logic which follows from the representation of terrorism. The electoral success of Santos was consequently interpreted as an endorsement of the ongoing negotiations (BBC, 2014; El País, 2014). But the elections had also taken place in an unusual setting, deemed as one of the most peaceful in decades. Prior to the election, the second largest guerrilla group in the country, the ELN, had announced that they were ready to join in dialogue with the government. But the popular mood was also different. During the campaign before the elections, Santos had made clever references to an unusual, but patriotic event taking place. The Colombian national football team had made it to the World Cup for the first time in sixteen years. In the months before the elections, Santos continued making clever references to the popular sport, when speaking about his wish to continue the project for peace. While his mandate had scored several goals, he wanted to continue to ‘win the game’ (Colprensa, 2014).

¹⁰⁰ Read: The FARC and the ELN

Later, he explicitly asked the Colombians to accompany him in the mission to score the last goal of peace (El Universal, 2014), as the nation had put so much effort into the first round, that it would be logical to finish the game.¹⁰¹ When Colombia won a match the day before the election, 3-0 over Greece, this spurred a wave of patriotism and people went to the ballots wearing shirts coloured by the national flag. Following the results, Santos thanked the people and confirmed that this would be a mandate for peace in Colombia, and in addition that ‘millions of Colombians have chosen hope over fear’ (Semana, 2014a). During the election campaign, Uribe had waged hard critique against Santos and his approach to the FARC. Claiming that he was happy to vote for Zuluaga, representing democratic values, a secure country in peace without the intrusion of hypocrisy, he simultaneously expressed sadness over that the FARC, *allegedly*, was committing massacres to force the people to vote for the current president (de Vengoechea, 2014; El Colombiano, 2014; El Espectador, 2014). Santos, on the other hand, expressed prior to the campaign, that ‘a president that turns down the option to make peace would not only be irresponsible, but would be violating the constitutional and popular mandate’ (Santos in El Espectador, 2013). Referring to the contrafactual unwillingness to commit to peace, deep tension has started to grow between the two protagonists.

5.17 Competing representations of the Self and the Other

After the election in 2014, ‘peace’ has really entered the official discourse as a strong and viable referent. In Santos' re-election speech, he asserts that ‘*what was at play, was not the name of a candidate, but the course of the country*’ (Semana, 2014a). In the following, Santos repeats his dedication to guarantee for the opposition, keep fighting for the country’s most vulnerable, and secure development. He endorses the election result as a sign of ‘unity’ and states *this* will be

¹⁰¹ In a declaration after Colombia had won over Uruguay, Santos made a comparative representation on how to win the peace: ‘This is how one wins. With desire, by thinking big, playing as a team and scoring goals in the same direction. This is how the country has to act. Everyone as a team, all united, scoring goals in the same direction’ (Santos, 2014a). In a declaration after Colombia had won over Uruguay, Santos made a comparative representation on how to win the peace: ‘This is how one wins. With desire, by thinking big, playing as a team and scoring goals in the same direction. This is how the country has to act. Everyone as a team, all united, scoring goals in the same direction’ (Santos, 2014a). In many ways, these metaphors from the football make in a clever way of framing and communicating the narratives, as the dedication to the sport can be seen to supersede the dedication to politics among popular fractions in Colombia. See for instance a curious tracking of Google searches, by the newspaper Semana, in cooperation with the Andes University and the Observatory of Democracy, where searches for the two largest football teams appear much more popular than the search for two important 2018 presidential candidates (Semana, 2018).

the time in history when Colombia finds peace, *'the supreme value of any nation'* (ibid.). Where the state Self from 2002 has found it necessary to re-build strength, authority and respect, to deter and eradicate 'evil', the Self from approximately 2011 has started to move away from the comparison with a spatial representation of a terrorist Other. Simultaneously it starts to construct the Self as inherently peaceful, open and not least *tolerant*. Within this construction, unity is called for even between antagonist forces. Santos' government does not rely on explicit personification of an enemy and has moved to articulate much smaller degrees of difference, than the former (Hansen, 2006).¹⁰² Throughout his term, Santos has recurrently linked peace with development and modernity, seeing that the Self, and the Colombian nation in extension, should fulfil its potential. Following the election speech of 2014 however, the peace is also linked to *social justice*. This new referent is notable, as it reflects the government's vision to 'set wrongs right', 'reform what needs to be reformed' and recognise that history has created unjust gaps between rich and poor. Commonly known, inequality and injustice are frequent causes for internal conflicts. With this new link, Santos' representation of the normative state responsibilities happens to align with the traditional, political platform of the leftist insurgence groups, demanding transformation (S. N. de las FARC-EP, n.d.). In continuation, the president announces that Colombia needs a *new* social pact that brings together the best of both the political left and the right.

On 24. August 2016, it was announced that the government had reached an agreement with the main adversary in the conflict, the FARC. Four weeks later, on 26. September, a peace agreement was formally signed in Cartagena by president Santos, on behalf of the government, and Rodrigo Lodoño Echeverri (alias Timochenko) on behalf of the FARC. In this context, Santos performs a speech where he once again confirms the following: *'In 52 years we have lived through and felt much pain from an armed conflict between children of the same nation', 'the good germinates now', 'the peace germinates now'* (Santos, 2016d).

Throughout the speech, Santos does not mention the word 'terrorism' in relation to the FARC. Instead, he uses terms like 'insurgent groups' or 'guerrillas'. With the speech, the president also expresses his gratitude towards the FARC, who has transformed from being represented as the nation's greatest enemy, to proving to be a worthy partner for dialogue, negotiation and cooperation (ibid.). At the point when this group will finally start returning to society and transition into a political party, they will be saluted into the protection and freedom

¹⁰² In his re-election speech, the president pronounces that *'I do not recognise any enemies. We do not hold a grudge'* (ibid.).

of democracy. With this new perspective, Santos has endorsed a peace that will include everyone, also the demobilised guerrillas.¹⁰³ The recognition of the FARC as a political actor, a negotiation partner, but also an adversary in the field at the time of the negotiation, however constitutes a complicated representation. As the government decided not to step down its military forces against the insurgent groups before an agreement was settled, it also remained less sensible for the FARC to dismiss its military campaign (although, in periods, it did). This might have informed the perceptions of reporters, media, politicians and some actors from civil society, seeing the continued actions as evidence of its criminal identity (Gomez-Suarez & Newman, 2013). In parallel, Colombians had seen little of the ‘peace’, which had been discussed in the Cuban island.

The diversification of opinions surrounding the conflict, the enemy and the role of the state has been consistent since Santos took presidency, but considerably intensified in the public space, after the government and the FARC launched their signed peace agreement. While the agreement in itself was a historical achievement, Santos had assured, during the possession to his second term, that *‘it will be the Colombians who will endorse the final agreement reached (...) it will be you, the Colombians, who will have the last word!’* (Santos, 2014b). The grand ceremony which introduced the signed agreement may nevertheless be read as a discursive move to secure a ‘point of no return’ and a ‘yes’ in the national plebiscite that was approved and scheduled for the next month. On the same day as the ceremony, However, Uribe fronted a protest march in Cartagena, joined by 2,000 people: *‘We are here to say no to the terrorists, no to this bad agreement, no to this final signing’* (Rendón, 2016; Tiempo, 2016b, 2016a). In the run-up to the plebiscite, organised campaigns *for* and *against* the peace agreement arose and reinforced their separate versions of the ‘rightful’ peace.

5.17.1 Response in the political opposition

Shortly after Santos assumed presidency in 2010, he introduced a new reading of the conflict situation, as exemplified by the victims’ law and the recognition of the FARC. While the new national project was constructed and represented as a continuation of Uribe’s Democratic Security, the new representations of the FARC and the history and the state, broke considerably with the already established narrative. In 2012, Uribe had launched the political movement ‘the

¹⁰³ Note that this does not imply impunity for those that have committed atrocities.

Front Against Terrorism' ('Frente Contra el Terrorismo'), formalising his return to politics.¹⁰⁴ The political movement conformed a platform for opposition against the current government, managed by Santos. Some of the main critiques revolved around the government's approximation to Venezuela and Ecuador, relations which had shattered under Uribe, the matter of security and the re-oriented fight against drugs. The main issue, however, was the strong opposition against Santos' announced dialogues with the FARC: *'I do not think it is in the interest of the country to soften security to dialogue with terrorism, because terrorism is insatiable'*, Uribe announced the same year (Caracol, 2012; Colprensa, 2012). The same year, Uribe and his supporters objected to the invitation extended to 'Timochenko' from the president, to start dialogues in Havana. In the following, Uribe made statements saying that Santos was lying to the country and ultimately giving away the motherland to the terrorists (Semana, 2014b). From 2014 and onwards, parties that did not accept of the peace negotiations would increasingly try to re-situate the image of the FARC as a group of terrorists. Accordingly, these were seen as lacking the determination and willpower to commit to peace and were henceforth expected to 'trick' the state, as history had demonstrated before. The Front Against Terrorism was launched together with the formation of a new party, the 'Pure Democratic Centre' ('Puro Centro Democrático'), a consolidated opposition which later was known as the 'Democratic Centre'.

The presented peace agreement in 2016, was subsequently met with continued (and reinforced) critique from the opposition, particularly signalled by Álvaro Uribe Vélez. The critique mobilised and manifested in civil resistance, and the construction of the campaign against the plebiscite, known as 'United for NO' (Unidos por el NO). Throughout the campaign, the FARC was continuously constructed as an illegitimate actor. According to Uribe, to vote for the peace agreement, in the 'illegitimate plebiscite', would mean to 'accept that the FARC, the third richest terrorist group in the world, does not contribute a single penny to repair the victims, conducts politics with illegal money flows and buys weapons that will replace those that are handed in' (Á. Uribe Vélez, 2016b). In addition to the political leadership of Uribe, the NO campaign was also assembled by civil society and human rights groups. The primary critique was issued towards the agreement's poor criminal treatment of the FARC. In addition, many (but not the Uribe administration) wished for even greater focus on land reform, constituting one of the root causes of the conflict. Supported by these groups, the campaign

¹⁰⁴ The political movement was joined by some of Uribe's main allies, among these, previous Interior Minister, Fernando Londoño.

unfolded and issues information through various platforms. The calls against Santos were manifested in slogans such as ‘No+Santos’ (communicating a double-meaning translated also into ‘No more Santos’), spread through popular resistance marches (Gómez-Suárez, 2016, p. 54).¹⁰⁵

In the run-up to the plebiscite, the protests and campaign against its approval have been issued through demonstrations, open forums, closed forums within some women’s movements, anti-abortion societies, environmental organisations, and through some conservative church societies. The Church held an important role in accusing the government for undermining the traditional family values by integration gays’ rights and gender equality into the agreement (Burnyeat, 2016). These accusations were thoroughly followed up by Uribe in the NO campaign, who was also able to link to a recent happening where manuals of ‘gender equality’ had been distributed in schools, and people were fearing that LGBTI education would take prominence and influence badly on the Colombian culture (Burnyeat, 2016; Gomez-Suarez, 2017). This was an important link, that generated support from many conservatives. As a patriarch coming from a big family, Uribe had often been referring to the traditional family structures, when speaking about the government’s role. Particularly, two valuable family models were drawn on; the strict father figure, and the protective family, both used as metaphors for the government. In addition, religion was also reiterated as an important constituent of the family. This naturally remained an important referent for Uribe, often articulating gratitude as seen for instance after the successful liberation of Ingrid Betancourt: ‘*the operation had the light of the Holy Spirit, and the protection of our lord Jesus Christ and that of the virgin, in all their expressions*’ (C. E. E. El Tiempo, 2008).

Two days after the government had announced their agreement with the FARC, Uribe held a speech in Santa Marta where he presented the agreement as some sort of a gift to the FARC:

Quotation 32: ‘The process rewards terrorism by denying jail to those who are most responsible for atrocious crimes, in a country with more than one hundred thousand prisoners of crimes that are less than those of the FARC. It rewards terrorism with political eligibility that those prisoners do not have, nor the paramilitaries, nor the politicians who have lost their investiture. It rewards terrorism by accepting the laundering of money from narco trafficking, a crime without punishment in the heads of the FARC, the largest cocaine cartel in the world.’

¹⁰⁵ This slogan had been apparent even before the presentation of the peace agreement and was followed by other expressions such as ‘No more FARC’, ‘No impunity’, ‘No more misrule’ and so forth.

Since the FARC was expected to have substantial financial assets, Uribe expressed a worry that these will ensure political misrepresentation through the buying of votes. The speech refers to the absurdness of the plebiscite, which is represented as *'297 pages in one sole question and of urge'*¹⁰⁶ (Á. Uribe Vélez, 2016a). Uribe demands a reformulation of the agreement, as imperative for the possibility to speak about a 'real' peace. Particularly, he states, the country cannot accept any forms of *impunity*, nor will it be logical to welcome the FARC leaders into politics, granting automatic seats in the parliament (ibid.). Throughout the session, Uribe also draws on a representation that has increasingly manifested in the discursive terrain, as a harsh critique of Santos. This is the linking of the government with the introduced term 'Castrochavismo'¹⁰⁷, which criticises how the government has gradually aligned with the political left, a dangerous development in the eyes of the former administration. Uribe explains: *'The government denies that it serves the Castrochavismo, but they are paving the same road. Chávez initially denied the castrismo'*¹⁰⁸, *the FARC is at least confessing its 21st century socialism'*. Santos' move to re-establish diplomatic relations with Venezuela and Ecuador is then, also re-represented as occurring with a 'hidden agenda'. As Uribe explains, this development is inherently dangerous: *'This is how Castro and Chávez began, they left their villages without food, then destroyed the industry, the entire economy, chased away businessmen and ruined the workers'*. In general, the process and the agreement are seen to discredit the long history of democracy that Colombia possesses. Finally, draws out that private property now is in risk due to the land reforms, but also the Armed Forces, who will be subject to the same punishments as the FARC, a move of comparison that he finds completely condemnable and illogic. In the end, the ex-president reiterates his disappointment with the international community, who *'support the impunity of the FARC whom they reject as terrorists in their own countries'* (ibid.). Linking with a spatially different group of radical, global terrorist, Uribe also asserts that *'Osama Bin Laden, Abimael Guzmán, El Chapo, none of these would be allowed to stand for election, become presidents in a democracy...'* (ibid.).

From 2014, the opposition is severely challenging the representations of identity that is constellated with articulations of the Santos administration and their policies towards the

¹⁰⁶ The question in the plebiscite was formulated as: 'Do you support the Final Agreement to End the Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace?'

¹⁰⁷ The 'Castrochavismo' is an expression partly coined by Álvaro Uribe, and those who reject the peace dialogues between the Santos administration and the FARC, that have evolved in Cuba. The term points to a convergence between the economic model installed with Fidel Castro who fronted the Cuban revolution of 1959, and the Bolivarian thinking and/or socialism of the 21st century, promoted by president Hugo Chávez in Venezuela (Olive & Narvaja de Arnoux, 2016, p. 48). In the Colombian setting, this mostly alludes something highly negative.

¹⁰⁸ The political ideology of the Cuban Fidel Castro.

conflict. The Uribe coalition keeps representing themselves as part of the Colombians, refusing to accept a new government agenda that will make space for terrorists in society and politics, without serving the punishment they deserve. Uribe represents his government as the only one which has been able to ‘take the bull by the horns’. In comparison, an administration that turns soft with the enemy is seen as weak, failing to comply with the identity and responsibility of the traditional, strong state. Beyond this, Santos’ administration has not only been represented as weak, but as possessing the ‘wrong’ values by being more interested in dialoguing with the ‘terrorists’ than focusing on security. From the point of view by the ‘Uribismo’, the Santos administration has come to constitute the Other, a radical transformation since 2010. The linking and differentiating can be illustrated and summarised as follows:

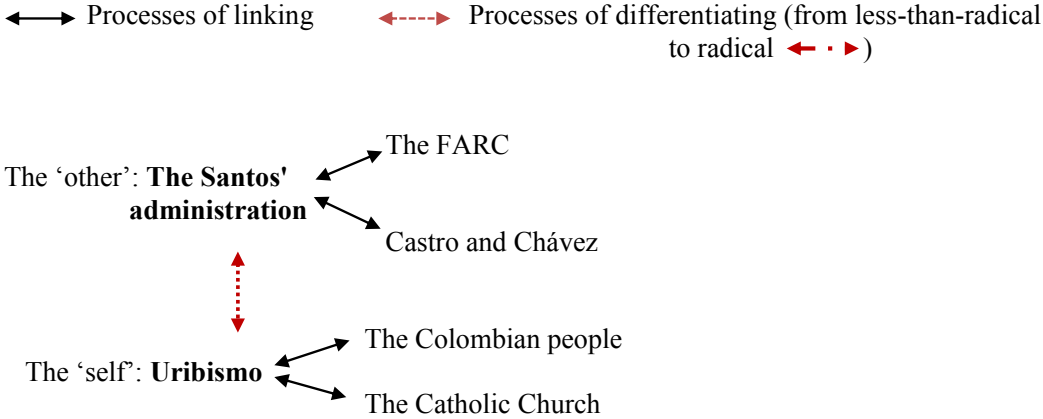


Figure 5: Linking and differentiating identities in the representations of the opposition, 2014

In this construction of identity, Uribe places the FARC and the Government on the same team, as the Other that is fighting for a common mission to transform Colombia, but not for the better. Referring to the peace process, Uribe explains how the FARC is converted into a paramilitary group, 'a partner of the state in the commitment of other crimes' (Á. Uribe Vélez, 2016a). Uribe, on the other hand, is constructed as a loyal leader and fellow countryman to the people, fighting with them for the ‘real’ peace. In a noble declaration in 2016, he compares himself with the current, weak government, criticising it for behaving cowardly: ‘the national agenda is not a terrorist agenda, democracy is defended with courage!’ (ibid.).

5.17.2 Difference articulated as for or against peace

Seeing that political elites, organisations, grassroots and civilians have gathered in campaigns both *for* an *against* the peace agreement, the main goal of centre-right president Juan Manuel Santos, whose term as president ends in 2018, has been to see the agreement implemented. This would end more than 50 years in conflict with the FARC and send an important signal to the region, and the world, that Colombia has changed. As Santos explains, '*the peace of Colombia, is the peace of the region and of the whole continent*' (Santos, 2016d). Referring to the repercussions that has exceeded the Colombian borders, Santos communicate a profound responsibility to the people, to stop the war. This, also for the sake of the regional community. After the agreement was signed, many have expressed their support, both nationals and foreigners, endorsing the dedication of the government. This may have contributed to the fact that the peace campaign turned out as somewhat dimmed. President Santos, the FARC and the organisers of the negotiations maintained a consistent conviction that they would see the agreement pass the popular test. As Santos has expressed, rather an '*imperfect agreement that saves lives, to a perfect war that continues to sow death and pain in our country... in our families!*' (Santos, 2016d). Simultaneously, it has been acknowledged that a '*perfect justice will not permit peace*' (Lafuente, 2016). Despite the 'imperfectness', the peace agreement has been named one the most inclusive peace agreement in history (Nylander & Salvesen, 2017).

The official discourse of Santos has looked beyond present time and beyond the national borders of Colombia. Between 2012 and 2014, Santos started applying representations about post-conflict. In an address to the Afro-Colombian community he concludes that '*to think about the post-conflict is to start designing reconciliation scenarios, of joint work, where, without sacrificing justice and truth, Colombians of all colours, beliefs and ideological positions, respect and advance in unity, in a tranquil environment*' (Santos, 2013d). Santos has dedicated thoroughly to secure 'unity for peace', as the only right solution to the conflict. With this unity, however, comes the option of being *against* peace. In the months before the plebiscite to approve or reject the presented peace agreement, Santos asked for the Colombians to endorse the agreement. When questioned on how people would participate in the decision, he deliberately explained that he was not only referring to how they would vote, but to what extent people had made themselves *aware* of the importance of the issue (Santos, 2016b). Furthermore, referring to how 'fake news' had impacted on United Kingdom European Union membership referendum, Santos reiterated the essential need to separate between true and false

The government framed the peace agreement as a rightful solution to the largest and most urgent problem in Colombia, namely the protracted and lethal conflict. To be able to catch up with its likeminded democratic counterparts in the international community, the government had represented the end to the conflict as imperative. Truth, recognition, reparation and a promise of non-repetition has consequently been constructed as the means to reach peace and reconciliation. As Santos has reiterated earlier, remembering and recognising the past is essential to move on, and to not make the same mistakes as previous governments have made. This departs from the opposition headed by Uribe, where the hatred for the guerrilla groups triumphed. Justice and punishment are consequently constructed as absolute requirements, for peace to prosper, but also out of respect for the laws of the country and the preventive effects for future insurgencies. In the following, the peace agreement has been rejected as incomplete.

On 2 October 2016, the national plebiscite to approve or reject the peace agreement ended with a marginal majority to the ‘No’ vote.¹⁰⁹ Santos’ response, while having claimed that the government did not have any ‘Plan B’, reassured that he would listen to the opposition and continue to fight for peace. After weeks of further talks and amendments, a new agreement was drafted. While the Santos administration presented this new deal as emerging with substantial changes, the Uribe opposition, who had been involved in the re-writing, represented these as only cosmetic changes. During the acts of presenting it, Santos remarked: *‘Today, in this grand theatre, we remember like in Bertolt Brecht’s grand painting, that ‘every man is a man’, every life is sacred and that every war is a setback’* (Santos, 2016a). 30 November, the Colombian Congress ratified the new agreement with 130 votes in favour and zero against. The opposition led by Uribe abstained from voting, holding that the agreement was only minimally improved (La Nación, 2016). In December, Santos accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo on behalf of all Colombians, dedicating the prize first and foremost to the victims of the internal armed conflict (Santos, 2016c).

¹⁰⁹ 50.2 percent voted against the agreement, while 49.8 percent voted for the agreement. Less than 40 percent of the electorate voted.

5.18 Contemplating effects: What does the empirical data reveal?

The chronological study of the official discourse from 2002 to 2016 has revealed a transformation in the constructions of the Self and the Other. During the presidency of Uribe, the government confronted its weak past and the failing efforts to provide for basic security and individual freedom in the country. Drawing a demarcating line between the old identity and the new Self, Uribe pledged to set ‘things straight’ and restore the ‘foundational principles of the nation’. These foundational principles were vindicated with reference to the great liberators of the country, who had fought for the values of ‘law’, ‘order’ and ‘authority’. Framing these as the most important traits of the governmental body, they were considered a *prerequisite* for the optimal performance and guarantee for democracy and freedom, according to Uribe, collective values in the Colombian society.

The basic narrative that Uribe produces and offers, is one where the foundational principles of the state have been lost, following the emergence of a group of unlawful and barbaric individuals. In Uribe’s representation, these have ultimately sought to overthrow the government and with this, destroying the Colombian society and everything it is built on. Since the former administrations have not been able to deter and deal with the violent groups, the threat has remained constant, active and impeding. Remembering that no new interpretations appear on a ‘blank sheet’, the context of the narrative is notable. When assuming the presidency, Uribe proposed the hard-line agenda as a viable alternative to the negotiation efforts that had ultimately failed in the past. Seeing that peace efforts had been ‘wasted’, the space for alternative interpretations were large. However, the representations also emerged in a grander context of insecurity. Following the 9/11 attacks in the United States, the ‘war against terror’ was dominating in the international discourse on terrorism. With this, the ‘good versus the evil’ was already an established narrative that made sense, contemplating the irrational and baffling attacks on democracy (R. Jackson, 2005). Linking to this structure of meaning, Uribe has come to represent the FARC as an irrational terrorist group, intentionally violating the nation and the democratic system¹¹⁰. Material happenings such as the bombing of Club El Nogal was interpreted within this logic and seen as part of a series of attacks that could happen anywhere,

¹¹⁰ Democracy has a special connotation in Colombia. With reference to chapter 4, Colombia is one of the countries in South America which has maintained an uninterrupted democracy, despite turbulent periods. This differentiates it from the fellow region members.

anytime and to anyone. The group was represented as an ‘existential threat’, a *radical* Other, which would require a specific response.

Within the representation that Uribe reproduces, the Other is seen as external to the Colombian society. It is differentiated in spatiality, in that it links to global terrorism, but also to Venezuela and Cuba in ideology. Following their irrationality and missing capability to resume to legitimate political means, the Other is presented as ‘backwards’ and inherently violent. With this comes an identity constructed with a *temporality of repetition*, where the group is assumed to return to violence and war, unless eliminated. It is a well-established principle in poststructuralism that perceptions of identities become lenses for interpretation through which policy is formulated and implemented. Uribe’s representation follows this particular logic, in blocking the idea of negotiations as a legitimate alternative. This resonates with the consensus guideline that one cannot negotiate with terrorists, as this would be to reward violence (P. R. Neumann, 2007). Instead, the formulation of a fundamental terrorist threat implies that threat will have to be addressed and *eliminated*, in order to avoid fatal consequences (Buzan et al., 1998). This strong response further coincided with the construction of the Self, which had distanced from the weakness of its past, and re-assumed the ethical responsibilities as the protective and strict ‘father figure’. From this basic representation, military confrontation with the FARC became not only possible and acceptable, but even *decisive* for the safety of the designated ‘good’ Colombians.

Juan Manuel Santos emerges from this discursive context. Initially promising to continue with the Democratic Security program established under Uribe, Santos did not pass along in the precise same line as his predecessor. Assuming presidency after having been declared the rightful successor for the Uribismo, Santos introduced his first moment of ‘surprise’ when claiming that the door to negotiations was not locked. In line with the established discourse, the Santos administration has maintained the temporal divide between the past and the present identity of the state. However, arguing that the former government has succeeded from the weakness and completed milestones in security, Santos has laid the groundwork for a new national roadmap, coinciding with a re-articulation of the Self. This gave light to the Democratic Prosperity agenda, legitimised as a natural continuation of the Democratic Security. Set to transform into a modern and developed nation, Santos has redirected the focus and speech of the government *forward* and *outwards*. Where Uribe in repeated situations has blamed the international community for not assuming their rightful responsibility in the fight against terror, the Santos administration has dedicated to re-

establishing the link to the democratic counterparts. According to the new president, these are seen to hold the recipe for ‘good governance’ and ‘prosperity’, values that the governmental Self associates with and reaches out for. This positive and optimistic transition however rests upon some preconditions, according to Santos. The violent history needs to be remembered and recognised, since it is imperative that the country does not fall back into old habits and mistakes. A fundamental change appears with the introduction of the Victims’ Law, where the government Santos moves to recognise victims of an ‘internal armed conflict’. Where the narrative of Uribe has reduced the origins of the violence to the mere existence of the FARC (primarily), Santos consequently offers a considerable re-reading of history, where the state is not completely innocent. However, by recognising the government’s shared responsibility for the negative development of the violence, the distance between the Other is slightly reduced. The Victims’ Law addresses one of the main causes to the conflict, namely land issues, and when Santos declares the start of the official peace negotiations in 2012, the difference between the Self and the Other is represented as ‘less-than-radical’. Calling for unity, but also diversity, Santos has widened the space for alternative thoughts and political affiliation. This follows importantly from a version of the Self which is constructed as inherently liberal, peaceful, democratic and sensitive to marginalised groups. Guided by a motivation of transforming the country and taking a more ostensible position within the international community, the Santos government avows a quest for an encompassing, profitable and sustainable peace, where differences are seen as an asset. Finally, the new representations that the ‘Santismo’ offers, moves away from articulating any *radical* Other, to the same comparable level that the discourse up until 2010 was constructed around. The FARC, while still different, is constructed in temporality as being able to progress towards the modern, democratic society, if motivated. Where the Self is bound by ethical concerns of dialogue and non-violence (to the extent possible), the most prominent Other eventually becomes ‘the enemies of peace’ or ‘those against the peace agreement’, who distribute lies within society.

As I explained in the theory chapter, it is assumed that constructions of identity remain stable, as long as it is continuously reproduced, practiced and goes unchallenged. I have alluded, this was much the case under the hegemonic representation of the FARC as a terrorist. When Santos enters presidency, this representation is increasingly challenged, but does not disappear. Ultimately these contradictory versions of reality constellate into opposite sides in the plebiscite, representing different perceptions of the Self and the Other. By the end of 2016, this means that the discursive field can be seen as *open*, and while the modification of the stringent

representations of the FARC has been decisive for the closing distance between the government and the guerrilla, the Santos administration has failed to establish discursive stability. The existence of the unlawful groups constitutes a fundamental concern in the discourse, but as I have explained, the different degrees of otherness have opened dissimilar spaces for alternative resolutions. As figure 7 illustrates, the construction of the Other and the logic of policy response that follows, can be illustrated differently with Uribe and Santos as follows:

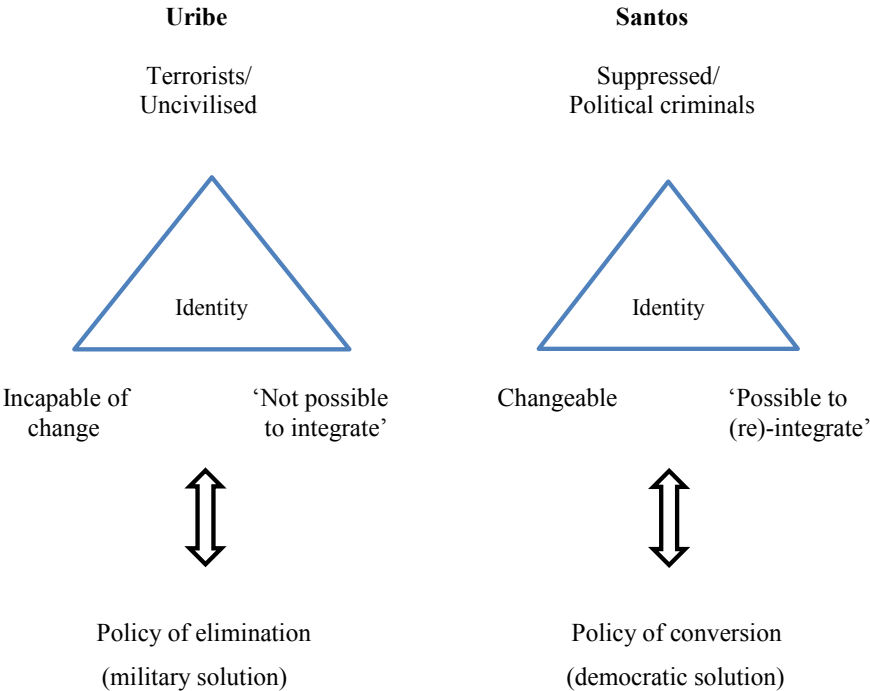


Figure 7: Competing constructions of the FARC as the Other (drawing upon Hansen, 2006, p.43)

From 2012 to 2014, these representations of identity and the ‘rightful’ end to the conflict have increasingly competed, reaching a top with the presentation of the first signed peace agreement between the government and the FARC. Up until the national plebiscite, representatives of the NO vote sought to delegitimise the solution, while supporters have promoted unity and generosity, for the sake of a rapid transformation to peace. Dependent on popular support in a time where the fundamental definition of identity was at stake, these two representations have seemed to radicalise in opposite directions.

5.19 Agency and political leeway

A fundamental concern in this thesis has been to investigate not only the relevance of language, but also how much language matters. In the following, it is intriguing to ponder upon the ‘success’ of the discursive projects that have been guided by Uribe and Santos respectively in presidency. Remembering the role of agency, the power to *frame* a debate, identity, meaning and materiality can selectively be represented in one way instead of another. In continuation, it is possible to question the extent to which the agents have succeeded in transmitting their way of viewing the world, a crucial attainment for their mandate. Richard Jackson explains that one way to ‘measure’ this progress, is to evaluate the extent to which the discourse has allowed the authorities to ‘enact their policies with significant support’, or at least without strong opposition (R. Jackson, 2005, p. 159). In addition, it would be relevant to investigate how alternative narratives and representations are silenced and marginalised in the public sphere (ibid.). To give a complete answer to this question would be close to impossible, not least contestable, but some aspects are worth highlighting and may partly answer the question.

In order to deliver his version of the world to the public audience, Uribe has used clever rhetoric. He has represented a break with the traditional ruling elite and has dedicated to closing the gap between the power and the people, by showing extraordinary presence and empathy at a local level. The articulation of a legitimate and strong state, at the same time a victim of an *illegitimate* violence, has established a foundation for a hard-line strategy, that has eventually nurtured into greater military violence on behalf of the state. The Other has been constructed as a binary opposition of the Self, and an inherent threat to the Self’s identity. This is a simple logic that is easy to sell and understand, in a society which is plagued by insecurity. The impending danger of the enemy has also worked to legitimise and reproduce the strength of the state, which has undertaken unprecedented means in the fight to bring back order. In many ways, Uribe has managed to construct the FARC as the main adversary in the conflict, henceforth overlooking or downplaying the wrongdoing of several other actors. The terror actions and the unethical motivations of the FARC have been highlighted, while atrocities of state actors or the public forces have been selected out of the narrative of the ‘good against the evil’ (read for instance the links between the state and paramilitaries, the ‘false positives’ scandal, which was initially denied, or the various attacks on human rights organisations, accused for spreading lies and serving the guerrilla).

Uribe has also been able to speak directly and efficiently to core supporters, by representing himself as ‘one of the people’. The basic representations of Uribe bears strong resemblance to a religious narrative, a discursive strength and imperative in the Colombian society where about 90 percent of the population identify with Christianity (primarily Roman Catholicism) (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour, 2015; Gray, 2014, p. 158). In many ways, the Uribista discourse is based on simple, similar constituents. It fosters strong emotions around a central vision, it articulates a moral task, a saviour, the solidary and faithfulness of citizens, and unity against a common enemy. While the FARC has been constructed as the most radical and prominent Other, the image of this ‘enemy’ has come to cover *anyone* that does not share the principles of the government. Since the threat is impending, it has been crucial to ask, ‘*which side are you on?*’ and the answer must be either of two options. Within this logic, the government has represented politics as a ‘sacred’ subject, where the increase of the political left would ultimately mean the decrease of freedoms and rights. Consequently, when the Santos government accepts the existence of a political left, even arguing for its inclusion into politics, the Uribistas have framed the administration as an ally of the FARC. In addition, it is given the label of ‘castrochavismo’, meaning that the country is doomed to spiral negatively in development, as seen with Cuba and Venezuela.¹¹¹ Accepting the FARC as a political party has also been described as dangerous, as it is also a viable chance that Timochenko, the terrorist, might buy his way into presidency. In total, this turned the question of the plebiscite into an important question for the identity of the nation, and the NO side has revived the legacy of the reductionist dilemma reading: ‘*You are with me, or you are against me*’ (see Vélez, 2015).

The discourse between 2002 and 2010 largely stabilised around Uribe’s representations and allowed his government to undertake exceptional measures.¹¹² This has manifested in altered consequences for the society. The stringent divide between ‘good’ and ‘evil’, ‘lawful’ and ‘unlawful’ has made it difficult to assume a ‘middle ground’ position. Unity has been called for between the ‘rightful’ citizens of Colombia and following the declared *state of unrest*, negative implications have followed for those who have been ascribed to the ‘wrong’ side. On one hand, the state has demanded cooperation from the people, which has let the security forces

¹¹¹ Ironically, Uribe is seen to mirror Chávez more than Santos, particularly in his way of communicating with the audience (Binetti, 2016 and interview with Juan Esteban Ugarriza Uribe, 30.01.18)

¹¹² Characterised by upholding only *one* viable representation of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’, the discourse can be considered as *closed* (in a relative sense) (Dunn & Neumann, 2016).

advance and reinstate security in and around major cities.¹¹³ The government has gained legitimacy and support, and the narrative has coincided with the logic and the promises of a safer reality. A constant demand for results and effectiveness (additional features of the government's Self), has however also established space for unconventional measures, undertaken to achieve basic goals. Bringing up a common example, the false positives scandal seems to have run from this opportunity. While initially framing this situation as the ill enactment of the murdered, this event has eventually attracted other (more supported) explanations, which have eventually hurt the narrative of the inherently 'good' and innocent state military.

In comparison to Uribe's somewhat successful framing of the situation, the rhetorical foundation of Santos peace agenda has been weaker. As Julie Wilhelmsen has found in her study of the war in Chechnya, wars that are being fought on weak discursive establishment may easily dwindle (Wilhelmsen, 2018, p. 203). The same seems to apply to tough efforts to implement a political peace in Colombia. Santos has increasingly directed the national agenda towards peace, linking the concept to the identity of the state, but also to wider interests of the public, such as development and prosperity. However, the communication of the new alternative reality, including the progress and content of the talks with the FARC, has been faint. During the negotiations in Havana, Uribe presented negotiation process as one where the government escorted the FARC on a luxury travel, where concessions would flow equally from each side of the negotiation table. The process was read as a sign of weakness where the government was 'giving in' to the terrorists. The discursive turns that have been seen increasingly during the mandate of Santos have therefore only been accepted to a relative extent. While he has spoken deliberately to the victims of the conflict, the marginalised groups and the international community, it is less likely that he has been able to convince the 'ordinary' people.¹¹⁴ Santos represents the traditional ruling elite and speaks in a technocratic, educated and elitist way. He has abolished the popular community councils in favour of technological solutions, and his new policies have been interpreted as a critique to his former president. In addition, Santos has somehow distanced himself from the Colombian people, by speaking to, referring to, and drawing on examples from his democratic fellows on the international stage. Measuring the country by international standards, this is alien to many who have no relations to the 'outside world' and cannot identify with the leader. Before the eyes of an attentive

¹¹³ Throughout this development, the FARC was also considerably weakened in personnel and material resources.

¹¹⁴ In the peace plebiscite, those regions who have been less affected by the violence generally voted 'no', while victims and vulnerable areas voted 'yes' (Semana, 2016; Telesur tv, 2016)

international audience, but also hopeful peace communities and individuals in Colombia, Santos has assumed a mandate as a 'peace president'. Where *unity* under Uribe was requested among the 'rightful' and designated citizens of Colombia, Santos has gone further to promote unity also among adversaries. This unity is justified in the name of a peace, a commitment which surpasses concerns for difference and political affiliation. Santos has then moved away from the concept of an 'enemy' to more dialogue friendly terms as 'adversary'. Instead of adhering to representations of terrorism and inhumanity, his administration has then accepted the FARC as fellow human beings. While human beings may disagree, this is not a reason for why they cannot dialogue, cooperate and solve their problems in peace and with mutual respect. In other words, the responsibility that runs from the Self within Santos' representation, is one where difference must be accepted in order to build a true liberal democracy and a sustainable peace. Where sympathisers of the left-wing policies were considered sympathisers of the guerrillas under Uribe's principles, this is no longer the case. The FARC is still considered different from the Self, but in the case of Santos' representation, difference may not actually lead to radical 'othering' (Rumelili, 2004) and Santos omits drawing strong boundaries between insiders and outsiders within the representation.

In the end, the peace process has struggled to gain stability even after its approval in Congress. The redefinition of the Self and the Other as 'less-than-radical' different has created a decisive opening to cooperate towards a common goal. On the other hand, parts of Santos' challenge to generate support for his transformed vision of the Self and the Other, may be interpreted in line with the strength and stability of the official discourse when this was dominated by the binary representations of Uribe. Uribe has managed to implement a strong legacy built on *a consistent* and thick narrative that includes the representation of the FARC as an inherent threat to Colombia's democratic system. Constructing the FARC as a party motivated for war, a war in response becomes legitimate, a construction which seems harder to reverse than to initiate.

6 Conclusion

In 2012, it was announced that the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia had met in exploratory talks and were formally ready to commence negotiations. With a common ambition to establish peace, a historical agreement was reached between the parties in August 2016. This was a remarkable development in the Colombian context. In 2002, a third effort to negotiate a solution had failed, and the newly elected president, Álvaro Uribe, had responded by installing a *war* on a problem defined as ‘terrorism’. Negotiations were deemed irrational, and military solution was replaced as the best answer. This gradually changed with the presidency of Juan Manuel Santos, who has committed to a mandate for peace. In the months after the 2016 announcement, a peace agreement between the government and the FARC was nevertheless *rejected* in a national plebiscite. The result was a tangible sign of the polarisation that exists in the country and reflected a heated political debate that had gone off in the preparation period. None of the parties within the political elite have expressed their resistance to peace. Nevertheless, there exists a strong controversy in the perceptions of what premises this peace should build on, and how a ‘rightful’ end to the conflict should be formulated. The purpose of this thesis has been to investigate the dominant representations, to find what has enabled but also limited the chances for a viable political solution to the violence between the government and the FARC.

6.1 Main findings

In the thesis I have explored the role language in the resolution of the Colombian conflict with the FARC. Many theories explain *why* wars end (Hartlyn, 1993; Licklider, 1993; Mason & Fett, 1996; Pruitt, 2011; Zartman, 2001). In the Colombian context, it is often referred to how a change in materiality has altered and/or reduced the alternatives for the adversaries on each side of the conflict. In this thesis however, I started out with a presumption that material factors are not pre-given, but always *discursively mediated*. This ontological premise opens for a distinct approach. It orients the study towards questions of *how* it was possible that the government could find a political solution, where this seemingly was impossible ten years ago. The basic premise has been that actors interpret and communicate their visions of the world through discourse, which becomes a lens through which problem formulation and resolution appear. In

the empirical example, I have used *discourse* as system of meaningful representations that articulate constructions of the Self and the Other, and simultaneously creates a certain space for political action, while limiting alternatives.

The empirical analysis of the official discourse between 2002 and 2016 has revealed a transformation. The inauguration of Uribe as president coincided with a reformulation of the conflict, the adversary and the fundamental responsibilities of the state Self. The Democratic Security programme was launched with a promise to regain order and authority and would function as a political means to legitimise a new and tougher security policy. Articulating a return to the fundamental identity of the nation, any attack against the democratically elected body would be interpreted as terrorism. In Uribe's basic representation, the existential threat residing from the FARC has become a benchmark. The FARC, as the Other, has been represented as *radically different* from the Self, and would have to be dealt with immediately, in order to avoid catastrophe and destruction. While allowing the government to circumvent the law in the name of sovereignty, the space for negotiation has been drastically delimited. Instead, the government policies have been oriented towards *elimination*, running logically from the perception of the threat.

Whereas Santos pledged to continue the security policy of Uribe upon his election to presidency, his government quickly introduced some amendments. The primary change came with the ratification of the Victims' Law, which turned to recognise the existence of an *internal armed conflict*. This deeply challenged the meaning entrenched in the official discourse from 2002. Santos proposed a re-reading of history, where the responsibility for insecurity was not solely reduced to the FARC, but also attributed to the government's past priorities. With this, the radicalness invested in the Other was been reduced, and the Self increasingly assumed an identity vested in tolerance, liberalism and modernity.

In the empirical analysis I found that the government's recognition of the armed conflict, and the FARC as a politically motivated group from 2011 and onwards, has been a *prerequisite* for the initiation of the successful peace talks. With the altered understanding of the Self and the history it is situated within, the official representation has created room for a new approach to the conflict. Military confrontation is no longer perceived as a natural solution running from the Self/Other distinction, and negotiation has entered the agenda as a tangible means to secure peace. At the same time, I have affirmed that discourse does not change with the wind, but is subject to alteration by individual actors, depending on their ability to resonate with the audience and earn support for a representation of the world. Santos and Uribe have come to

frame very different conceptions of the peace, within their mandates to steer the official discourse. In Uribe's interpretation of the FARC and the conflict, peace narrows down to the perception of a 'secure peace'. When the peace is defined and constructed as the continuation of security and justice, the solution further resonates with principles of punishment, military power and violence, echoing the depiction of the Other as inhumane and irrational. This leaves little room for concessions and democratic integration. Repeating the logic presented in Uribe's version of reality, peace will *follow* from the elimination of the threat, and will prosper once the situation is controlled:

Security and order  Peace

In Santos' new interpretation of the conflict and the FARC, peace is no longer planted in the inviolable principle of justice. According to the Santos administration, some levels of justice will have to be sacrificed for the possibility to establish peace. The peace is further linked with goals of development, human rights and prosperity, concepts that in turn characterise the Self, reaching both outwards in space and forward in time. The violent groups are interpreted as having robbed the victims of a chance to prosper, and the new government must consequently provide a chance to 'catch up' with the world. Linking to his international counterparts, Santos also seeks to prepare the ground for a more liberal and tolerant society, opening for political affiliation and cooperation of both the political left *and* the right. The firm call for unity has endured within the official discourse from 2002-2016, but the concept has received different meanings. Instead of dividing between 'good' and 'evil', 'loyal' and 'disloyal' citizens, unity has been advocated across diversity and among adversaries, increasingly with the presidency of Santos. With this, the government has created space for a more positive conception of peace, rather than the vision of peace as the mere *absence of violence* (See Galtung, 2011). What has been seen, is consequently that peace is negotiated without an agreement of bilateral ceasefire. The opposite logic somehow applies, reading that peace and unity will establish the foundation for sustainable security, prosperity and order:

Peace  Security and order

While space has been created for a political solution, I have argued that the discursive legacy of the former administration, has limited the success of a political solution. The new

representations of identity and policy has been met with overwhelming critique from ex-president Uribe, who's vision of the world has not vanished. The two basic representations have consequently challenged each other, radicalised, and made the foundation for peace quivering. In the end, the former boundaries between the government and the guerrilla have been altered, while Santos and Uribe themselves have articulated increasing difference between each other.

Generally, the thesis has tried to illustrate that the social world does not operate with pre-defined identities, but rather construct and interpret these through language. This means that threats are not objectively given, nor could these constitute themselves *outside* of any structures of meaning. On the contrary, they become intersubjective constructions, with meaning attached and eventually become accepted among a broader audience. In Colombia, a political solution to the conflict with the FARC has been reached for the first time in history, and the guerrilla group has officially ceased to exist. Nevertheless, where new representations have been introduced, the legacy of the former structured discourse has however persisted and made the process challenging. Ultimately, the discourse is left unstable and the peace becomes vulnerable for amendments, depending on the results of the 2018 presidential elections. This raises a discourse analytical point: even through discourses may stabilise to a more or less extent, they will, in their most essential and inherent character, be described as dynamic and 'open' systems for meaning-making. This means that some specific representations may take precedence, but could nevertheless be challenged by other representations, which rest latent in the discursive terrain, re-emerging when the incentives are 'set' (for instance when insecurity is on the rise). In the case of Colombia, one could then imagine that it could be easier to restart a war with FARC affiliations in the future, as constellations of meanings have once defined the group as radically different, barbaric and frightening. While I am not set out to speculate in this, it is important to rest with the powers that are invested in language, and the possible *lock-in* of dominant representations: once someone or something has been established as a fundamental danger, it will be a difficult task to swiftly deconstruct this image. This is prominent also with the persistence of Uribe's representations which frames the FARC as terrorists, an identity that is hard to 'un-do'.

In the end, I have found that the peace process revolves around a lot more than just the signing of a paper. I have discussed how the legitimacy of *a* peace, is based upon actors' perceptions about the Other, the Self and the ethical responsibilities that follow. This again suggests the relevance of studying language and identity in social transition periods. The mapping of the different, and in this case *contradictory* ways of viewing reality, is not only

useful prior to the initiation of a process but might also tell us something about the foundations that the peace rests on, and the likely point for controversies in the future.

6.2 Methodological considerations and future study

The empirical analysis consists of a detailed study of political texts, from 2002-2016. I have found discourse analysis fit to explore the research question. The methodological bedrock of poststructuralism provides a useful way to study the relationship between language and politics, and the general lesson is that we cannot separate discourse and materiality completely. This, because humans interpret and construct their world through language. More specifically, the theory has presented a way of studying how politics runs from the construction of *identity* and how identity simultaneously is constituted through policy formulation. This is important in a transitional period like the Colombian, where problem formulation and resolution depend on the perception of the threat posed by ‘otherness’.

Naturally, there are also limitations to what a discourse analysis can do. Explained in chapter 3, the method cannot be assessed along strict criteria for validity and reliability, as defined by the positivist tradition. Adhering to the ontological foundation of poststructuralism, the drawing of causal inferences has been replaced by a focus on mutually constitutive factors. Discourse analysis is more concerned with interpretation and aims to say something about how aspects of the world are constructed, reproduced, maintained and challenged. In the continuation, I am inclined to argue that the study of a longer process would generally benefit from the study of large amounts of text. On the downside, I have had to undertake stringent delimitations in the thesis. My empirical study has been limited to the *official discourse* and most notably to texts issued by the presidents. With this, the samples have necessarily excluded some perspectives. Ideally, the empirical study would have been extended horizontally, to include more voices. Not only within the political elite, to account for nuances in reproduction and contestation, but also among the wider public. As Richard Jackson (2005) explains, the power and success of a narrative may, to some extent, be measured from the way that it is adopted, or *accepted*, by the opposition. This is a line worth following for future study. More specifically, the strength of the government’s representations of the Self and the Other could well be studied in the essence of how words, logics and representations of reality is assumed and applied naturally and uncritically by the larger mass. As I have touched upon, a discourse is never completely closed and there will always be space for contestation, alternative

interpretation and moderation. Nevertheless, the room for contestation may also be considered larger or narrower (whether agents are conscious or unconscious of this). Referring yet again to Jackson (2005), a political discourse can be considered hegemonic and successful once its way of viewing the world becomes institutionalised and accepted along a wide range of sectors, such as in the media, the schools, the church, the civil society and in ‘ordinary’ citizen groups (ibid.). Looking at how the representations have been manifested and reproduced within other for instance expert discourses and popular discourses, would more substance to the conclusion. This may further be important to measure, for the possibility to say something about the likeliness of that peace will be implemented and accepted among the broader public, alternatively to discover what groups of society does not resonate with the proposed representations, and on what basis.

In the end, the thesis has looked at how polarisation has manifested profoundly around two dominant representations. This has left the official discourse instable, in a time where stability is crucial for the successful transition to peace. The diversified constructions of the Self/Other relation and the meaning invested in the solution to the conflict, will be interesting to follow in the Colombian presidential elections of 2018. These will set off by the end of May and is currently headed by the two favourites, Iván Doque, representative of the Uribistas’ Democratic Centre, and Gustavo Petro, leftist candidate from the Colombia Humana Party, and also a former M-19 guerrilla fighter. Where the peace agreement is unlikely to be ruined, Doque has proclaimed that he will change central clauses, linked to for instance narcotics production and transitional justice, leaving the new FARC party (Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común) in a much more insecure situation (Johnson, 2018). Petro, who has pledged to fight inequality gaps, insert a grand land reform and has previously demonstrated his sympathy for the Venezuelan leader Hugo Chávez, runs right into much of the fear laden representations proposed by Uribe, prior to the plebiscite in 2016. It will consequently be interesting to see how a potentially turbulent election will evolve and how the invested meanings will continue to manifest and constellate into the next political roadmap. The next president will have to deal with a challenging implementation of the peace agreement, an on-going, but *difficult* negotiation with the second largest guerrilla group (the ELN) and important issues of land distribution and narcotics production.

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7 Appendix 1

List of interviewees

January 2018

Respondent 1 (R1)	Anonymised, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, Bogota, 19 January
Johanna Amaya Panche	Saint Thomas University, Researcher, Bogota, 24 January
Respondent 4 (R4)	Anonymised, Truth Commission, Bogota, 26 January
Maria Emma Wills Obregon	Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, Advisor, Bogota, 26 January
Nubia Rojas	Independent journalist, Bogota, 29 January
Andrei Gomez-Suarez	Rodeemos el Diálogo, Director, Bogota, 29 January
Juan Esteban Ugarriza Uribe	Universidad del Rosario, Professor, Bogota, 30 January

8 Appendix 2

Table 4.2 Intertextual research models

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3A</i>	<i>Model 3B</i>
Analytical focus	Official discourse: Heads of states Governments Senior civil servants High ranked military Heads of international institutions Official statements by international institutions	Wider foreign policy debate: Political opposition The media Corporate institutions	Cultural representations: Popular culture High culture	Marginal political discourses: Social movements Illegal associations Academics NGOs
Object of analysis	Official texts Direct and secondary intertextual links Supportive texts Critical texts	Political texts Parliamentary debates Speeches, statements Media texts Editorials Field reporting Opinion—debate Corporate institutions Public campaigns Recurring intertextual links	Film, fiction, television, computer games, photography, comics, music, poetry, painting, architecture, travel writing, autobiography	Marginal newspapers, websites, books, pamphlets Academic analysis
Goal of analysis	The stabilization of official discourse through intertextual links The response of official discourse to critical discourses	The hegemony of official discourse The likely transformation of official discourse The internal stability of media discourses	Sedimentation or reproduction of identities in cultural representations	Resistance in non-democratic regimes Dissent in cases of models 1 and 2 hegemony Academic debates

From Hansen, 2006, p.64

9 Appendix 3

List of quotations

Quotation 1: 26. Colombia sin guerrilla y sin paramilitares. La autoridad legítima del Estado protege a los ciudadanos y disuade a los violentos. Es la garantía de la seguridad ciudadana durante el conflicto y después de alcanzar la paz.

Quotation 2: 28. Enalteceré la profesión de soldado y policía. Que la comunidad los valore y respete. Que ellos se esmeren por merecer respeto y admiración. Que reciban formación técnica y su esfuerzo sea premiado con becas de estudio y altas calificaciones. Con más policías y soldados nuestra fuerza pública sufrirá menos bajas, será más respetada y el pueblo vivirá más tranquilo.

Quotation 3: 38. Todos apoyaremos a la fuerza pública, básicamente con información. Empezaremos con un millón de ciudadanos. Sin paramilitarismo. Con frentes locales de seguridad en los barrios y el comercio. Redes de vigilantes en carreteras y campos. Todos coordinados por la fuerza pública que, con esta ayuda, será más eficaz y totalmente transparente. Un millón de buenos ciudadanos, amantes de la tranquilidad y promotores de la convivencia.

Quotation 4: Bolívar y Santander prefiguran nuestra identidad política como Nación. El primero encarna la idea de orden y autoridad. El orden como presupuesto ineludible de la libertad, la autoridad que hace posible la igualdad de oportunidades. El segundo representa el imperio de la ley que garantiza la seguridad y las libertades. El orden para la libertad mediante la autoridad democrática de la ley: ¡Eh allí el binomio ético-político que sostiene la continuidad histórica de nuestra Nación y otorga sentido a nuestra institucionalidad!

Quotation 5: Para reposo del Libertador recuperemos el orden, que unifique esta Nueva Granada disgregada hoy en repúblicas de facto de organizaciones violentas. (...) Que el Hombre de las Leyes nos inspire una Nación de obediencia a las normas para cancelar la esclavitud de la violencia.

Quotation 6: Ante el juramento que acabo de prestar, que compromete mis energías y la totalidad del ciclo vital que El Creador me depare, convoco a los colombianos y colombianas a retomar el lazo unificador de la ley, la autoridad democrática, la libertad y la justicia social, extraviado en momentos desapacibles de la historia.

Quotation 7: Cuando se tolera el terrorismo, el terrorismo simplemente tiene altibajos estratégicos pero nunca desaparece. La decisión que tiene que tomar Colombia es derrotar el terrorismo. Esta noche llamo nuevamente a la Fuerza Pública y a la Fiscalía a hacer un gran trabajo y a redoblar esfuerzos.

Quotation 8: El país sigue siendo azotado por estos grupos. Hoy más que nunca debemos reiterar que con el terrorismo no se puede jugar. Al terrorismo no se le puede contemplar. A la arrogancia, a la ceguera del terrorismo no se le puede tener consideración.

Quotation 9: Tenemos años que los marcan los terroristas, nos acaban de hacer este daño tan grande pero si persistimos en la determinación, si persistimos en la acción, si persistimos a pesar del dolor y el desconcierto se tendrá que repetir lo que siempre ocurre para bien del pueblo: el delito hace mucho daño pero no triunfa, el triunfo finalmente será de la democracia, del ordenamiento jurídico de la gente de bien (...) A mis compatriotas, en medio del dolor, una voz de ánimo. Colombia está en un momento único ideal para derrotar el terrorismo (...) emprendamos el camino definitivo de derrotar el terrorismo.

Quotation 10: La antípoda de la política democrática es el terrorismo, que pretende imponer por la violencia su voluntad sobre los otros, al costo de la vida de miles de civiles. Es lo que hemos visto en los atentados del club El Nogal en Bogotá y de Neiva. Es lo que hemos visto en Fortul, Arauca, donde terroristas engañaron a un niño con una bicicleta bomba que luego activaron, acabando con su vida. Frente al terrorismo sólo puede haber una respuesta: derrotarlo. Quienes persistan en el uso de esta práctica criminal, soportarán todo el peso de la ley.

Quotation 11: Los colombianos no cederemos ante esa amenaza. La vamos a derrotar con la colaboración de toda la ciudadanía. El concepto clave aquí es solidaridad. Solidaridad entre los ciudadanos y solidaridad con la Fuerza Pública. Este principio, esencial en el texto de nuestra

Constitución, es fundamental para la convivencia, para la creciente consolidación en la integración profunda del pueblo colombiano. La masiva respuesta de la población a la cooperación dentro del marco institucional ha demostrado la determinación del pueblo colombiano de acabar con el terrorismo.

Quotation 12: Colombia siempre ha sido ejemplo en América Latina de la libertad de prensa. No ha pasado por la mente de este Gobierno restringir esa libertad, con normas jurídicas excepcionales o permanentes. Sólo pedimos a los periodistas, como a todos los ciudadanos, actuar con responsabilidad a la hora de divulgar información que pueda poner en peligro la seguridad de todos.

Quotation 13: Nuestra Fuerza Pública jamás tiene la menor inclinación a igualarse con los terroristas en su desprecio por los derechos humanos. Por eso, mientras las Farc y el terrorismo que la acompaña, mientras la organización terrorista todos los días viola los derechos humanos, aquel sector politiquero de los derechos humanos sale a defender a las Farc con el pretexto de defender los derechos humanos.

Quotation 14: La Nación entera clama por reposo y seguridad. Ningún crimen puede tener directa o ladina justificación. Que ningún secuestro halle doctrina política que lo explique. Comprendo el dolor de las madres, de los huérfanos y desplazados de la Patria, en su nombre revisaré mi alma cada madrugada para que las acciones de autoridad que emprenda tengan la más pura intención y el más noble desarrollo. Apoyaré con afecto a las Fuerzas Armadas de la Nación y estimularemos que millones de ciudadanos concurren a asistirlos.

Quotation 15: A todos estos grupos se les ha ofrecido la posibilidad de un diálogo a partir del cese de hostilidades. Grupos paramilitares, los que cumplan con el cese de hostilidades se les respeta, sino la orden ha sido muy sencilla, en privado y en público: los que no la cumplan se les mete a la cárcel o se le da de baja. Ahí no hay vacilación, así de claro es. Grupo paramilitar que esté delinquiendo aquí, hay que acabarlo, con la misma agresividad militar con que hay que acabar al ELN y a las Farc. Por eso no puede haber un centímetro de permisividad con alguno de estos grupos terroristas. Esto tiene que ser con toda la fortaleza y lo que necesitamos es construir más confianza de la ciudadanía con la Fuerza Pública, que todo el mundo el coopere a la Fuerza pública.

Quotation 16: Cada victoria sobre el terrorismo es una victoria de la libertad. Colombia puede mirar hoy al mundo con la frente en alto y decir: aquí avanzamos frente a los violentos y saboreamos la libertad que nos querían arrebatar sin que esa libertad haya sufrido mengua alguna en la acción gubernamental de derrotarlos.

Quotation 17: Derrotaremos al terrorismo, terminaremos el conflicto y construiremos la paz. Mantendremos una presión incesante sobre los violentos, organizados en bandas criminales, grupos guerrilleros y terroristas. No les dejaremos más opción que la rendición (...). Mantendremos la exitosa política del Presidente Álvaro Uribe Vélez, que combinó la mano tendida y el pulso firme.

Quotation 18: ¡Soy y seré el Presidente de la Unidad Nacional! Pero que quede claro: no quiero un país sin partidos ni sin controversias ideológicas. Colombia necesita partidos sólidos, serios y de vocación permanente, con posiciones diferentes sobre la sociedad y sobre el Estado.

Quotation 19: Colombianos: Los invito a que compartamos la construcción de un nuevo amanecer. En este nuevo amanecer tenemos la oportunidad histórica para transformar a Colombia y asumir un positivo protagonismo en el escenario internacional.

Quotation 20: Como resultado de estos esfuerzos, el Estado recuperó para sus ciudadanos la mayor parte del territorio nacional que se encontraba bajo la influencia violenta de los Grupos Armados al Margen de la Ley (GAML), que comprenden a las FARC, el ELN y las Bandas Criminales (BACRIM).

Quotation 21: El contexto histórico que enmarca este Plan Nacional de Desarrollo es diferente al de otras administraciones. Estamos frente a un optimismo auténtico en nuestro futuro, una confianza incomparable en las potencialidades del país y una imagen en el exterior que es claramente positiva. De ser percibidos en el mundo como un Estado fallido nos convertimos en una economía emergente, atractiva para la inversión y para el Turismo.

Quotation 22: En este nuevo amanecer vamos a desarrollar las potencialidades de nuestra gente, de nuestra tierra, de nuestras regiones, para conquistar las oportunidades globales de los próximos 50 años. En este nuevo amanecer lograremos que Colombia, en menos de una

década, sea reconocida internacionalmente por su altísima calidad de capital humano, por su equidad social, una capacidad económica, empresarial y tecnológica de talla mundial.

Quotation 23: De acuerdo con ella, serán beneficiarias de esta ley todas las personas que, en forma individual o colectiva, hayan sufrido daños como consecuencia de infracciones al Derecho Internacional Humanitario o violaciones a los derechos humanos, ocurridas con ocasión del conflicto armado interno.

Quotation 24: Y que nadie se engañe: el reconocimiento del conflicto que sufrimos desde hace casi medio siglo no supone –y así lo aclara la misma ley– un reconocimiento político a los grupos armados ilegales, a los que seguiremos combatiendo como narcoterroristas en tanto sigan atentando contra la paz y seguridad de los colombianos.

Quotation 25: No hay duda de que es hora de pasar la página. Si ponemos fin al conflicto, los colombianos estaremos frente a un mundo lleno de oportunidades. Si terminamos el conflicto, se desatará todo nuestro potencial, y a Colombia no la parará nadie. TENEMOS QUE UNIRNOS.

Quotation 26: ¿Y por qué aceptamos en introducir ese tema en la negociación? Porque la negociación era básicamente para terminar el conflicto y dar todas las garantías, para que el día de mañana, en lugar de las malas, a través de los votos, puedan reivindicar sus políticas.

Quotation 27: Pero accedimos a poner el tema agrario porque ahí está el origen del conflicto. Y la política que nosotros estamos adelantando, no solamente cuando hace uno la comparación con lo que hemos hecho a través de todos estos procesos fallidos de negociación, era una política que no había una gran diferencia. Y se está discutiendo en este momento esa política allá en Cuba.

Quotation 28: Creo que para bien de Venezuela, para bien de Colombia. Y yo tengo que reconocerle al Presidente Chávez que ha sido también una persona fundamental en ese acercamiento y en este proceso de paz que estamos adelantando con las Farc.

Quotation 29: Algunos analistas internacionales han dicho que han sido una de las reformas más audaces y más progresistas en la historia del país, o en la historia reciente del país (...) Y me siento muy orgulloso cuando escucho analistas internacionales y mucha de la gente que me acompañó, de Colombia y del exterior —ahí creamos una serie de comisiones con embajadores, con representantes de los organismos internacionales— cuando dicen que la evolución de nuestra Fuerza Pública en materia de derechos humanos tal vez no tiene comparación con ningunas otras fuerzas armadas en el mundo.

Quotation 30: Lo hago porque estoy convencido de que hemos avanzado lo suficiente y que —por fin— es posible llegar a ese futuro de prosperidad y de paz que merecemos todos los colombianos. Lo hago porque cuando se ve la luz al final del túnel, no se da marcha atrás. ¡Y no vamos a hacerlo!’

Quotation 31: Yo sé hacer la guerra, y obtuve resultados en esta tarea. Es más —y perdónenme la falta de modestia— obtuve los mejores resultados contra la guerrilla que se han obtenido en la historia de estas dos guerrillas. Y me di cuenta que es más fácil, es más impactante, es más “vendedor”, mostrar a la población atemorizada la cabeza sangrienta del enemigo.

Quotation 32: Este proceso premia al terrorismo al negar cárcel a los máximos responsables de delitos atroces, en un país con más de 100 mil presos por delitos menores que los de FARC; premia al terrorismo con elegibilidad política que no tienen esos presos, ni los paramilitares, ni los políticos que han perdido la investidura; premia al terrorismo con la aceptación del lavado de dineros de narco tráfico, delito sin castigo en cabeza de FARC, el mayor cartel de cocaína del mundo.